PROJECT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF THE ADVANCING CITIZENS ENGAGEMENT PROJECT FUNDED BY SPARK MICROGRANTS IN RWANDA

Alice Kabeza

University of Kigali, Rwanda Schiman NIYONKURU University of Kigali, Rwanda Julius SEMAKULA University of Kigali, Rwanda

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between project resource management practices and project performance in Rwanda, a case of advancing citizens engagement prepared and funded by Spark Microgrants in Musanze sector. Effective resource management is a critical determinant of project success in development initiatives. In Musanze District, Rwanda, the Advancing Citizens Engagement Project, funded by Spark Microgrants, aims to promote citizen engagement in community development. However, the extent to which resource management practices impact project performance remains underexplored. This study employed a mixedmethods approach, combining surveys, interviews, and correlation analyses to assess the relationship between resource management practices and project performance. The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between resource management practices and project performance. Resource planning, including documentation and scope assessment, showed a significant impact on project success. Efficient resource allocation practices, based on skills and availability, contributed to cost control and efficiency. Implementing robust resource utilization monitoring mechanisms to avoid overallocation or underutilization. Investing in training and capacity-building for project team members to enhance performance.

Keywords: resource, resource planning, resource utilization, project performance, resource management

At the global level, the importance of effective project resource management practices has been increasingly recognized in recent years. With the growing complexity and scale of projects across various industries, efficient resource allocation and utilization have become crucial for project success (Cleland & Ireland, 2019). The failure to implement sound resource management practices can lead to delays, budget overruns, and compromised project outcomes (Kerzner, 2017).

In the context of Africa, project management has gained significant attention due to the continent's ambitious development agendas and the need for sustainable socio-economic growth. African countries face unique challenges, such as limited resources, political instability, and inadequate infrastructure, which further emphasize the importance of effective project resource management (Adlbrecht & Hartmann, 2018).

On the East African level, collaboration between countries has become increasingly common in recent years, with regional projects aimed at addressing common challenges and fostering economic integration. East African nations are pursuing various development initiatives to uplift their economies, necessitating efficient project resource management practices to ensure the successful execution of these projects (Nyamagere, 2020).Due to this evolution, nowadays projects can be defined as onetime, complex, unique sequence of activities carried out in a project organization with time, and budget constraints and they implement a definite output (project result) (Görög, 2013b).

In Rwanda like other countries there are many organizations which survive through creation of projects, some of those organizations are the private organizations, non –government organizations (NGOs), public organizations. Below is the example of those organizations in Rwanda, in public organizations there are the schools, hospitals. CETRAF Ltd and URWIBUTSO Enterprise are the examples of private organizations. Among the non-government organizations there are SPARK Microgrants, World vision, UNDP, Care international Rwanda.

Spark Microgrants which is the study area in this research is a non-profit organization that enables communities to organize and make progress, primarily focused on East Africa, and it headquarter is in Kampala, Uganda. It has founded in 2010. Spark's partner communities act as the main decision makers at every stage of process. The Spark Process encourages communities to envision and work towards their own goals, putting them in the driver's seat of their futures. It also helps the communities with limited infrastructure and access, The Spark Process helps these communities by building on existing social capital and community structures to drive community led change (Spark, 2022).

Project finally discusses the transformations needed to emerge from a deeply unsatisfactory social and economic situation. Therefore, to actualize these transformations, all forms of organizations need to create and improve their services, products, and facilities, and mostly this is done through projects (Spark, 2022).

According to the PMI's pulse of the profession study (2015), all change in an organization happens through projects and programs-by many different names. However, despite the fact that apparently projects exist within organizations and help them to achieve their strategic objectives, there is a growing recognition that they are often poorly understood and frequently not properly managed, yet as per the PMI's pulse study (2015), it is stated that when a project management mindset is embedded into an organization's DNA, performance improves and competitive advantage accelerates.

The proposed research aims to investigate the current project resource management practices employed in the advancing citizens engagement project prepared and funded by spark microgrants in Musanze district and

analyse their influence on project performance. By focusing on Rwanda, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge on project management practices in the African context, and specifically, in East Africa. Moreover, the findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers and project managers in Rwanda and other African nations to enhance the effectiveness of project resource management and achieve successful project outcomes.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of project resource management practices in ensuring successful project outcomes, there is limited empirical research focusing on the specific context of Rwanda and its advancing citizens engagement project prepared and funded by spark microgrants in Musanze District) in Musanze Sector. While project management practices have gained attention at the global, African, and East African levels, there is a need to investigate the actual implementation and effectiveness of project resource management practices in Rwanda to bridge the existing research gap.

The projects prepared and funded by Spark Microgrants, in line with the Rwandan government policies to address poverty and promote inclusive growth at the community level, involves the execution of various projects in different sectors. However, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the current project resource management practices employed in the Spark microgrants in Musanze Sector. This gap in knowledge hinders the ability to assess the impact of these practices on project performance.

The problem is further compounded by the unique challenges faced by Rwanda, such as limited resources, and the need for sustainable socioeconomic development. These factors necessitate the implementation of efficient project resource management practices to ensure the successful execution and completion of projects within the Citizens Engagement project framework.

Therefore, the research aims to bridge the gap by analysing the relationship between project resource management practices and project performance of Spark Microgrants in Musanze, Rwanda.

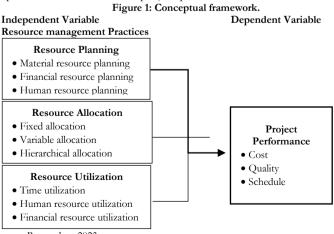
Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory: The Resource-Based View theory focuses on how a firm's resources and capabilities contribute to its competitive advantage and overall performance (Barney, 1991). Applied to project resource management, RBV suggests that effective allocation and utilization of resources can lead to improved project performance. Projects that leverage unique and valuable resources efficiently are more likely to achieve a competitive edge and deliver successful outcomes (Helfat & Peteraf, 2003). RBV provides insights into how project managers can identify and exploit resources to gain a sustainable advantage in project execution. "In accordance with the Resource-Based View theory (Barney, 1991), this study posits that efficient allocation and utilization of resources can lead to enhanced project performance."

Contingency Theory: Contingency Theory posits that there is no one-size-fitsall approach to management practices, and the effectiveness of management decisions depends on the specific context and circumstances in which they are applied (Donaldson, 1996). In the context of project resource management, Contingency Theory suggests that the success of resource management practices is contingent on the characteristics of the project, the organizational context, and external environmental factors (Pinto & Slevin, 1988). Project managers must tailor their resource management strategies to suit the unique requirements and constraints of each project.

Stakeholder Theory: Stakeholder Theory emphasizes the importance of considering the interests and needs of various stakeholders in decisionmaking processes (Freeman, 1984). In the context of project resource management, this theory highlights that project resources are often limited and need to be allocated in a way that balances the expectations and requirements of different stakeholders (Cleland & Ireland, 2019). By engaging stakeholders and understanding their priorities, project managers can make informed resource allocation decisions that align with the overall project goals and stakeholder expectations. Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) suggests that project managers should consider the needs and expectations of various stakeholders when allocating and managing project resources.

Conceptual framework

Figure 1 below shows the study intended to find out the link between independent variable which is project resource management and the dependent variable which is project performance.



Source: Researcher, 2023

Resource Planning and Project Performance: Resource planning is a critical aspect of project management that directly influences project performance. Several empirical studies have investigated the relationship between resource planning and project performance, providing insights into how effective resource management practices can contribute to successful project outcomes. In their study on construction projects, Rwakarehe et al. (2017) explored the impact of resource planning on project performance in Rwanda. The authors found that effective allocation of resources, including labour, materials, and equipment, positively correlated with project schedule adherence and cost control. This suggests that meticulous resource planning plays a pivotal role in achieving project objectives within the stipulated time and budget constraints. A study by Musoni and Tindiwensi (2019) in the Rwandan context emphasized the integration of resource planning and project scheduling. The researchers found that projects that integrated resource allocation considerations into their scheduling processes experienced improved performance, as compared to those that treated resource planning and scheduling as separate tasks. This integration led to better utilization of resources, minimized resource conflicts, and enhanced project progress tracking.

Resource planning not only affects the execution phase but also influences the project's ability to manage uncertainties and risks. Karangwa and Muhire (2018) demonstrated that effective resource planning contributed to improved risk mitigation strategies. By ensuring the availability of necessary resources at critical project stages, organizations were better equipped to handle unexpected challenges and disruptions, thereby reducing the impact of potential risks on project performance.

The utilization of technology in resource planning has also been investigated in relation to project performance. Nkurunziza et al. (2020) examined the adoption of project management software for resource allocation in Rwandan projects. Their findings indicated that the use of software tools enhanced resource visibility, real-time tracking, and decision-making. This technological integration positively influenced project performance by enabling quicker adjustments to resource allocation based on changing project demands.

Empirical research consistently highlights the significance of resource planning in influencing project performance outcomes. Effective allocation and management of resources, integration with project scheduling, risk mitigation, and technology adoption all contribute to enhancing project success rates. These findings underscore the importance of adopting comprehensive resource planning practices within the context of project management in Rwanda.

Resource Allocation and Project Performance: Resource allocation, the process of distributing and managing resources within a project, is a

fundamental aspect of project management that significantly influences project performance. Empirical studies have extensively examined the link between resource allocation strategies and their impact on achieving successful project outcomes.

In their investigation of construction projects in Rwanda, Uwizeyimana and Mupenzi (2016) explored various resource allocation strategies and their implications for project success. The study found that projects that employed dynamic resource allocation techniques, such as reallocating resources based on changing project needs, were more likely to achieve higher levels of performance. This suggests that flexibility and adaptability in resource allocation positively contribute to overall project success.

A study conducted by Gatete et al. (2018) in the Rwandan context emphasized the importance of aligning resource allocation decisions with project objectives. The researchers found that projects with a well-defined resource allocation strategy that considered the specific requirements of each project phase were better positioned to achieve performance targets. This strategic alignment led to optimal resource utilization and reduced resource bottlenecks.

Effective resource allocation also has implications for team collaboration and communication, which in turn affect project performance. Mukamana and Uwamahoro (2019) investigated the relationship between resource allocation practices and team coordination in Rwandan projects. The study revealed that projects that utilized transparent resource allocation processes and facilitated interdepartmental communication experienced smoother execution and higher performance levels. This highlights the importance of clear resource allocation communication in enhancing project outcomes.

The satisfaction of stakeholders, including clients, sponsors, and team members, is a key measure of project success. Nshimyumuremyi and Uwimana (2021) studied the impact of resource allocation optimization on stakeholder satisfaction in Rwandan projects. The findings demonstrated a positive correlation between well-optimized resource allocation and stakeholder satisfaction, indicating that projects that effectively allocate resources to meet stakeholder expectations are more likely to achieve better performance outcomes.

Empirical research consistently supports the notion that resource allocation is a critical determinant of project performance. Strategies such as dynamic allocation, alignment with project objectives, fostering team collaboration, and optimizing stakeholder satisfaction contribute to achieving successful project outcomes. As projects in Rwanda continue to evolve, implementing effective resource allocation practices will play an integral role in enhancing project performance and overall project success. Resource Utilization and Project Performance: Effective resource utilization is a crucial factor that significantly impacts project

performance. Empirical studies have examined how the efficient use of resources contributes to the achievement of project objectives and overall success.

A study by Kagoyire et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between resource utilization and project success in Rwanda. The research highlighted that projects that optimized resource utilization, ensuring that resources were allocated to tasks based on their expertise and availability, were more likely to meet project milestones and deliverables on time. This finding emphasizes the importance of aligning resource allocation with task requirements.

The financial aspect of project performance is closely tied to resource utilization. Murekatete and Niyigena (2018) explored the impact of resource utilization on project cost efficiency in Rwandan projects. The study revealed that projects that effectively managed and utilized resources experienced reduced instances of resource wastage and rework, leading to improved cost control and financial performance.

Skilful resource utilization not only influences project timelines and costs but also affects the quality of project outputs. Mukarugwiza and Uwera (2020) examined how resource utilization practices influenced the quality of deliverables in Rwandan projects. The study indicated that projects that allocated resources according to the required skills and competencies for each task were more likely to produce high-quality outputs. This underscores the role of resource utilization in achieving desired project outcomes.

Stakeholder satisfaction is a key measure of project success. Gasana et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between resource utilization efficiency and stakeholder satisfaction in Rwandan projects. The study demonstrated that projects that efficiently allocated and utilized resources to meet stakeholder expectations were more likely to achieve higher levels of stakeholder satisfaction, thus contributing to overall project performance.

Empirical research consistently supports the notion that resource utilization is a critical factor influencing project performance. Optimized resource allocation based on task requirements, cost efficiency, skill alignment, and stakeholder satisfaction all play integral roles in achieving successful project outcomes.

Research Design

This study adopted a correlation research design. The major purpose of correlation is to describe the relationship between independent and dependent variables which are project resource management and the project performance. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) defined a population as the total number of items in a specified field of inquiry and he added that population is an asset of cases about which one wishes to draw some conclusions. This study has been conducted on Spark microgrants in Musanze sector. The study population was totalling 100 working in this

project. The Census Method has been used where in each and every item in the universe is selected for the data collection. Whenever the entire population is studied to collect the detailed data about every unit, then the census method is applied

	Population size	Sampling technique
Country director	1	Census
Program manager	1	Census
Project manager	1	Census
District coordinator	4	Census
Trainers	93	Census
TOTAL	100	

Table 1: Sampling population and their sample size

Data Collection: This study adopted a correlation research design. The major purpose of correlation is to describe the relationship between independent and dependent variables which are project resource management and the project performance.

The study applied the following tools of data collection; questionnaires, interview especially for the employees and documentation used to collect secondary data. Data collection was based on secondary and primary data. A Likert-scale questionnaire has been used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

Analysis And Interpretation

Descriptive Analysis

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on resource planning and project performance in advancing citizens engagement project in Musanze District

Statements	Ν	Mean	Std.
The project resource is documented and identified.	100	3.8983	1.35896
Resources are assigned to specific tasks based on their skills	100	4.2339	1.11096
Resource planning involves assessing the project scope	100	4.2203	1.21593
Resources are assigned to specific tasks based on their availability.	100	4.1525	1.23461
It involves assessing objectives, and tasks	100	4.2102	1.20792
Valid N (listwise)	100	4.22779	1.129102

Source: Field data, 2023

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics on resource planning and project performance in advancing citizen engagement projects in Musanze District. The mean scores, ranging from 3.8983 to 4.2339 out of 5, indicate a generally positive perception of resource planning practices within the project. Specifically, respondents recognize the importance of documenting and identifying project resources (mean = 3.8983), assigning resources based on skills (mean = 4.2339) and availability (mean = 4.1525), as well as assessing project scope and objectives (mean = 4.2203 and 4.2102, respectively). These findings underscore the significance of systematic resource planning in enhancing project effectiveness and advancing citizen engagement initiatives within the district.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics on resource allocation and project performance in advancing citizens engagement project in Musanze District

advancing chizens engagement project in musanze District				
Statements	Ν	Mean	Std.	
Resources are allocated efficiently.	100	3.8983	1.35896	

Efficient resource allocation contributes to cost control and	100	4.2339	1.11096
budget adherence in project.			
Resource as re allocated to where they are needed.	100	4.2203	1.21593
Proper resource allocation helps in objective attainment.	100	4.1525	1.23461
Proper resource allocation helps in timely completion.	100	4.2102	1.20792
Valid N (listwise)	100	4.22779	1.129102

Source: Field data, 2023

Table 3 displays descriptive statistics on resource allocation and project performance in advancing citizen engagement projects in Musanze District. The mean scores, ranging from 3.8983 to 4.2339 out of 5, indicate a generally positive perception of resource allocation practices within the project. Specifically, respondents acknowledge the importance of efficiently allocating resources (mean = 3.8983), which contributes to cost control and budget adherence (mean = 4.2339), reallocating resources as needed (mean = 4.2203), and ensuring proper allocation to aid in objective attainment (mean = 4.1525) and timely project completion (mean = 4.2102). These findings highlight the significance of effective resource allocation strategies in facilitating project success and advancing citizen engagement initiatives in Musanze District.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics on resource u	itilization and project performance in
advancing citizens engagement p	project in Musanze District

udvanenig erabens engagement project in frasante District					
Statements	Ν	Mean	Std.		
Project managers monitor resource utilization to avoid	100	3.8983	1.35896		
overallocation or underutilization of resources.					
Project resource are utilized on time.	100	4.2339	1.11096		
It leads to operational efficiency	100	4.2203	1.21593		
Resource utilization leads to cost saving	100	4.1525	1.23461		
It leads to improved performance		4.2102	1.20792		
Valid N (listwise)		4.22779	1.129102		

Source: Field data, 2023

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics on resource utilization and project performance in advancing citizen engagement projects in Musanze District. The mean scores, ranging from 3.8983 to 4.2339 out of 5, suggest a generally positive perception of resource utilization practices within the project. Specifically, respondents acknowledge the importance of project managers monitoring resource utilization to avoid overallocation or underutilization (mean = 3.8983), timely utilization of project resources (mean = 4.2339), and the resultant operational efficiency (mean = 4.2203) and cost savings (mean = 4.1525). Moreover, respondents recognize that effective resource utilization leads to improved project performance (mean = 4.2102). These findings underscore the significance of efficient resource utilization in enhancing project outcomes and advancing citizen engagement initiatives in Musanze District.

Results

The correlation analysis reveals strong positive correlations between resource management factors (resource planning, resource allocation, and resource utilization) and the performance of the Advancing Citizens Engagement Project. Here is what these correlations mean:

Strength of Correlations: All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) and have values close to 1. This suggests that there are very strong positive relationships between each of the resource management factors and project performance. Resource Planning: Resource planning has a strong positive correlation of 0.919 with project performance. This indicates that as resource planning practices improve, project performance tends to improve significantly.

Resource Allocation: Resource allocation has a strong positive correlation of 0.923 with project performance. This suggests that as resource allocation practices become more effective or efficient, project performance tends to increase. Resource Utilization: Resource utilization has a strong positive correlation of 0.903 with project performance. This implies that as resource utilization practices improve, project performance tends to improve significantly.

Practical Implications: These strong positive correlations collectively highlight the importance of effective resource management practices (planning, allocation, and utilization) in contributing to project success. When resources are managed well at every stage, the project is more likely to achieve its goals efficiently and effectively. Recommendations: Based on these correlations, it is advisable for project managers to prioritize and enhance resource management practices comprehensively. This includes improving resource planning, efficient allocation, and effective utilization to maximize the chances of project success.

The correlation analysis underscores the significance of resource management practices in driving project performance. These findings emphasize the need to focus on all aspects of resource management to optimize the Advancing Citizens Engagement Project's outcomes in Musanze District.

		1	2	3	4
1. Resource	Pearson Correlation	1	.915**	.931**	.919**
planning	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	Ν	10	10	10	10
2. Resource	Pearson Correlation	.915**	1	.993**	.923**
allocation	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	10	10	10	10
3. Resource	Pearson Correlation	.931**	.993**	1	.903**
utilization	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	10	10	10	10
4. Performance	Pearson Correlation	.919**	.923**	.903**	1
of project	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100

Table 5:	Correlation	Matrix
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Source: Filed data, 2023

Conclusion

The study has provided valuable insights into the relationship between project resource management practices and project performance in the context of the Advancing Citizens Engagement Project in Musanze District, Rwanda. The findings highlight the significance of effective resource management as a critical determinant of project success. this study underscores the importance of robust resource management practices in achieving project success. By implementing effective resource planning, allocation, and utilization strategies, the Advancing Citizens Engagement Project and similar initiatives in Rwanda and beyond can enhance their ability to engage citizens, drive positive change, and achieve their objectives efficiently and effectively.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered: Project managers should prioritize and enhance resource planning practices within the Advancing Citizens Engagement Project, emphasize efficient resource allocation practices, ensuring that resources are assigned to specific tasks based on skills, availability, and project needs, implement robust resource utilization monitoring mechanisms to avoid overallocation or underutilization of resources, lastly is to Provide training and capacity-building opportunities for project team members as a tool for enhancing project performance.

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