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The Effect of Project Vital Activities on Project and the Mediating Role of Stakeholder Engagement in Government Building Construction Projects

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Abstract
This research article aims to analysis the effect of project vital activities (Corruption, political intervention, and Risk mitigation) on project performance through stakeholder engagement in Building construction projects. The research follows a mixed approach, utilizing structured questions, and interview as the primary method of data collection. The research design was descriptive and explanatory. The target population consists of ten building construction projects, with a total of 1110 individuals those actively participate on the project when the research movement. A stratified sampling strategy had employed to conduct a sample size of 222 participants. And for interview purposive sampling was conducted to select 4 from the stratified sample size of the research. Primary data collected through structured interviews with project managers, contractors, government officials, and key stakeholders. The collected data processed and analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS software and SPSS v26 software was used for analysis of the data. The research findings show that in building construction projects project vital activities which are project risk mitigation, political intervention, and Corruption has a significant effect on project performance through stakeholder engagement. The researcher recommends that there should attention for both stakeholder engagement and anticorruption rules and regulation for risk mitigation and better project performance.

Keywords: Stakeholder engagement, Risk mitigation, Political Intervention, corruption, project vital activities

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Introduction

Background of the study

Government Building Mega projects in the worldwide play a crucial role in the expansion and development of public services, infrastructure, and economies well fare (Hall & Bonanomi, 2021). These massive initiatives involve multiple stakeholders, such as contractors, government agencies, community leaders, and other relevant parties. Ensuring the success of these ambitious endeavors relies on effective stakeholder engagement, which fosters cooperation, communication, and collaborative decision-making among stakeholders (Fleta-asín & Muñoz, 2020). However according to the researcher point of view and the dynamic of the technology and the rapid development of the economy and the unlimited want of human force to conduct demand more research is necessary to fully understand the connection between stakeholder participation, project essential activities, and project performance in Government Building projects.

Previous studies(Fleta-asín & Muñoz, 2020; Keers & Fenema, 2018; Viswanathan et al., 2019) have emphasized the significance of project essential tasks, including organizing, scheduling, allocating resources, and budgeting, in accomplishing project goals. These tasks play a critical role in controlling project scope, budget, and timeline. Additionally, Stakeholder engagement has been recognized as a valuable tool in Africa for managing expectations, resolving conflicts, and ensuring alignment of project goals with stakeholder interests(Kassel, 2016). Improved project results, such as cost control, on-time delivery, quality assurance, and client satisfaction, can result from effective stakeholder engagement(Biruk & Rzepecki, 2019).

The Effect of corruption for the construction sector in Ethiopia was studied and the studies investigate the potentials of Building Information Modeling (BIM) to mitigate risks of corruption in the Ethiopian public construction sector(Berhe, 2019). These factors separately on project performance are more common than those that have examined the combined effects of project vital activities and stakeholder engagement, as well as the mediating role of stakeholder engagement. In Government Building projects, it is crucial to aware how

stakeholder participation affects the relationship between project performance and important activities(Hall & Bonanomi, 2021)

This study attempts to close the current research gap and add to the body of knowledge in the field of construction management by investigating the mediating effects of stakeholder engagement on the link between project vital activities and project performance. Project managers, legislators, and stakeholders will find the data useful in comprehending the significance of successful Stakeholder engagement for project outcomes. The ultimate goal of the research is to identify the effect of project vital activities on project performance and the role of stakeholder engagement at Debre-tabor University Woybla Mariyam Campus building construction projects.

Statement of the Problem

The role of political involvement in Government Building projects and its Effect on project performance remains understudied, specifically in developing countries(Al-Abrrow et al., 2019). According to the researcher perception on the ground day to day activities the influence of political interference on project timelines, budgets, and scope needs to be examined to identify potential areas of concern and develop strategies to mitigate negative effects.

Corruption poses a significant challenge to Government Building projects and other developing countries. The financial losses incurred due to corruption in construction projects are substantial, as evidenced by the World Bank's 2015 report (Zicari & Aldama, 2017). However, limited research has been conducted to quantify the extent of corruption's Effect on project budgets, and the specific percentage of funds lost to corruption in the Government Building projects.

The risk is expected to be consistently 30% by 2025 while the industry is also projected to consume 15 trillion USD every year worldwide (Locatelli et al., 2017).

Corruption continues to take a devastating toll on our world, resulting in a staggering daily loss of $1 billion. This astronomical Figure represents the economic damage caused by corrupt practices globally. Regrettably, Africa bears the brunt of this affliction, losing a staggering $140 billion each year due to corruption(Feil, 2021). In Ethiopia, the absence of research on corruption and construction is concerning. However, (Berhe, 2019), a dedicated individual with a , conducted a study that shed light on the issue. His findings disclosed that a significant portion, ranging from 30% to 35%, of the total project cost is lost due to corruption in the construction sector. Unfortunately, the Ethiopian capital allocates 60-65% of its annual budget to construction, making it an attractive target for corrupt practices in this year 2023/2024 the Ethiopian parliament says that 70% of the whole budget allocates for construction only. This situation highlights the urgent need for measures to combat corruption, ensure transparency, and safeguard the resources allocated to Government Building projects in Ethiopia.

Risk mitigation is of utmost importance in ensuring optimal project performance(Muriana & Vizzini, 2017). However, according to the researcher point of view Government owned building construction projects lack sufficient research on the significance of risk mitigation and the associated challenges in achieving project performance objectives. To address this research gap and overcome the problem, it is crucial to conduct in-depth research that examines the importance of risk mitigation strategies and their Effect on project performance in Government Building projects. Such research will provide valuable insights and recommendations for effective risk management practices, ultimately enhancing project outcomes in the government sector.

Stakeholder engagement plays a crucial role in all projects specially construction projects, as it influences the performance of the projects(Bal et al., 2013). Stakeholder engagement involves the active involvement and collaboration of individuals, groups, or organizations with a vested interest or affected by the project(Lin, 2022). However, despite its significance, there is a lack of sufficient empirical evidence in this area especially government owned building projects. Further research and empirical studies are needed to better understand the Effect of stakeholder engagement on these factors and its overall influence on project performance in the construction industry.

Project performance is indeed critical in construction projects as it ensures timely completion, adherence to budget constraints, and the delivery of the desired scope and quality(Bello, 2017). However, in developing countries like Ethiopia, there is a significant lack of research and empirical evidence pertaining to project performance. Moreover, there is a dearth of recorded data on the performance of Government owned projects in the country. This insufficiency of information necessitates conducting comprehensive research to assess and understand project performance in construction projects. By undertaking such research, valuable insights can be

gained, leading to the identification of factors influencing project performance, the challenges faced, and the formulation of strategies to enhance project outcomes. This research will play a crucial role in improving project management practices and decision-making processes in the construction sector of Ethiopia.

Previous research has predominantly examined the direct correlations between Leadership intervention and project performance(Rogger, 2014) corruption and project performance(Owusu et al., 2019), stakeholder engagement and risk mitigation(Zicari & Aldama, 2017), and project performance and stakeholder engagement (Saddiqa et al., 2023); however, it has not taken into account the possible mediation Effects of stakeholder engagement and political intervention.

This knowledge gap restricts the ability to comprehend how stakeholder engagement techniques affect the correlation between these variables and project performance.

There is the scarcity of research on the mediating effect of stakeholder engagement for the relationship between project vital activities and project performance.

Research objective

1. To examine the Effect of risk mitigation on stakeholder engagement.

2. To assess the effect of risk mitigation on project performance.

3. To investigate the influence of political intervention on stakeholder engagement and project performance.

4. To analyze the Effect of corruption on stakeholder engagement and project performance.

5. To explore the mediating role of stakeholder engagement in the relationship between Project Vital activities and project performance.

Research Hypothesis

(H1): A corruption has a negative significant Effect on project performance through stakeholder engagement.

(H2): Risk mitigation has a positive significant Effect on project performance through stakeholder engagement.

(H3): A political interventions has a negative significant Effect on project performance through stakeholder engagement.

Literature Review

Usang et al., O(2020) conducted a survey-based study in the context of government infrastructure projects. Their findings disclosed that stakeholder engagement significantly mediated the relationship between project vital activities and project performance. This suggests that effective stakeholder engagement practices can positively affect project outcomes in Debre-Tabor University Building projects.

Similarly, (Bal et al., 2013) examined the Effect of stakeholder engagement on project success in government Building projects. Their study demonstrated that stakeholder engagement played a crucial mediating role in enhancing project performance. By actively involving stakeholders in project activities and decision-making processes, project managers can foster better communication, collaboration, and coordination, leading to improved project outcomes(Zicari & Aldama, 2017).

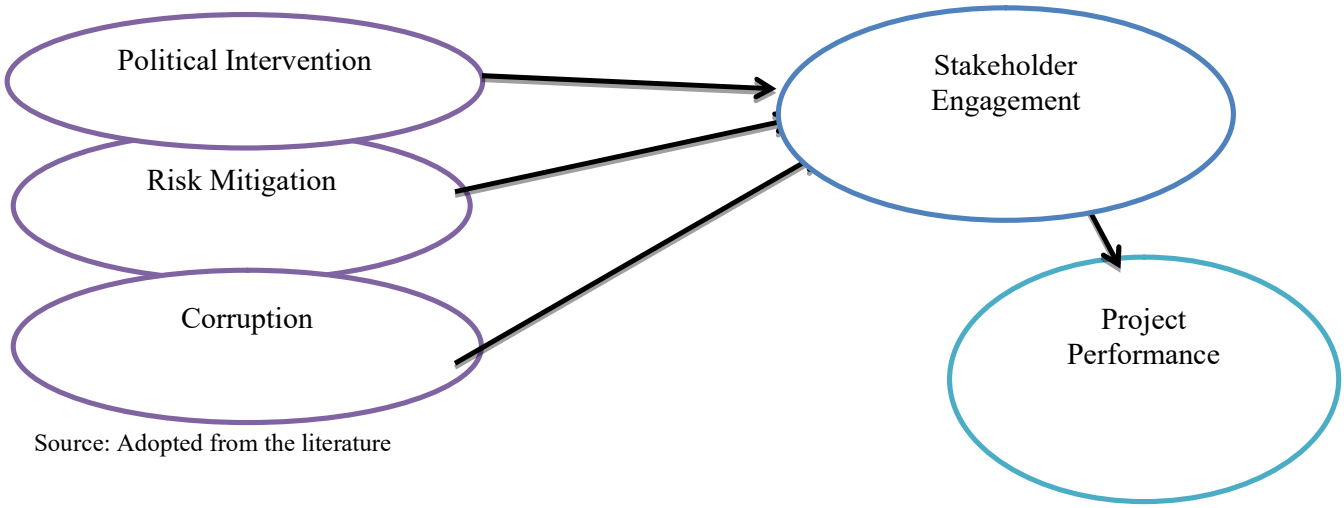
Furthermore, (Usang et al., 2020) conducted a study focusing on government-funded urban development projects. Their research explored the role of stakeholder engagement in such projects and found that stakeholder engagement had a positive influence on project vital activities, including effective communication and collaborative decision-making. These project vital activities, in turn, contributed to improved project performance. This emphasizes the importance of engaging stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle to ensure positive project outcomes.

However, despite the existing studies(Cape et al., 2022; Guo & Kapucu, 2019; Jayasuriya et al., 2020; Mardani, 2018; Pobi, 2019) on stakeholder engagement in government Building projects, there is a limited number of empirical studies specifically focused on the context of the mediating effect of stakeholder engagement for the relationship between project vital activities and project performance for Debre-Tabor University Building projects. This research gap highlights the need for further investigation to address the specific dynamics and challenges of Debre-Tabor University Building projects. Conducting empirical studies in this context would

provide valuable insights into the mediating effects of stakeholder engagement and contribute to enhancing project performance and stakeholder satisfaction in construction projects.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 conceptual Framework



Source: Adopted from the literature

Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed research approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods within a descriptive and explanatory research design. The target population consisted of 1110 actively working individuals identified during the survey. Probability and Non-probability sampling methods were used, with stratified random sampling for quantitative data and purposive sampling for qualitative data. The sampling focused on a diverse range of projects in terms of industries, sizes, and organizational settings. Primary data sources, including structured questionnaires and interviews, were used to gather information on stakeholder engagement practices, project activities, and performance. Structural equation modeling was employed to analyze complex relationships and test mediation models. A triangulation method was utilized for data analysis, cross-referencing multiple sources and techniques to ensure robustness and validity, enhancing the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

Table 1 Composite Reliability, Validity, and Convergent Validity of the Model

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	Convergent Validity
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	.959	0.90	.758	good convergent validity
PROJECT PERFORMANCE	.802	.96	.78	strong convergent validity
POLITICAL INTERVENTION	.830	.744	.68	acceptable convergent validity
RISK MITIGATION	.755	.92	.767	good convergent validity
CORRUPTION	.894	.848	.918	strong convergent validity

Source: Researcher's AMOS output 2024

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity refers to the assessment of the degree to which different measures of the same concept are correlated, indicating whether the indicators converge to measure a single underlying concept (Hair et al., 2013) It is commonly evaluated by examining the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which measures the amount of

variance captured by the latent construct relative to the measurement error. A commonly accepted minimum threshold for convergent validity is an AVE greater than 0.5. In the provided table, it is indicated that the convergent validity of stakeholder engagement, risk mitigation project performance, political intervention, and corruption exceeds this threshold of 0.5, suggesting that the indicators within each construct converge well to measure the respective underlying concepts.

It seems like you want to present the provided information in a tabular format. Here's how you can represent the data in table form:

Model Fit

Table 2 Model measurement

Measure	**Value**	**Threshold/Range**	**Fit Interpretation**
CMIN (Chi-square)	368.389	-	Excellent (1.411)
Degrees of Freedom (DF)	261	-	-
CMIN/DF	1.411	1 to 3	Excellent
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.964	> 0.95	Excellent
SRMR (Standardized RMS)	0.142	< 0.08	Poor
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error)	0.045	< 0.06	Excellent
PClose	0.800	> 0.05	Excellent

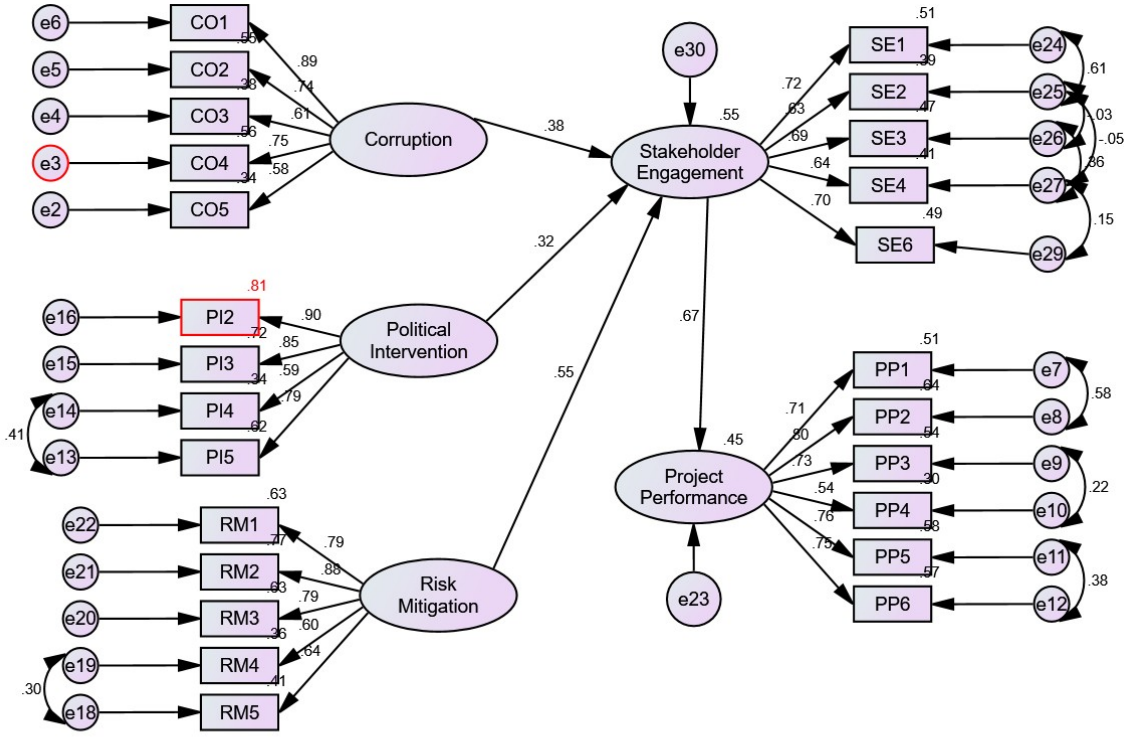
Structural Analysis

The standardized indirect (mediated) effect of Risk Mitigation on Project Performance is .368. That is, due to the indirect (mediated) effect of Risk Mitigation on Project Performance, when Risk Mitigation goes up by 1 standard deviation, Project Performance goes up by 0.368 standard deviations. This is in addition to any direct (unmediated) effect that Risk Mitigation may have on Project Performance.

The standardized indirect (mediated) effect of Political Intervention on Project Performance is .214. That is, due to the indirect (mediated) effect of Political Intervention on Project Performance, when Political Intervention goes up by 1 standard deviation, Project Performance goes up by 0.214 standard deviations. This is in addition to any direct (unmediated) effect that Political Intervention may have on Project Performance.

The standardized indirect (mediated) effect of Corruption on Project Performance is .254. That is, due to the indirect (mediated) effect of Corruption on Project Performance, when Corruption goes up by 1 standard deviation, Project Performance goes up by 0.254 standard deviations. This is in addition to any direct (unmediated) effect that Corruption may have on Project Performance.

Figure 2 The Effect of Project Vital activities on project performance through stakeholder engagement



Source: Researcher's Amos output 2024

Mediation Analysis

The indirect (mediated) effect of Political Intervention on Project Performance is .080. That is, due to the indirect (mediated) effect of Political Intervention on Project Performance, when Political Intervention goes up by 1, Project Performance goes up by 0.08. This is in addition to any direct (unmediated) effect that Political Intervention may have on Project Performance.

The indirect (mediated) effect of Risk Mitigation on Project Performance is .157. That is, due to the indirect (mediated) effect of Risk Mitigation on Project Performance, when Risk Mitigation goes up by 1, Project Performance goes up by 0.157. This is in addition to any direct (unmediated) effect that Risk Mitigation may have on Project Performance.

The indirect (mediated) effect of Corruption on Project Performance is .075. That is, due to the indirect (mediated) effect of Corruption on Project Performance, when Corruption goes up by 1, Project Performance goes up by 0.075. This is in addition to any direct (unmediated) effect that Corruption may have on Project Performance.

Standardized Total Effect

The standardized total (direct and indirect) effect of Risk Mitigation on Stakeholder Engagement is .531. That is, due to both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects of Risk Mitigation on Stakeholder Engagement, when Risk Mitigation goes up by 1 standard deviation, Stakeholder Engagement goes up by 0.531 standard deviations.

The standardized total (direct and indirect) effect of Political Intervention on Stakeholder Engagement is .257. That is, due to both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects of Political Intervention on Stakeholder Engagement, when Political Intervention goes up by 1 standard deviation, Stakeholder Engagement goes up by 0.257 standard deviations.

The standardized total (direct and indirect) effect of Corruption on Stakeholder Engagement is .363. That is, due to both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects of Corruption on Stakeholder Engagement, when Corruption goes up by 1 standard deviation, Stakeholder Engagement goes up by 0.363 standard deviations.

The standardized total (direct and indirect) effect of Risk Mitigation on Project Performance is .397. That is, due to both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects of Risk Mitigation on Project Performance, when Risk Mitigation goes up by 1 standard deviation, Project Performance goes up by 0.397 standard deviations.

The standardized total (direct and indirect) effect of Political Intervention on Project Performance is .340. That is, due to both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects of Political Intervention on Project Performance, when Political Intervention goes up by 1 standard deviation, Project Performance goes up by 0.34 standard deviations.

The standardized total (direct and indirect) effect of Corruption on Project Performance is .227. That is, due to both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects of Corruption on Project Performance, when Corruption goes up by 1 standard deviation, Project Performance goes up by 0.227 standard deviations.

The standardized total (direct and indirect) effect of Stakeholder Engagement on Project Performance is .404. That is, due to both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects of Stakeholder Engagement on Project Performance, when Stakeholder Engagement goes up by 1 standard deviation, Project Performance goes up by 0.404 standard deviations.

Discussion

Effect of Political Intervention on Project Performance through stakeholder engagement

Based on the data provided, Political Intervention is shown to have a significant positive impact on Project Performance, with a standardized total effect of .304. This implies that a 1 standard deviation increase in Political Intervention corresponds to a notable 0.304 standard deviation improvement in Project Performance, highlighting the essential role of political factors in driving successful project outcomes. Effective management of Political Intervention can enhance Project Performance by optimizing strategies, resources, and stakeholder relationships. Project managers must proactively address political dynamics to achieve success. However, based on interviews with stakeholders and managers, conflicting views emerge. While Person 3 and Person 1 express concerns about delays and cost overruns due to political intervention in University-owned building projects, Person 2 believes that political intervention can streamline resource allocation and project implementation. The presence of political intervention can indeed negatively impact project performance, leading to delays, increased costs, and uncertainty, particularly in the face of political disruptions like policy changes, government instability, bureaucratic delays, or civil unrest, all of which can impede project success.

However there are also other researchers(D, 2019; Rogger, 2014; Usang et al., 2020) founding about the political intervention and project performance. The research on the impact of political interference on local government projects show that political interference is negatively related to local government performance, its effect on local government performance. On the other research conducted on Nigeria(D, 2019) show that there also political interference had undermined the efficient administration of public water supply in the state.

In conclusion, the data suggests that political intervention has a significant impact on project performance. The quantitative analysis shows a positive relationship, indicating that increased political intervention leads to improved project performance. However, the qualitative findings from the interviews disclose negative effects, such as delays, cost overruns, and disruptions caused by political interference. It is important for project managers to effectively manage political intervention to optimize project outcomes. They should consider the potential risks and benefits associated with political dynamics and navigate them proactively to ensure project success.

Effect of Corruption on project performance through stakeholder engagement

The data reveals a significant negative impact of Corruption on Project Performance, with a standardized total effect of -.055, indicating that a 1 standard deviation increase in Corruption results in a 0.055 standard deviation decrease in Project Performance. This emphasizes the need for proactive anti-corruption measures to combat its detrimental influence, promoting transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct within project teams. Stakeholder interviews reflect diverse perspectives on Corruption's effects: while Person 4 attributes project delays and budget overruns to political intervention, Person 2 and Person 1 emphasize the negative impacts of Corruption on project outcomes, including increased costs, compromised quality, and diminished transparency.

Person 3 presents a contrasting view, suggesting that Corruption can occasionally expedite project delivery by circumventing bureaucratic challenges, though stressing that combating Corruption is ultimately more sustainable than bypassing bureaucratic hurdles. Notably, both Corruption and political intervention are recognized as having adverse effects on stakeholder engagement, highlighting the importance of addressing these issues to ensure successful project deliveries and maintain stakeholder trust.

however the finding of this study are consistent with findings of Adindu et al.,(2020b) corrupt activities in construction project delivery in severely effects on project performance. However the finding of Edwards et al., (2017) Corruption in the construction industry is found to be universal and pervasive, occurring in all areas, at all stages, at all levels, and in all forms. On the other study by Khadim et al., (2021) corruption is widespread in the local construction industry and it has harmful effects on project.

A study by Locatelli et al., (2017) found that Corruption worsens both cost and time performance, and the benefits delivered. Other researchers(Berhe, 2019b; Grasso, 2019; Khadim et al., 2021; Tabish & Jha, 2012) also found that corruption is a significance effect on project performance.

Based on the provided data and the interview findings, it is evident that corruption has a significant and negative impact on project performance. The quantitative analysis demonstrates a clear relationship, with an increase in corruption leading to a decrease in project performance. The qualitative findings from the interviews further support this, with respondents highlighting project delays, material escalation, and exceeding budgets as consequences of corruption and political intervention. Previous research also aligns with these findings, indicating that corruption is pervasive in the construction industry and has harmful effects on project outcomes. To mitigate the detrimental effects of corruption, project managers and organizations must prioritize anti-corruption measures, promote transparency, and uphold ethical standards. By doing so, they can improve project performance and ensure successful project delivery. The consistent findings across various studies emphasize the need for concerted efforts to combat corruption and its impact on project performance.

Effect of Risk mitigation on project performance through stakeholder engagement

Based on the data provided, the effect of risk mitigation on project performance emerges as significant, with a standardized total effect of .047. This suggests that a 1 standard deviation increase in risk mitigation correlates with a 0.047 standard deviation improvement in project performance. These results underscore the critical nature of identifying risks, devising contingency plans, and implementing proactive strategies to mitigate risks' adverse effects and bolster overall project outcomes. Effective risk mitigation practices play a vital role in project success by preemptively addressing potential risks and contributing to enhanced project performance. While opinions on risk mitigation varied among respondents, with some highlighting its positive impact on minimizing disruptions and enhancing predictability in costs and schedules, others viewed risk mitigation as bureaucratic and having limited effectiveness. Person 1 emphasized the benefits of effective risk mitigation strategies, whereas Person 2 raised concerns about how risk mitigation measures could introduce complexities and delays, potentially hampering project performance. The efficacy of risk mitigation was observed to hinge on the thoroughness of risk assessment, the implementation of mitigation strategies, and the inherent risks associated with the project.

The research finding on Viswanathan et al., (2019) risk mitigation improved project success criteria and project management success.

From A Guide to project management body of knowledge (Institute, 2017) risk mitigation plays a crucial role in project performance.

However, it is important to note that while there are articles supporting the direct effect of political intervention on project performance(D, 2019; Rogger, 2018; Wang et al., 2021), there is a lack of research specifically addressing the indirect effect of stakeholder engagement in the context of political interventions. Further research is needed to fully understand and establish the relationship between stakeholder engagement and project performance when influenced by political interventions.

In conclusion, risk mitigation plays a crucial role in improving project performance by minimizing disruptions and enhancing predictability. Effective risk assessment and proactive measures are essential components of successful project management. While the impact of political intervention on stakeholder engagement and project performance requires further investigation, existing research points to the negative effects of political interventions on project outcomes.

Finding

The research findings show that in Debre Tabor University building construction projects project vital activities which are project risk mitigation, political intervention, and Corruption has a significant effect on project performance through stakeholder engagement.

However the research ensured that stakeholder engagement as the mediating role on the relationship between project vital activities and project performance. Stakeholder engagement is fully or perfect mediation variable in the research. Additionally, the research findings highlight the mediating role of stakeholder engagement in the relationship between Project Vital activities and project performance. Stakeholder engagement has a positive overall effect on project performance, influencing risk mitigation, political intervention, and corruption. This emphasizes the significance of nurturing strong stakeholder engagement, as it directly improves project performance and indirectly affects it through risk mitigation, political intervention, and corruption. By enhancing stakeholder engagement, organizations can enhance project outcomes by minimizing risks, effectively managing political factors, and mitigating the negative impact of corruption.

Conclusion

In this research, a mixed-method approach was used to study Debre-Tabor University Building projects and how stakeholder engagement impacts project performance. The findings revealed that corruption and political intervention negatively affect stakeholder engagement and project outcomes, emphasizing the necessity for anti-corruption measures and reduced political interference. Political involvement significantly influences project success, emphasizing the need for government support. Furthermore, corruption, risk management, and political intervention impact projects through stakeholder engagement, emphasize the importance of strong relationships, transparency, and effective risk strategies for project success.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, recommendations include shifting from political involvement to political support for projects to enhance transparency, establishing a comprehensive code of conduct to combat corruption, enhancing stakeholder engagement through educational programs and active involvement, prioritizing timely budget allocation and streamlined procurement, conducting thorough risk analyses, assigning project managers based on qualifications, establishing transparent governance mechanisms to mitigate political interventions, and implementing measures for transparency, accountability, and efficiency in Debre-Tabor University building projects. These steps aim to combat corruption, improve stakeholder engagement, enhance project planning and execution, and ultimately ensure the successful delivery of projects at the university.

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