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Effect of Stakeholder Engagement on Project Success: A Case Study of Renovation of Amahoro Stadium in Kigali, Rwanda

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Abstract: *This study examined the effect of stakeholder engagement on project success, with a case study of the renovation of Amahoro Stadium in Kigali, Rwanda. The study objectives were: to examine the influence of project planning on project success; to analyse the effect of project execution mechanisms on project success; and to assess the effect of project decision making on project success. The target population was 150 project participants. The study applied Stakeholder Theory, Agency Theory, and the Resource-Based View (RBV). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used, employing Pearson correlation and a multiple regression model. Correlations between project planning, project execution mechanisms, and project decision making were 0.925, 0.862, and 0.945, respectively ($p < 0.05$). Regression analysis revealed that project planning was not statistically significant ($p = 0.105$), while project execution mechanisms ($p = 0.000$) and project decision making ($p = 0.000$) were significant predictors of project success ($R^2 = 0.904$). The study concludes that stakeholder engagement significantly influences project success. It is recommended that the Ministry of Infrastructure actively engage citizens through awareness campaigns, training programs, and collaborative initiatives.*

Keywords: *Stakeholder Engagement, Project Success, Project Planning, Project Execution, Decision Making, Amahoro Stadium, Rwanda*

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1. Introduction

Stakeholder engagement is a pivotal element in project management, significantly influencing project outcomes such as performance, satisfaction, and overall success. Those individuals are the lifeblood of the project due to their pivotal role in project success or failure (Cerri, 2024). Effective stakeholder engagement involves systematically identifying and interacting with individuals or groups who have a vested interest in a project's outcome. This process was crucial for understanding stakeholder expectations, mitigating risks, and aligning project goals with broader objectives (Bryson, 2024).

In large-scale infrastructure projects, the importance of stakeholder engagement is amplified due to the diverse array of stakeholders involved, including government authorities, construction firms, consultancy agencies, local communities, and sports organizations (Waris et al., 2022). In Qatar, stakeholder engagement in stadium construction was critical for the FIFA 2022 World Cup, involving over 100 national and international stakeholders and ensuring sustainability goals were met (Stubbs, 2022). In South Africa, engagement for the 2010 FIFA World Cup contributed to infrastructure development and lasting socio-

economic impacts (Fédération Internationale de Football Association, 2010).

Rwanda's recent infrastructure development efforts provide the context for this study. The Amahoro Stadium, initially constructed between 1984 and 1989 at a cost of $21 million, is a symbol of national pride and resilience. Its renovation cost Rwf2 billion ($160 million), expanding capacity from 25,000 to 45,000 spectators and upgrading facilities to international standards (Rwanda Housing Authority, 2023).

The general objective of the study was to analyse the effect of stakeholder engagement on the success of the Amahoro Stadium renovation project in Rwanda. The specific objectives were: (1) to examine the influence of project planning on project success; (2) to analyse the effect of project execution mechanisms on project success; and (3) to assess the effect of project decision making on project success.

The study tested the following hypotheses: H01: There is no significant influence of project planning on project success. H02: There is no significant effect of project execution mechanisms on project success. H03: There is no significant effect of project decision making on project success.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Literature

2.1.1 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory, as developed by R. Edward Freeman (2010), emphasizes the significance of considering the interests of all stakeholders in business decision-making. Contemporary scholarship continues to refine the theory. Freudenreich, Ludeke-Freund, and Schaltegger (2020) argue that stakeholder theory integrates normative foundations with instrumental value creation mechanisms. The descriptive, instrumental, and normative dimensions of the theory provide a useful structure for analysing how stakeholders were engaged during the project and how that engagement influenced performance outcomes (Donaldson, 1995).

2.1.2 Agency Theory

Agency theory, developed by Jensen and Meckling (1976), focuses on conflicts of interest between principals and agents. In the context of the Amahoro Stadium renovation, the relationship between public authorities (principals) and contractors or project managers (agents) reflects this core agency dynamic. Mechanisms such as monitoring systems, performance-based contracts, and transparent reporting are directly relevant to ensuring project success and reducing opportunistic behaviour (Filatotchev and Boyd, 2009).

2.1.3 Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV), developed by Barney (1991), proposes that organizations achieve competitive advantage through the management of valuable, rare, and non-substitutable resources. Stakeholder engagement is critical for mobilizing strategic resources, strengthening partnerships, and sustaining competitive advantage over time (Freeman et al., 2020). Engaging stakeholders such as suppliers, regulators, and communities can help organizations access new technologies, market insights, and financial support.

2.2 Empirical Review

Research by Dwivedi (2021) illustrates that stakeholder involvement in planning leads to more accurate project scoping and resource allocation, reducing the risk of conflicts later in the project lifecycle. Lagac (2023) notes that early stakeholder engagement fosters transparency and builds trust. In developing countries, Wanner and Probstl-Haider (2019) highlight that effective engagement is crucial for navigating complex regulatory and social environments.

During execution, Hollmann et al. (2022) emphasize that regular stakeholder engagement helps manage expectations and maintain support. Active Collabo (2024) found that projects with active stakeholder engagement during execution were more likely to be completed on time and within budget. Continuous two-way communication enhances trust and contributes significantly to overall project success (Aaltonen and Kujala, 2020).

Engaging stakeholders in decision-making ensures more inclusive and better-informed decisions. Lehtinen, Aaltonen, and Rajala (2019) found that projects with continuous stakeholder involvement in decision-making were more adaptable and achieved higher overall success. Stakeholder engagement in decision-making also contributes to long-term sustainability of the project (Gisele et al., 2023).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design, appropriate for providing a detailed description of stakeholder engagement processes and their impact on project success. A mixed-methods approach was used, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches within a single research design to generate numerical data and in-depth contextual insights (Creswell and Creswell, 2022).

3.2 Study Population and Sample Size

The target population included all 150 stakeholders involved in the Amahoro Stadium renovation project: government officials (7), construction firms (4), consultancy agencies (2), local community representatives (120), and sports organizations (17). Given the finite population size, it was feasible to include all 150 stakeholders in the study. All 150 respondents completed and returned their questionnaires, resulting in a 100% response rate.

3.3 Research Instruments

A structured questionnaire with Likert-scale responses (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was used to capture quantitative data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants such as project managers, government officials, and community leaders to provide qualitative insights. Secondary data was obtained from project reports, meeting minutes, and official documentation.

3.4 Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed using SPSS version 25.0. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution) summarized the data. Inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis, assessed relationships among variables. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. The regression model applied was:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where: Y = Project success; X_1 = Project Planning; X_2 = Project Execution Mechanisms; X_3 = Project Decision Making; ε = Error term.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Responses were kept confidential and anonymous. Participants retained the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The research adhered strictly to the principle of non-harm throughout the process.

4. Results and Discussion

A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed, all completed and returned (100% response rate). Demographic findings showed: 68% male and 32% female respondents; 52% aged 25–29 years; 54.7% holding a Bachelor's degree; and 75.3% with 2–3 years of experience on the Amahoro Stadium project.

Descriptive findings showed overall means of 4.49 for project planning, 4.53 for project execution mechanisms, 4.30 for project decision making, and 4.66 for project success - all falling between Agree and Strongly Agree - confirming high stakeholder involvement and perceived project success across all dimensions.

4.1 Inferential Statistics

Table 1: Correlation

	Plan.	Exec.	Dec.	Success
Project Planning Pearson Corr.	1	.965**	.984**	.925**
Sig.(2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
N	150	150	150	150
Project Execution Pearson Corr.	.965**	1	.946**	.862**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
N	150	150	150	150
Project Decision Pearson Corr.	.984**	.946**	1	.945**
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
N	150	150	150	150
Project Success Pearson Corr.	.925**	.862**	.945**	1
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
N	150	150	150	150

***p<0.01 (2-tailed). Source: Primary data, 2024*

The Pearson correlation results revealed strong positive correlations between all independent variables and project success: project planning (r = 0.925), project execution mechanisms (r = 0.862), and project decision making (r = 0.945). All correlations were statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). These findings indicate a significant and strong relationship between stakeholder engagement practices and the successful performance of the Amahoro Stadium renovation project, consistent with recent literature (Khan et al., 2021; Mwebaza & Mugisha, 2023).

Table 2: Model Summary

M.	R	R^2	Adj. R^2	Std. Err.
1	.951a	.904	.902	1.204

a. Predictors: Decision Making, Execution Mechanisms, Planning. Source: Primary, 2024

Source: Primary data, 2024

The correlation coefficient (R = 0.951) indicates a very strong positive relationship between the predictor variables and project success. The R^2 value of 0.904 means that approximately 90.4% of the variation in project success is explained by the combined influence of the three stakeholder engagement variables. The adjusted R^2 (0.902) further confirms the robustness of the model (Kamau et al., 2021).

Table 3: ANOVA

Model	Sum Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.
Regression	1994.980	3	664.993	458.631	.000b
Residual	211.693	146	1.450		
Total	2206.673	149			

Dep. Var: Project Success. b. Predictors: Decision Making, Execution, Planning

Source: Primary data, 2024

The ANOVA results (F = 458.631, p = 0.000) confirm that the regression model is statistically significant. The significance level ($p < 0.05$) confirms that the independent variables collectively have a significant effect on project success, validating the relevance of stakeholder engagement practices in enhancing project outcomes (Leod et. al., 2021).

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstd. Coeff.		Std. Beta	t	Sig.
	B	SE			
(Constant)	17.533	1.514		11.579	.000
Project Planning	.304	.187	.290	1.631	.105
Proj. Execution	-.469	.115	-.402	-4.083	.000
Proj. Decision	.833	.115	1.039	7.241	.000

a. Dep. Var: PROJECT SUCCESS

Source: Primary data, 2024

Among the independent variables, project planning was not statistically significant (p = 0.105), while project execution mechanisms (p = 0.000) and project decision making (p = 0.000) were statistically significant. The regression equation is: $Y = 17.533 + 0.304X1 + (-0.469X2) + 0.833X3$. The negative coefficient for execution mechanisms ($\beta = -0.469$) suggests that how execution mechanisms were applied may have adversely affected certain success outcomes. Interviews revealed that direct beneficiaries were not actively consulted during planning, as the project was managed primarily through the Rwanda Housing Authority and Ministry of Sport.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

4.2.1 Testing Research Hypothesis One

H01: There is no significant influence of project planning on project success. As shown in Table 4, ($\beta1 = 0.304$, $p = 0.105 > 0.05$, $t = 1.631$). The null hypothesis was accepted since $p = 0.105$ exceeds the 5% significance level. Project planning had an insignificant influence on the success of the Amahoro Stadium renovation project.

4.2.2 Testing Research Hypothesis Two

H02: There is no significant effect of project execution mechanisms on project success. As shown in Table 4, ($\beta2 = -0.469$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, $t = -4.083$). The null hypothesis was rejected. Project execution mechanisms had a significant effect on project success, although the negative beta suggests that the manner of implementation may have adversely influenced some outcomes.

4.2.3 Testing Research Hypothesis Three

H03: There is no significant effect of project decision making on project success. As shown in Table 4, ($\beta3 = 0.833$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, $t = 7.241$). The null hypothesis was rejected. Project decision making had a significant positive effect on the success of the Amahoro Stadium renovation project.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that stakeholder engagement significantly influences the success of the Amahoro Stadium renovation project. Project planning showed a very strong positive correlation ($r = 0.925$) with project success but was statistically insignificant in regression ($p = 0.105$), possibly due to limited consultation with direct beneficiaries. Project execution mechanisms showed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.862$) and significant regression effect ($p = 0.000$). Project decision making demonstrated the strongest correlation ($r = 0.945$) and the most significant regression effect ($\beta = 0.833$, $p = 0.000$), underscoring the importance of inclusive and participatory decision-making.

With $R^2 = 0.904$ and $F = 458.631$ ($p = 0.000$), the overall model confirms that 90.4% of the variation in project success is explained by the three stakeholder engagement variables. All correlation coefficients were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), affirming that stakeholder engagement exerts a significant and positive effect on project success.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Project managers and government institutions should strengthen project planning by ensuring broader stakeholder consultation, including direct beneficiaries. Comprehensive plans with clear objectives, timelines, risk management strategies, and inclusive participation will increase the impact of planning on project success.

2. Project execution mechanisms should be refined by adopting effective management practices, ensuring optimal resource allocation, and establishing robust oversight frameworks. Investing in capacity building for project teams will facilitate more efficient implementation and reduce delays.

3. Decision-making frameworks should incorporate comprehensive stakeholder consultations, data-driven strategies, and systematic risk assessments to foster transparency and long-term sustainability of infrastructure investments.

4. The Ministry of Infrastructure should engage citizens actively in the construction sector through awareness campaigns, training programs, and collaborative initiatives, ultimately enhancing employment opportunities and community benefits.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Future research should explore the long-term effects of stakeholder engagement on project success beyond immediate renovation outcomes, focusing on sustainability and continued stakeholder participation. Longitudinal studies could examine how ongoing engagement influences stakeholder trust and project benefit durability. Comparative analyses across infrastructure projects within Rwanda or neighbouring countries could provide deeper insights into best practices for stakeholder engagement in diverse settings.

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