

Interactive Participation, Collaboration And Project Success Among Non-Government Organization Health Projects In Kumi District

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between interactive participation, collaboration and project success among NGO health projects in Kumi district. The study was a cross-sectional research design which applied a quantitative research approach. A sample of 44 health projects in Kumi District. Primary data was obtained from a project manager, program manager and monitoring & evaluation officer using a structured questionnaire. SPSS v. 25 was used to analyze data, and results were presented and interpreted using frequency tables, correlation, and regression analyses. The study found a positive relationship between interactive participation and project success. A positive relationship between collaboration and project success was also obtained. The study also found that collaboration was a partial mediator in the relationship between interactive participation and project success. Moreover, this study found that interactive participation and collaboration were significant predictors of project success. Moreover, this study established that interactive participation was a better predictor of project success among health projects. The study concludes that interactive participation and collaboration are inevitable in stimulating project success among health projects. It equally concludes that health projects will be more successful when they mainly focus on interactive participation. The study recommends health projects to intensify interactive participation, and strengthen collaboration with stakeholders to boost project success.

Keywords: Interactive Participation, Collaboration, Project Success, Non-Government Organization and Health Projects

Background to the Study

Project success is prominent in the discussions of practitioners and researchers within the project management fraternity (Faridah et al., 2023). This is because when a project is successful, it is able to minimize unnecessary time and cost overruns that threaten the viability of projects (Suzan et al., 2024). It is also agreed that successful projects meet stakeholder expectations, leading to community acceptance and collaboration on sustainable projects (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). Given these facts, all projects, regardless of their size and nature, have expressed the need to understand what needs to be done to meet the project's key success parameters. Although project success remains a major agenda for NGOs, it is a major concern globally as many activities undertaken by NGOs have not been successful, resulting in such projects not being able to compete with activities in terms of time, scope, budget and delivery of tasks. beneficiary satisfaction (Performance Management Institute (Faridah et al., 2023). A survey conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2018) across 23,931 projects shows that more than 65% of implemented health projects encounter time overruns. In addition, 1,058 projects Non-governmental organizations

Received: 19.07.2024

Accepted: 22.07.2024

Published on: 30.07.2024

have not been implemented due to lack of funding (Alex & Moses, 2024) Most of these cases are dominant in developing and least developed countries The Tropical Diseases Program (ESPEN), which was implemented in sub-Saharan African countries such as Mali, Niger and Algeria, has not been able to achieve 51.3% vaccination coverage (Kazaara et al., 2023). Similarly, in Uganda, project success continues to be highlighted as one of the main issues among NGO projects (Uganda National NGO Forum, 2018). More than 45.7% of health projects implemented by NGOs experience cost and time overruns, while 33.4% of NGO activities differ from previously planned (Paul et al., 2023). One of the most affected areas is Kumi. In an interview, the mayor for Kumi highlighted that beneficiaries expressed dissatisfaction with the growing number of NGOs that focused on extracting money from vulnerable communities instead of providing services (Racheal et al., 2023). Another 35 Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs) were unable to continue extending health projects to communities because they did not have sufficient funds. Furthermore, such activities were budgeted and resources fully allocated (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). Similarly, a report by the Kumi District Community Officer (2019) states that approximately 33.1% of NGO activities are unable to reach the target beneficiaries, while 13.7% of NGO activities are carried out within the required extension of time (Annet et al., 2023). With increasing project failure, a body of literature has emerged explaining possible underlying factors (Faridah et al., 2023) suggesting that interactive participation increases project understanding and support from various stakeholders, culminating in timely implementation of project activities. When stakeholders are enabled to participate, their acceptability of project activities increases, which fosters trust, collectively mobilizes resources, and takes full responsibility (Akankwasa et al., 2022). This enables projects to deliver activities within the expected time, budget and scope. On the other hand, Bond-Barnard, Fletcher and Steyn (2018) state that collaboration is essential in the sense that different stakeholders meet the project, which builds trust and willingness to support the project, which increases the success of the project. Although there is empirical evidence to suggest that interactive participation and collaboration influence project success, an existing literature has been developed in developed countries (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). Where NGO projects exist in Uganda that have been widely studied, they are in the central region outside of the highland areas. Moreover, empirical evidence to examine the practical role of collaboration in the relationship between interactive participation and project success is generally limited. This study therefore seeks to extend the local literature using Kumi District by providing an empirical explanation of the relationship between interactive participation and project success (Lydia et al., 2023). It is further extended to minimize the lack of literature regarding the moderating role of collaboration in the relationship between interactive participation and project success. it is justified to conduct a study that is aimed at investigating the relationship between interactive participation and project success.

Statement of the Problem

More than 65% of NGO health projects in Kumi District did not achieve the goals and objectives as expected (David et al., 2023). These projects have either failed to complete specific programs and activities within the expected time frame, while others have sought additional funding to implement previously anticipated programs. Kumi District Community Based (Akankwasa et al., 2022), more than one-third (33.1%) of health projects are not implemented as planned. The number of NGOs seeking extension of time to implement health programs in the district has also increased to 13.7% compared to 5.1% three years earlier as of 2016. If unchecked, this is likely , that many donor funds will be wasted and community members' trust in projects will be affected (Amos et al., 2024). It is suggested that the failure of such projects could be attributed to a lack of interactive participation and collaboration (Micheal et al., 2024).

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the relationship between interactive participation, collaboration and project success and tested the mediation effect of collaboration in the relationship between interactive participation and project success among NGO health projects in Kumi district.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between interactive participation and project success among NGO health projects in Kumi district
2. To examine the relationship between collaboration and project success among NGO health projects in Kumi district.
3. To examine the mediation effect of collaboration in the relationship between interactive participation and project success among NGO health projects in Kumi district
4. To examine the combined effect of interactive participation, collaboration on project success among NGO health projects in Kumi district

Methodology

This study used a cross-sectional research design along with a quantitative research approach. A cross-sectional research approach was chosen due to its suitability for studies with a short time frame such as this particular study (Olanrewaju et al., 2021). On the other hand, a quantitative research approach was used because it is clear how the studied variables are related. Moreover, this approach is based directly on the original plans and its results are more easily analyzed and interpreted (Rasheed et al., 2022). The study population consisted of 50 health projects in Kumi District. This was the total number of projects that were scaled up in the last 5 years from 2015 (Uganda Registers Services Bureau (Nafiu et al., 2012). This number included 38 International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and 12 Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs). Health projects were considered as the unit of analysis. A sample of 44 health projects was used according to Krejci and Morgan's (1970) table i.e. INGO health projects (Olanrewaju & Abiodun, 2021). Based on the number of health projects in each category, the researcher determined disproportionately the actual number of projects to be selected to determine the actual health projects to participate in the study, it involved randomly selecting one project after another without reaching the target number (Abiodun & Christopher, 2024) because it takes into account the heterogeneity of the population. Therefore it guarantees that all categories of the population are represented by the selected sample (Faith et al., 2023).

In each project, the researcher focused on three (3) participants who served as the unit of inquiry, which included the project manager, the program manager, and the monitoring and evaluation officer (Wegulo et al., 2023). If a project manager or program manager was found to be responsible for a number of projects, then the researcher hired assistants. The project manager was chosen because he is fully responsible for all the decisions made and the results of the project. On the other hand, the program manager should play a validating role by guiding key decisions and coordinating all activities to make the project a success (Nafiu et al., 2013). The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer is responsible for leading all forms of reactive decision-making, following project and program managers in highlighting areas for improvement.

Table 1: Unit of Analysis selection

Health Projects	Population (N)	Sample (n)
INGO	38	33
LNGO	12	11
Totals	50	44

Source: URSB (2019).

Only primary data was used this study. This form of data was used because it provides first-hand information regarding the research phenomenon. Moreover, primary data enables the study to obtain information which is specific to the subject matter under investigation (Nafiu et al., 2017). Data used herein was collected with the help of a structured

Received: 19.07.2024**Accepted: 22.07.2024****Published on: 30.07.2024**

questionnaires. The questionnaire was used because large sample which is dispersed (Nafiu, 2012). This instrument contained closed-ended questions which were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale. The points on this scale were defined as; 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-not sure, 4-agree and 5-strongly agree (Nafiu et al., 2013). This scale was used because it allows respondents to express the extent to which they agree or disagree with the different notions (A & Ahmed, 2019). From the field, data was sorted, edited and processed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS. Version 25) (Nelson et al., 2022). Upon carrying out parametric tests among others reliability, normality, factor analysis, skewness and kurtosis, the researcher was able to fully clean the data. Afterwards, the researcher obtained descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to interpret results. Under descriptive statistics, the researcher used frequency tables to interpret demographic characteristics. Inferential statistics included correlation and regression analysis. Correlation was used to address objectives 1 and 2. Regression analysis was used to address objective three of the study.

RESULTS

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variable/Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Interactive Participation (1)	1							
Meetings (2)	.757**	1						
Dialogue (3)	.767**	.446**	1					
Collaboration (4)	.397**	.244*	.359**	1				
Communication (5)	.336**	.094	.282**	.658**	1			
Synchronicity (6)	.232*	.200	.145	.742**	.316**	1		
Coordination (7)	.337**	.234*	.361**	.848**	.339**	.416**	1	
Project Success (8)	.332**	.226*			.364**	.778**	.425**	.641**
							.666**	1

Notes: n=32 NGO health projects; * p<.05 level (2-tailed); ** p<.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data

Interactive Participation and Project Success

Results in Table 1 revealed a significant and positive relationship between interactive participation and project success ($r=.332$, $p<.01$). These results meant that improving interactive participation among NGO health projects would result in a possible improvement in project success. The implication to that effect is that NGO health projects which seek to succeed must enhance interactive participation if they are to enhance their chances. Likewise, the results obtained that meetings is significantly and positively associated to project success ($r=.226$, $p<.05$) (Nelson et al., 2023).

Received: 19.07.2024

Accepted: 22.07.2024

Published on: 30.07.2024

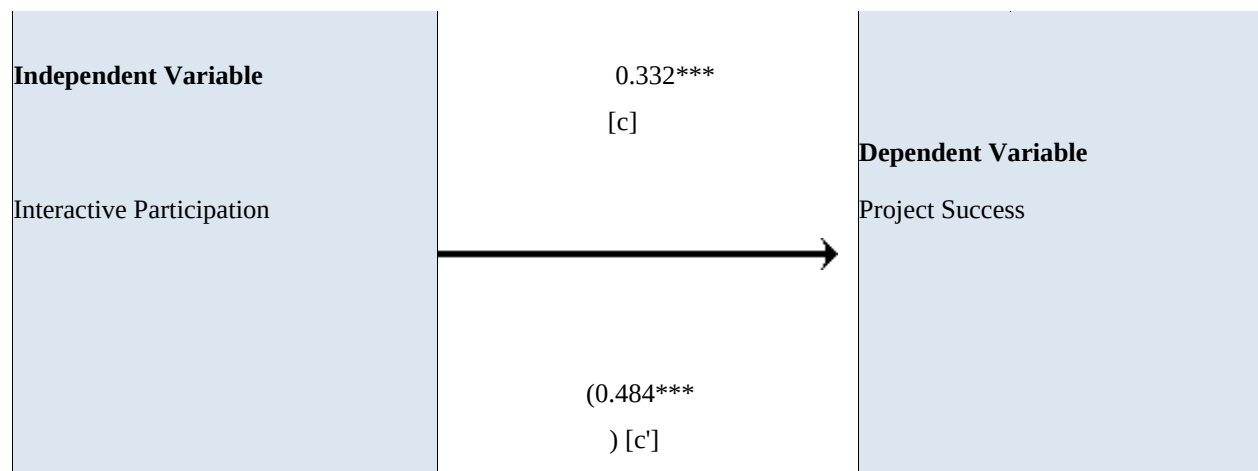
Furthermore, the results established that there exists a significant and positive relationship between dialogue and project success ($r=.364$, $p<.01$). From these results, it meant that enhancing meetings and dialogue are more likely to translate in project success. Therefore, these results implied that to increase the propensity of project success among health projects, it is necessary to enhance meetings and dialogue.

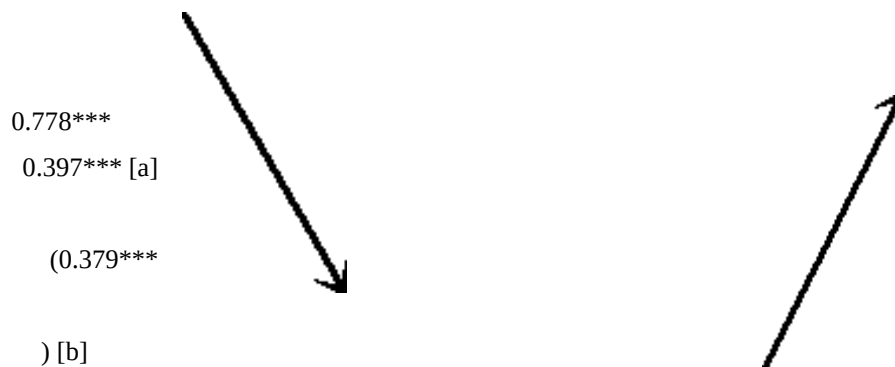
Collaboration and Project Success

Correlation results in Table 1 revealed a significant and positive relationship between collaboration and project success ($r=.778$, $p<.01$). This meant that improving collaboration in health projects is likely to stimulate project success. Accordingly, the results implied that one of the possible ways through which health projects can enhance project success is when they improve collaboration. Important to note, the results revealed that communication is significantly and positively associated with project success ($r=.425$, $p<.01$) (Suzan et al., 2024). Furthermore, results established a significant and positive relationship between synchronicity and project success ($r=.641$, $p<.01$). More so, the results revealed that there exists a significant and positive relationship between coordination and project success ($r=.666$, $p<.01$). These results meant that enhancing communication, synchronicity and coordination during collaboration is likely to lead to possible improvement in project success. In this case, these results implied that it is necessary to guarantee that communication, synchronicity and coordination manifest in health projects to enhance on the chances of project success.

Mediation Effect of Collaboration in the relationship between Interactive Participation and Project Success

This study used Med Graph System to establish whether collaboration mediates the relationship between interactive participation and project success. The results are presented in Figure 1.





Mediating Variable

Collaboration

Type of mediation=Partial, $n=32$; Direct=.332; Indirect=.152; *** significance at $p<0.001$;

Sobel z-value=3.199679; $p=0.001376$

Figure 1: Med-Graph on mediation of collaboration in the relationship between interactive participation and project success

From the Med-Graph (Figure 1), Sobel z-value= 3.199679 and $p=0.001376$ was obtained. From these results, it was evidenced that the Sobel z-value was greater than the p-value. In addition, the p-value obtained from the analysis was also less than .05 ($p<.05$). The satisfaction of these two conditions meant that collaboration was a mediator in the relationship between interactive participation and project success. This implied that collaboration facilitates the relationship between interactive participation and project success. Further still, the results revealed that the beta weight for the basic relationship between interactive participation and project success was significant [$c= (r=332, p<.001)$]. Likewise, the beta weight upon the inclusion of the mediating variable (collaboration) was also significant [$c'= (r=.484, p<.001)$]. These results meant that collaboration was a partial mediator in the relationship between interactive participation and project success. The results revealed that 45.7% [(Indirect/Direct) *100] is the magnitude to which the relationship between interactive participation and project success is indirect or influenced by the mediator while 54.3% is direct.

Combined relationship between Interactive Participation, Collaboration and Project Success

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis

Unstandardized Standardized Coefficients

Model	B	Std. Error Beta	t	Sig.
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Received: 19.07.2024

Accepted: 22.07.2024

Published on: 30.07.2024

1	(Constant)	.963	.250		3.860	.000
	Interactive Participation	.431	.100	.484	4.328	.000
	Collaboration	.339	.103	.367	3.282	.001

	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	F	Sig.
	.819	.671	.664	94.799	.000

Note: n=32 NGO health projects, Dep Var: Project Success, Tolerance>.1, VIF<5

Source: Primary Data

The regression results indicated in Table 2 revealed an overall F-value=94.799, Sig<.05 in relation to the effect of interactive participation and collaboration towards project success. These results meant that there was a statistically significant predictability between interactive participation, collaboration and project success. In this case, these results implied that the results obtained were fit to be based on for making conclusions and recommendations.

Results revealed Adj. r^2 =.664 in relation to the predictability of interactive participation and collaboration towards project success. These results meant that jointly interactive participation and collaboration examined 66.4% of the variances in project success. These results therefore implied that when interactive participation and collaboration are stimulated within a given project, it will result in .664 (66.4%) change in project success (Nelson et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the results revealed Beta=.484, Sig<.05 in relation to interactive participation and Beta=.367, Sig<.05 for collaboration. Since the Sig. for both variables was less than .05 (Sig<.05), it meant that jointly interactive participation and collaboration were significant predictors of project success. Moreover, Interactive participation revealed a higher Beta-value compared to collaboration (Beta=.484 vs Beta=.367). This meant that interactive participation was a better predictor for project success as opposed to collaboration. This implied projects which focus on interactive participation will record more success compared to projects which concentrate on collaboration.

Conclusion

It is revealed herein that interactive participation is positively associated with project success. The lesson envisaged is that improving interactive participation is associated with a potential enhancement in project success. In other words, the current study is of the proposal that one of the ways policy makers as well as managers can increase the propensity of fulfilling project deliverables within time, scope, budget and beneficiary satisfaction is when they stimulate interactive participation. It is therefore a calling for these project implementers to make sure meetings a routine and always lobby for dialogue.

Received: 19.07.2024

Accepted: 22.07.2024

Published on: 30.07.2024

Furthermore, it is clarified that collaboration is one of the key drivers of project success. What we learn from this is that projects can enlighten chances of project success if they boost collaboration. As policy makers and managers, this study endorses the need to boost communication, synchronicity and coordination within projects.

Likewise, the current study proves that collaboration mediates the relationship between interactive participation and project success. Specifically, the study unveils that collaboration is a partial mediator in this relationship. The current study acknowledges that collaboration plays a role in facilitating interactive participation's potential to influence project success. It communicates that whereas interactive participation has the capacity to affect projects' ability to succeed, it partially relies on the extent of collaboration. By this, the current study teaches us that much as meetings and dialogue are key, policy makers and managers should equally direct attention towards making sure that there is collaboration, synchronicity and coordination within projects.

Last but not least, it is proved beyond doubt that both interactive participation and collaboration significantly predict project success. This study affirms that any significant changes in interactive participation and collaboration will result in remarkable variations in project success. In this case, this study communicates that policy makers and managers should not underestimate the relevance of both interactive participation and collaboration in drastically influencing project success. They must make sure projects embrace meetings, dialogue, communication, synchronicity and coordination if projects are to succeed.

Recommendation

Interactive participation should be continually improved to stimulate project success. NGOs extending health projects must frequently hold interactive meetings with stakeholders to acquire feedback which can facilitate better decisions. They should also lobby for dialogue by making sure all project decisions collectively agreed upon and always endeavor to reconcile with stakeholders whenever grievances arise.

NGOs should increase collaboration with stakeholders to facilitate project success. Accordingly, projects should enhance a two-way communication, intensify coordination and synchronicity with all stakeholders to guarantee such collaboration.

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Received: 19.07.2024

Accepted: 22.07.2024

Published on: 30.07.2024

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Received: 19.07.2024

Accepted: 22.07.2024

Published on: 30.07.2024

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