

EFFECT OF BENEFICIARY INVOLVEMENT APPROACHES ON SUSTAINABILITY OF WATER SUPPLY PROJECT IN RWANDA: A CASE OF POTABLE WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECT IN SOUTHERN PROVINCE

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Abstract: Community participation and community based management are topical themes in current policy and discussion revolving around decision-making processes especially those dealing with natural resources management. To manage stakeholders, project managers tend to use traditional stakeholder management approach which emphasizes on giving more attention to those who can affect the project over those who are affected by the project. Using traditional stakeholder management approach implies that project managers should focus more on complying with donors' requirements. The challenge for project managers is therefore, to find the right balance between complying with the requirements of donors who in most cases are likely to assess the project in terms of accuracy of financial accountability and appealing to the needs of beneficiaries throughout the life of the project. The fact is that numerous studies have been conducted to know whether or not the involvement of stakeholders in community development project is beneficial. However, in Africa and in Rwanda particularly projects continue failing or are not sustainable at long run. Many reasons may be behind but one of them should be the approaches of involvement of beneficiaries in project management process. Although stakeholders are involved, stakeholders are not always beneficiaries and the studies which have been conducted put the stakeholders in the same basket, which probably hinders the involvement of direct beneficiaries of the project. Another aspect to examine is the approaches of involvement of beneficiaries in the project management process and its effect on sustainability of the project. The general objective of this study was to demonstrate the effect of beneficiary involvement approaches on water supply project sustainability with three specific objectives; to assess the effect of information dissemination with beneficiaries on water supply project sustainability, To examine the effect of consultation with beneficiaries on water supply project sustainability and to evaluate the effect of beneficiary participation on water supply project sustainability. This study used descriptive survey design. The study population was made up by 53,111 beneficiaries of the project in Nyaruguru district. The researcher collected data from 397 respondents. Multiple regression analysis was used to establish the effect of beneficiary involvement approaches on the sustainability of water supply project in Rwanda. It was found out that the project could not be sustainable without information dissemination and that beneficiary consultation has a great effect on project sustainability. Regarding beneficiary participation it has been found out that there was a moderate relationship between beneficiary participation and project sustainability.

Keywords: Beneficiary involvement, water sanitation, project sustainability.

1. INTRODUCTION

The notion of people's participation in their development has been gaining momentum in the process of human empowerment and development. Contemporary development scholars have been advocating the inclusion of people's participation in development projects as they believe the avowed objectives of any project cannot be fully achieved unless people meaningfully participate in it (Mohammad, 2010). Over the past few decades the phrase "community participation" has gained increasing usage in academic literature, policy making documents and international conference papers as a key element in attempts to attain sustainable development in African countries. The issue of community participation is now an established principle when one considers issues dealing with decision-making to achieve sustainable development (Shackleton et al. 2012). Advocates for participation note that policy and development which adopt a bottom-up framework where local communities are actively involved in decision-making, better facilitate the achievement of target objectives (Leonard et al 2013).

1.1 Statement of the Problem:

Community participation and community based management are topical themes in current policy and discussion revolving around decision-making processes especially those dealing with natural resources management. Communities are seen to be more involved in the implementation of projects but lack ownership of the projects. This causes lack of commitment to the projects and at times hostile reaction from the communities. The communities are always at the receiving end when it pertains to losses in the exchange. Community participation is shown to be effective when the local population is involved not as co-operating users but as resource managers or owner managers. To manage stakeholders, Winters (2010) and Eskerod et al., (2015) claim that project managers tend to use traditional stakeholder management approach which emphasizes on giving more attention to those who can affect the project over those who are affected by the project. Consequently, due to resource dependency in NGO sector, using tradition stakeholder management approach implies that project managers should focus more on complying with donors' requirements. The challenge for project managers is therefore, to find the right balance between complying with the requirements of donors who in most cases are likely to assess the project in terms of accuracy of financial accountability and appealing to the needs of beneficiaries throughout the life of the project (AbouAssi&Trent, 2016, Hermano et al., 2013, p.28). Winch (2009), argues that stakeholders are actors in the project's environment that are not formal members of the project coalition but may affect or be affected by the project, hence, understanding and managing external stakeholders' demands in the project decision making is of utmost importance in order to ensure the success of an international project.

In developing countries national and regional governments, local and international NGOs and other concerned organizations invest large sums every year for the implementation of rural water supply projects (Gebrehiwot, 2010). However, construction of water projects does not help if they fail after a short time. In order to make the investment in water supplies more effective, failure rates of these systems should be reduced. According to Gebrehiwot (2010), this can be accomplished by better integration of people who receive the water and water project suppliers in decisions concerning planning construction and management of water supply systems.

The fact is that numerous studies have been conducted to know whether the involvement of stakeholders in community development project is beneficial. But actually in Africa and in Rwanda particularly projects continue failing or are not sustainable at long run. Many reasons may be behind but one of them should be the approaches of involvement of beneficiaries in project management process. Although stakeholders are involved, stakeholders are not always beneficiaries and the studies which have been conducted put the stakeholders in the same basket, which probably hinders the involvement of direct beneficiaries of the project as said by Eskerod et al (2015). Another aspect to examine is the approaches of involvement of beneficiaries in the project management process and its effect on sustainability of the project

1.2 Objectives of the Study:

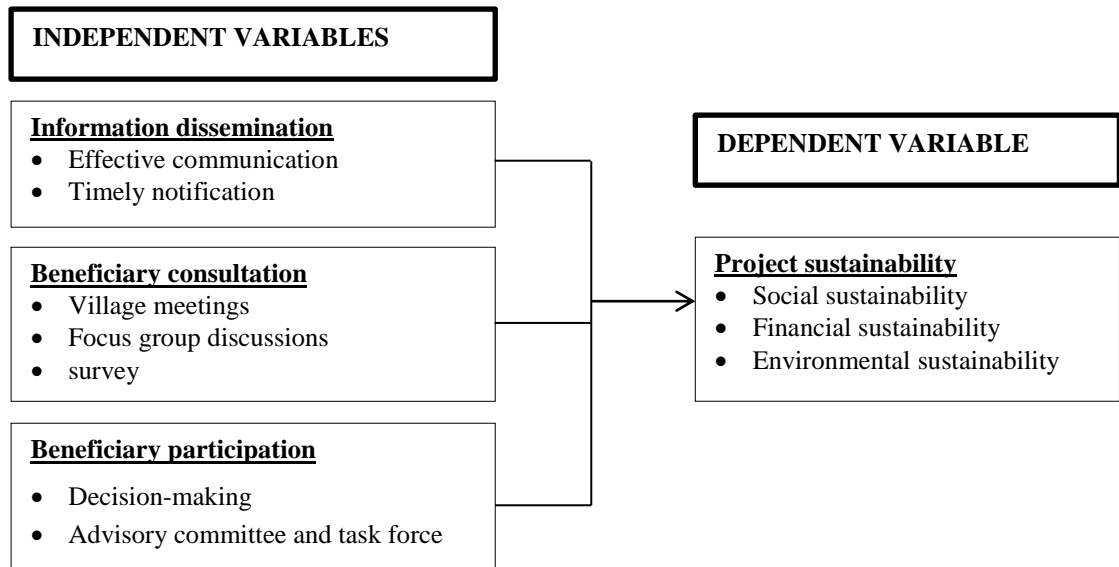
1.2.1 General Objective:

The general objective of this study was to demonstrate the effect of beneficiary involvement approaches on water supply project sustainability.

1.2.2 Specific objectives:

- i. To assess the effect of information dissemination with beneficiaries on water supply project sustainability.
- ii. To examine the effect of consultation with beneficiaries on water supply project sustainability.
- iii. To evaluate the effect of beneficiary participation on water supply project sustainability.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design:** This research used the descriptive survey design
- **Target Population:** The study population was made by 53,111 beneficiaries of the Project in Nyaruguru district
- **Sample size:** Because it wasn't easy to collect data from all people in the project as it was time consuming and costly the researcher select the sample and come up with a sample size of 397 Respondents
- **Data Collection instruments:** In collection of primary data, questionnaire was used as main instrument of data collection. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and distributed to the respondents by the researcher herself helped with the trained people.
- **Data processing and analysis:** To analyse data, the procedure was governed by the main headings of the researcher's questionnaires; also, findings and interpretations were analysed interchangeably. To make this analysis efficient, the researcher examined all the answers in the same way. In this research data were analyzed quantitatively using inferential and descriptive statistics.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Descriptive statistics:

4.1.1 Descriptive statistics per variable:

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation per variable

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------------|-----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Information_dissemination | 385 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.4130 | .55747 |
| Beneficiary_consultation | 385 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.3403 | .66620 |
| Beneficiary_participation | 385 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.4468 | .62741 |
| Project_sustainability | 385 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 4.3870 | .66406 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 385 | | | | |

The study used 5 point Likert scale statement from strongly disagree to strongly agree by ascendant order. The Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics namely min, max, mean and standard deviation for each variable. For variables information dissemination, beneficiary consultation and beneficiary participation, the minimum was 3 and the maximum was 5 which means that none of respondents disagreed nor strongly disagreed with the statements, rather they agreed and strongly agreed with the statement but some of them were undecided regarding the statements. The mean for those three

variables varies from 4.34 to 4.45 which means that many of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement regarding each variable. For the variable project sustainability the min was 2 and the max was 5; this implies that among respondents some disagreed with the statement and some were undecided. The mean in this case was 4.3 which show that a great number agreed and strongly agreed with the statement regarding project sustainability. The mean was 4.38 which mean that many of the respondents agreed with the statement. The standard deviation varies from 0.55 to 0.66. This means that there was a certain degree of heterogeneity in the answers of respondent.

4.1.2 Frequencies and percentages:

Table 2: Frequency and percent table

| Information_dissemination | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | 3 | 13 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.4 |
| | 4 | 200 | 51.9 | 51.9 | 55.3 |
| | 5 | 172 | 44.7 | 44.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 385 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

| Beneficiary_consultation | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | 3 | 42 | 10.9 | 10.9 | 10.9 |
| | 4 | 170 | 44.2 | 44.2 | 55.1 |
| | 5 | 173 | 44.9 | 44.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 385 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

| Beneficiary_participation | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | 3 | 28 | 7.3 | 7.3 | 7.3 |
| | 4 | 157 | 40.8 | 40.8 | 48.1 |
| | 5 | 200 | 51.9 | 51.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 385 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

| Project_sustainability | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | 2 | 13 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.4 |
| | 4 | 197 | 51.2 | 51.2 | 54.5 |
| | 5 | 175 | 45.5 | 45.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 385 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

4.1.3 Inferential statistics:

4.1.3.1 Correlation analysis:

In order to assess if there is a relationship between independent variables and dependent variable the Pearson correlation coefficient has been processed. The results are shown in the following Table3.

Table 3: Pearson correlation coefficient

| | | Information_diss emination | Beneficiary_cons ultation | Beneficiary_parti cipation | Project_sustainab ility |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Information_disse mination | Pearson Correlation | 1 | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | |
| | N | 385 | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|-----|
| Beneficiary_consultation | Pearson Correlation | .222 | 1 | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | | |
| | N | 385 | 385 | | |
| Beneficiary_participation | Pearson Correlation | .137 | .114 | 1 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | |
| | N | 385 | 385 | 385 | |
| Project_sustainability | Pearson Correlation | .777** | .720** | .659** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 385 | 385 | 385 | 385 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | | | |

The table3 shows that there was a very strong positive relationship between information dissemination and project sustainability at a significance level of 0.01; The Pearson correlation coefficient between them is .777. The strong positive relationship has been observed between beneficiary consultation and project sustainability at a significance level of 0.01. The Pearson correlation coefficient between them was .720. Lastly a moderate positive relationship at 0.01 level of significance has been observed between beneficiary participation and project sustainability with $r=.659$. The next table4 helped appreciating how much the model contributed to project sustainability.

Table 4: coefficient of determination

| Model Summary | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 1 | .815 ^a | .665 | .662 | .38606 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Beneficiary participation, Beneficiary consultation, Information dissemination | | | | |

The table 4 helped to appreciate how much the model as a whole contributed to sustainability of potable water supply and sanitation project. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.665 means that 66.5% of the variation in project sustainability is caused by beneficiary involvement practices. Only 33.5% of the variation in project sustainability is not explained by the model. In order to assess if the model is a good fit for the data the p-value given by the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed and results are shown in next Table5.

Table 5: Significance of the model

| ANOVA ^b | | | | | | |
|---|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 112.551 | 3 | 37.517 | 251.723 | .000 ^a |
| | Residual | 56.784 | 381 | .149 | | |
| | Total | 169.335 | 384 | | | |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Beneficiary_participation, Beneficiary_consultation, Information_dissemination | | | | | | |
| b. Dependent Variable: Project_sustainability | | | | | | |

The table 5 shows that the p-value for the overall regression relationship was ($p = .000$), this value is much less than the level of significance of 0.05. which means that there is almost zero chances over one thousand that the model as a whole can be removed from predictors without affecting the sustainability of the project. This indicates that there was a statistically significant effect of beneficiary involvement practices on the project. In order to appreciate statistically how much the change in value of one independent variable affected the sustainability of the project while other variables remained constant, the regression coefficients have been calculated and answers are shown in table6.

Table 6: Regression coefficients

| Coefficients ^a | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------|------|
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | .026 | .162 | | .159 | .874 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| | Information_dissemination | .542 | .061 | .455 | 8.959 | .000 |
| | Beneficiary_consultation | .308 | .043 | .309 | 7.108 | .000 |
| | Beneficiary_participation | .141 | .047 | .134 | 2.998 | .003 |
| a. Dependent Variable: Project_sustainability | | | | | | |

The Table6 shows the beta coefficients of the model. It helps to appreciate how much every independent variable contributes to the prediction of the dependent variable. One should notice that the p (t)>0.05 for all variables which means that every independent variable count in this model.

From the table above the regression equation may be written as follow: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$, $Y = 0.26 + 0.542X_1 + 0.308X_2 + 0.141X_3 + 0.386$. The regression model demonstrated that a unit increase in information dissemination increases Project sustainability by 0.542 units, while other variables remain constant. One unit increase in beneficiary consultation would increase project sustainability by 0.308 units if other variables remain constant. Finally, a unit change in beneficiary participation would increase project sustainability by 0.141 units, while other variables stay constant.

4.2 Discussion of results:

4.2.1 Information dissemination and project sustainability:

The coefficient of correlation between information dissemination and project sustainability equal to 0.777 (Table4) and is significant at 0.01 level which means that there is a strong (Deborah, 2016) positive relationship between information dissemination and sustainability of the project. The regression analysis (Table-4.7) helped to appreciate statistically the influence of information dissemination to predict the sustainability of the project. The regression coefficient of the variable information dissemination is 0.542. The value of this coefficient means that if the information dissemination was increased by one unit, it would have caused the sustainability of the project to increase by 0.542 units. P-value for information dissemination is 0.000 which means that there is almost zero chance in 1000 that the parameter information dissemination be zero, which implies that the term of the regression equation containing the parameter information dissemination, cannot be eliminated without significantly affecting the accuracy of the regression. These results are in harmony with those of Rebeca (2016) who concluded that the absence of reciprocal information sharing limits participation, conveys disrespect, and prevents beneficiaries from developing a sense of ownership and gaining deeper understanding of the project.

4.2.2 Beneficiary consultation& project sustainability:

According to the table3 there is a strong positive correlation between Beneficiary consultation & project sustainability. The Pearson correlation coefficient between them was .720. The regression coefficient for the Beneficiary consultation was .308 this implies that if Beneficiary consultation was increased by one unit, the sustainability of the project would have increased by 0.308on the condition other variables remaining constant. The observation of the p-value of this variable (Beneficiary consultation) indicated that it is a very important factor in predicting sustainability of the project. These results are in line with those of Norman et al, 2010 who concluded that in the process of consultation, stakeholders may provide one another and public officials with more valid and reliable information, increasing accountability and that improved understanding of local values, priorities and expectations can result in project designs and delivery mechanisms that are more compatible with socio-cultural conditions. They found also that beneficiary consultation can generate a greater willingness for beneficiaries to invest their time, labor and other resources in a project they “own,” thereby stretching the value of invested funds.

4.2.3 Beneficiary participation and project sustainability:

The Pearson correlation coefficient computed (.659) showed that there is moderate positive correlation between beneficiary participation and project sustainability. The β coefficient for Beneficiary participation (.141) implies that if this variable is increased by one unit, it will cause the success of the project to increase by 0.141 units if other variable stay constant. The observation of p-value allow to conclude that the variable Beneficiary participation is of great importance in sustainability of project and particularly in the case of the project because there is only 3 chances over 1000 that the project may succeed without beneficiary participation. These findings have similarity with those of Frilliness (2015) who found that stakeholders’ participation in various forms promoted project sustainability; these forms include resource mobilization, setting standard for monitoring project success, collaborative partnership, material contribution, advocacy, lobbying, information giving and consultation. The study also indicated that the strength of stakeholders’

participations in promoting project sustainability has been portrayed in various forms including effective utilization of local knowledge and skills in project activities and use of local resources and materials. This result concord also with those of Theresia(2010) who concluded that community mobilization is very crucial because it creates awareness among stakeholders, people become aware of their material resources, their leadership, their technical expertise and the kind of help they are likely to need from outside, people should be mobilized through education and training on the importance of their projects and to make them feel that projects belongs to them, with mobilization, various village resources should be identified and daily recognized within the rules and institutions that creates predictable and transparent framework of both private and public sector.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions:

Based on the information drawn from findings the researcher concluded that the effect of information dissemination on sustainability of a project is significant. It was found out that the project could not be sustainable without information dissemination and that the increase of one unit in information dissemination increases the project sustainability by .542 units if other variables remain constant.

This study demonstrated that there is a strong relationship between beneficiary consultation and sustainability of the project. The study found out that beneficiary consultation has a great effect on project sustainability. It showed that the increase of one unit in beneficiary consultation would increase the sustainability of the potable water supply and sanitation by .308 units if other variables remain constant. Moreover it showed that this variable is a very important factor in project sustainability.

As per the third objective this study demonstrated that there is moderate relationship between beneficiary participation and project sustainability. Statistically the increase of one unit in beneficiary participation increases the sustainability of project by .141 units if other variables stay constant. The indispensable role of this variable in project sustainability has been proved by its p-value which showed that it can't be ignored in the model without affecting deeply the accuracy of the prediction by the model.

5.2 Recommendations:

At the end of this study some recommendations should be given To Whom It May Concern especially to project managers and designer.

- i. Project managers and project designers must take into consideration the dissemination of information among stakeholders especially among beneficiaries provided that this will enhance the level of the sustainability of the project.
- ii. Project managers must consult with beneficiaries during the whole project management process. Any decision to make or any review in project document must be done conjointly with beneficiaries or their representatives.
- iii. Apart from consulting and disseminating information among stakeholders especially beneficiaries, the latte must participate in whole process of project management this will enhance the level of project sustainability provided that the beneficiary will take in hand the management of deliverable after the end of the project.

5.3 Suggestions for further research:

This research has been limited only on potable water supply and sanitation Project in Rwanda; other similar researches may be done in other projects and locations of the globe to confirm or to contradict the findings.

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