

Effect of Project Sustainability Practices on Project Success: A Case of Joint Program on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment Project in Nyaruguru District, Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the effect of project sustainability practices on the success of the JPRWEE Project in Nyaruguru District. Specifically, it examined sustainable project planning, resource management, risk management, and stakeholder involvement. The study was guided by Project Management Triangle, Stakeholder Theory, and Goal-Setting Theory. A descriptive and correlational research design was employed, covering a population of 215 project staff, local leaders, and beneficiaries using a census approach. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis and analysed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and multiple linear regression were used. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between sustainability practices and project success ($R = 0.840$), with the model explaining 70.5% of the variation in project success ($R^2 = 0.705$). The study recommended strengthening sustainable planning, optimizing resource management, implementing risk management protocols, and enhancing stakeholder participation and beneficiary feedback. Future research should examine the influence of stakeholder engagement, participatory planning, implementation, and monitoring on project success.

Introduction

The Background of the study, Statement of the problem, general objective, specific objectives, hypotheses of the research, scope of the study and the significance of the study.

Background of the study

The integration of project sustainability practices into the livelihoods of smallholder farmers has gained significant attention in recent years, given the critical role smallholder farmers play in global food production and rural development. Sustainable agriculture practices are essential for enhancing the resilience, productivity, and overall well-being of smallholder farmers, ensuring their long-term viability and contribution to food security. One of the key benefits of integrating sustainability practices is the improvement of agricultural productivity. According to Smith et al. (2020), sustainable farming techniques, such as crop rotation, agroforestry, and organic farming, can significantly increase crop yields while maintaining soil health and reducing dependency on chemical inputs. These practices not only boost productivity but also enhance soil fertility and biodiversity, which are crucial for sustainable agricultural systems.

Objective of the study

1. General objective

The aim of the study is to assess the effect of project sustainability practices on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District.

2. Specific objective

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To analyses the effect of sustainable project planning on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District
- ii. To assess the effect of sustainable resource management on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District
- iii. To find out the effect of sustainable risk management on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District
- iv. To assess the effect of stakeholder involvement on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District.

3. Research hypotheses

To attain the objectives of the study, the research tested the following hypotheses:

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of sustainable project planning on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District,

H₀₂: There is no significant effect of sustainable resource management on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District,

H₀₃: There is no significant effect of sustainable risk management on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District,

H₀₄: There is no significant effect of stakeholder involvement on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District.

4. Time scope

The study's time scope spans from 2020 to 2024, capturing recent developments and outcomes related to project sustainability practices and livelihood impacts among smallholder farmers in Nyaruguru district. This timeframe ensures that the study examines current practices and trends, considering any changes or advancements in agricultural policies, technologies, and community dynamics during the specified period. By focusing on this timeframe, the study aims to provide relevant and timely insights into the sustainability challenges and opportunities faced by smallholder farmers, contributing to ongoing discussions on rural development and sustainable agriculture in Rwanda.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section summarizes previous research on the study's independent and dependent variables. The literature review is divided into several sections: the conceptual review, theoretical review, empirical review, conceptual framework, and research gap.

Conceptual review

A conceptual review is typically a detailed analysis and synthesis of key concepts and frameworks related to a particular topic.

1. Project sustainability practices

Project sustainability practices integrate environmental, social, and economic considerations throughout the project lifecycle to enhance long-term success. Key practices include stakeholder engagement, sustainable resource management, risk assessment, and lessons learned. These practices promote innovation, stakeholder value, resilience, and contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs'), despite challenges such as limited standardized frameworks and quantitative research (Fernandes, 2024; Pinto, 2023; Soares, 2024).

2 Sustainable Project Planning

Sustainable project planning integrates environmental, social, and economic considerations into project design and implementation. It involves stakeholder engagement, impact assessment, efficient resource use, flexible planning, and sustainability indicators to achieve long-term outcomes while minimizing negative impacts (Soares, 2024; Pinto, 2023; Jones & Anderson, 2021).

3. Sustainable Resource Management

Sustainable resource management involves the efficient and responsible use of natural and human resources to meet present needs without compromising future generations. It focuses on resource conservation, waste reduction, renewable resource use, and long-term planning. Organizations can improve operational efficiency, minimize environmental degradation, and promote social equity by assessing resource availability, reducing dependence on non-renewable resources, and considering life-cycle impacts (Kowalska & Jankowska, 2021; Mwangi & Kariuki, 2020; Seth & Mathur, 2021).

Theoretical review

Theoretical review of the study, focusing on three key theories that provide a foundation for understanding project success. These theories include the Project Management Triangle, Stakeholder Theory, and Goal-Setting Theory.

1. Project Management Triangle Theory

The Project Management Triangle, also known as the Iron Triangle, explains the relationship between time, cost, and quality/scope in determining project success. It highlights the need to balance these constraints, as changes in one may affect the others. Although the theory provides a simple framework for decision-making, it has limitations because it does not fully consider stakeholder satisfaction, social impacts, and environmental sustainability (Turner, 2021; Zahoor, 2023). In the JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District, the theory provides a basis for examining how sustainable project planning and sustainable resource management influence project success. Effective planning helps coordinate project activities, timelines, and budgets, while sustainable resource management promotes the efficient use of financial, human, and material resources, reduces waste, and supports long-term social and economic benefits.

2. Goal-Setting Theory

Goal-Setting Theory, developed by Locke and Latham, explains that specific, measurable, and challenging goals improve motivation and performance. Regular feedback helps monitor progress and make necessary adjustments (Turner, 2021). However, unrealistic goals may cause stress, while individual differences and conflicting stakeholder priorities can affect goal achievement (Zahoor, 2023). In the JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District, the theory is relevant because sustainable risk management involves identifying potential obstacles and implementing appropriate measures to achieve project objectives and ensure long-term success.

3. Stakeholder Theory

Theory highlights the importance of communication, collaboration, transparency, and shared ownership in achieving sustainable project outcomes, particularly in community-based rural development projects. However, the theory faces challenges in identifying diverse stakeholders and balancing competing interests. Conflicting expectations may complicate decision-making and cause project delays (Poth, 2023). In this study, Stakeholder Theory explains how the involvement of community members, government officials, and development partners influences the success of the JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District. Their participation promotes effective implementation, transparency, community ownership, and long-term project sustainability.

Empirical review

An empirical review is a summary and analysis of studies that are based on observed and measured phenomena essentially studies that collect data through surveys, interviews, experiments and content analysis.

1. Effect of sustainable project planning on project success

Al-Momani and Al-Smadi (2022) studied 250 project managers and engineers in Jordan using surveys and multiple regression analysis. The findings showed that environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, resource management, and cost-effective planning positively influenced infrastructure project success. Khan and Akram (2021) examined sustainable planning in IT projects in Pakistan using surveys, interviews, descriptive statistics, and regression analysis. The findings indicated that integrating environmental, social, and economic sustainability into early project planning improved project outcomes, particularly time, cost, and scope management. Nguyen (2020) investigated 200 construction project stakeholders in Vietnam using questionnaires and structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings revealed that sustainable project planning positively influenced project success, particularly project quality and stakeholder satisfaction.

2. Effect of sustainable resource management on project success

Kamaruddin, Mokhtar, and Chia (2021) found that effective resource planning and monitoring improved manufacturing project success in Malaysia by reducing delays and cost overruns. Similarly, Akanbi, Fatoki, and Adebisi (2020) established that efficient resource allocation, particularly human resource management, enhanced the timely and cost-effective completion of infrastructure projects in Nigeria. Osei-Tutu, Agyekum, and Ntiamoah (2019) also revealed that adequate resource allocation and availability were essential for completing construction projects on time and within budget in Ghana. Collectively, these studies highlight the importance of effective resource planning, allocation, and monitoring in achieving project success.

3. Effect of sustainable stakeholder involvement on project success

Kanu and Nwachukwu (2022) found a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.75$) between stakeholder engagement and women's empowerment project success in Nigeria, explaining 50% of the variance. Similarly, Seth and Mathur (2021) reported a positive relationship ($r = 0.69$), with stakeholder engagement explaining 48% of project success in India. Mugisha (2020) found a strong correlation ($r = 0.72$) and 52% explanatory power in Uganda. Overall, the studies show that stakeholder engagement enhances participation, resource mobilization, ownership, sustainability, and project success.

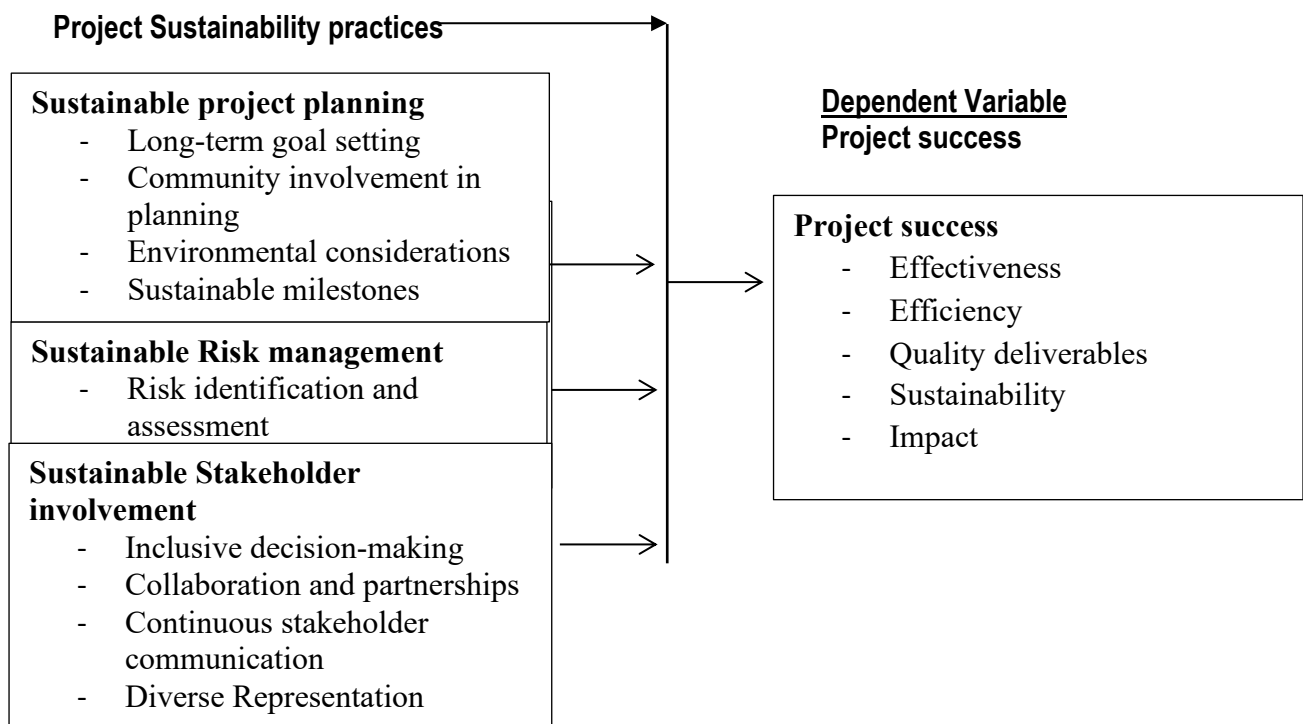
4. Effect of sustainable risk management on project success

Thakur, Soni and Gupta (2022), Kwon and Kim (2021), and Liu, Lu, and Wang (2020) consistently found that effective risk management and adaptive strategies significantly improve project success. Regular risk identification, assessment, mitigation, and timely adaptation of resources, scope, and schedules reduce delays and cost overruns while improving project performance, stakeholder satisfaction, and the achievement of time, cost, and quality objectives.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study examines the integration of sustainable project practices in JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District, focusing on their impact on the project's success. By exploring these elements, the framework aims to identify how each sustainable practice contributes to the overall success of JPRWEE project in terms of economic empowerment, community involvement, sustainability, and long-term outcomes.

Independent Variable



Research design

A research design serves as the blueprint for gathering and analyzing information about the subjects of the study and their environments. It should be thoughtfully constructed to enhance the effectiveness of addressing the research questions. A research design provides a structured approach for information collection and analysis (Taherdoost, 2022). For this study, the researcher employed both descriptive and correlational research designs. Descriptive survey research utilized to gather information on various issues, while the correlational research design focused on exploring the relationships between the variables under study.

Population of the Study

In this case, the population of 215 individuals were divided into three groups including project staff, local leaders and beneficiaries' proportion within the overall population.

Table 3.1. Population of the study

Category	Population
Project Manager	1
Project Coordinator	3
Project Field officer	21
Local Stakeholders	40
Beneficiaries	150
Total	215

Source: JPRWEE project, 2025

Research Instruments

The researcher relied on document analysis, questionnaires, and interviews to compile the data.

1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a structured research tool used to collect data from respondents. It consists of a series of questions or statements designed to gather specific information regarding the variables of interest in a study. (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

Validity

Validity is defined as the point that projected to evaluate. In addition, validity is based on the statement that what is being studied can be measured or captured, seeks to validate the reality and truth of any result or conclusions drawn from the data, indicates that the conclusions drawn are dependable and that the methods justify the conclusions.

The instrument of this research was measured through the opinion of experts especially the research supervisor, who is knowledgeable and tested during the pilot study. Any ambiguity or non-clarity was cleared before the field for data collection.

The validity was tested using Content Validity Index (CVI).

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Total numbers of relevant items in the instrument}}{\text{Total numbers of items in the instruments}}$$

$$CVI = \frac{21}{24} = 0.875$$

Table 3.2: Reliability statistics

Variables	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Sustainable Project planning	4	.851
Sustainable resource management	4	.832
Sustainable risk management	4	.820
Sustainable Stakeholder involvement	4	.828
Project success	5	.827

Table 3.3: Evaluation of Mean

Mean	Evaluation
1.0 -1.8	Very low
1.9 -2.6	Low
2.7-3.4	Neutral
3.5-4.2	High
4.3- 5.0	Very high

Table 3.4: Evaluation of standard deviation

Standard Deviation	Level spreading
SD<0.5	Homogeneity
SD>0.5	Heterogeneity

Source: Aggesti (2009)

Inferential statistics

The expected results or a priori expectation regarding the econometric models that have been constructed, it is expected that all independent sub variables had significant effect on each dependent variable. This kind of effect is to positively check for each econometric model. Generally, there are significant and positive effect of stakeholders' involvement on project success.

X = Independent Variable

Y = Dependent Variable

$Y = f(x)$

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

Were,

X = (X₁= Sustainable Project planning (SPP), X₂= Sustainable resource management (SRM), X₃: Sustainable risk management (SRM) and X₄: Sustainable Stakeholder involvement (SSI), while the Y= Project success (PS) Based on these functions the following multiple regression models are established: Where β_0 is the intercept for each model and β_1 , β_2 , β_3 and β_4 are coefficients of explanatory variables, using primary data and e= error term. The pre-estimation tests carried out in determining the suitability of each of the model.

Limitation of the study

The study anticipates several limitations that may affect its outcomes. Firstly, the reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires could introduce response bias, as participants might provide socially desirable answers rather than accurate reflections of their experiences. Secondly, the scope of the study is confined to JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or similar projects. Additionally, time constraints and resource limitations may restrict the ability to conduct extensive follow-up with participants or include a larger sample size, thereby narrowing the range of perspectives included in the study. Despite these limitations, the research design has been structured to mitigate potential biases and ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Response rate

This section discusses the effectiveness of data collection efforts within the study, emphasizing the distinction between completed and incomplete questionnaires. The examined response rate provides essential context for the findings, reflecting the engagement levels of the target population and the representativeness of the collected data, which may influence the reliability of the study's conclusions.

Table 4.1: Response rate

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percent
Incomplete	14	6.5
Complete	201	93.5
Total	215	100.0

Table 4.2: Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Male	107	53.2
Female	94	46.8
Total	201	100.0

Table 4.3: Age group of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
18-25 years	10	5.0

26-35 years	56	27.9
36-45 years	92	45.8
46-55 years	29	14.4
56-65 years	11	5.5
Above 65	3	1.5
Total	201	100.0

Table 4.4: Education level of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Primary level	129	64.2
Secondary level	39	19.4
Bachelor level	27	13.4
Masters level	6	3.0
Total	201	100.0

Table 4.5: Sustainable Project Planning of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District includes clear long-term goals that align with sustainability principles.	201	4.15	.947
Community members are actively involved in the planning process of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District.	201	4.50	.825
Environmental considerations are effectively integrated into the planning of the JPRWEE project.	201	3.93	1.183
JPRWEE project has established sustainable milestones to track progress towards its sustainability objectives.	201	4.55	.647
Overall mean and standard deviation	201	4.28	.901

Table 4.6: Sustainable Resource Management of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Resources allocated for JPRWEE project are managed efficiently to maximize sustainability.	201	4.25	.727
JPRWEE project prioritizes the use of local resources to enhance sustainability in Nyaruguru District.	201	4.53	.663
There is a systematic approach to resource monitoring and evaluation in the JPRWEE project.	201	4.48	.807
JPRWEE project implements effective resource recycling practices to minimize waste.	201	4.46	.860
Overall mean and standard deviation	201	4.43	.764

Table 4.7: Sustainable Risk Management of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
JPRWEE project conducts regular risk identification and assessment to address potential threats.	201	4.57	.646
Adaptive management strategies are employed in JPRWEE project to respond to changing conditions and risks.	201	4.38	.816
Effective mitigation strategies are in place to manage risks identified in the JPRWEE project.	201	4.38	.942
Training is provided to project staff on risk management practices within the JPRWEE project.	201	4.63	.710
Overall mean and standard deviation	201	4.49	.779

Table 4.8: Sustainable Stakeholder involvement of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
JPRWEE project engages in inclusive decision-making processes to involve stakeholders.	201	4.08	.999
JPRWEE project fosters collaboration and partnerships with various stakeholders to enhance project outcomes.	201	4.47	1.010
There is continuous communication with stakeholders regarding the progress and updates of the JPRWEE project.	201	4.10	1.226
JPRWEE project ensures diverse representation of stakeholders in its planning and execution phases.	201	4.61	.631
Overall mean and standard deviation	201	4.32	.967

Table 4.9: Performance of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
JPRWEE project has effectively achieved its stated objectives and goals.	201	4.23	.755
The resources utilized by JPRWEE project have been used efficiently to deliver results.	201	4.53	.721
The deliverables produced by JPRWEE project meet high-quality standards.	201	4.34	.962
The outcomes of JPRWEE project are sustainable and will have lasting impacts on the community.	201	4.32	.781
JPRWEE project has had a positive impact on the livelihoods of the local population in Nyaruguru District.	201	4.56	.746
Overall mean and standard deviation	201	4.40	.793

Table 4.10: Correlations

		Sustainable Project planning	Sustainable resource management	Sustainable risk management	Sustainable Stakeholder involvement	Project success
Sustainable Project planning	Pearson	1	.843**	.659**	.612**	.726**
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	201	201	201	201	201
Sustainable resource management	Pearson	.843**	1	.642**	.468**	.668**
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	201	201	201	201	201
Sustainable risk management	Pearson	.659**	.642**	1	.585**	.713**
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	201	201	201	201	201
Sustainable Stakeholder involvement	Pearson	.612**	.468**	.585**	1	.722**
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	201	201	201	201	201
Project success	Pearson	.726**	.668**	.713**	.722**	1
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	201	201	201	201	201

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

Table 4.12: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	36.539	4	9.135	117.115	.000 ^b
	Residual	15.297	196	.078		
	Total	51.835	200			

a. Dependent Variable: Project success

Table 4.13: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t		Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.176	.172		1.023	.308		
	Sustainable Project planning	.162	.079	.167	2.051	.042	.226	4.432
	Sustainable resource management	.178	.076	.178	2.342	.019	.266	3.764
	Sustainable risk management	.245	.052	.265	4.712	.000	.478	2.094
	Sustainable Stakeholder involvement	.362	.050	.382	7.240	.000	.546	1.832

a. Dependent Variable: Project success

Table 4.14: Hypotheses Results

Hypotheses	P Value	Comment
H ₀₁ : There is no significant effect of sustainable project planning on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District,	p=0.042<0.05	Rejected
H ₀₂ : There is no significant effect of sustainable resource management on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District,	p=0.019<0.05	Rejected
H ₀₃ : There is no significant effect of sustainable risk management on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District,	p=0.000<0.05	Rejected
H ₀₄ : There is no significant effect of stakeholder involvement on success of JPRWEE project in Nyaruguru District.	p=0.000<0.05	Rejected

Summary of Findings

1 The Effects of Sustainable Project Planning on the Success of JPRWEE Project in Nyaruguru District- The findings indicate strong agreement that sustainable project planning was effectively implemented in the JPRWEE project, with an overall mean of 4.28 (SD = 0.901). Respondents particularly agreed on sustainable milestones (M = 4.55) and community involvement (M = 4.50), while environmental integration received the lowest mean (M = 3.93). Overall, the results demonstrate positive but varied perceptions of sustainable planning practices.

2 The Effects of Sustainable Risk Management on the Success of JPRWEE Project in Nyaruguru District- The findings indicate strong agreement on sustainable risk management practices in the JPRWEE project, with an overall mean of 4.49 (SD = 0.779). Respondents particularly agreed on risk identification and assessment, adaptive strategies, mitigation measures, and staff training. Although responses varied to some extent, the overall results confirm that effective risk management practices were implemented in the project.

3 The Effects of Stakeholder Involvement on the Success of JPRWEE Project in Nyaruguru District- The findings indicate that respondents generally agreed that the JPRWEE project promoted sustainable stakeholder involvement through inclusive decision-making, collaboration, continuous communication, and diverse representation. The overall mean of 4.32 and standard deviation of 0.967 indicate strong agreement with some variation in respondents' views.

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