

Stakeholder participation and project performance: Insights from the Soroti Catholic Diocese projects in Teso region of Uganda

Philomena Petronela Alako¹

Caleb Tamwesigire²

Benon Kyabarongo³

Alice Ngele Mwazuna⁴

¹alakopetro@gmail.com

²ctamwesigire@kab.ac.ug

³b.kyabarongo@kab.ac.ug

⁴anmwazuna@kab.ac.ug

^{1,2,3,4} Kabale University, Uganda

Recommended Reference: Alako, P. P., Tamwesigire, C., Kyabarongo, B., & Mwazuna, A. N. (2025). Stakeholder participation and project performance: Insights from the Soroti Catholic Diocese projects in Teso region of Uganda. *African Quarterly Social Science Review*, 2(4), 393–403. <https://doi.org/10.51867/AQSSR.2.4.38>

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of stakeholder participation on project performance in Soroti Catholic Diocese in Uganda. The study was guided by the stakeholder theory and adopted a cross-sectional survey research design that involved a purely quantitative approach. Using the Morgan table, a sample of 100 respondents was selected using stratified sampling from a population of 132. Quantitative data was collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS Version 25.0. Quantitative results in the form of descriptive statistics, correlations, and regressions were presented using tables. The results indicated that stakeholder participation had a strong positive influence on project performance ($r = 0.721$ and $p = 0.00 \leq 0.01$). The study concluded that stakeholder participation significantly enhances project performance within the Soroti Catholic Diocese. When stakeholders are engaged throughout the project's planning, implementation, and monitoring phases, they contribute local knowledge, feedback, and innovative ideas, which enhances the quality of project outputs. The study recommends that the Diocese should strengthen and promote active stakeholder participation practices in order to achieve improved performance of the projects' outcomes.

Keywords: Project Performance, Stakeholder Participation, Soroti Catholic Diocese, Uganda

I. INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder participation means the active and meaningful involvement of stakeholders in a project's processes and decision making extending beyond mere consultation to deeper levels of engagement. This crucial aspect of stakeholder participation is fundamentally underpinned by the principles of empowerment, inclusiveness and representation (Tor & Gambo, 2024). Empowerment in stakeholder participation means equipping stakeholders with the capacity, information and influence to genuinely shape project outcomes fostering a sense of ownership which moves stakeholders from passive recipients to active contributors who can impact decisions that directly affect them. This is achieved by providing access to relevant knowledge, enhancing their ability to understand complex project issues and ensuring their voices carry weight in critical discussions (Laetitia & Amolo, 2025). Iyiola et al., (2025) affirms that stakeholder participation ensures that all relevant stakeholder groups particularly those who might typically be marginalized or underrepresented are actively invited and supported to participate in projects. It's based on the understanding that diverse perspectives lead to more robust, equitable and sustainable project outcomes.

Achieving true stakeholder participation requires deliberate efforts to dismantle barriers to participation such as language differences, cultural norms or socioeconomic disparities thereby guaranteeing that a wide spectrum of interests and needs are considered (Wall, 2021). Additionally, stakeholder participation refers to the effective presence and articulation of the interests, concerns and values of various stakeholder groups within project deliberations and decision making bodies (Lassiter & Campbell, 2023). It ensures that the voices of those affected by or affecting the project are authentically heard whether directly by individuals or through their designated representatives. Effective stakeholder participation is vital for a project's legitimacy and acceptance as it ensures that collective decisions reflect diverse viewpoints thereby strengthening collaboration and mitigating conflicts that could impede project performance (Funkhouser et al., 2025). When empowerment, inclusiveness and representation are effectively integrated,

stakeholder participation transcends a procedural requirement becoming a powerful driver for project success. This integrated approach fosters shared ownership, enhances decision quality and significantly improves a project's relevance and acceptance within its community (Haar, 2024).

Project Performance refers to the degree to which a project achieves its stated objectives and satisfies its stakeholders typically evaluated against a set of predefined criteria. While historical views often centered on the "iron triangle" of time, cost and quality (Atkinson et al., 2022); contemporary definitions acknowledge that true performance extends to delivering value, meeting stakeholder expectations and contributing to strategic goals (Serrador & Turner, 2015). For the purpose of this study, aligning with established project management principles project performance is defined as the overall effectiveness and success of a construction project in meeting its planned objectives concerning its schedule, budget and the quality of its deliverables alongside its ability to fulfill stakeholder requirements. The Project Management Institute consistently positions these elements scope, time, cost and quality as fundamental baselines against which project success is measured (Bassi, 2017).

According to Aguinis (2023), Project Performance is the overall measurement of whether a project has met the stated objectives and requirements of scope, cost and schedule. Project performance denotes the extent to which project outputs and outcomes satisfy budget goals, schedule goals, operational and technical specifications and ultimately the business needs of the client. Project performance is directly related to the project potential success. A project is considered to be successfully implemented if it is carried on schedule, realizes the purpose the project was designed through achieving the goals and objectives identified, the project is completed within the budgets and stipulated time (Maina & Kimutai, 2021). Project Performance is a multi-dimensional concept that reflects the degree to which a project achieves its stated objectives and satisfies its stakeholders. While it has evolved to encompass broader strategic and value-driven outcomes, its foundational assessment remains rooted in three critical constructs: Time, Cost and Quality (Atkinson et al., 2022).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Effective stakeholder participation has increasingly become a critical determinant of project success particularly in developing countries such as Uganda where projects in sectors like infrastructure, education, health and community development often rely heavily on local participation and collaboration. A significant number of projects experience delays, cost overruns, community resistance or total abandonment largely due to inadequate involvement and participation of key stakeholders during planning, implementation and evaluation phases (Mwesigwa, 2022). In addition, construction projects in Uganda including those in the Soroti Catholic Diocese often experience frequent schedule overruns in project implementation. For example, only 11.8% of 85 public road projects in Uganda were completed on schedule (Nasaazi, 2022); and other public sector projects show 53% experienced delayed completion and similar cost overruns (Bagenda & Ndevu, 2024).

Projects commonly face significant delays, considerable cost overruns, and quality compromises. Specific examples within the Diocese include incomplete projects like the Soroti cathedral, Centenary House in Katakwi, and the priest's home for the sick and elderly. Despite the Diocese's commitment to community infrastructure, these projects are susceptible to systemic inefficiencies common in Uganda. Whereas there are many factors that affect project performance, there is scanty documented evidence regarding the cause for persistent underperformance of construction projects in Soroti Catholic Diocese in terms of time, cost and quality yet no study has been conducted in the recent past. It is against this background that the researcher sought to explore the specific dynamics between stakeholder participation and project performance within the Soroti Catholic Diocese, aiming to inform strategies for more efficient and sustainable infrastructure development.

1.2 Research Objective

To determine the relationship between stakeholder participation and Project Performance in Soroti Catholic Diocese.

1.3 Research Question

What is relationship between stakeholder participation and Project Performance in Soroti Catholic Diocese?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Stakeholder Theory

Advanced by Robert Edward Freeman in the 1980s, Stakeholder Theory posits that organizations should consider the interests of all stakeholders not just shareholders in decision-making processes. This theory emphasizes the importance of engaging stakeholders to create value and achieve sustainable outcomes (Chrispeels et al., 1984). In

the context of this study, Stakeholder Theory provides a theoretical framework for understanding the significance of stakeholder engagement in project management and its relationship with project performance. The central idea is that an organization's success in its project initiatives is dependent on how well it manages the relationships with key groups such as customers, employees, suppliers, communities, financiers and others that can affect the realization of its purpose. Specifically, managers should understand that the success of the projects can be influenced greatly by the participation of various stakeholders. These stakeholders will participate depending on the relationship they foster with the top management and not junior workers acting on their behalf. If the top management supports the involvement of stakeholders in the procurement process, then they will be part of the decision making therefore ensuring that they take the products bought positively as opposed to products that have been imposed on them. Therefore, the stakeholders' theory helps in understanding the relationship between stakeholder engagement and project performance hence its significance to the study.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Stakeholder Participation and Project Performance.

Contemporary project management literature widely acknowledges stakeholder participation as a core element of all-inclusive stakeholder engagement and a decisive influence on overall project performance including key aspects like on time completion, budget adherence and quality work (Bassi, 2017). Stakeholder participation refers to the active engagement of individuals, groups or organizations with a vested interest in a project. Participation can take many forms; from consultation and information sharing to inclusiveness and representation of all stakeholders and co-implementation (Barney et al., 2019). The importance of stakeholder involvement has been widely acknowledged in project management literature. According to El-Naway et al., (2015), their study emphasizes that projects are more likely to succeed when stakeholders are actively engaged as this helps manage expectations, reduce resistance and build ownership. The Project Management Institute as cited by Simard & Aubry (2025) also stresses that effective stakeholder engagement contributes significantly to delivering value and achieving project objective.

Engaging stakeholders in the planning phase ensures that their needs, interests and potential concerns are integrated into the project design. According to Yang et al., 2018, stakeholder participation at this stage leads to more accurate requirements, improved risk identification and better alignment with organizational and community needs, which enhances project viability and performance. Active stakeholder involvement during implementation and monitoring contributes to improved transparency, accountability and timely feedback. A study by Aaltonen and Kujala found that stakeholder engagement enhances adaptability, problem-solving and collaboration, leading to smoother project execution and higher levels of satisfaction among beneficiaries (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2016). Active stakeholder participation significantly enhances project time performance in construction. Scholars emphasize that early and continuous involvement from diverse groups leads to more realistic planning, proactive challenge identification and efficient decision making thus preventing delays (Karrer et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2018). This allows for upfront addressing of unforeseen local complexities with specific Ugandan research linking inadequate participation in planning to road construction project delays (Matsiko et al., 2024).

A study by signori and others shows that active stakeholder participation boosts project cost performance in a way that when diverse stakeholders, including financial partners and end-users are meaningfully involved, it leads to more accurate initial cost estimations, better resource use and effective cost control; this involvement helps uncover cost-saving innovations and minimizes expenses from rework or disputes (Baharuddin et al., 2017; Signori, 2017). Beyond just schedules and budgets, active stakeholder participation is crucial for enhancing project quality performance in construction. Genuine involvement from beneficiaries and end-users ensures deliverables precisely match their needs, expectations and functional standards extending to usability and contextual fit; this participation creates continuous feedback loops, enabling early identification and correction of quality issues, reducing rework, and improving the asset's overall fitness-for-purpose (Rajab, 2022). Despite its benefits, stakeholder participation can pose challenges. These include conflicting interests, power imbalances, time constraints and limited capacity of certain stakeholder groups. According to Reed et al., (2018), the success of participatory processes depends on effective facilitation, clear communication and inclusive structures that ensure equitable engagement.

Empirical studies show a strong correlation between stakeholder participation and project performance. For instance, Lalam (2018) reports that participatory projects in developing countries are more likely to be relevant, cost-effective and sustainable. Similarly, a study by Bahrami et al., (2018) found that high levels of stakeholder involvement contributed to improved schedule adherence, budget control and quality outcomes in construction projects. Despite a general understanding of stakeholder participation's positive impact on project performance significant literature gaps remain: a scarcity of context-specific research in developing countries like Uganda, limiting insights into cultural and socio-political nuances; a lack of robust methodologies for quantifying the degree of inclusiveness and empowerment and their precise impact; insufficient longitudinal studies to understand the long-term

effects of empowerment; limited exploration of “invisible” or hard-to-reach stakeholders and a shortage of practical empirically tested implementation frameworks for complex construction environments (Bobae, 2024; Fisher, 2023; Franklin & Franklin, 2020; Rajab, 2022; Reed et al., 2018; Sang et al. 2017; Signori, 2017; Wanyonyi et al., 2023).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Approach

This study utilized a cross-sectional Survey research design with a purely quantitative approach to investigate stakeholder engagement and its impact on project performance. This approach is well suited for systematically characterizing the phenomena, conditions and population relevant to the research problem

3.2 Study Population

The target population for this research encompassed key individuals directly involved in or significantly affected by the Diocese's construction projects totaling to 132, including diocesan administrators totaling to 12, project/technical team overseeing construction totaling to 16, and representatives of the Christian community, specifically members of the parish council totaling to 104. This selection ensures a comprehensive perspective from both the implementers and the primary beneficiaries and stakeholders within the Diocese's operational context.

3.3 Sample Size

Based on the Morgan table; a sample size of 100 respondents will be drawn from the total study population of 132 individuals. The Morgan table gives a sample size of 97 but the researcher rounds it up to 100.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

Sampling was conducted to choose specific elements from the total population to represent it. The stratified random sampling technique was used in this study.

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

Structured questionnaires were used to collect the primary data which was then analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistics techniques.

Table 1

Population, Sample size and Sampling techniques

Category	Population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Christian community representatives	104	79	Stratified random sampling
Project Technical Team	16	12	Stratified random sampling
Diocesan administrators	12	9	Stratified random sampling
Total	132	100	

Source: Soroti Catholic Diocese Records

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section presents the findings on the respondents' demographic characteristics including gender, age, education level and work experience. These characteristics are essential for understanding the background of the participants and how they may influence stakeholder engagement and project performance.

Table 1

Gender of the respondent

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	79	79.0
female	21	21.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings indicate that 79% of respondents were male, while 21% were female. This shows that the majority of participants in project activities within Soroti Catholic Diocese are men. This may reflect traditional

gender roles in the Teso Region where men often hold leadership and decision-making positions within religious and community-based institutions. However, the participation of women (21%) demonstrates a growing inclusivity trend in stakeholder participation, indicating efforts to involve women in project planning and implementation.

Table 2

Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
20-30	20	20.0
31-40	32	32.0
41-50	25	25.0
51-60	18	18.0
70 and above	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

The results show that the largest proportion of respondents (32%) was aged between 31–40 years, followed by 41–50 years at 25%. Those aged between 20–30 years accounted for 20%, while 51–60 years represented 18%. The smallest group was respondents were aged 70 and above at 5%. This distribution indicates that most project stakeholders are in their prime working years (31–50 years) representing a mature and active workforce. This group is likely to play a vital role in decision-making, leadership and sustainability of project activities. The younger respondents (20–30 years) bring energy and innovation, while the older group (51 years and above) contributes wisdom and experience. This balance across age groups ensures that project engagement benefits from diverse perspectives.

Table 3

Level of Education Attained by the Respondent

Level of education	Frequency	Percent
Primary	9	9.0
secondary	9	9.0
Certificate	11	11.0
Diploma	28	28.0
Bachelor's Degree	32	32.0
Post Graduate Diploma	5	5.0
Master Degree	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

The majority of respondents had attained at least a Diploma (28.0%) or Bachelor's Degree (32.0%) showing that most stakeholders possess a relatively high level of education. This suggests that project activities are likely to benefit from informed decision-making and professional skills. However, a notable proportion of respondents had only primary education (9.0%) or secondary education (9.0%), indicating that some participants may require additional capacity-building initiatives to fully engage in technical aspects of project management. The presence of respondents with postgraduate qualifications cumulatively accounted for (11.0%) reflecting a skilled group capable of providing expert guidance, further enhancing project performance.

Table 4

Duration of Service

Duration of service	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 Years	20	20.0
1-5 years	44	44.0
6-10 years	22	22.0
11-15 years	7	7.0
above 15 years	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings indicate that most respondents (44.0%) had served between 1–5 years, followed by those with 6–10 years of experience at 22.0%. This suggests that the majority of stakeholders are relatively experienced and

familiar with the diocese's project operations which is crucial for sustaining continuity and institutional memory. A smaller group (20.0%) had less than one year of experience, reflecting recent recruits or newly involved stakeholders. The 11–15 years (7.0%) and above 15 years (5.0%) groups represent long-term members who bring deep institutional knowledge, which can guide strategic decisions.

4.2 Descriptive Results

The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between stakeholder participation and Project Performance in Soroti Catholic Diocese. The respondents were asked questions on stakeholder participation and the results are as presented on table 6 below as well as questions pertaining to project performance and the results were as presented on table 6 below.

Table 5

Summary of the Findings on Stakeholder Participation

Stakeholder Participation	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Stakeholders were regularly given opportunities to provide input and feedback throughout the project.	82	83.7	5	5.1	11	11.2
My contributions and opinions as a stakeholder were valued and seriously considered by the project team.	77	78.6	11	11.2	10	10.2
Stakeholders were actively involved in key decision-making processes related to the project.	78	79.6	10	10.2	10	10.2
The project provided clear and accessible channels for stakeholders to participate (meetings, feedback forms).	84	85.8	5	5.1	9	9.2
There was sufficient transparency regarding how stakeholder input influenced project decisions.	73	74.5	16	16.3	9	9.2
All identified stakeholders were given equitable opportunities to participate, regardless of their background or influence.	83	84.7	7	7.1	8	8.2
Stakeholder meetings and engagement activities were well-organized and effective.	81	82.7	8	8.2	9	9.2
My participation helped the project team better understand the needs and expectations of the affected community/group.	82	83.7	10	10.2	6	6.1
The level of my involvement in the project was adequate for its successful execution.	84	85.7	10	10.2	4	4.1
The project team actively sought out diverse perspectives from all relevant stakeholder groups.	86	87.8	4	4.1	8	8.2

Source: Field Data (2025)

The respondents were asked whether stakeholders were regularly given opportunities to provide input and feedback throughout the project, 82 respondents (83.7%) agreed, 5 (5.1%) were undecided/Not Sure and 11 (11.2%) disagreed. This suggests that most stakeholders were consistently involved though a small percentage felt excluded from meaningful participation. On whether stakeholder contributions and opinions were valued and seriously considered by the project team, 77 respondents (78.6%) agreed, 11 (11.2%) were Not Sure/undecided and 10 (10.2%) disagreed. This indicates that while most stakeholders felt appreciated, there is a need to further enhance stakeholder trust and engagement. Regarding active involvement of stakeholders in key decision-making processes, 78 respondents (79.6%) agreed, while 10 (10.2%) were Not Sure/undecided and 10 (10.2%) disagreed, showing that stakeholder involvement was generally high but not universal. When asked whether clear and accessible participation channels such as meetings and feedback forms were provided, 84 respondents (85.8%) agreed, 5 (5.1%) were Not Sure/undecided, and 9 (9.2%) disagreed, reflecting strong accessibility and openness in the participation process.

With regards to transparency in showing how stakeholder input influenced project decisions, 73 respondents (74.5%) agreed, 16 (16.3%) were undecided and 9 (9.2%) disagreed. This suggests transparency was present but could be strengthened to ensure stakeholders see the impact of their contributions. When asked if all identified stakeholders were given equitable opportunities to participate, 83 respondents (84.7%) agreed, 7 (7.1%) were Not Sure/undecided and 8 (8.2%) disagreed, indicating that fairness and inclusivity were largely achieved. On whether stakeholder meetings and engagement activities were well-organized and effective, 81 respondents (82.7%) agreed, 8 (8.2%) were undecided, and 9 (9.2%) disagreed, showing general satisfaction with the quality of engagement processes.

Respondents were asked whether their participation helped the project team better understand community needs and expectations, and 82 respondents (83.7%) agreed, 10 (10.2%) were Not Sure/undecided, while 6 (6.1%) disagreed, demonstrating that stakeholder input was instrumental in aligning the project with community priorities. Regarding whether the level of stakeholder involvement was adequate for successful project execution, 84 respondents

(85.7%) agreed, 10 (10.2%) were undecided and 4 (4.1%) disagreed, indicating that most stakeholders felt meaningfully involved in the project. Lastly, when asked whether the project team actively sought diverse perspectives from all stakeholder groups, 86 respondents (87.8%) agreed, 4 (4.1%) were Not Sure/undecided, and 8 (8.2%) disagreed, showing strong inclusivity and commitment to gathering varied stakeholder views.

Table 7

Summary of the Findings on Project Performance

Project Performance	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)
The project was completed within or close to its initially planned schedule.	66	67.3	7	7.1	24	24.5
Key project milestones were consistently achieved on time.	71	72.5	9	9.2	18	18.4
The project experienced minimal delays beyond the planned completion date.	77	78.6	5	5.1	16	16.3
Unforeseen issues during the project were addressed swiftly, preventing significant schedule impacts.	66	67.3	14	14.3	18	18.4
The initial project schedule was realistic and achievable from the outset.	67	68.3	8	8.2	21	21.4
The project adhered strictly to its approved budget, avoiding significant cost overruns.	72	73.4	6	6.1	20	20.4
The project delivered its objectives without requiring substantial additional funding beyond the original allocation.	63	64.3	14	14.3	21	21.4
The project delivered excellent value for the money invested.	75	76.5	8	8.2	15	15.3
All cost variations during the project were well-managed and justified.	76	77.5	5	5.1	17	17.3
The completed project meets all specified technical and design requirements.	78	79.6	9	9.2	11	11.2
The quality of workmanship and materials used in the project was consistently high.	76	78.4	9	9.3	12	12.4
The completed project effectively serves its intended purpose and meets the needs of its beneficiaries.	77	78.6	14	14.3	7	7.1
Rework or significant rectifications due to quality issues were minimal throughout the project.	84	85.7	5	5.1	9	9.2
The final output of the project demonstrates long-term durability and structural integrity.	83	84.7	6	6.1	9	9.2

Source: Field data (2025)

The respondents were asked whether project were completed within or close to their initially planned schedule and 66 respondents (67.3%) agreed, indicating that most projects were delivered on time. However, 24 respondents (24.5%) disagreed, suggesting that a notable minority experienced delays. Regarding the achievement of key project milestones, 71 respondents (72.5%) agreed that milestones were consistently met, while 18 respondents (18.4%) disagreed, implying that some projects faced challenges in staying on track. Similarly, 77 respondents (78.6%) agreed that the project experienced minimal delays beyond the planned completion date, showing strong schedule adherence. On handling unforeseen issues, 66 respondents (67.3%) agreed that such issues were addressed swiftly to prevent major impacts, though 18 respondents (18.4%) disagreed, indicating room for improvement in crisis management. When asked about the realism of the initial schedule, 67 respondents (68.3%) agreed that it was practical and achievable, whereas 21 respondents (21.4%) disagreed, implying that some projects started with unrealistic timelines.

Concerning budget control, 72 respondents (73.4%) agreed that projects adhered to approved budgets without significant cost overruns. However, 20 respondents (20.4%) reported budgetary issues, suggesting occasional financial mismanagement. Additionally, 63 respondents (64.3%) agreed that projects delivered their objectives without requiring additional funding, while 21 respondents (21.4%) disagreed. On the value for money, 75 respondents (76.5%) agreed that projects delivered excellent value, while 15 respondents (15.3%) disagreed, indicating mixed perceptions of project efficiency. Regarding quality, 78 respondents (79.6%) agreed that completed projects met all technical and design requirements, and 76 respondents (78.4%) reported consistently high-quality workmanship and materials. However, a minority (12.4%) disagreed, showing some concerns about construction standards. When assessing whether projects met beneficiaries' needs, 77 respondents (78.6%) agreed, reflecting strong project relevance and impact. Similarly, 84 respondents (85.7%) indicated minimal rework was needed due to quality issues, and 83 respondents (84.7%) reported that the final project output demonstrated durability and structural integrity.

4.3 Empirical Findings

This section presents correlation analysis and regression results based on questionnaire responses.

Table 8*Correlation Analysis for Stakeholder Participation and Project Performance*

	Project Performance	Stakeholder Participation
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 .000 100
Stakeholder Participation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.721** .000 100

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

Source: Field Data (2025)

The table 8 above displays a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.721, indicating a strong positive relationship between stakeholder participation and project performance in Soroti Catholic Diocese, Teso Region. This implies that when stakeholders are actively involved in project planning, decision-making and monitoring, there is a higher likelihood of successful project implementation and sustainability. Further regression analysis was conducted to determine the strength and effect of stakeholder participation and project performance essentially, how much variance in the independent variable (stakeholder participation) influences the dependent variable (project performance).

Table 9*Model Summary for Stakeholder Participation and Project Performance*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.721a	.932	.930	.14822

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder Participation

Source: Field Data (2025)

The model summary in Table 9 shows that the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.721, indicating a strong positive relationship between stakeholder participation and project performance in Soroti Catholic Diocese. The R Square value of 0.932 suggests that 93.2% of the variation in project performance can be explained by stakeholder participation. After adjusting for the number of predictors, the Adjusted R Square is 0.930, indicating that the model remains highly reliable and robust even when accounting for additional variables. This finding implies that the more stakeholders including church leaders, parishioners, donors, government representatives and community members actively participate in the planning, decision-making and implementation processes, the higher the likelihood of achieving project goals and improving community welfare.

Table 10*Regression coefficients for Stakeholder Participation and Project Performance*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.	R²	Adjusted R²
(Constant)	0.365	0.130	-	2.808	0.006	0.932	0.930
Stakeholder Participation	0.927	0.031	0.721	29.903	0.000		

a. Dependent Variable: Project Performance

Source: Field data (2025)

The regression analysis reveals that stakeholder participation has a positive and statistically significant effect on project performance ($p = 0.000$). The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.721$) indicates that for every one-unit increase in stakeholder participation, project performance improves by 72.1%, holding other factors constant. The R Square value of 0.932 shows that stakeholder participation explains 93.2% of the variance in project performance; indicating a very strong predictive relationship. The Adjusted R Square of 0.930 accounts for model complexity and sample size, confirming that the model has high explanatory power and minimal overfitting. This suggests that effective involvement of stakeholders including church leaders, parishioners, donors, government representatives and community members directly contributes to the successful planning, implementation and sustainability of projects within the Soroti Catholic Diocese.

4.4 Discussion

The above results strongly align with the existing body of literature as noted by Bassi (2017) and Barney et al., (2019) who equally emphasized that stakeholder participation is a core component of project management and that

stakeholder participation directly influences time, cost and quality performance of projects. The findings also align with the findings of El-Naway et al., (2015) who found out that active involvement of stakeholders in projects fosters ownership, reduces resistance and improves project acceptance thereby enhancing project outcomes significantly. Simard & Aubry (2025) likewise stressed that effective stakeholder engagement delivers value and increases the likelihood of achieving project objectives, a finding clearly reflected in the Diocese context. Consistent with Yang et al. (2018), the present results highlight that stakeholder participation during the planning stage leads to better alignment of project activities with community needs, improved risk identification and further leads to higher project viability. In the Diocese projects, the inclusion of church leaders, parishioners, donors and government officials provided diverse perspectives that enhanced transparency, accountability and timely feedback in projects. This also aligns with Aaltonen and Kujala's (2016) conclusions that stakeholder involvement improves collaboration and adaptability during project execution.

Moreover, the findings also resonate with Karrer et al. (2024) and Matsiko et al. (2024), who linked early stakeholder involvement with reduced delays and enhanced time performance in construction projects. Similarly, studies by Baharuddin et al., (2017) and Signori (2017) noted that meaningful stakeholder participation especially financial partners and end-users results in more accurate cost estimations and efficient resource utilization in projects. In the Soroti Diocese, this appears to have contributed to both resource optimization and sustainable project outcomes. The present study further confirms the findings of Rajab (2022), who noted that engaging beneficiaries enhances the quality of project outputs by ensuring and meeting user needs and expectations. However, the study also echoes concerns raised in the literature about the challenges of stakeholder participation in projects. Reed et al., (2018) pointed out that power imbalances, conflicting interests and capacity limitations can hinder inclusive processes. While the Soroti Diocese projects benefitted from strong stakeholder engagement, ensuring equitable participation across all groups remains a critical consideration.

Empirical evidence from developing countries further corroborates the present findings. For instance, Lalam (2018) found out that participatory projects are more sustainable and cost-effective, while Bahrami et al., (2018) demonstrated improvements in time, budget and quality outcomes from active stakeholder involvement practices. The current study therefore contributes to filling the identified gap in literature (Bobae, 2024; Fisher, 2023) by providing context-specific evidence from Uganda. By showing that stakeholder participation explains over 90% of project performance in a faith-based organizational setting, this study adds new insights into the cultural and socio-political contexts influencing participation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusions

The findings establish that active stakeholder participation is essential for improved project outcomes. When stakeholders are engaged throughout planning, implementation and monitoring, they contribute local knowledge, feedback and innovative ideas, which enhance the relevance and quality of project outputs. Participation fosters ownership, reduces resistance to change and increases transparency, ensuring that projects meet the actual needs of the community. In the context of Soroti Catholic Diocese, participatory approaches empowered parishioners and community members to take part in decision-making, monitor progress and provide valuable input, which directly contributed to better project results.

5.2 Recommendations

Projects should prioritize regular stakeholder meetings, workshops and forums throughout the project lifecycle. These platforms allow for consultation, discussion and continuous feedback, ensuring that stakeholders are actively involved in shaping project activities and decisions. Regular engagement fosters a sense of ownership and strengthens the relevance of project interventions. Encouraging participatory planning and decision-making is also essential. Stakeholders, including community members and parishioners should be empowered to contribute to project design, implementation strategies and performance monitoring. Participation not only improves decision-making quality but also reduces resistance to project changes, promoting smoother execution. Furthermore, the development of community monitoring committees or feedback platforms is recommended. Such mechanisms enable local stakeholders to track project progress, report challenges, and actively contribute to solutions. This participatory approach enhances accountability, promotes transparency, and strengthens community trust in the project process.

REFERENCES

- Aaltonen, K., & Kujala, J. (2016). Towards an improved understanding of project stakeholder landscapes. *International Journal of Project Management*, 34(8), 1537–1552.
- Aguinis, H. (2023). *Performance management*. Sage Publications.
- Atkinson, E., Spillane, J., Bradley, J., & Brooks, T. (2022). Challenges in the adoption of mobile information communication technology (M-ICT) in the construction phase of infrastructure projects in the UK. *International Journal of Building Pathology and Adaptation*, 40(3), 327–344.
- Bagenda, B., & Ndevu, Z. (2024). Principal risks associated with public-private partnership projects in Uganda. *Public Works Management & Policy*, 29(2), 183–230.
- Baharuddin, H. E. A., Che Ibrahim, C. K. I., Costello, S. B., & Wilkinson, S. (2017). Managing stakeholders through alliances: A case study of a megaproject in New Zealand. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers-Management, Procurement and Law*, 170(4), 151–160.
- Bahrami, S., Negreira, J., Olander, S., & Landin, A. (2018). Communicating the acoustic performance of innovative HVAC solutions. In *Cold Climate HVAC Conference* (Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 1085–1095). Springer International Publishing.
- Barney, J. B., Freeman, R. E., Harrison, J. S., & Phillips, R. A. (2019). Stakeholder theory. *The Cambridge Handbook of Stakeholder Theory*, 1(1), 3–18.
- Bassi, A. (2017). Project management body of knowledge in the context of PMI and ISO. In *Knowledge and project management: A shared approach to improve performance* (Vol. 1, No. 5, pp. 53–67). Springer International Publishing.
- Bobae, K. (2024). Role of stakeholder engagement in enhancing project outcomes in construction projects in Korea. *International Journal of Project Management*, 6(3), 13–24.
- Chrispeels, J., Gonzalez, M., & Edge, K. (1984). Uniting for reform: The power and importance of bringing all shareholders to the table. *Freeman*, 1(1), 25–54.
- El-Naway, O., Mahdi, I., Badwy, M., & Al-Deen, A. G. (2015). Developing methodology for stakeholder management to achieve project success. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology*, 4(11), 10651–10660.
- Fisher, W. O. (2023). Getting serious about stakeholders. *Missouri Law Review*, 88, 955.
- Franklin, A. L. (2020). Identifying stakeholders. In *Stakeholder engagement* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 19–42). Springer International Publishing.
- Funkhouser, E., Mungia, R., Laws, R., Nyongesa, D. B., Gillespie, S., Leo, M. C., McBurnie, M. A., Gilbert, G. H., & Group, N. D. P. C. (2025). Participation rates in 11 national dental practice-based research network surveys 2014–2022. *Evaluation & the Health Professions*, 48(2), 242–255.
- Haar, K. (2024). Impact of stakeholder engagement strategies on project success in Cameroon. *International Journal of Project Management*, 6(1), 14–25. <https://doi.org/10.47672/ijpm.1838>
- Iyiola, A. O., Akingba, O. O., Alimi, S. K., Akinsorotan, A. M., Osei, S. A., Idowu, C. F., Izah, S. C., & Ogwu, M. C. (2025). Impact assessment of biobased products in the global south. In *Sustainable bio economy development in the global south* (Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 431–453). Springer.
- Karrer, T., Peichl, M., & Dill, S. (2024). Analysis of fine building structures using radar. In *2024 15th German Microwave Conference (GeMiC)* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 237–240).
- Laetitia, B. I., & Amolo, A. E. J. (2025). Stakeholder empowerment strategies and community development project performance. *International Journal of Finance & Banking Studies*, 14(1), 157–165.
- Lalam, E. Y. (2018). Stakeholder engagement, community participation, stakeholder commitment and project sustainability: A case of rural water supply and sanitation projects in Jinja District [Unpublished master's dissertation]. Makerere University Business School. <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12282/3205>
- Lassiter, J. W., & Campbell, A. L. (2023). Perceived effectiveness of study skills training for Division III college athletes: A pilot program. *Journal of Athlete Development and Experience*, 5(1), 3.
- Maina, S. M., & Kimutai, G. (2021). Stakeholder management and project performance of open air market projects in Nyeri County, Kenya. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 20(7), 47–56. <https://doi.org/10.9790/487X-2007014756>
- Matsiko, J. M., Nduhura, A., Settumba, J. P., Phuyal, M., & Motadi, S. M. (2024). Stakeholder involvement in project planning and performance of road construction projects in Uganda: A case of Uganda National Roads Authority. *African Journal of E-Commerce, Logistics and Transport Studies*, 1(2), 69–91.
- Mwesigwa, D. (2022). Rewarding or sanctioning performance? A critique on group dominance and counter-group dominance in public organizations. *Journal of Governance and Accountability Studies*, 2(1), 65–78.



- Nasaazi, A. (2022). An inquiry into the challenges facing arbitration practice in the construction industry in Uganda: A study of industry players in Kampala [Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi].
- Rajab, O. I. (2022, September 27–29). Lean construction. In *8th Jordan International Civil Engineering Conference on Smart Civil Engineering* (pp. 1–9). Amman, Jordan.
- Reed, M. S., Vella, S., Challies, E., De Vente, J., Frewer, L., Hohenwallner-Ries, D., Huber, T., Neumann, R. K., Oughton, E. A., & Sidoli del Ceno, J. (2018). A theory of participation: What makes stakeholder and public engagement in environmental management work? *Restoration Ecology*, 26(S1), S7–S17.
- Sang, D. K., Komen, J., & Korir, M. (2017). Effect of strategic change management on performance of large and medium hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 4(5), 667–681.
- Serrador, P., & Turner, R. (2015). The relationship between project success and project efficiency. *Project Management Journal*, 46(1), 30–39.
- Signori, S. (2017). From “managing for stakeholders” to “managing with stakeholders”: When stakeholders can help rescue a company. In *Stakeholder engagement: Clinical research cases* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 167–192). Springer International Publishing.
- Simard, M., & Aubry, M. (2025). The project management office’s active participation in a digital transformation: A trajectory full of twists and turns. *Project Management Journal*, 56(1), 124–140.
- Tor, M. A., & Gambo, N. (2024). A systematic review of stakeholders’ engagement as a critical tool for effective project performance. *Journal of Project Management*, 4464(8), 324–330.
- Wall, W. P. (2021). Determinants of SMEs’ performance—from business strategy to innovation. *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 23(2), 537–554.
- Wanyonyi, R., Mokaya, S., & Lango, B. (2023). Influence of stakeholders’ participation on performance of national agricultural and rural inclusive growth program in Kenya. *Journal of Economics, Management Sciences & Procurement*, 3(6), 152–165.
- Yang, R. J., Jayasuriya, S., Gunarathna, C., Arashpour, M., Xue, X., & Zhang, G. (2018). The evolution of stakeholder management practices in Australian mega construction projects. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*, 25(6), 690–706.