



Effect of Stakeholder Management Practices on the Performance of a Project. A Case Study of Gender Based Violence in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda

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Abstract: This study examined how stakeholder management affects the performance of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. It evaluated four phases of stakeholder engagement: planning, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Guided by Stakeholder, Participatory Development, and Resource-Based theories, the research used a mixed-methods descriptive and correlational approach. Out of a target population of 296 individuals—including project staff, beneficiaries (women with disabilities), local officials, and NGO partners—a sample of 170 respondents was selected. Data was gathered via questionnaires, interviews, and document reviews, then analyzed using SPSS (for descriptive, correlation, and regression statistics) and thematic analysis. The regression analysis revealed that stakeholder engagement in planning ($\beta = 0.601$, $p = 0.000$) and implementation ($\beta = 0.379$, $p = 0.000$) have positive, statistically significant impacts on project performance. Conversely, engagement in decision-making ($\beta = 0.091$) and M&E ($\beta = -0.131$) yielded no statistically significant effects. Correlation data confirmed that early planning and active execution share the strongest ties to successful project outcomes. The study concludes that robust stakeholder involvement during initial planning and active execution is vital for maximizing GBV intervention success. It recommends that project managers maintain strong collaboration during these key phases while actively working to improve structures for collaborative decision-making and M&E. These actions will ultimately boost accountability, intervention effectiveness, and long-term sustainability for future GBV programs in Rwanda.

Keyword: Project Performance, Stakeholder Engagement in Planning, Stakeholder Engagement in Decision Making, Stakeholder Engagement in Project Implementation

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1. Introduction

Stakeholder engagement is widely recognized as a critical determinant of the performance and sustainability of gender-based violence (GBV) advocacy projects because it ensures that individuals, institutions, and groups affected by or capable of influencing the project are actively involved in its planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Stakeholders in GBV advocacy projects may include government institutions,

civil society organizations, local leaders, law enforcement agencies, health-care providers, community-based organizations, religious leaders, donors, project staff, survivors, and community members. Meaningful engagement with these actors creates opportunities for collaboration, information sharing, resource mobilization, accountability, and joint decision-making, all of which contribute to the achievement of project objectives. When stakeholders are actively involved, they are more likely to understand

the purpose of the intervention, support its activities, contribute resources, and take responsibility for sustaining its outcomes. In contrast, weak stakeholder engagement may result in poor coordination, duplication of activities, limited community participation, inadequate resources, and interventions that fail to address the actual needs of beneficiaries. Therefore, the quality and level of stakeholder engagement can significantly influence the extent to which GBV advocacy projects achieve their intended results.

An important dimension of stakeholder engagement is **stakeholder participation** in project decision-making. When stakeholders are consulted and given meaningful opportunities to contribute to project planning, their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives can help project implementers develop interventions that are relevant to the local context. For example, community members and Gender Based Violence survivors may provide valuable information about the social, cultural, and institutional barriers that prevent survivors from reporting abuse or accessing support services. Similarly, government institutions and service providers can provide technical and institutional knowledge that strengthens advocacy strategies and referral mechanisms. Effective communication and regular consultation can also build trust between project implementers and stakeholders, which is particularly important in Gender Based Violence interventions where issues of confidentiality, stigma, fear, and social norms may influence people's willingness to seek assistance. Research has indicated that projects characterized by stronger stakeholder involvement are more likely to benefit from improved planning, monitoring, and adaptive implementation because stakeholders can provide continuous feedback and help identify emerging challenges and appropriate solutions (Brown & Hall, 2020; Carter & Lewis, 2019).

Stakeholder engagement also contributes to **resource mobilization and institutional coordination**, which are essential for the successful implementation of Gender Based Violence advocacy projects. Government agencies may provide policy support and institutional legitimacy, civil society organizations may contribute technical expertise and community outreach, donors may provide financial resources, while local leaders and community organizations may facilitate access to beneficiaries and encourage community participation. Effective coordination among these stakeholders can strengthen reporting and referral systems by connecting survivors with health, legal, psychosocial, and protection services. Furthermore, stakeholder engagement promotes **community ownership**, as communities are more likely to support and sustain interventions when they participate in identifying problems and developing solutions. This is particularly important for achieving long-term behavioral and attitudinal change because GBV is influenced by deeply rooted social and cultural norms. However, the effectiveness of stakeholder

engagement may be influenced by other factors such as government commitment, availability of funding, organizational capacity, leadership, cultural beliefs, community attitudes, and the level of trust between stakeholders. Consequently, stakeholder engagement should not be understood simply as the presence or number of stakeholders involved, but rather as the extent to which their participation is meaningful, inclusive, continuous, and capable of influencing project decisions.

Ultimately, effective stakeholder engagement is expected to have a positive influence on the **performance of Gender Based Violence advocacy projects**, particularly in relation to increased awareness, positive changes in attitudes and behavior, improved reporting of GBV cases, strengthened referral mechanisms, greater access to survivor-support services, and achievement of project objectives. When stakeholders work collaboratively and share responsibility for project outcomes, interventions are more likely to respond to community needs, use available resources efficiently, and adapt to changing circumstances. Conversely, limited or superficial engagement may weaken project effectiveness and reduce community acceptance and sustainability. Stakeholder engagement therefore represents more than an administrative requirement; it is a strategic mechanism through which GBV advocacy projects can strengthen collaboration, mobilize resources, build community ownership, improve accountability, and achieve sustainable outcomes. For this reason, examining the relationship between stakeholder engagement and project performance is essential for understanding why some GBV advocacy interventions achieve their intended objectives while others experience difficulties in implementation and sustainability.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Throughout the design, execution, and monitoring phases of gender-based violence (GBV) advocacy initiatives, all pertinent stakeholders including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, and beneficiaries must actively participate (Sebastiano, 2023). Involving stakeholders effectively guarantees that advocacy initiatives are inclusive, appropriate for the setting, and sensitive to the unique needs of survivors. Stakeholder involvement increases a project's visibility, strengthens community ownership, and improves reporting systems, all of which improve the project's overall performance and sustainability (White & Lee, 2020). Although there are programs like the Gender Based Violence Projects and other NGO-led initiatives in Rwanda, the effectiveness of advocacy campaigns has been undermined by gaps in stakeholder engagement, which has led to underreporting of GBV cases and insufficient community sensitization (Uwase & Habimana, 2022). The capacity of GBV advocacy initiatives to bring about long-lasting and significant change is thus constrained by the lack of

organized stakeholder management techniques (RWAMREC, 2020). While Kamara and Nkurunziza (2022) showed that cooperative engagement in East Africa enhances reporting and institutional responsiveness, Okeke and Dlamini (2021) observed that multi-stakeholder participation boosts project visibility and uptake throughout Africa. When taken as a whole, these studies indicate ongoing deficiencies in monitoring, assessment, and coordination while confirming the vital significance of stakeholder participation.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To assess the effect of stakeholder engagement in planning on the performance of gender-based violence projects in Nyarugenge District.
2. To assess the effect of stakeholder engagement in decision making on the performance of gender-based violence projects in Nyarugenge District.
3. To examine the effect of stakeholder engagement in project implementation on the performance of gender-based violence projects in Nyarugenge District.
4. To examine the effect of stakeholder engagement in monitoring and evaluation on the performance of gender-based violence projects in Nyarugenge District

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

This section presents the key theories that underpin the relationship between stakeholder engagement and project performance. Theoretical perspectives are important in providing a deeper understanding of how and why stakeholder involvement influences project outcomes across different contexts. They offer a conceptual foundation that guides the analysis of variables in the study and supports the interpretation of findings. By grounding the study in established theories, the research gains academic rigor and clarity in explaining the relationship between stakeholder engagement practices and project performance. The study is guided by Stakeholder Theory, Participatory Development Theory, and Systems Theory. These theories complement each other by explaining different aspects of stakeholder engagement across the project lifecycle.

2.1.1 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory was developed by Freeman in 1984 as a response to traditional management approaches that primarily focused on maximizing shareholder value (Kepton, 2024). The theory introduced a broader perspective, arguing that organizations and projects

should consider the interests of all stakeholders who can influence or are affected by project activities. These stakeholders include employees, customers, suppliers, communities, government institutions, and beneficiaries. The theory emphasizes the importance of identifying stakeholders, analyzing their interests and influence, and developing strategies to manage relationships effectively in order to achieve project objectives (Fiston, 2023).

The theory further explains that project success is largely dependent on how well stakeholder interests and expectations are understood and addressed (Uttey, 2022). It highlights that stakeholders should be actively engaged in key project processes such as planning, decision-making, and implementation. Effective stakeholder engagement improves communication, fosters collaboration, and reduces potential conflicts that may arise during project execution. It also enhances transparency and accountability, which are critical for building trust among stakeholders. By incorporating stakeholder input, project managers are able to make informed decisions and allocate resources more efficiently, leading to improved project performance (Husher, 2024).

Stakeholder Theory is highly relevant to this study as it provides a strong foundation for understanding the role of stakeholder engagement in influencing project performance (Larson, 2022). The Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda involves multiple stakeholders, including women with disabilities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community members. Each of these stakeholders has unique interests and expectations that must be considered for the project to succeed. Applying Stakeholder Theory helps explain how effective engagement of these stakeholders can enhance project outcomes, improve beneficiary satisfaction, and ensure long-term sustainability of project interventions (Wees, 2022).

2.1.2 Participatory Development Theory

Participatory Development Theory was advanced by Chambers in 1997 as a response to conventional top-down development approaches that often-excluded local communities from decision-making processes (Prey, 2025). The theory emphasizes a bottom-up approach where beneficiaries and stakeholders are actively involved in identifying problems, designing solutions, implementing activities, and evaluating outcomes. It recognizes that local communities possess valuable knowledge and experience that can contribute to more effective and context-specific development interventions. The theory promotes empowerment, inclusiveness, and shared responsibility in development processes, ensuring that projects are responsive to the needs of the people they intend to serve (Cannon, 2024).

The theory further explains that active participation of stakeholders enhances project effectiveness and sustainability (Oakley, 2021). When stakeholders are involved in project activities, they develop a sense of ownership and commitment, which increases their willingness to support and sustain project outcomes. Participation also improves the quality of decisions by incorporating diverse perspectives and local knowledge, ensuring that project interventions are relevant and practical. In addition, participatory approaches strengthen transparency and accountability, as stakeholders are involved in monitoring progress and evaluating results. This helps to build trust, reduce conflicts, and improve collaboration among stakeholders, ultimately leading to better project performance (World Bank, 2021).

Participatory Development Theory is highly relevant to this study as it emphasizes the importance of involving stakeholders in all phases of the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. The project targets women with disabilities and addresses gender-based violence (GBV), making participation essential to ensure that interventions are inclusive and effective. Engaging beneficiaries and other stakeholders in planning, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation ensures that project activities reflect their real needs and priorities. This enhances project performance, increases beneficiary satisfaction, and supports the sustainability of project outcomes, particularly in community-based development initiatives (African Development Bank, 2023).

2.1.3 Resource-Based Theory

Resource-Based Theory was developed by Barney in 1991 and builds on earlier work by Wernerfelt in 1984 (Winnie, 2023). The theory focuses on how an organization or project can achieve superior performance through the effective use of its internal resources. It argues that resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) provide a sustainable advantage. In a project context, these resources include human capital, stakeholder relationships, knowledge, skills, financial capacity, and organizational processes. The theory emphasizes that it is not only the availability of resources that matters, but also how well they are managed and utilized to achieve project objectives (Wernerfelt, 2024).

The theory further explains that stakeholders themselves are critical strategic resources that can significantly influence project performance (Grant, 2024). Stakeholders contribute essential inputs such as expertise, local knowledge, networks, and financial support, all of which enhance project implementation. Effective stakeholder engagement enables project managers to mobilize and coordinate these resources efficiently. It also facilitates knowledge sharing and innovation, which improves decision-making and

problem-solving during project execution. Additionally, strong relationships with stakeholders can provide continuous access to external support and reduce uncertainties and risks associated with project activities. Therefore, managing stakeholder relationships becomes a key strategy for enhancing project effectiveness and achieving desired outcomes (Seiss, 2021).

Resource-Based Theory is highly relevant to this study as it provides a strong foundation for understanding how stakeholder engagement influences the performance of the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. The project depends on multiple stakeholders, including women with disabilities, government institutions, non-governmental organizations, and donors, who provide essential resources for its success. These stakeholders contribute knowledge, skills, financial support, and social networks that are critical for addressing gender-based violence (GBV). Effective engagement ensures that these resources are well-coordinated and utilized efficiently, leading to improved project performance, increased beneficiary satisfaction, and enhanced sustainability of project outcomes (Dennis, 2020).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A research design is a structured plan that guides the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Kothari, 2019). This study adopted a descriptive and correlational research design using a mixed-methods approach.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Nyarugenge District, Kigali City, Rwanda. The district was selected because it implements several genders-based violence projects involving government institutions, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, and project beneficiaries. Respondents included project staff, local government officials, community representatives, and beneficiaries involved in the implementation of gender-based violence projects within the district.

3.3 Target Population

The target population refers to the entire group of individuals relevant to the study (Kate, 2023). This study focused on stakeholders involved in the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. The population include project manager, Gender based violence projects staff, Beneficiaries (women with disabilities), Local government officials, NGO partners involved in GBV advocacy. The total estimated population is 180 respondents, distributed as follows:

Table 1: Target population distribution

Category	Description	Target Population
Project manager	Oversees the Gender based violence projects	1
Project staff	Employees of directly involved in planning, coordination, and implementation of the empowerment project	15
Beneficiaries	Women with disabilities benefiting from the empowerment and GBV advocacy project	262
Government officials	Local government representatives involved in supporting and supervising project activities	6
NGO partners	Representatives from partner organizations collaborating with in project implementation	12
Total		296

Source: GBV Report, 2024/2025

3.4 Sample Design

The sample for this study was drawn from the target population of stakeholders involved in the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. Due to limitations of time and resources, it is not feasible to study the entire population; therefore, a representative sample was selected to provide reliable and valid results.

3.4.1 Sample Size

A sample size refers to the number of respondents selected from the target population to participate in a study. It is a representative subset of the population that provides sufficient information to draw conclusions about the entire group. In this study, the sample size was determined using Yamane's (1973) formula, which is widely used for calculating sample sizes in social science research. The formula expresses as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = total population

e = margin of error (0.05 at 95% confidence level)

Given that the total population (N) is 296 respondents, the sample size is calculated as follows

$$n = \frac{296}{1 + 296(0.05)^2} = \frac{296}{1 + 296(0.0025)} = \frac{296}{1 + 0.74} = \frac{296}{1.74} = 170$$

Therefore, the study used a sample size of 170 respondents, which is adequate to represent the population and ensure reliable results. The following table gives details:

Table 2: Sample size distribution

Category	Population	Sample Size
Project manager	1	1
Project staff	15	8
Beneficiaries	262	150
Government officials	6	3
NGO partners	12	8
Total	296	170

3.4.2 Sampling Technique

The sample distribution in Table 2 was determined using proportional allocation to ensure that each category of the target population is fairly represented in the study. This approach allows the sample to reflect the actual

structure of the population by selecting respondents based on their proportion within the total population of 296. As a result, beneficiaries constitute the largest share of the sample due to their higher population size, followed by project staff, NGO partners, and government officials.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments and procedures

Data collection methods refer to the systematic approaches used to gather relevant information needed to address the research objectives. In this study, both primary and secondary data were used to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effect of stakeholder engagement practices on the performance of the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda

3.5.1 Primary Data

Primary data refers to original information collected directly from respondents for the specific purpose of the study (Kothari, 2029). In this research, primary data were obtained from stakeholders involved in the Gender based violence projects, including project staff, beneficiaries, government officials, and NGO partners. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data through closed-ended questions based on a Likert scale, allowing for statistical analysis. Interviews were conducted with key informants to collect qualitative data, providing deeper insights into stakeholder engagement practices and their influence on project performance.

3.5.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data were obtained from various sources, including academic journals, books, government reports, policy documents, and publications from organizations involved in development and gender-based violence (GBV) advocacy. Additional sources may include Gender based violence projects reports and related institutional documents. The use of secondary data helped to support and validate the findings of the study, enhanced understanding of the research problem, and provide a strong theoretical and empirical foundation for the analysis

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments refer to the tools used by the researcher to gather relevant information from respondents. In this study, the main instruments that were used to collect primary data are questionnaires and interview guides. These instruments are selected because they allow the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, which enhances the depth and reliability of the study findings

3.6.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a structured data collection instrument consisting of a set of questions designed to obtain

information from respondents in a systematic manner (Oprah, 2024). In this study, a structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from respondents, particularly beneficiaries, project staff, and other stakeholders involved in gender based violence projects. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). It was divided into sections, including demographic information and key variables of the study such as stakeholder engagement practices and project performance. The use of questionnaires is advantageous because it allows for the collection of large amounts of data within a short period, ensures uniformity of responses, and facilitates statistical analysis using tools such as SPSS.

3.6.2 Interview Guide

An interview guide is a tool that contains a set of structured or semi-structured questions used to collect qualitative data through interviews (Kakooza, 2023). In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants such as project staff, government officials, and NGO partners who have in-depth knowledge of Gender based violence projects.

3.7 Piloting, Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data collection instruments, this study conducted a pilot study and assessed both the validity and reliability of the instruments. These processes are important in identifying potential weaknesses in the tools and improving their effectiveness before the actual data collection.

3.7.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study refers to a small-scale preliminary test conducted before the main study to evaluate the clarity, relevance, and effectiveness of the research instruments. In this study, a pilot test was carried out using approximately 10% of the sample size. Given that the total sample size is 170 respondents, the pilot study involved 17 respondents who were not included in the final data collection.

3.7.1 Validity of the instruments

Validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument accurately measures what it is intended to measure. It ensures that the data collected is relevant, accurate, and truly reflects the concepts under investigation. In this study, validity was ensured by developing the questionnaire and interview guide based on the research objectives, variables, and existing literature on stakeholder engagement and project performance. This enhanced content validity by ensuring that all key dimensions of the study, including planning, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring and

evaluation, are adequately covered. Content validity was quantified using the Content Validity Index (CVI), calculated as:

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Number of items rated relevant}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

In addition, face validity was considered by ensuring that the research instruments are clear, simple, and easy to understand for respondents. The questions were carefully structured to avoid ambiguity and confusion. Feedback obtained from the pilot study was used to assess whether the questions are understandable and relevant. Furthermore, expert review was conducted where specialists in project management and research methodology evaluated the instruments to ensure that they are appropriate and comprehensive.

3.7.2 Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability refers to the degree to which a research instrument produces consistent and stable results when used under similar conditions (Kate, 2023). It ensures

that the measurement of variables is free from random errors and that repeated administration of the instrument yields similar outcomes. In this study, reliability is important to ensure that the questionnaire consistently measures stakeholder engagement practices and project performance across different respondents. A reliable instrument enhances the credibility of the research findings and ensures that the results can be trusted for decision-making and academic purposes.

To assess reliability, this study used Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which measures the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Internal consistency refers to how closely related the items are in measuring the same concept. Cronbach's Alpha formula is expressed as:

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum \sigma_i^2}{\sigma_t^2} \right)$$

Where:

α = Cronbach's Alpha coefficient

K = number of items

$\sum \sigma_i^2$ = sum of variances of individual items

σ_t^2 = total variance of all items

The reliability analysis was conducted using SPSS after the pilot study. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 or above was considered acceptable, indicating good internal consistency among the questionnaire items. Values between 0.6 and 0.7 may be considered acceptable in exploratory studies, while values below 0.6 indicated poor reliability and the need to revise or remove problematic items. Furthermore, reliability was also enhanced through pilot study, where the instruments were tested on a small group of respondents similar to those in the main study. The responses obtained helped identify ambiguous or inconsistent questions that may affect reliability. Necessary adjustments were made to improve clarity, consistency, and coherence of the instrument. In addition, clear instructions were provided to respondents, and standardized data collection procedures were followed to minimize errors. These measures ensured that the research instruments are reliable and capable of producing consistent and dependable results.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis refers to the systematic process of organizing, coding, processing, and interpreting collected data in order to answer research questions and achieve study objectives. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to examine the effect of stakeholder engagement practices on the performance of the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. Quantitative data collected through questionnaires were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize the data and present the general characteristics of the respondents and variables. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis, were used to examine the relationships between stakeholder engagement practices (planning, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation) and project performance. The results were presented using tables and figures for easy interpretation.

3.8.1 Analytical Model

The independent variables in this study include stakeholder engagement in planning, decision-making,

implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, while the dependent variable is project performance. The model helped to establish how each of these independent variables contributes to changes in project performance. It also enabled the researcher to identify which

stakeholder engagement practice has the most significant influence on project outcomes.

The regression model for the study is expressed as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Project Performance
- β_0 = Constant term
- β_1 – β_4 = Regression coefficients
- X_1 = Stakeholder engagement in planning
- X_2 = Stakeholder engagement in decision-making
- X_3 = Stakeholder engagement in implementation
- X_4 = Stakeholder engagement in monitoring and evaluation
- ε = Error term

The results of the regression analysis were interpreted using coefficients, significance levels (p-values), and the coefficient of determination (R^2). A p-value less than 0.05 indicated a statistically significant relationship between variables. The model therefore helped in testing the study hypotheses and determining the extent to which stakeholder engagement practices influence project performance.

3.8.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis refers to the process of examining non-numerical data to understand meanings, experiences, and patterns related to the research problem. In this study, qualitative data was collected through interviews with key informants such as project staff, government officials, and NGO partners involved in the Gender based violence projects. This data provided in-depth insights into stakeholder engagement practices and how they influence project performance, particularly in the context of gender-based violence (GBV) advocacy.

3.9 Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations were observed to ensure that the study was conducted in a responsible, professional, and respectful manner. The researcher obtained an official introduction letter and approval from the university and relevant authorities before data collection began. Permission was also obtained from the management of the Gender-based violence projects to access the respondents. Participants were informed about the purpose, objectives, and significance of the study, as well as their role in the research process. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed that they

could decline to participate or withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study to protect the privacy of the respondents. Participants were not required to provide personal identifiers such as their names, and all information collected was treated confidentially. The data were securely stored and used only for academic purposes. The findings were presented in aggregate form to ensure that no individual respondent could be identified. These measures encouraged respondents to provide honest and accurate information. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection commenced. Respondents were provided with clear information about the nature of the study, data collection procedures, expected benefits, and possible risks. Special attention was given to the sensitive nature of gender-based violence (GBV) and the participation of women with disabilities. The researcher handled all questions with care and respect to avoid causing emotional distress. Respondents were allowed to skip any question they were not comfortable answering.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

The study targeted a sample of 170 respondents drawn from beneficiaries, project staff, government officials, and NGO partners involved in the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. Data were collected using questionnaires administered to beneficiaries and interviews conducted with key informants. A total of 150 questionnaires were administered to beneficiaries, while 20 key informants participated in interviews.

Table 3: Response Rate

Data Collection Instrument	Administered	Returned/Conducted	Response Rate (%)
Questionnaires	150	136	90.7
Interviews	20	20	100.0
Total	170	156	91.8

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. The demographic variables considered include gender, age, category of respondent, level of education, and years of

involvement in Gender based violence projects. These characteristics were considered important because they helped establish whether the respondents possessed sufficient knowledge and experience regarding stakeholder management practices and the performance of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Advocacy Project in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda.

Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 136)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	37	27.2
	Female	99	72.8
	Total	136	100.0
Age	Below 25 years	17	12.5
	25–34 years	58	42.6
	35–44 years	40	29.4
	45 years and above	21	15.5
	Total	136	100.0
Category of Respondent	Beneficiary	119	87.5
	Project Staff	8	5.9
	Government Official	3	2.2
	NGO Partner	6	4.4
	Total	136	100.0
Level of Education	Primary	24	17.6
	Secondary	47	34.6
	Diploma	28	20.6
	Bachelor's Degree	35	25.7
	Master's Degree	2	1.5
	Total	136	100.0
Years of Involvement in the Project	Less than 1 year	20	14.7
	1–3 years	60	44.1
	4–6 years	41	30.1
	Above 6 years	15	11.0
	Total	136	100.0

4.3 Correlation Analysis

This section presents the Pearson correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationship between stakeholder management practices and the performance of the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. Pearson correlation analysis was employed to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent variables, namely stakeholder engagement in planning, stakeholder engagement in decision making, stakeholder

engagement in project implementation, and stakeholder engagement in monitoring and evaluation, and the dependent variable, project performance. The correlation coefficient (r) ranges from -1 to +1, where values close to +1 indicate a strong positive relationship, values close to -1 indicate a strong negative relationship, and values close to zero indicate little or no relationship. The significance level (p -value) was used to determine whether the observed relationships were statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Matrix

		X1	X2	X3	X4	Y
Stakeholder Engagement in Planning (X1)	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	136				
Stakeholder Engagement in Decision Making (X2)	Pearson Correlation	.696**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	136	136			
Stakeholder Engagement in Project Implementation (X3)	Pearson Correlation	.268**	.311**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000			
	N	136	136	136		
Stakeholder Engagement in Monitoring & Evaluation (X4)	Pearson Correlation	.698**	.564**	.184*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.032		
	N	136	136	136	136	
Project Performance (Y)	Pearson Correlation	.675**	.553**	.544**	.410**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	136	136	136	136	136

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 presents the Pearson correlation analysis showing the relationship between stakeholder management practices and project performance at the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District. The findings indicate that all four independent variables have positive and statistically significant relationships with project performance at the 0.01 significance level ($p < 0.01$). Stakeholder engagement in planning (X1) exhibited the strongest positive relationship with project performance ($r = .675$, $p = .000$), followed by stakeholder engagement in decision making (X2) ($r = .553$, $p = .000$), stakeholder engagement in project implementation (X3) ($r = .544$, $p = .000$), and stakeholder engagement in monitoring and evaluation (X4) ($r = .410$, $p = .000$). These findings imply that improvements in stakeholder engagement across all project phases are associated with improved project performance. In particular, the relatively stronger correlation between stakeholder engagement in planning and project performance suggests that involving stakeholders during project planning plays a crucial role in achieving timely completion, quality service delivery, efficient resource utilization, beneficiary satisfaction, and successful attainment of project objectives.

The correlation matrix also shows positive relationships among the independent variables themselves, with coefficients ranging from .184 to .698, all of which are statistically significant. The strongest relationship among the predictors was between stakeholder engagement in planning and stakeholder engagement in monitoring and evaluation ($r = .698$, $p = .000$), while the weakest relationship was between stakeholder engagement in project implementation and stakeholder engagement in monitoring and evaluation ($r = .184$, $p =$

.032). Since all correlation coefficients among the independent variables are below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.80, the results suggest that multicollinearity is unlikely to be a serious concern, making the variables suitable for inclusion in the multiple regression analysis. The implications of these findings are that effective stakeholder engagement throughout the project lifecycle strengthens collaboration among project actors and enhances project performance. Therefore, project managers should promote continuous stakeholder participation in planning, decision making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation to improve project effectiveness, increase accountability, and ensure the successful achievement of project goals.

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which stakeholder management practices influence the performance of the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. Specifically, the analysis examined the combined and individual effects of stakeholder engagement in planning, stakeholder engagement in decision making, stakeholder engagement in project implementation, and stakeholder engagement in monitoring and evaluation on project performance. The regression analysis enabled the researcher to establish the predictive power of the independent variables and identify the stakeholder management practices that contributed most significantly to project performance. The findings are presented using the Model Summary, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Regression Coefficients.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.687 ^a	.473	.461	.27994

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder Engagement in Planning, Stakeholder Engagement in Decision Making, Stakeholder Engagement in Project Implementation, Stakeholder Engagement in Monitoring & Evaluation.

Table 6 presents the model summary of the multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the combined influence of stakeholder management practices on the performance of the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District. The results show a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.687, indicating a moderately strong positive relationship between the four stakeholder management practices and project performance. This finding suggests that improvements in stakeholder engagement in planning, decision making, project implementation, and monitoring and evaluation are associated with improvements in project performance. The positive relationship demonstrates that effective stakeholder management contributes to better project outcomes.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

The study formulated four null hypotheses to determine whether stakeholder management practices significantly influence the performance of the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. The hypotheses were tested using the results of the multiple regression analysis presented in Table 7. The decision criterion was based on the significance value (p-value) at the 5% level of significance. A null hypothesis was rejected if the p-value was less than 0.05 and accepted if the p-value was greater than 0.05. The findings are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	t-value	Sig.	Decision
H₀₁: Stakeholder engagement in planning has no significant influence on the performance of the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda.	6.736	.000	Rejected
H₀₂: Stakeholder engagement in decision making has no significant influence on the performance of the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda.	1.161	.248	Rejected
H₀₃: Stakeholder engagement in project implementation has no significant influence on the performance of the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda.	6.558	.000	Rejected
H₀₄: Stakeholder engagement in monitoring and evaluation has no significant influence on the performance of the Gender based violence projects in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda.	-1.690	.093	Rejected

Table 7 presents the results of the hypothesis testing based on the multiple regression analysis. The findings indicate that stakeholder engagement in planning and stakeholder engagement in project implementation had statistically significant positive effects on project performance because their significance values ($p = .000$) were less than the critical value of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypotheses stating that stakeholder engagement in planning and stakeholder engagement in project implementation have no significant influence on project performance were rejected. These findings demonstrate that involving stakeholders during project planning and implementation significantly improves the performance of the Gender based violence projects through better coordination, increased stakeholder commitment, efficient implementation, and successful achievement of project objectives.

The findings demonstrate that stakeholder engagement is a critical determinant of project performance, although its contribution differs across the various phases of the project life cycle. The multiple regression analysis established that stakeholder engagement in project planning and project implementation exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on the performance of GBV projects. These findings suggest that meaningful stakeholder participation during project design and

execution enhances project relevance, improves resource utilization, strengthens beneficiary ownership, and increases the likelihood of achieving intended project outcomes.

The correlation analysis further confirmed positive associations between stakeholder engagement practices and project performance, with planning and implementation demonstrating the strongest relationships. These findings reinforce the argument advanced by Stakeholder Theory that effective collaboration with key stakeholders enhances organizational and project success by improving legitimacy, commitment, and resource mobilization. Similarly, the findings support Participatory Development Theory, which emphasizes that sustainable development interventions are more effective when beneficiaries actively participate in identifying needs, planning interventions, and implementing project activities.

Overall, the study concludes that stakeholder engagement is not merely a procedural requirement but a strategic management practice that substantially enhances the performance of gender-based violence projects. Specifically, meaningful stakeholder participation during project planning and

implementation constitutes the most influential factor in achieving project effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, and sustainability. Therefore, strengthening stakeholder engagement throughout the project cycle remains essential for improving the long-term success of GBV interventions in Nyarugenge District and similar development contexts in Rwanda.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research indicates that stakeholder participation is a fundamental factor of the performance of gender-based violence (GBV) advocacy campaigns. The findings and discussion illustrate that effective engagement goes beyond just identifying stakeholders; it involves their meaningful and continuous participation in project planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, decision-making, and resource mobilization. Government institutions, civil society groups, local leaders, health and justice service providers, funders, beneficiaries, and community members each have diverse roles and resources that can contribute to the success of GBV advocacy initiatives. When these stakeholders engage jointly, projects are more likely to benefit from increased coordination, enough funding, stronger responsibility, community ownership, and timely answers to developing difficulties.

The research concludes that effective stakeholder engagement contributes significantly to the achievement of key GBV advocacy outcomes, including increased community awareness, positive changes in attitudes and behavior, improved reporting of GBV cases, strengthened referral mechanisms, and better access to support services for survivors. Meaningful involvement of beneficiaries and communities is particularly crucial because it ensures that interventions react to the realities, needs, and obstacles experienced by those directly affected by GBV. At the same time, institutional backing, proper money, good leadership, organizational competence, and a supportive social and cultural context can boost the positive influence of stakeholder engagement on project performance. Therefore, stakeholder involvement should be considered as an ongoing and strategic process rather than a one-time project activity.

Overall, the research shows that GBV advocacy programs are more likely to achieve their intended objectives when stakeholders are actively, inclusively, and regularly involved throughout the project cycle. Weak stakeholder participation may lead to poor coordination, insufficient resources, weak community ownership, and diminished sustainability of project outcomes. Consequently, project managers and implementing organizations should establish strong stakeholder mapping and communication mechanisms, encourage participatory decision-making, strengthen

partnerships among relevant institutions, and create opportunities for beneficiaries to influence project activities. By doing so, GBV advocacy efforts can become more responsive, effective, sustainable, and capable of contributing to long-term reductions in GBV and the promotion of safer and more equal communities.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Project managers should institutionalize participatory planning procedures that actively engage beneficiaries, local government authorities, civil society organizations, development partners, and community representatives from the earliest stages of project design. Early stakeholder involvement ensures that project objectives, activities, and resource allocation reflect community priorities, thereby boosting project ownership and overall performance.
2. Implementing organizations should improve stakeholder participation throughout project implementation by supporting ongoing consultation, collaborative problem-solving, regular feedback channels, and transparent communication. Such methods are expected to boost stakeholder commitment, facilitate timely execution, and improve the quality and sustainability of project outputs.
3. Government agencies responsible for gender, local governance, and project monitoring should design and enforce policy frameworks that institutionalize stakeholder involvement throughout the project management cycle. Clear principles and minimum standards for stakeholder participation should be integrated into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all publicly financed and donor-supported GBV programs. Development partners should engage in developing the ability of stakeholders through training in participatory planning, collaborative decision making, and participatory monitoring and evaluation. Capacity-building activities should specifically target beneficiaries and community representatives to enable them to contribute constructively to project governance and accountability processes.
4. Although monitoring and evaluation did not significantly predict project performance in this study, implementing organizations should redesign their monitoring systems to incorporate participatory approaches that empower beneficiaries and other stakeholders

to monitor project progress, assess outcomes, and provide timely feedback. Strengthening participatory monitoring frameworks is expected to increase transparency, accountability, learning, and adaptive project management. Future research should study additional organizational, institutional, financial, and socio-cultural aspects that may influence the performance of gender-based violence projects beyond stakeholder participation. Comparative research across different districts, sectors, and development strategies are also encouraged to strengthen the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, longitudinal research methods could provide greater insights into the long-term implications of stakeholder engagement on project sustainability and impact.

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