



Effect of Stakeholder Management on the Project Success of the Kepler E-Learning Project in Gasabo District, Rwanda

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Abstract: This study examined the effect of stakeholder management on the success of the Kepler E-Learning Project in Gasabo District, Rwanda. The study targeted 2,484 stakeholders, from whom 243 respondents were selected using appropriate sampling techniques. A descriptive-correlational mixed-methods design was adopted. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentary review. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis in SPSS, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Findings showed that stakeholder participation and communication were positively perceived, each recording an aggregate mean of 4.13, while project success recorded an overall mean of 4.05. Pearson correlation results indicated significant positive relationships between project success and stakeholder participation ($r = 0.512$), communication ($r = 0.581$), conflict resolution ($r = 0.548$), and monitoring ($r = 0.623$), all at $p < 0.001$. Stakeholder monitoring was the strongest correlate of project success. Multiple regression analysis showed that the four stakeholder management practices jointly explained 46.8% of the variation in project success ($R^2 = 0.468$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.459$), with all four practices having significant positive effects. However, sustainability of the platform beyond donor funding received the lowest mean score of 3.87. The study recommends strengthening continuous stakeholder monitoring and feedback mechanisms, inclusive communication and participation, effective conflict-resolution mechanisms, and strategies for institutional ownership and financial sustainability beyond external donor support. The findings provide useful evidence for improving the performance and sustainability of e-learning projects in Rwanda.

Keywords: Stakeholder participation, Stakeholder communication, Stakeholder conflict resolution, Stakeholder monitoring, and Project Success

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1. Introduction

E-learning has become an important tool for expanding access to higher education, particularly in developing countries where access to quality education remains unequal (UNESCO, 2020). However, many e-learning initiatives struggle to move beyond pilot stages because of weak stakeholder coordination, limited resources, and resistance to change (World Bank, 2022). Effective stakeholder management involving students, faculty,

administrators, donors, regulators, and technology providers is therefore essential for aligning interests, mobilizing resources, managing risks, and supporting sustainable implementation (Esgerod & Huemann, 2020).

Globally, the growth of e-learning was significantly accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in more than 1.5 billion learners shifting to online education (UNESCO, 2021). Despite this growth, many projects continue to face challenges associated with fragmented

stakeholder involvement, inadequate faculty preparation, digital inequality, and weak policy alignment. Successful initiatives demonstrate that early stakeholder participation, co-design, continuous feedback, public-private partnerships, and effective governance can improve learner satisfaction, retention, accessibility, and long-term sustainability (World Bank, 2022; OECD, 2023).

Across Africa, e-learning offers significant potential to address the growing demand for higher education among the continent's rapidly expanding youth population. However, many initiatives face challenges related to unreliable infrastructure, limited broadband access, inadequate digital skills, regulatory barriers, funding dependency, and weak stakeholder commitment (African Union, 2021; AfDB, 2020). Successful initiatives demonstrate that partnerships among governments, universities, donors, telecommunications companies, communities, and technology providers can improve affordability, accessibility, and adoption when solutions are adapted to local needs.

In East Africa, similar challenges exist despite several successful e-learning initiatives. Projects in countries such as Kenya and Tanzania have benefited from collaboration among governments, universities, NGOs, communities, and donors, while other initiatives have struggled because of limited digital skills, bandwidth challenges, political instability, cybersecurity risks, and insufficient engagement with learners and faculty (African Development Bank, 2022). Regional bodies such as the EAC and IUCEA have consequently emphasized stronger coordination, harmonized standards, quality assurance, and stakeholder collaboration to support sustainable digital education (IUCEA, 2022; EAC, 2023).

Rwanda has positioned digital education as an important component of its ambition to become a knowledge-based economy. Government investments in digital infrastructure, smart classrooms, and connectivity have expanded opportunities for e-learning, although challenges remain in content availability, digital literacy, stakeholder coordination, and equitable access (MINICT, 2023). Fragmented involvement among universities, students, government institutions, private-sector organizations, and regulators can limit the effectiveness and sustainability of digital education initiatives (NISR, 2022).

The Kepler-SNHU University Online Degree Partnership provides a relevant example of stakeholder management within Rwanda's e-learning environment. Established through collaboration between Kepler, Southern New Hampshire University, the Mastercard Foundation, and other local stakeholders, the programme has provided competency-based online degrees to underserved Rwandan youth (Kepler, 2023). Its use of hybrid learning hubs, stakeholder engagement, faculty development, data

monitoring, and adaptation to changing circumstances demonstrates how coordinated stakeholder involvement can support the implementation and expansion of an e-learning project.

Despite these achievements, the Kepler-SNHU partnership and Rwanda's wider e-learning sector continue to face challenges such as digital literacy gaps, internet affordability, funding sustainability, curriculum integration, cybersecurity, and inclusion of disadvantaged learners. Therefore, this study examines how stakeholder management influences the successful implementation of the Kepler-SNHU e-learning project in Rwanda. By examining stakeholder participation, communication, conflict resolution, and monitoring, the study aims to identify effective practices, existing challenges, and recommendations that can contribute to the sustainability and replication of e-learning initiatives in Rwanda and beyond (Kayibanda, 2024).

1.1 Problem statement

There exists a critical gap in empirical evidence regarding the role of stakeholder management in the successful implementation and sustainability of e-learning initiatives in Rwanda, particularly within the context of the Kepler-SNHU partnership. While existing studies have largely focused on technological, infrastructural, and digital literacy challenges, limited attention has been given to how stakeholder participation, communication, expectation management, conflict resolution, and monitoring influence implementation outcomes. This gap makes it difficult to determine how effective stakeholder coordination can address persistent challenges such as student engagement, faculty readiness, digital inequality, and sustainability

This study therefore seeks to examine how stakeholder management practices contribute to the successful implementation of the Kepler-SNHU e-learning project in Rwanda. Drawing on evidence from the partnership, the study will assess how stakeholder participation, communication, conflict resolution, and monitoring influence project success to generate practical insights for improving coordination, addressing implementation challenges, and supporting the sustainability of e-learning initiatives in Rwanda.

1.2 The Study was guided by the following specific objectives

1. To assess the influence of stakeholders' participation on the project success of the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District, Rwanda
2. To evaluate the influence of stakeholder communication on the project success of the

Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District, Rwanda.

3. To analyze the influence of conflict resolution on the project success of the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District, Rwanda.
4. To examine the influence of stakeholder monitoring on the project success of the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District, Rwanda.

1.3 The Study tested the following null hypothesis

1. **H01:** Stakeholders' participation has no significant positive effect on the project success of the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District, Rwanda.
2. **H02:** Effective stakeholder communication has no significant positive effect on the project success of the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District, Rwanda.
3. **H03:** Efficient conflict resolution mechanisms have no significant positive effect on the project success of the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District, Rwanda.
4. **H04:** Systematic stakeholder monitoring has no significant positive effect on the project success of the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District, Rwanda.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews key concepts, theories, and empirical studies on stakeholder management in e-learning projects. It examines stakeholder roles, communication, conflict resolution, and monitoring, their influence on project success, and identifies research gaps within Rwanda's university e-learning context.

2.1 Conceptual review

2.1.1 Stakeholders' Participation

Stakeholder participation involves clearly defining the responsibilities, authority, and contributions of individuals or groups within an e-learning project. Clear roles improve accountability, reduce duplication, and support coordination among students, faculty, administrators, technology providers, donors, and government agencies (PMI, 2021; Eskerod & Huemann, 2020). Tools such as power-interest grids and

RACI matrices can help clarify responsibilities and improve project coordination.

Evidence from African universities shows that clear stakeholder roles can reduce resistance, improve adoption, and support project completion. In Rwanda, government institutions such as MINICT and the Rwanda Development Board also play important roles in supporting digital transformation, while poor coordination between regulators and implementers can create implementation challenges (MINICT, 2023).

2.1.2 Stakeholder Communication

Stakeholder communication involves the timely and transparent exchange of information to build alignment, trust, and collaboration. Effective communication can include LMS platforms, WhatsApp groups, SMS, regular updates, surveys, and other feedback mechanisms. Using multiple communication channels is particularly important where connectivity and digital literacy vary among stakeholders (Liu et al., 2021).

Communication should also be adapted to different stakeholders' needs, language abilities, and levels of technical knowledge. Plain language, visual communication, regular feedback, and appropriate communication frequency can reduce misunderstandings and disengagement. In Rwanda's hybrid learning environment, digital tools can be complemented by SMS, USSD, and face-to-face meetings to overcome connectivity and cultural barriers (Vuuren van et al., 2021; PMI, 2021).

2.1.3 Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution refers to structured approaches for managing disagreements arising from competing interests, resource constraints, or implementation challenges. Mediation, negotiation, collaborative problem-solving, and root-cause analysis are effective approaches because they encourage stakeholders to find mutually beneficial solutions (Rahim, 2020).

Evidence from African educational institutions indicates that participatory approaches, regular discussions, and collaborative decision-making are more effective than purely hierarchical approaches. Early intervention is important because addressing disagreements before they escalate can prevent repeated conflicts and maintain trust among stakeholders. In Rwanda, avoiding unresolved conflicts may weaken trust and stakeholder commitment (Mazur et al., 2021).

2.1.4 Stakeholder Monitoring

Stakeholder monitoring involves continuously assessing stakeholder engagement, satisfaction, risks, and

performance using tools such as KPIs, surveys, dashboards, stakeholder registers, and engagement heat maps (PMI, 2021). Regular monitoring enables project managers to identify disengagement and emerging risks early and take appropriate corrective action.

Continuous and adaptive monitoring is particularly important because stakeholder priorities and project conditions can change over time. Combining quantitative indicators with qualitative feedback provides a more complete understanding of stakeholder engagement. Flexible monitoring systems can also help projects respond more quickly to infrastructure disruptions, policy changes, and other emerging challenges (Müller & Jugdev, 2020; Larson & Gray, 2021).

2.1.5 Project Success

Successful e-learning implementation goes beyond launching a digital platform and includes timely implementation, user adoption, learning outcomes, institutional integration, and long-term sustainability. Key success factors include technological readiness, faculty and student capacity, organizational support, policy alignment, and continued funding (Silvius & Schipper, 2021; Kirkwood & Price, 2020).

Sustainability requires e-learning initiatives to become integrated into institutional systems rather than remaining dependent on temporary projects or donor funding. Institutional support, faculty champions, peer mentoring, change management, and stakeholder alignment can strengthen long-term adoption. Therefore, sustainable e-learning requires moving from a project-based approach toward an integrated ecosystem that supports continuous improvement and institutional ownership.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory, developed by Freeman (1984), emphasizes that project success depends on addressing the needs and interests of all stakeholders, rather than focusing only on funders or project owners. In e-learning, stakeholders include students, faculty, administrators, technology providers, donors, and regulators. The theory highlights stakeholder identification, clear role allocation, effective communication, participation in decision-making, and accountability as important for building trust, creating shared value, and achieving sustainable project outcomes (Freeman et al., 2020; Mahajan et al., 2023).

For the Kepler-Gasabo e-learning project, the theory provides a useful framework for examining how administrators, SNHU partners, MINICT, students, and

other stakeholders contribute to implementation success. It supports the study's focus on stakeholder participation, communication, conflict resolution, and monitoring, showing how coordinated stakeholder relationships can improve adoption, institutional readiness, and sustainability.

2.2.2 Stakeholder Engagement Cycle Theory

Stakeholder Engagement Cycle Theory explains stakeholder management as a continuous process involving identification, analysis, engagement, and monitoring (Eskerod & Huemann, 2020). Unlike a one-time approach, the theory recognizes that stakeholder interests, influence, and needs can change throughout a project's implementation. Continuous communication, feedback, and monitoring therefore allow project managers to adapt their engagement strategies to emerging challenges.

The theory is particularly relevant to the Kepler-SNHU e-learning project because issues such as faculty resistance, student dropout, and infrastructure challenges require continuous stakeholder engagement and timely responses. Through tools such as stakeholder mapping, RACI matrices, communication channels, surveys, and dashboards, the theory provides a framework for understanding how ongoing stakeholder management can strengthen adoption, trust, and the long-term sustainability of the project.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Stakeholders' Participation and E-Learning Project Success

Stakeholder participation, particularly through clearly defined roles and responsibilities, is essential to the success of e-learning projects. Clear role allocation improves coordination, accountability, decision-making, and resource utilization among institutions, technology providers, faculty, administrators, and students. Evidence from Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Rwanda shows that formalized stakeholder roles can improve platform utilization, reduce resistance, and enhance project implementation outcomes (Kerzner, 2022; PMI, 2021; Mwangi & Ngugi, 2023; Kimwise et al., 2024). However, limited research has examined stakeholder participation within partnership-based e-learning initiatives in Rwandan higher education, particularly the Kepler e-learning model.

2.3.2 Stakeholder Communication and E-Learning Project Success

Effective stakeholder communication promotes coordination, transparency, trust, and timely problem-solving throughout e-learning projects. Research indicates that structured and multi-channel communication,

including digital platforms, SMS, meetings, and feedback mechanisms, can improve stakeholder engagement and reduce implementation delays (Kerzner, 2020; Bourne & Walker, 2021; Liu et al., 2021; Müller & Jugdev, 2020). In African higher education, communication strategies adapted to local infrastructure and literacy conditions have been particularly useful. Nevertheless, limited research has explored how structured stakeholder communication affects e-learning projects involving international and local partnerships such as the Kepler–Southern New Hampshire University partnership.

2.3.3 Conflict Resolution and E-Learning Project Success

Effective conflict resolution is important for maintaining collaboration and continuity in e-learning projects where stakeholders may have different priorities, responsibilities, and expectations. Collaborative approaches such as negotiation, mediation, dialogue, and participatory decision-making can reduce delays, improve cooperation, and resolve disputes more effectively than highly competitive or hierarchical approaches (Rahim, 2020; Keryan et al., 2023). Despite evidence supporting these approaches in educational and development projects, limited research has specifically examined how conflict resolution mechanisms contribute to the sustainability and success of university e-learning initiatives in Rwanda.

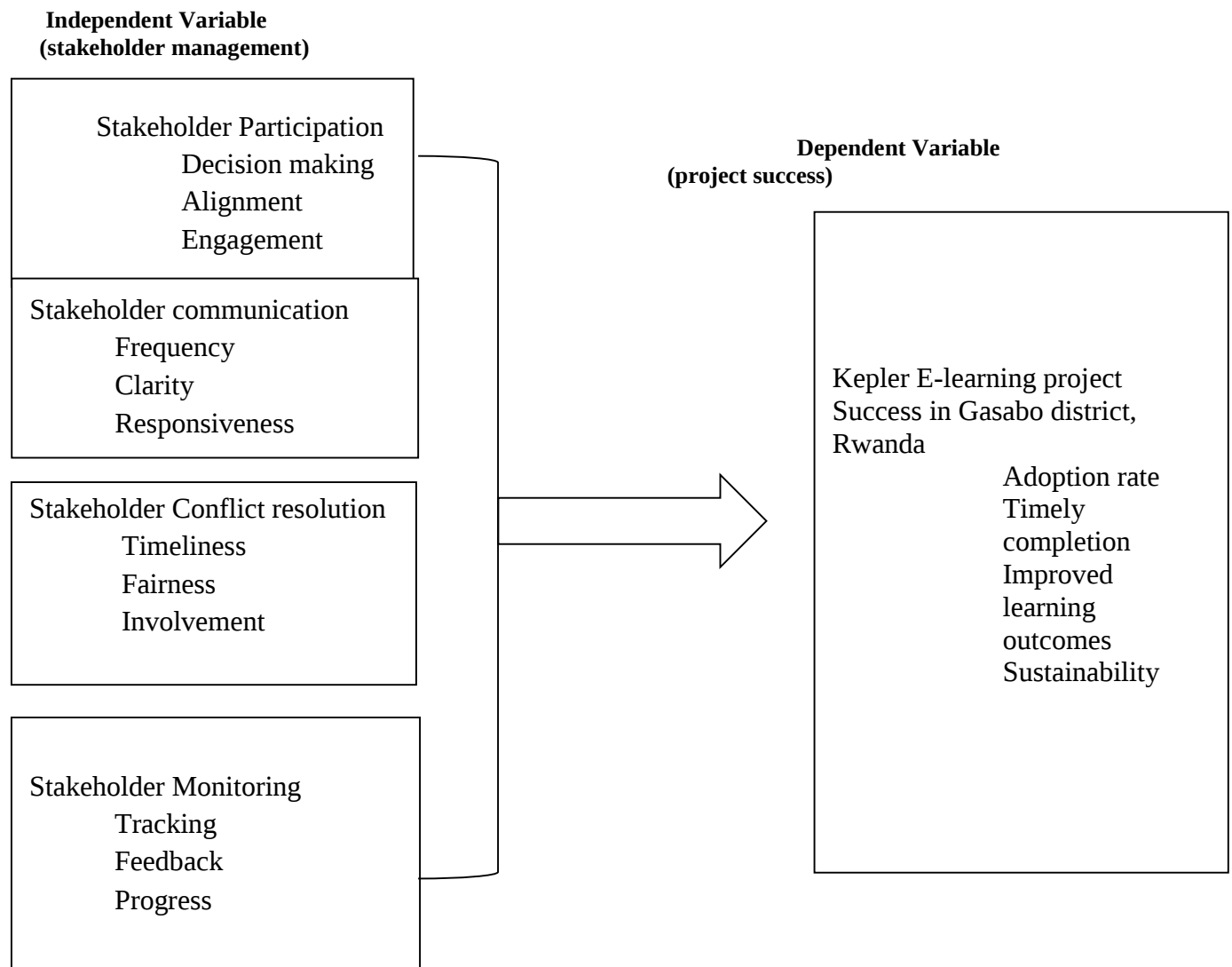
2.3.4 Stakeholder Monitoring and E-Learning Project Success

Stakeholder monitoring enables project teams to track engagement, identify emerging risks, assess stakeholder needs, and adjust strategies throughout implementation. Structured monitoring systems, stakeholder registers, digital dashboards, and a combination of quantitative and qualitative feedback can improve project alignment and help identify potential problems before they affect project outcomes (PMI, 2021; Müller & Jugdev, 2020; Kerzner, 2022). However, empirical research on stakeholder monitoring in African university e-learning projects remains limited, creating a need to examine how monitoring practices contribute to the successful implementation of the Kepler e-learning initiative.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

This research employs a theoretical framework to structure and guide the investigation into stakeholder management practices in the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo, Rwanda. The framework elucidates the interrelationships among key independent variables, stakeholders' roles, stakeholder communication, conflict resolution mechanisms, and stakeholder monitoring, and their influence on successful e-learning project implementation and sustainability. A visual representation of these interdependencies appears in the figure below

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



2.5 Research Gap

The research gap lies in the limited empirical understanding of how specific stakeholder management practices individually and collectively influence the success and sustainability of e-learning projects. Although stakeholder management is widely recognized as important to project success, many existing studies treat it as a broad, aggregated concept rather than examining specific practices such as stakeholder participation, communication effectiveness, conflict resolution, collaborative decision-making, and monitoring. This limitation is particularly significant in African higher education, where e-learning implementation is affected by challenges such as limited digital access, infrastructure constraints, stakeholder preparedness, and complex institutional relationships. In addition, much of the existing research focuses on short-term outcomes such as user acceptance, access, and initial adoption, while giving less attention to long-term sustainability, including institutionalization, continuous financing, system maintenance, and sustained stakeholder support. Consequently, there is insufficient context-specific evidence on how stakeholder management practices contribute to both the effective implementation and long-term sustainability of e-learning initiatives in Rwanda's higher education sector. This study therefore addresses this gap by examining the influence of specific stakeholder management practices on the success and sustainability of the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District, Rwanda.

3. Methodology

Research Design: The study utilized a mixed-method descriptive research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component used structured questionnaires to examine the influence of stakeholder management practices, including stakeholder roles, communication, conflict resolution, and monitoring practices, on the successful implementation of the Kepler e-learning project. The qualitative component used interviews with administrators, program coordinators, and IT support staff to obtain deeper insights into stakeholder experiences, perceptions, and implementation challenges. The research design was appropriate because the mixed-method approach enabled the study to combine numerical evidence with detailed stakeholder experiences. The quantitative component helped identify patterns and relationships between stakeholder management practices and project implementation, while the qualitative component provided explanations and contextual understanding of these relationships. This combination provided a more comprehensive understanding of how stakeholder management contributes to the successful implementation of the Kepler e-learning project.

Population and Sample: The target population consisted of 843 stakeholders involved in the implementation and management of the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District. These included 49 stakeholders from implementing organizations, 85 university staff, and 709 student beneficiaries. The population included project coordinators, program managers, technical specialists, M&E officers, faculty trainers, program administrators, IT support staff, academic coordinators, degree students, and technical certificate learners. A sample of 272 respondents was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error. The sample was distributed across the different stakeholder categories to ensure that students, university staff, and implementing organizations were adequately represented.

Sampling Technique: The study employed probability sampling, particularly simple random sampling, to provide eligible members with an equal opportunity of being selected and to reduce selection bias. Stratified random sampling was also applied across the major stakeholder categories to ensure appropriate representation. In addition, purposive sampling was used for key stakeholders such as program administrators and IT staff because of their specialized knowledge of the implementation and management of the Kepler e-learning project. The combination of these techniques was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain both general perspectives from the wider stakeholder population and detailed information from individuals with specialized knowledge of the e-learning project.

Data Collection Tools: Both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires and interview guides. The questionnaires consisted of closed-ended questions measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, and focused on stakeholder roles, communication, conflict resolution, monitoring practices, and successful project implementation. Interviews were conducted with program administrators and IT support staff to obtain detailed information about stakeholder experiences, perceptions, and implementation challenges. Secondary data were obtained from Kepler institutional reports and documents, academic journals and scholarly publications, Rwanda's digital education and higher education policy documents, and reports relating to the Southern New Hampshire University–Kepler partnership.

Data Processing and Analysis: Quantitative data were first cleaned and processed using Microsoft Excel, where the researcher checked for missing values, duplicates, inconsistencies, and outliers. The data were then analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and responses.

Inferential statistics, particularly regression analysis, were used to determine the relationship between stakeholder management practices and successful implementation of the Kepler e-learning project. Qualitative data from interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, with responses organized into themes related to stakeholder engagement, communication, project monitoring, and implementation challenges.

Validity and Reliability: The validity of the research instruments was ensured through appropriate review of the questionnaire and interview items to ensure that they adequately addressed the study variables and objectives. Reliability was assessed to ensure consistency of the measurement instruments before conducting the main analysis. The use of structured questionnaires, consistent data-processing procedures, and systematic qualitative analysis further supported the quality and trustworthiness of the findings.

Table 1: Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test for the key variables

	N	Scale mean	Scale Variance	Cronbach’s Alpha
Stakeholder Participation	5	4.01	0.63	0.812
Stakeholder Communication	5	4.05	0.58	0.845
Conflict Resolution	5	3.98	0.67	0.798
Stakeholder Monitoring	5	4.03	0.61	0.826
Project Success	7	4.08	0.56	0.857

Source: Field data 2026

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process. Respondents participated voluntarily and provided informed consent before data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that the information provided would be used strictly for academic purposes. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by protecting participants' personal identities and institutional information. All collected data were securely stored and used solely for the purposes of the research.

4. Results and Discussion

A total of 272 questionnaires were distributed to respondents involved in the Kepler E-learning Project in

Gasabo District, Rwanda. Of these, 243 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing an 89.3% response rate, while 29 were not responded to, accounting for 10.7%. This high response rate is an indicator that the majority of the targeted respondents were willing to participate in the study. The response rate is considered excellent and offers sufficient data for the analysis, therefore enhancing the reliability and credibility of the study findings.

4.1 Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the stakeholder management dimensions and project success. The results are presented in the correlation matrix below.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix among Study variables

	SP	SC	CR	SM	PS
SP Pearson Correlation	1	.421**	.398**	.447**	.512**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
N	243	243	243	243	243
SC Pearson Correlation	.421**	1	.463**	.539**	.581**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
N	243	243	243	243	243
CR Pearson Correlation	.398**	.463**	1	.491**	.548**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
N	243	243	243	243	243
SM Pearson Correlation	.447**	.539**	.491**	1	.623**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
N	243	243	243	243	243
PS Pearson Correlation	.512**	.581**	.548**	.623**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
N	243	243	243	243	243

Source: Field Data, 2026

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation results between stakeholder management practices and project success in the Kepler e-learning project. The findings show that all four variables had positive and statistically significant relationships with project success ($p < 0.001$). Stakeholder monitoring had the strongest correlation with project success ($r = 0.623$), followed by stakeholder communication ($r = 0.581$), conflict resolution ($r = 0.548$), and stakeholder participation ($r = 0.512$). This indicates that improvements in stakeholder monitoring, communication, conflict resolution, and participation were associated with higher levels of project success. The independent variables were also moderately correlated with one another, with the strongest relationship between stakeholder communication and monitoring ($r = 0.539$). Since none of the correlations exceeded 0.80, there was no indication of serious multicollinearity. Overall, the results

provide evidence of strong positive relationships between stakeholder management practices and project success and therefore justify conducting multiple regression analysis to determine the individual contribution of each practice to the success of the Kepler e-learning project.

4.2 Regression Analysis

This section examines how stakeholder participation, stakeholder communication, conflict resolution mechanisms, and stakeholder monitoring influence project success in the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District. It presents the model summary, ANOVA results, and regression coefficient analysis to determine both the overall significance of the model and the individual contribution of each stakeholder management practice.

Table 3: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate	Durbin Watson
1	.684a	.468	.459	.48721	2.116

Source: Field data, 2026

Table 3 shows an R-value of 0.684, indicating a strong positive relationship between stakeholder management practices and project success. The R Square value of 0.468 indicates that stakeholder participation, communication, conflict resolution, and monitoring collectively explain 46.8% of the variation in project success, while the

remaining 53.2% may be explained by other factors not included in the model. The Adjusted R Square of 0.459 indicates that the model explains 45.9% of the variation after adjusting for the number of predictors. The Durbin-Watson value of 2.116 is within the acceptable range,

indicating no significant autocorrelation problem in the residuals.

Table 4: ANOVA analysis Results

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	48.912	4	12.228	51.526	.000a
Residual	56.418	238	0.237		
Total	105.330	242			

Source: Field Data, 2026

Table 4 presents the ANOVA results, showing an F-statistic of 51.526 with a significance value of 0.000. Since the p-value is below 0.05, the overall regression model is statistically significant. This means that stakeholder participation, stakeholder communication, conflict

resolution, and stakeholder monitoring, when considered together, significantly influences the success of the Kepler e-learning project. Therefore, the regression model is appropriate for explaining project success.

Table 5: Regression coefficients

Predictable Variable	Unstandardized coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	T-Value	Sig.(p-value)
(Constant)	1.184		4.762	.000
Stakeholder participation	.174	.171	2.486	.014
Stakeholder communication	.193	.228	3.174	.002
Conflict resolution	.168	.201	2.891	.004
Stakeholder Monitoring	.254	.287	3.942	.000

Source: Field data, 2026

Table 5 shows that stakeholder participation had a positive and statistically significant effect on project success ($\beta = 0.171$, $p = 0.014$), indicating that greater stakeholder involvement contributes to improved project outcomes. Stakeholder communication also had a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.228$, $p = 0.002$), demonstrating the importance of effective information sharing and communication among stakeholders. Conflict resolution had a positive and significant influence on project success ($\beta = 0.201$, $p = 0.004$), suggesting that effectively addressing stakeholder disagreements supports successful

project implementation. Finally, stakeholder monitoring had the strongest positive influence on project success ($\beta = 0.287$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms are particularly important for achieving successful project outcomes. Overall, all four stakeholder management practices significantly contributed to project success, with stakeholder monitoring emerging as the strongest predictor, followed by stakeholder communication, conflict resolution, and stakeholder participation.

Table 6: Hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Statement	P-Value	Decision at $\alpha=0.05$
H ₀₁	Stakeholder participation has no significant positive effect on project success	.014	Rejected
H ₀₂	Stakeholder communication has no significant positive effect on project success	.002	Rejected
H ₀₃	Conflict resolution mechanisms have no significant positive effect on project success	.004	Rejected
H ₀₄	Stakeholder monitoring has no significant positive effect on project success	.000	Rejected

Source: Field Data, 2026

Table 6 shows the hypotheses, statements, p-values, and decisions regarding the influence of stakeholder management practices on the success of the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District, Rwanda. The null hypotheses were rejected because their p-values were below 0.05. Stakeholder participation, stakeholder communication, conflict resolution mechanisms, and stakeholder monitoring all have statistically significant positive effects on project success. The strongest predictor was stakeholder monitoring, followed by stakeholder communication, conflict resolution mechanisms, and stakeholder participation. These findings demonstrate that effective stakeholder management is an important factor in achieving successful implementation of e-learning projects.

The findings of this study indicate that stakeholder participation has a significant positive effect on project success. This finding is consistent with studies such as Reed et al. (2009), Ahsan and Gunawan (2010), and Ampofo and Yeboah (2023), which emphasize that involving stakeholders in planning and decision-making promotes ownership, accountability, cooperation, and improved project outcomes. In the context of the Kepler e-learning project, active participation of students, faculty, administrators, and other stakeholders can therefore strengthen commitment to project activities and contribute to successful implementation.

The importance of stakeholder communication is also supported by the findings of this study, which revealed a significant positive effect on project success. This is consistent with Mazur et al. (2021), Chizimba (2013), and

Mukunga (2012), who emphasize that clear, regular, and effective communication strengthens stakeholder relationships, reduces misunderstandings, and improves project coordination. For the Kepler e-learning project, effective communication among students, faculty, administrators, technical teams, and project managers can facilitate timely information sharing, feedback, and coordination, thereby supporting successful project implementation.

The positive effect of conflict resolution mechanisms is consistent with Rahim (2020), Mutinda et al. (2022), and Uwizeyimana and Nariratana (2023), who found that timely and effective conflict resolution contributes to trust, cooperation, and reduced disruption in projects. In the Kepler e-learning context, the ability to address disagreements and stakeholder concerns constructively can prevent conflicts from disrupting project activities and can help maintain positive working relationships among stakeholders. Effective conflict resolution therefore contributes to maintaining stakeholder commitment and supporting the achievement of project objectives.

Finally, stakeholder monitoring emerged as the strongest predictor of project success in this study. This finding highlights the importance of continuous monitoring of stakeholder involvement, project activities, feedback, and performance. Effective monitoring enables project managers to identify challenges early, strengthen accountability, track progress, and use evidence to inform decision-making. This finding is consistent with the broader project management literature, which emphasizes monitoring and control as essential processes for

maintaining project performance and achieving intended outcomes (Project Management Institute, 2021). In the context of the Kepler e-learning project, the finding suggests that strengthening monitoring systems can make a particularly important contribution to successful project implementation. Overall, the findings confirm that stakeholder participation, communication, conflict resolution, and monitoring are significant determinants of project success, with stakeholder monitoring making the strongest contribution.

4.3 Implications of the study

The study has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the findings provide empirical support for Stakeholder Theory, Stakeholder Engagement Cycle Theory, and Sustainability Theory, which emphasize the importance of involving, communicating with, monitoring, and managing relationships among stakeholders throughout the project life cycle. The significant positive relationships found between stakeholder participation, communication, conflict resolution, stakeholder monitoring, and project success demonstrate that stakeholder management is an important determinant of successful e-learning project implementation. In particular, stakeholder monitoring emerged as the strongest predictor of project success, followed by communication, conflict resolution, and participation. The regression model further showed that these stakeholder management practices collectively explained 46.8% of the variation in project success, demonstrating their substantial explanatory power while also indicating that other factors contribute to project outcomes.

Practically, the findings imply that Kepler, educational institutions, project managers, government agencies, and development partners should institutionalize effective stakeholder management throughout the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of e-learning initiatives. Project managers should strengthen continuous stakeholder monitoring and accountability mechanisms, establish clear and timely communication channels, involve stakeholders in planning and decision-making, and use collaborative conflict-resolution mechanisms to address disagreements before they affect project implementation. Since respondents generally perceived stakeholder management practices positively and the project recorded an overall project success mean of 4.051, these practices should be maintained and strengthened to support continued project performance and sustainability. For policymakers and development partners in Rwanda, the study provides evidence that stakeholder management should be incorporated into the design and implementation of future digital education initiatives to promote

ownership, accountability, scalability, and long-term sustainability beyond donor support.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that stakeholder management significantly contributes to the success of the Kepler e-learning project in Gasabo District, Rwanda. Stakeholder participation, communication, conflict resolution, and monitoring were all positively and significantly associated with project success, with stakeholder monitoring emerging as the strongest predictor. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining strong stakeholder relationships throughout the project lifecycle. However, the findings also indicate that other factors, including technological infrastructure, financial resources, institutional support, and leadership, may influence project outcomes. The study therefore emphasizes that effective stakeholder management should be supported by a strong institutional environment. Overall, strengthening stakeholder engagement and addressing contextual challenges can enhance the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of e-learning projects in Rwanda.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to enhance stakeholder management practices and improve the success of the Kepler E-learning project and relevant educational initiatives.

1. Increase stakeholder participation by providing more opportunities for partners, instructors, students, and other stakeholders to participate in project planning, implementation, and decision-making.
2. Improve stakeholder communication by establishing a clear communication plan that promotes timely information sharing, regular updates, feedback, and effective coordination among stakeholders.
3. Strengthen conflict resolution by establishing transparent and inclusive mechanisms for identifying and resolving conflicts early through dialogue, negotiation, and collaborative problem-solving.
4. Enhance stakeholder monitoring by regularly tracking stakeholder engagement, collecting feedback, and

- using monitoring results to improve decision-making, accountability, and project performance.
5. Promote project sustainability by diversifying funding sources, strengthening institutional support, and investing in capacity building to reduce dependence on external funding.
 6. Strengthen stakeholder capacity through regular training and awareness activities that improve understanding of project objectives, digital platforms, and stakeholders' roles and responsibilities.

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