Effect of Project Planning on Project Performance, A Case of Partnership for Resilient and Inclusive Small Livestock Markets Project in Rulindo District, Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

The research sought to investigate the effect of project planning on project performance in Rwanda, focusing on the case of The Partnership for Resilient and Inclusive Small Livestock Market (PRISM) project in Rulindo District. It examined the effect of project communication planning, stakeholder planning, and risk planning on the performance of PRISM project in this district. The study was guded by stakeholder theory, Organizational information theory, and the theory of constraints. The study employed descriptive and correlational research designs. The target population under this study was 754 and the sample size was 87 respondents. This study employed universal and purposive sampling methods. Purposive sampling also referred to as judgmental or selective sampling, involves the researcher choosing specific individuals from the population based on their judgment. The study used questionnaires and interview and observation guides as research instruments. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as correlation and multiple regression were used to analyze quantitative data after running the collected data through SPSS. In contrast, content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data. Regarding specific objective one, the results revealed that project communication planning has positive and significant effect PRISM project in Rulindo District as indicated by β1 =0.162, p-value = 0.021<0.05, t = 2.347 which means that an increase of one unity in project communication planning would lead to an increase in performance of PRISM project in Rulindo District by 0.162 units. Regarding the second specific objective, the findings showed that project stakeholder planning has positive and significant effect on the performance of PRISM project in Rulindo District as indicated by β2= 0.295, p-value= 0.000<0.05, t= 3.881 which implies that an increase of one unity in project stakeholder planning would lead to an increase in performance of PRISM project in Rulindo District by 0.295 units. With the third specific objective, the results showed that project risk planning has positive effect but is not statistically significant on the performance of PRISM project in Rulindo District as indicated by β3=0.032, p-value=0.616, t=0.507, the implication is that an increase of one unity in project risk planning would lead to an increase in performance of PRISM project in Rulindo district by 0.032 units. The study concludes that communication planning, stakeholder planning and risk planning significantly contribute to predicting and positively influencing the performance of PRISM Project in Rulindo District. Based on the study's results, it was recommended that PRISM projects foster a culture of active communication and collaboration. This can ensure more inclusive and informed decision-making processes by encouraging open channels for employees, and stakeholders to share ideas, insights, and feedback freely. This participatory also approach fosters engagement, enables balanced decision-making, and cultivates a collaborative environment that drives better problem-solving, innovation, and overall organizational performance.

Keywords: Communication Planning, Project Planning, Project Performance, Risk Planning, Stakeholder Planning

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Bojnord and Afrazeh (2006) project planning involves breaking down the project work into individual tasks and allocating them to the project team members who are responsible for their execution. Successful project planning requires consideration of various factors including time, cost, risk, scope, quality, procurement, human resources, integration, and communication. These factors are influenced by inputs such as human, technical, managerial, and organizational elements. Managerial factors directly impact the planning process, while techniques utilized also affect planning outcomes. Organizational factors are instrumental in planning, and the human factor is particularly crucial during the project planning stage (Tesfaye et al., 2017).

Project planning stands as the cornerstone for achieving success in projects. Lacking careful planning, realizing project success remains a mere aspiration. While planning doesn't ensure success absolutely, the absence of it virtually guarantees failure. Project planning is essential in project management, influencing outcomes across wide-ranging environments (Mohsin, 2021). Tesfaye et al.(2017) assert that projects are crucial to a nation's economic

development. A country's economy is built on projects since they generate additional capital and provide a steady supply of goods and services. In recent times, particularly in developing nations, projects have been recognized as a crucial vehicle for driving social-economic transformation among the population (Asare, 2017).

Most initiated projects begin with excellent concepts and investments that have bright futures. However, throughout their existence, these projects encounter several difficulties that impede their promising prospects. A key factor contributing to project is the incapacity of project planners to sufficiently define the project activities and scope (Williams & Munene Muiruri, 2022). According to Irfan et al. (2021) inadequate planning and individual competencies are the primary causes of project failure. This prevents all project team members from understanding the project's true fundamentals, which prevents them from achieving the project's full output (Williams & Munene Muiruri, 2022).

According to Tesfaye et al.,(2017), project planning plays a crucial in the economy, but the success rate of project remains generally low in a developing countries. The success or failure of these projects is critical for nations with limited financial resources.Thus, project planning should be given a lot of importance, with particular emphasis on its components such as stakeholder engagement, communication, scope, risk, time, procurement, cost, and quality management. Furthermore, efficient project planning significantly aids in the execution process and can improve the performance in the control and monitoring phases of the project (Irfan et al., 2021).

In Rwanda, several projects close as a result of noncommittal behavior or deviation from predetermined goals, which results in the fraudulent use of funds meant for community development. Certain projects require more time to finish than anticipated and fail to comply with the deadlines established during the planning phase. Other projects experience cost overruns, exceeding the budgeted amount. These challenges and others are mainly caused by different factors but inadequate project planning is at the forefront (Alpha et al., 2021). Ephantus et al.(2015) suggest that many projects with good planning have consistently succeeded in accomplishing their objectives, but those with inadequate planning often failed at either the earlier stages or have not produced the expected outcomes.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Rwanda has notably implemented numerous agricultural projects aimed at transforming the sector and enhancing food security (Védaste & Michael, 2024).These initiatives have led to increased productivity, the adoption of improved agricultural techniques, and a reduction in poverty levels as indicated by Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI, 2020). The Partnership for Resilient and Inclusive Small Livestock Market (PRISM) project, launched in 2021, is managed by Rwanda's Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources. Co-financed by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Belgian Development Agency (ENABEL), the project operates in 15 districts and aims to alleviate poverty by improving food security, nutrition, and incomes among rural households. It supports smallholder farmers by providing small livestock and training in farming, financial literacy, nutrition, business management, and gender equality. The project also aims to improve livestock value chains, boost agricultural productivity, and connect farmers to markets (IFAD, 2019).

Despite the significance of these projects, the Agriculture sector in Rwanda experiences a high rate of project failure, accompanied by significant expenses for launching and operating these projects (Institute of Policy Analysis and Research [IPAR], 2018). According to the study by Ruzindana and Irechukwu (2023), Rwanda's 50% of businesses fail to survive beyond five years. For example, the Rwanda Agriculture Board signed a $16.5 million contract in 2017 with OM Metals and SPML to develop irrigation systems and improve watersheds in the Mpanga Sector, but only 75% of the project activities were completed as of March 2020 (MINAGRI, 2020). The poor performance of these projects is attributed mainly to poor planning practices such as setting unrealistic goals and targets, lack of coordination between activities, inefficient resource allocation and poor feasibility study (Angelique, 2019). Furthermore, Eric et al.(2020) indicated that many projects in Rwanda fail due to issues like miscommunication, supply shortages, inadequate stakeholder engagement, and insufficient risk management. These obstacles greatly lead to project delays, budget overruns, or face cancellation. Such project failures bear significant economic and political consequences (Woldie, 2016).

Project planning plays a crucial role in project performance, especially in addressing existing issues. However, there is a significant gap in studies on its impact on small livestock projects in Rwanda. Previous studies have prioritized a diverse range of topics. Thaddee et al. (2020) determined the contribution of project management practices on project success in Girinka Project in Kamonyi District of Rwanda; Numuhire and Kwena (2022) investigated the planning and sustainability of the Rwanda education assistance project in Rwamagana District, while Umulisa and Dushimimana (2023) analyzed the effect of project planning practices on the performance of improved capacity for Supply of Quality in the Reproductive Health Services Project in Nyamasheke District of Rwanda. However, most of these studies focused on projects operating in different domains with no focus on small livestock-related projects. Given the aforementioned challenges and the notable gap in existing literature regarding the effect of

project planning on project performance, particularly within the small livestock sub-sector, this led the researcher to examine the effect of project planning on the performance of PRISM project in Rulindo District, Rwanda.

1.2 Research objectives

The present study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

i. To examine the effect of communication planning on the performance of PRISM Project in Rulindo District
ii. To determine the effect of stakeholder planning on the performance of PRISM Project in Rulindo District
iii. To assess the effect of project risk planning on the performance of PRISM Project in Rulindo District

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The study tested the following specific hypotheses:

Ho_1: There is no significant effect of communication planning on the performance of PRISM project Rulindo District

Ho_2: There is no significant effect of stakeholder planning on the performance of PRISM Project in Rulindo District

Ho_3: There is no significant effect of project risk planning on the performance of the PRISM project in Rulindo District

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Underpinning

This section presents the theoretical review such as organizational information theory, stakeholder theory, and Theory of Constraints.

2.1.1 Organizational Information Theory

Organizational information theory, advanced by Karl in 1967, suggests that communication within an organization shapes the environment, which in turn influences people's behavior and productivity. The theory emphasizes the communication process rather than the role of the communicators. This perspective is valuable for understanding how organizational members collaborate with both internal and external environments to interpret the information they receive. The theory encompasses the information environment, information equivocality, and the flow of communication (Alamgir et al., 2015).

For an organization to successfully deliver projects, it must provide the necessary information to achieve its goals. The primary objective is to reduce ambiguity and focus on essential information, excluding the unnecessary. Organizational communication should be geared towards ensuring that people clearly understand the objectives, enabling them to achieve the goals effectively. According to Diallo & Thuillier (2005), effective communication is essential for maintaining relationships, building trust, showing respect, and enhancing team productivity. Organizational information theory focuses on the relationships and networks between groups and individuals within organizations, highlighting their collaborative efforts (Fine, 2008).

This theory is pertinent to the study as it stresses the relevance of engaging all stakeholders in the communication process to make certain their perspectives and feedback are considered. The researcher explored how inclusive communication strategies contribute to more successful project outcomes by applying Organisational information theory

2.1.2 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory was first introduced by Eduard Freeman in 1984. The concept of organizational management and business ethics focuses on the principles of morality and values when overseeing and running an organization (Freeman & McVea, 2005). The idea of maximizing stakeholder value originated from Freeman‘s work, Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach, which laid the groundwork for future theories in this area. This approach is grounded in both organizational management and ethics. It challenges the traditional focus on shareholder value prevalent in free-market systems, advocating instead for the prioritization of stakeholder interests. For years, economists have defined the purpose of a business as maximizing shareholder returns, which was even considered its legal purpose. The idea of maximizing stakeholder value originated from Freeman's work, Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach, which laid the groundwork for future theories in this area. This approach is grounded in both organizational management and ethics. This perspective also aligns with viewing a project as an initiative created to provide value for all stakeholders, including the project owner argued that this interpretation is incorrect, as the law does not mandate a business to prioritize shareholder profits, but rather to act within the boundaries of the law. This

perspective also aligns with viewing a project as an initiative created to provide value for all stakeholders, including the project owner (Missonier & Loufrani-Fedida, 2014).

Stakeholder Theory stresses the interconnected link between a company and its diverse stakeholders, such as clients, suppliers, personnel, investors, communities among others with an interest in the organization. This theory advocates for creating value for all stakeholders, rather than solely for shareholders. As such, the project manager must understand and consider the interests of each stakeholder to contribute to the success of the project. This approach encourages managers to recognize the value of stakeholder involvement and treat them as essential contributors. By fostering these relationships, the theory helps create a more effective project organization, which can enhance the likelihood of project success. Sustainable project management involves the proactive engagement of stakeholders in key activities such as defining requirements, evaluating costs and benefits, planning and scheduling, as well as identifying and addressing risks and issues, and ensuring transparent project reporting. (Silvius & Schipper, 2014).

This study is tied to the theory since it shows the involvement of various individuals in project implementation, especially during the planning phase, which contributes to the project's achievements. Stakeholder theory considers the function of the project donor, project team, and government, examining how their decisions impact others to ensure the best possible outcomes for everyone involved. To enhance stakeholder management, it is essential to systematically plan communication, common goals, objectives, and project priorities before starting the project.

By incorporating stakeholder theory, the researcher explores how PRISM project acknowledges and manages stakeholder expectations and contributions during the planning and implementation phases to enhance overall project performance.

2.1.3 Theory of Constraints

This theory serves as both a management philosophy and a methodical one aimed at identifying and addressing constraints or bottlenecks that hinder the system's general efficiency. Originally used in manufacturing and operations management, the principles of the Theory of Constraints (TOC) can also be applied to project planning, helping to enhance efficiency and project outcomes (Şimşit et al., 2014). It is a systems approach aimed at ensuring that any changes made during the continuous improvement process benefit the entire system, rather than just a specific part of it. A foundational principle of theory is that each system encounters constraints that hinder it from reaching its objectives. The five Focusing Steps of the theory provide a straightforward yet powerful method for continuous improvement, especially when the constraint is clearly identifiable. They accomplish this by initially pinpointing the symptoms within the system, which serve as indicators that the system is not operating up to the desired standards. Subsequently, the Thinking Process tools of TOC are then employed to scrutinize the root causes of those symptoms, determine necessary corrective actions, and advise strategies for their implementation. TOC stresses the need to improve workflow by identifying and managing constraints. (Mabin, 1990).

The TOC advises project managers to focus on tasks according to the identified constraint and take actions to synchronize and balance the flow of resources and activities. It also introduces buffer management, which helps protect projects from disruptions and ensures a smooth task progression through the system. TOC focuses on managing constraints to enhance project performance, minimize bottlenecks, and boost total output. This method offers a framework for project management framework that allows institutions to optimize resources and realize project goals more efficiently (Goldratt, 1990). Moreover, the theory suggests that companies be managed efficiently by addressing firm-specific issues. The idea emphasizes processes and procedures that improve organizational performance and identifies cost, schedule, quality, and scope as significant hurdles to achieving project success (Kohli & Gupta, 2010) .

In this research, the TOC is very useful because it reminds everyone who is part of the project to think of strategies for addressing issues like costs, schedules, risks, quality, scope, and project plans. It advocates for preventive measures to anticipate and prevent issues from arising.

2.2 Empirical Review

This empirical review aims to synthesize existing research findings on the relationship between project planning and project performance, drawing from various studies that examined different aspects of planning processes, methodologies, and their outcomes. The review will evaluate the quality of these studies, summarize their key findings, and identify common patterns and discrepancies in the results.

2.2.1 Communication Planning and Project Performance

Effective communication bridges the gap between stakeholders with diverse organizational cultures, backgrounds, skill sets, and varying levels of expertise, all of which can influence the success of project implementation. It is paramount in establishing effective stakeholder relationships. Poor communication skills can have a detrimental effect on team engagement, productivity, and the overall profitability of a project as signified by Project Management Institute (PMI, 2017).

Aminah (2016) evaluated the use of participatory communication in the small farmers' empowerment project in Eastern Indonesia, a joint initiative between the government and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The study found that the limited use of participatory communication led to insufficient cooperation and dialogue between the small farmers and other stakeholders.

This led to a restricted exchange of essential information and knowledge needed for decision-making during the project's execution, which contributed to its failure. The lack of agreement on the desired outcomes and priority areas obstructed effective coordination in the decision-making process, negatively impacting the program's success

An empirical study by Nyandongo and Davids (2020) scrutinized the impact of communication on project performance, revealing a powerful linkage between communication and project outcomes. The study highlighted that effective communication contributes to higher success rates and improves overall project performance. The importance of communication was underscored by the survey's findings, which showed that project managers who prioritize communication as a key factor in project success tend to achieve better results. Additionally, the research identified specific social media tools that could enhance communication in projects. However, it was likewise renowned that the use of social media in project management remains a controversial topic. Investigating how social media can be effectively used to improve communication in project management would provide valuable insights, considering the associated risks and debates

According to Singirankabo and Wanjiku (2023), in their conducted research on the effect of communication practices on the performance of INGOs' projects in Rwanda, meant to evaluate the effects of participatory communication, results-driven communication, and multi-channel communication. The research revealed a strong link between participatory communication and both dialogue consultation and project timelines. Results-driven communication was associated with feedback regarding cost efficiency, project deadlines, and quality. Furthermore, multi-channel communication showed a significant relationship with message consistency and project schedules. Based on these findings, the researchers recommend that project managers in INGOs adopt effective communication strategies to enhance goal attainment. They also propose that future research gather data from project teams and stakeholders to further deepen the empirical understanding.

2.2.2 Project Stakeholder Planning and Project Performance

Researchers have identified stakeholder participation in any project as crucial for achieving durable development, positive impact, and overall project success. El-Sawalhi and Hammad (2015) studied stakeholder management in the Gaza Strip construction projects, aiming to enhance the role of stakeholders in these projects. The study had four key objectives: identifying and ranking the factors influencing stakeholder management in construction projects, assessing stakeholders based on their influence, evaluating current stakeholder management practices, and developing a conceptual framework for the stakeholder management process. The findings revealed that the most important factors influencing stakeholder management include selecting a highly competent project manager, transparently evaluating different solutions, safeguarding impactful communication amongst the project and its stakeholders, setting common goals and objectives, and addressing stakeholder needs and expectations. The client and donors were identified as the primary stakeholders with the most influence on the construction project. A management framework was developed to guide stakeholder involvement in construction projects, with the researcher recommending that the project management team follow the proposed framework for effective stakeholder management.

In their study, Gichimu and Mutuku (2022) determined the effect of stakeholder management on project performance. The research focused on evaluating how contract management, communication management, and conflict management affect projects funded by the County Government in Nyeri County. The results confirmed that communication management had a profound influence on project performance, followed by conflict management and contract management. The researchers underscored the value of effective stakeholder management and recommended that the government ensure thorough stakeholder involvement during the feasibility phase of any project. To enhance transparency and accountability in project management, the study suggested defining clear communication channels, formats, frequencies, and responsibilities for sharing progress updates with stakeholders from the outset of the project. Additionally, it recommended that project management adopt a proactive approach to conflict by identifying potential issues early and preparing solutions in advance.

A research study by Eric et al. (2020) explored the interconnection between stakeholder management on project performance in Rwanda, focusing on the SCSC project of the Rwanda Red Cross. The study aimed to evaluate the influence of stakeholder needs and expectations, communication, conflict management strategies, and participation on project performance. The findings revealed that stakeholder management contributed significantly to project performance. To ensure enhanced stakeholder involvement, the researchers recommend accentuating the importance of involving stakeholders in a project from the beginning to the end. This approach ensures the project's impact on the community and aligns with the community's needs. The researchers further recommended building stronger collaborative relationships through continuous engagement and information sharing, as well as harmonizing stakeholder plans at all levels of national development. For example, this could involve jointly signing the district's performance contract.

2.2.3 Risk Planning and Project Performance

Projects face a variety of risks that can impact their financial, strategic, operational, and hazard-related aspects. Unanticipated events and uncertainties often lead to negative outcomes for projects, and failure to address these risks effectively can hinder project completion. As a result, conducting risk analysis and managing these risks are critical components of project management. Managers must navigate risks and uncertainties to successfully achieve the project's objectives (Njuguna, 2019). In a study conducted by Aduma & Kimutai (2018) in Nairobi, Kenya, the researchers investigated risk management practices at the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF). The study utilized a descriptive research design, focusing on 651 management employees at NHIF. A stratified random sampling method was leveraged resulting in a sample of 241 participants. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to employees from different departments, including investment, health insurance, legal affairs, public procurement, and human resources. Results indicated that risk transfer methods, such as outsourcing, elevated insurance premiums, and third-party contracts, played a substantial role in influencing the performance of NHIF's projects.

A study by Mugenga and Bugingo (2024) analyzed the impact of risk management on the performance of construction projects in Musanze District, Rwanda, focusing on Project Institute of Applied Sciences (INES)-Busogo, GS Kampanga Road, and the New Product Developer (NPD Ltd). The targeted population was 600 employees and selected a sample of 86 respondents. The analysis of data was performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, applying both descriptive and inferential statistics. The results highlighted a significant link between risk management and project performance. The study suggested that involving Rwandan citizens in construction projects could boost personal economic growth, as informal work provides steady income, improving financial stability.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design outlines the structure for conducting the study. It acts as a roadmap for collecting, measuring, and analyzing data. This includes planning the data collection methods and the analytical techniques. Descriptive research focuses on identifying the characteristics of a phenomenon through observation or exploring the relationships between different phenomena (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019).

The study employed descriptive and correlational research designs for effective data analysis. It also utilized together quantitative and qualitative approaches for data collection. This means that both questionnaires and interviews were used to gather the information should be grounded when analyzing and interpreting such data. This approach facilitated the description of data crucial for addressing the study objectives outlined and for testing hypotheses. The study utilized correlation to assess the effect of project planning and its variables on project performance, having an insight into the individual influences of the considered project planning practices on performance.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population was 754 population who is involved in project, in Rulindo district, where the child protection project is implementing. They included project beneficiaries, project implementors, project planners and project donors.

Table 1
Target Population

Target Population	Number
Project planners	4
Project implementors	7
Project beneficiaries	741
Project donors	2
Total	**754**

The table above shows that a total of 754 people, They included 741 project beneficiaries, 7 project implementors, 4 project planners and 2 project donors.

Table 2
Summary of Respondents

Category	Study Population	Sample Size
Project planners	4	4
Project implementors	7	7
Project donors	2	2
Project beneficiaries	741	74
Total	**754**	**87**

The table above shows that a total of 87 people, this study conducted on 4 project planners, 7 proejct implementors, 2 projet donors and 74 project beneficiaries.

3.3 Research Instruments

A questionnaire is a data collection instrument composed of a series of questions intended to obtain information from participants, who provide answers to both open-ended and close-ended questions (Kabir, 2016). A structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data, with 83 questionnaires distributed to willing participants. The questionnaire had two sections: the first section collected demographic information such as age, gender, position, education, work experience, and professional background. The second part focused on analyzing the effect of project planning on the performance of PRISM Project in Rulindo District, Rwanda. The questionnaire utilized a scale, where participants mentioned their degree of agreement (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, or strongly disagree) with various statements. This tool was employed to gather quantitative data from both project implementors and beneficiaries.

Moreover, according to Kallio et al. (2016), an interview guide is a collection of questions posed to participants during an interview. The sequence of these questions and the extent to which the interviewer deviates from the predefined list can vary depending on the type of interview being conducted. The interviewer can document the interviewee's responses while also observing their body language, facial expressions, and other reactions to the questions, which helps in drawing more informed conclusions (Kabir, 2016).

This research used a structured interview guide, with an interview schedule outlining key points on the topic to guide the investigative discussion. The interview guide was further complemented by informal interviews with senior project staff. This approach assisted the researcher in several ways, including managing the pace of the interviews.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

This study utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, with qualitative data being approximated and characterized through interviews, and analyzed based on responses, while quantitative data analysis involves systematic use of statistical methods (descriptive and inferential statistics) to describe, summarize, and compare data (Monday, 2020).

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the effect of project planning on project performance in Rwanda. This section presents and analyzes data collected from respondents who have involved in the project.

Table 3

Questionnaire and Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Percent
Responded	85	97.7
Didn't respond	1	1.1
Unsuccessfully responses	1	1.1
Total	**87**	**100.0**

Table 3 presents the response rate. Out of the target 87 questionnaires distributed and conducted interviews, a total of 85 were collected including 81 questionnaires and 4 completed interview guides.

Table 4

Age Group of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
Between 18-28	10	12.3
Between 29-38	22	27.2
Between 39-48	23	28.4
Between 49-58	19	23.5
59 years and above	7	8.6
Total	**81**	**100.0**

The findings about age group respondents in the Table 4. The study revealed that the greater part of the participants were between the ages of 39-48 years (28.4%) followed by those between the ages of 29-38 years (27.2%). Those aged between 49-58 years accounted for 23.5%, respondents aged 18-28 were 12.3% and over 59 years were minorities (8.6%). The study aimed to figure out the age distribution of respondents. An age bracket is a specific range of ages with upper and lower limits.

Table 5

Gender of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Male	33	40.7
Female	48	59.3
Total	**81**	**100.0**

The study reveals that gender distribution among the respondents. Analysis above indicated that 59.3% of respondents were female while the males comprised 40.7% of the respondents. This indicates that females dominate the position of project involvement. The study aimed to determine the gender distribution of respondents, focusing on gender, which encompasses socially constructed characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys.

Table 6

Educational Level of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Primary	37	45.7
Secondary	17	21.0
Bachelor	20	24.7
Master	7	8.6
Total	**81**	**100.0**

Table 6 reveals that 45.7% of respondents held primary education, 24.7% had bachelor's degrees, 21.0% had secondary education, and 8.6% had master's degrees. This is because the projects in agricultural projects require professionals in various fields and beneficiaries. The agricultural project employs professional experts, resulting in significant project outcomes. The researcher aimed to ascertain the academic qualifications of the respondents. Educational background refers to a person's level of education, including formal education, and any new learning opportunities they are currently pursuing

Table 7

Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	8	9.9
Married	63	77.8
Divorced	6	7.4
Window(er)	4	4.9
Total	**81**	**100.0**

The findings on marital status respondents. More than half of the respondents were married (77.8%), 9.9% of respondents were singles, 7.4% of respondents were divorced and 4.9% of respondents were widows(er). Marital status refers to a legally defined relationship with a significant other, including single, married, widowed, or divorced. Researchers may inquire about marital status to understand individuals' needs and preferences.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics on the the Effect of Communication Planning on the Performance of PRISM projct in Rulindo District

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
A clear communication flow has been established, ensuring efficient information sharing among all stakeholders	81	4.32	.544
Project's information is timely delivered to the team members and stakeholders	81	4.41	.628
The best communication modes were used to keep all project stakeholders well-informed	81	3.74	1.243
The flexible meanings of communication were used to respond to the diverse needs of project stakeholders	81	4.28	.597
Overall		**4.18**	**.753**

Table 8 presents the results of the effect of project planning on the performance of PRISM project in Rulindo district. The survey results demonstrated a strong positive agreement among respondents about the establishment of a clear communication flow for efficient information sharing among all stakeholders, with a high mean of 4.32 and SD of 0.544 indicating heterogeneity in responses among respondents. Similarly, the survey results showed a high mean score of 4.41, indicating strong positive agreement among respondents, with a standard deviation of 0.628, indicating heterogeneity in opinions.

Further, the study found that effective communication methods were utilized to keep all project stakeholders informed, with a high mean score of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 1.243. Additionally, respondents strongly agreed that flexible communication strategies were effectively used to cater to the diverse needs of project stakeholders, with a mean score of 4.28. The response data shows a standard deviation of 0.597, indicating a significant degree of heterogeneity among respondents.

The overall very high mean of 4.18 positive opinions is expressed regarding the impact of project planning on the performance of PRISM Project in Rulindo District, standard deviation of 0.753 indicating some heterogeneity in perceptions among the respondents. The findings align with research by Bourne and Walker (2005) asserted that communication is very important for project teams in managing relationships with stakeholders.

Regarding the interview, the senior project staff were asked about how they communicate with project management staff.

Participant 1 stated

> "*We know that the effective communication is vital for managers to succeed as it builds trust, enhances performance, promotes collaboration, and aids in making informed decisions. Further, we exchange thoughts, opinions, knowledge, and information to guarantee a clear and purposeful understanding*

fulfilling all stakeholders. moreover, we communicate using regular meetings to share weekly project information and the feedback is recommended."

Participant 2 pointed out that

"*we prioritize clear and open communication by regular checking in with project team members and stakeholders through meetings, emails and other collaborative tools such s WhatsApp. By active listening, providing updates, and encouraging feedback, we are sure that everyone is on the same page*."

Participant 3 further said

"*We hold regular meetings with the teams to address issues, we use project management software for real-time updates and encourage informal checks such as WhatsApp to foster collaboration for stakeholders. We further provide regular reports and ensure they are informed of key project milestones and potential issues and we try to adopt communication to persuit their preferences*."

Participant 4 added that

"*we keep communication channels open by conducting regular meetings and providing updates. We further use collaborative tools to share information and gather feedback. We also promote transparency and encourage open dialogue. We share timely updates on project progress*."

Table 9

Descriptive statistics on the effect of stakeholders planning on the performance of PRISM project in Rulindo district

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Project managers identified key stakeholders	81	4.25	.488
Project managers assessed stakeholders	81	4.21	.607
Project managers prioritized stakeholders	81	4.31	.683
Project managers engaged with stakeholders	81	4.37	.486
Overall		**4.28**	**.566**

Table 9 shows the descriptive findings on effect of stakeholder planning on the performance of PRISM project in Rulindo District. numerous respondents agreed with the statements that project managers identified key stakeholders, as evidenced by very high mean of 4.25 (SD=0.488). The mean indicates a very strong positive agreement and the standard deviation shows homogeneity in perceptions. Moreover, respondents agreed that project managers assessed stakeholders with a mean score of 4.21 (0.607). The high mean score indicates strong positive agreement, while the standard deviation reveals heterogeneity in opinion patterns.

Furthermore, the high mean score of 4.31 (0.683) for the statement that project managers prioritized stakeholders indicates a strong positive agreement among respondents, with a standard deviation presenting heterogeneity in perceptions. Considering the statement that project managers engaged with stakeholders, the very high mean score of 4.37 (0.486) implies a very strong positive agreement and the standard deviation indicates homogeneity in responses among respondents.

The overall very high mean of 4.28 for the combined statements signifies an overall poisitve opinion that is the effect of stakeholder planning on performance of PRISM, standard deviation of 0.566 indicating some heterogeneity in perceptions among the respondents.The results are linked with the research conducted by Rajablu et al. (2014) highlights the importance of stakeholder engagement and management in ensuring the successful completion of project deliverables. The project manager's success relies on their ability to effectively engage and manage stakeholders, who have varying expectations throughout the project's lifecycle. The stakeholder identification process is the initial step in project management, involving the identification of potential stakeholders. This process includes identification, mapping, prioritization, and engagement to understand their influence, involvement, and significance to the project or business.

On this matter in relation to how the senior managers engage with all project management staff and other stakeholders at district, sector level during project implementation.

The participant 1 said that

"*first of all, we create a stakeholder engagement plan, which helps us to get a list of stakeholders, analyze them and form engagement tactics. Moreover, we communicate the project's vision and build trust through the planning process, we regularly communicate with key stakeholders to increase the likelihood of securing their support throughout the project."*

Participant 2 noted that

"through regular updates and consultation. Inclusive meetings and feedback sessions, we ensure that everyone's input is valued by fostering an open environment for discussion, utilizing collaboration tools to keep everyone informed". Participant 3 noted that:

"we hold regular meetings to promote continuous communication, encourage feedback and inputs from all the team members and stakeholders to keep everyone informed and engaged."

Participant 4 pointed out that

"to keep everyone informed and aligned with project goals and promoting. We maintain open communication and foster collaboration with the project management team and stakeholders through regular meetings to share the project progress and discussion on the way forward."

Table 10

Descriptive statistics on the the effect of risk planning on the performance of PRISM in Rulindo district

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Potential risks are identified for project performance	81	4.04	.293
The project risks are analyzed to evaluate potential problems that could negatively impact a project's performance	81	3.77	.694
Project risks are ranked using risk assessment matrix	81	3.94	1.166
Project risks are treated to reduce their impact on project performance	81	4.20	.459
Overall		**3.98**	**.653**

Table 10 presents the descriptive findings on the effect of risk planning on performance of PRISM in Rulindo District. Statement that potential risks are identified for project performance with a very high mean of 4.04 indicating a very strong positive agreement and homogeneity in responses among respondents with a SD 0.293. The claim project risks are analyzed to evaluate potential problems that could affect project performance with a high mean of 3.77 signifying a strong positive agreement and SD of 0.694 signifies heterogeneity.

Moreover, the claim that the project risks are ranked using risk assessment matrix, with a high mean of 3.94 indicating a strong positive agreement and SD of 1.166 designating heterogeneity in responses. Furthermore, the statement project risks treated to reduce their impact on project performance, with a very high mean of 4.20 signifying a very strong positive agreement. The SD of 0.459 signifies heterogeneity.

Overall, the high mean score of 3.98 and SD of 0.653 for combined statements implies a strong positive agreement on effect of risk planning and the performance of the PRISM project in Rulindo District, an indication of heterogeneity of responses among respondents. The findings were supported Zwikael and Ahn (2011) who asserted that the approach to managing positive risks involves strategies like exploitation, probability enhancement, and risk sharing, while accepting risks remains unchanged. Risks and parameters should be reassessed for accurate impact documentation, and the plan must be integrated into the project plan.

On this matter description of how staff handled risks during project implementation.

Participant 1

"proactive identification of potential risks and develop risk response plan". Participant 2 said, *"We proactively identify and assess risks through regular risk assessment and brainstorming sessions. We develop contingent plans and maintain open communication to address uncertainties as they arise."*

Participant 3 noted that

"we conduct risk assessment to identify potential project risk. After risk analysis, we do risk prioritization. We elaborate on the contingent plan for critical risks. We also do continuous risk monitoring as the project progresses."

Participant 4 added that

"in project progress, we first identify potential events that could impact the project, such risk or opportunities, and devise strategies to manage these events as they arise."

Table 11

Project Performance

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Project tasks are performed within a timeliness set	81	3.96	.511
Project tasks are performed within a scope set	81	4.79	.410
Project tasks are performed within a budget set	81	4.14	.565
Project tasks are performed within quality standards	81	4.17	.412
Overall		**4.26**	**.474**

Table 11 presents the performance of PRISM project in Rulindo District. Respondents agreed that project tasks are performed within a timeliness set (with high mean of 3.96 and SD of 0.511). High mean indicates a strong

positive agreement and the standard deviation signifies a heterogeneity in opinions among respondents. Similarly, respondents agreed that Project tasks are performed within a scope set (with a very high mean score of 4.79 and SD of 0.410). the high mean reveals a very strong positive agreement and SD signifies a homogeneity in opinions among respondents.

Moreover, participants agreed that project tasks are performed within a budget set (with a very high mean score of 4.14 and SD of 0.565). The high mean indicates a very strong positive agreement and the standard deviation signifies a heterogeneity in opinions among respondents. Furthermore, respondents agreed that project tasks are performed within quality standards (with a very high mean score of 4.17 and SD of 0.412). The high mean indicates a very strong positive agreement and the SD signifies a homogeneity in opinions among respondents.

Overall, the high mean of 4.26 and SD of 0.474 for combined statements implies a strong positive agreement on the performance of the PRISM in Rulindo District, with an indication of homogeneity of responses among respondents. The findings align with Takim and Adnan (2008), who asserted that a project's performance and success are largely dependent on assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of project measures. The authors further emphasized that project performance includes successful completion within a defined scope, budget, project tasks, and resource allocation, all based on the project schedule.

On this matter concerning project performance,Participant 1 said that:

> "*stakeholders were actively involved in the project planning and implementation process to ensure their needs and feedback were prioritized. We focus on targeted interventions and regular communication and address effectively specific challenges faced to ensure increased satisfaction*".

Participant 2 noted that

> '*Stakeholders were involved through the development and the implementation phases of the project, assuring their needs and expectations were understood and addressed regular feedback loops were established, allowing adjustment based on their inputs. In addition, the project outcomes are aligned with beneficiaries' goals, leading to the tangible improvement of their living conditions*".

Participant 3 and 4 shared that

> "*we ensure that beneficiaries are actively involved in the planning and decision-making process to align project goals and their needs. We provide training and support to empower them and output (pigs, chickens, and goats) effectively. We also maintain transparency in project operations, fostering trust and confidence among beneficiaries"*

Table 12

Correlation Analysis

		Project Performance	Communication Planning	Stakeholder Planning	Risk Planning
Project performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.337**	.490**	.156**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.000	.165
	N		81	81	81
Communication planning	Pearson Correlation		1	.251**	-.125**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.024	.268
	N			81	81
Stakeholder planning	Pearson Correlation			1	.323**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.003
	N				81
Risk planning	Pearson Correlation				1
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N				

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

The correlation matrix table 12 indicates a positive correlation between project planning practices (communication planning, stakeholder planning, and risk planning) as independent variables and the performance of the PRISM Project in Rulindo District as the dependent variable.

In particular, communication planning shows a positive and significant correlation ($r=0.337$, $p=0.002<0.01$). This divulges that any positive change in communication planning would contribute to better performance of PRISM project in Rulindo District. The findings are allied with those of El-Saboni et al. (2009) on the effect of electronic communication planning and systems on construction projects in the United Arab Emirates, highlighted that effective

communication planning through all stages of a project is a key success factor that integrates all other elements contributing to project success.

The study reveals also a positive and significant (r = 0.490, p=0.000<0.01) relationship between stakeholder planning and performance of PRISM project in Rulindo District, implying that increased stakeholder planning is linked with improved performance of PRISM project in Rulindo district. The study's results concur with those of Gichimu & Mutuku (2022) who affirmed that the rationale of stakeholder management in ensuring project fulfillment cannot be overstated.

Further, this study indicates a positive but not statistically significant correlation (r=156, p=0.165>0.01) between risk planning and the performance of PRISM Project in Rulindo District. This indicates that the performance of the PRISM Project in Rulindo District is linked to increased risk planning. Zwikael and Ahn (2011) who asserted that the approach to managing positive risks involves strategies like exploitation, probability enhancement, and risk sharing, while accepting risks remains unchanged.

Table 13

Hypotheses Summary

Research hypotheses	Results	Decision
Ho_1: There is no significant effect of communication planning on the performance PRISM Project in Rulindo District	(r=0.337, p=0.002<0.01).	Rejected
Ho_2: There is no significant effect of stakeholder planning on PRISM Project in Rulindo District	(r = 0.490, p=0.000<0.01)	Rejected
Ho_3: There is no significant project risk planning on the performance PRISM Project in Rulindo District	(r=156, p=0.165>0.01)	Accepted

Table 13 presents the findings from hypotheses testing. The results indicated a positive correlation effect of project planning on performance of PRISM project in Rulindo district and statistically significant for two hypotheses and not statistically significant for last hypothesis. For null hypothesis H0a: There is no significant effect of communication planning on the performance of PRISM project in Rulindo district is rejected with a p-value of 0.002, this is less than 0.01, therefore this hypothesis is rejected. Similarly, the hypothesis H0b: There is no significant effect of stakeholder planning on performance of PRISM project in Rulindo district was rejected, with a p-value of 0.000, this is less than 0.01, therefore this hypothesis is rejected. Lastly, hypothesis H0c: There is no significant effect of risk planning on the performance of PRISM project is accepted, with a p-value of 0.156, which is greater than 0.01, therefore this hypothesis is not rejected.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The research examined the effect of project planning on project performance in Rwanda, specifically the PRISM project in Rulindo District. Based on the findings, the study made the following conclusion.:

The study concluded that communication planning has a positive significant effect on project performance. Therefore, project managers should establish and manage effective communication structures prior to the project's commencement.

Furthermore, the study found that stakeholder planning has a significant positive impact on project performance, emphasizing the importance of involving stakeholders in both the formulation and implementation processes to foster project ownership, and sustainability, and ensure the satisfaction and active participation of all stakeholders.

Lastly, the study concluded that while risk planning positively influences the project, its effect was not statistically significant

5.2 Recommendations

This study recommends that the PRISM project promotes active communication, allowing project teams, employees, and stakeholders to share ideas and opinions and vigorously participate in decision-making procedures to enhance overall organizational effectiveness. This ensures that diverse and equally good decisions are made for the advancement of the organization.

Given the strong connection between stakeholder planning and project performance, PRISM project is strongly recommended to prioritize stakeholder engagement throughout the entire project lifecycle. This can be effectively achieved by organizing regular community meetings, feedback sessions, and initiatives to foster strong

partnerships with local groups and authorities. Such efforts will ensure ongoing collaboration, strengthen relationships, and ultimately contribute to the sustained success and impact of the project.

Further, the study suggests that PRISM project should regularly assess stakeholder interests to enhance support and resolve conflicts, improve project performance, and involve stakeholders in pre-execution and inception meetings, incorporating their views into planning and execution for increased project acceptability and social investment.

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