

**Organisational Rationality, Project Resources, Procedures And Project Success; A Case Study Of
Selected UNDP Funded Projects In The Public Sector In Uganda**

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between organisational rationality, project resources, procedures and project success of selected UNDP funded projects in the Public Sector in Uganda. The objectives were to: establish the relationship between organisational rationality and project success; examine the relationship between project resources and project success; establish the relationship between project procedures and project success; and examine the relationship between organisational rationality, project resources and procedures. The study used a cross-sectional research design along with both qualitative and quantitative research approach. A sample of 30 UNDP projects was obtained from a population of 40. Data was obtained using a semi-structured questionnaire. Validity of this instrument was determined using CVI and reliability using Cronbach Alpha coefficient. SPSS v. 25 was used to analyse data to obtain frequency tables and inferential statistics used to interpret results. The study found a positive relationship between organizational rationality and project success. Likewise, the study found a positive relationship between positive relationship between project resources and project success. In addition, the study revealed a positive relationship between project procedures and project success. Furthermore, the study unveiled that organizational rationality and project resources were significant predictors of project procedures. Moreover, this study unveiled that organizational rationality is a better predictor of project success over project success. The study concludes that organizational rationality, project resources and project procedure cannot be taken for granted as far as project success is concerned. This study recommends; intensifying organizational rationality; enhancing project resources; and improving project procedures to stimulate project success.

Keywords: Organisational Rationality, Project Resources, Procedures And Project Success

Background to the study

Historically, projects were carried out with a focus on time, quality of final output and target dates. (Isaac et al., 2023) defined organizational rationality as the summation and coordinated construction of roles, norms, legitimization of work orders and control mechanisms in the workplace into a common vision. He further argues that rationality stems from the concepts of structuring roles, responsibilities and overall organizational hierarchy so that work processes are predictable, as is the case with bureaucratization (Faridah et al., 2023). Based on their discussion, the type of structure significantly affects the success of the project. (F. Christopher, Muhindo, et al., 2022) described the rationality of the organization as one where everyone is not left with the task of finding the most advantageous solution, but the organization puts forward rules, standards and procedures to ensure that the work and decision-making of the organization is carried out in a particular way (F. Christopher, Muhindo, et al., 2022). This is directly related to the assertion of Stare, (2011) who looked at functional organizations that consist of purchasing, human resource management, production, sales, finance department, etc. In these organizations, employees from different departments are required to carry out other project tasks, while project management is

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assigned to a person within a functional organization (T. Christopher, 2022). In the case of project organizations, the project is assigned to a group of employees who are organized within the new department. Project team members work only on project tasks. The project matrix structure is a combination of the above structures. Each employee can perform their normal activities within the business function and at the same time be assigned to a project to perform some unique project activities. (F. Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022) noted that anecdotal evidence revealed that project organizations in developing countries are characterized by volatility and incompatibility with organizational routines, indicating challenges affecting project success. In Uganda today, government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) receive funding through arrangements such as national implementation modalities in which the government is the implementing partner (Alex & Kazaara, 2023). However, development partners such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have adopted a hands-on approach that allows them to influence major project decisions to meet project schedules beyond government bureaucracy. On the government side, the appointment of focal persons or project coordinators is more often a formality, with the appointee having minimal influence on project decision-making (Frank et al., 2023). The normal structure remains with the traditional government chain of command for all project approvals, which defines project procedures. At the very least, the release of funds from the project account requires a rigorous process through accounts maintained by the central bank. Project resources, such as the recruitment of project workers, require very lengthy approvals (Faith et al., 2023). This is approached by formal procurement procedures through public procurement and public asset management (PPDA), which often slow down the project and negatively affect the fulfilment of project schedules (intangible resource). This is delinquent in agricultural projects that depend on climatic conditions and changing seasons. Notably, there are not many comprehensive studies in Uganda on how organizational rationality, project resources and project practices influence project success, and therefore more studies are needed. Given the large amount of funding from UNDP through various departments, ministries and agencies to fulfil the government's mandate towards the public, there is interest to further study how the different structures of different MDAs affect project success (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). Some projects in MDAs use a combination of existing and ad hoc organizational structures (World Bank, 2002). The aim of the study is to understand how the static functional relationships of government structures and practices provide the capacity that can ensure project success.

Statement of the problem

Donor-funded projects are a pillar of considerable documented progress in raising value for developing countries out of dire social and developmental stagnation (Edgar & Moses, 2023). However, government ministries, departments and agencies are predisposed to a layered management structure, leaving the question of how different organizational structures operating under conditions of institutional complexity affect project success (Ivan et al., 2023). The study therefore seeks to study the relationship between organizational rationality, project resources, procedures and project success.

Purpose of the study

To examine the relationship between organisational rationality, project resources, procedures and project success of selected UNDP funded projects in the Public Sector in Uganda.

Objectives of the study

1. To establish the relationship between organisational rationality and project success.
2. To examine the relationship between project resources and project success.
3. To establish the relationship between project procedures and project success.
4. To examine the relationship between organisational rationality, project resources and procedures.

Methodology

The survey design followed a cross-sectional design. This design was used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from a wide variety of individuals in different projects to gain the widest coverage of the resulting findings (Nafiu et al., 2012). Testing hypotheses was collected through a questionnaire which was interviewer administered. The study target population constituted UNDP projects under the public sector which commenced from 2012 to data. The total number of projects were 40 (A & Ahmed, 2019). Different projects in Climate change funded by UNDP in the public sector were the unit of analysis while the unit of inquiry were the employees, preferably; the project coordinator (Olanrewaju et al., 2021b). A sample of 30 projects was selected based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for selecting samples. Cluster sampling was used to account for maximum geographical differences by focusing on all selected UNDP funded projects in Uganda (Lu et al., 2013). The study used only primary data. Primary source was obtained directly from the unit of inquiry during the data collection process. This form of data was used to provide recent information about the variables under investigation subsequently enhancing data relevance (Creswell, 2014). The unit of inquiry comprised one respondent from each project, that is; project coordinator. Data collection was carried out through a semi-structured questionnaire to collect data for generalizable results. This instrument contained closed-ended questions and open-ended questions for the predicting variables of organizational rationality, project resources and procedure (Nafiu et al., 2013). The closed ended questions were anchored using two types of 5-Likert scales. The first scale defined as; 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-Not sure, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly agree was used to gauge Items of the independent and mediating variable. On the other hand, the second scale which was defined as; 1-Not successful, 2-Slightly successful, 3-Moderately successful, 4-Highly successful and 5-Very highly successful was used to anchor Items of the dependent variable (Jallow et al., 2022). The data was analysed using SPSS version 25 for

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quantitative data (Nelson et al., 2022). During the analysis, the researcher conducted parametric tests such as normality, kurtosis, skewness and factor analysis until the data was totally clean to reveal good statistics. Frequency tables and inferential statistics were obtained to interpret results. The frequency table was used to interpret results in relation to demographic characteristics, which comprised both individual and project characteristics (Nafiu, 2012). Inferential statistics constituted correlation and regression analysis, where; Correlation Analysis examined the nature of the relationships between variables while regression was used to check the predictability of variables (Olanrewaju et al., 2021a). Qualitative data was summarized and grouped according to the sequence of views and opinions of interviewees for purposes of identifying the outstanding statements (Nafiu & Ph, 2012). The narratives presented were interpreted to derive meaning.

RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation Analysis

Variable	1	2	3	4
Organizational Rationality (1)	1			
Project Resources (2)	.166	1		
Project Procedures (3)	.532**	.452*	1	
Project Success (4)	.594**	.715**	.729**	1

Note: n=28, *p<.05 level (2-tailed), **p<0.01 level (2-tailed).

Organizational Rationality and Project Success

Results in Table 1 revealed significant and positive relationship between organizational rationality and project success ($r=.594$, $p<.01$) (Nelson et al., 2023). These results meant that enhancing organizational rationality would result in a likely improvement in project success. Indeed, most of the respondents who shared views and opinions about the same expressed that organizational rationality can facilitate project success. As one of the participants remarked:

“The ability to formulate strong and effective internal controls is vested in depends on how rational we are as an organization in charge of implementing UNDP project. These controls are important because they guide our operations to ensure that we are efficient, effective and satisfy our expectations from all stakeholders”

More so, another participant stressed that:

“It is inevitable in because it gives us the dominancy that we need as project implementers to run efficiently and within the interest of our stakeholders”

From these results, it implied that for projects to enhance chances of succeeding in terms of improved project efficiency, stakeholder satisfaction and attainment of organizational benefits, they need to improve external autonomy and internal control.

Project Resources and Project Success

Correlation results in Table 1 highlighted that there exists a significant and positive relationship between project resources and project success ($r=.715$, $p<.01$). These results meant that enhancing project resources is likely to

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increase the propensity of project success. This association was also emphasized by participants who expressed views and opinions regarding this association. For instance, one of the coordinators in one ministry had this to say:

“Absolutely necessary because no project can operate without resources...”

On the other hand, another participant stressed that:

“I consider project resources the most important of all things you can ever think about that can guide the project to achieve all its goals and objectives. It facilitates remunerating staff, acquiring necessary machinery, establishing modal centers, name it. Precisely, nothing can be done without resources.”

Accordingly, these results implied that the more a project injects tangible and intangible resources is the more likely it stands a chance of succeeding.

Project Procedures and Project Success

Table 1 revealed significant and positive relationship between project procedures and project success ($r=.729$, $p<0.01$). This meant that improvement of project procedures is likely to enhance project success. In the same manner, some of the participants who shared views and opinions indicated that project procedures could influence project success. For instance, one of the participants commented:

“Having a procedure in place is inevitable because it addresses the question of who, what, where, and when all presumed tasks and responsibilities are supposed to be executed. This increases our chances of being able to satisfy our stakeholders.”

Similarly, another project coordinator from one of the government agencies noted as follows:

“Procedures streamline how we coordinate, interact or communicate throughout the project. This improves our potential to formulate proactive and reactive strategies which can increase our project’s potential to register the predetermined success indicators”

These results implied that it is necessary for projects to intensify structural processes if they are to increase the possibility of attaining success in terms of stakeholder satisfaction, organizational benefits and improved project efficiency.

Table 2: Organizational Rationality, Project Resources and Procedures

		Unstandardized		Standardized		
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	Organizational Rationality	.410	.135	.469	3.035	.006
	Project Resources	.357	.148	.374	2.416	.023
	F	Sig.	R	R2	Adj. R2	
	8.988	.001 ^b	.647 ^a	.418	.372	

Note: n=28; Mediating variable=Project procedure, VIF<5; Tolerance>.1

Source: Primary Data

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Regression results presented in Table 2 revealed Adj r^2 =.372 in relation to predictability of organizational rationality and project resources on project procedures. These results meant that jointly organizational rationality and project resources predicted up to 37.2% of the variance in project procedures. This implied that increasing organizational rationality and project resources will result in 37.2% positive change in project procedures.

Furthermore, the standardized coefficient corresponding to organizational rationality revealed Beta=.469, $p < .05$ and Beta=.374, $p < .05$ in relation to project resources. These results meant that both organizational rationality and project resources significantly predict project procedures. In this case, these results implied that stimulating organizational rationality and project resources causes significant variations in project procedures. Moreover, the Beta=.469 for organizational rationality meant that a unit change in organizational rationality results in .469 or 46.9% change in project procedures. Beta=.374 for project resources meant that a unit change in project resources explains .374 or 37.4% change in project procedures. In this case, these results implied that organizational rationality has a more predictive power over project resources in influencing project procedures.

Discussion of Findings

Organisational Rationality and Project Success

In this research, it was found out that organizational rationality is positively associated with project success. These findings postulated that improvement in organizational rationality is likely to bring about a possible improvement in project success. In other word, the current study is of the view that projects which intend to improve efficiency, fulfill stakeholder satisfaction and achieve organizational benefits need to intensify organizational rationality in order to increase the chances of attaining these parameters (Akankwasa et al., 2022). This can be explained by the fact that organizational rationality enables projects to enrich internal control and external autonomy which could facilitate project success. Moreover, organizational rationality is exhibited in terms of improved efficiency, calculability, predictability and control which are crucial for enhancing project success. Accordingly, this study suggests that ass projects improve efficiency, predictability, become calculative and intensify control, they will stand a high chance of achieving project success.

The findings consistent with (Faridah et al., 2023) who noted that the behaviour of an individual towards a given project is determined by the philosophy, values, ideas, rules, standards, and procedures that govern decision-making. These attributes contribute significantly to the efficiency and attainment of organizational benefits of the project. In the same way, (Winny et al., 2023) emphasize that extent of external autonomy enables projects to acquire sufficient information from stakeholders which facilitates stakeholder satisfaction. Whereas these scholars concur with the current research, they are generally old. On that note, it could be argued that the current study is relevant because it provides recent empirical evidence affirming the existence of a positive relationship between organizational rationality and project success.

As policy makers, the current study provides a clear justification why it is necessary to enhance organizational rationality. It unveils that projects which embrace so stand a chance of achieving project success. Specifically, the study emphasizes the need to improve interdepartmental coordination in order to enhance the propensity of achieving project success. This is because coordination enables projects to design general rules and specific directives that should be followed by project members to execute tasks and responsibilities expected of them efficiently. The findings are consistent with Dille et al., (2018) who revealed that when projects improve coordination activities as they seek to revamp internal controls, they stand a better chance of improving project success. In addition, Pinto (2014) pointed out that organisational rationality is associated with increased application of systems, structures of authority and processes which could facilitate project success. Even then, these studies were conducted from other parts of the world. Accordingly, the current study is necessary since it provides empirical evidence which is fully customized to Uganda's perspective.

Furthermore, the current study demonstrated that projects which continuously measure the extent to which processes run efficiently are likely to record success. This can be explained by the fact that this exercise enables projects to identify and improve weak points within the process. Likewise, this study emphasizes that projects which execute tasks as planned and reduce on unnecessary delays stand a chance to improve project success. This is because such initiatives are fundamental in minimizing resource wastage which is associated with improved efficiency and attainment of organizational benefits. In the same manner, Joslin and Müller (2016) indicate that organisational rationality is an embedded part of the project's environment, which influences the project's success. Moreover, McGrath and Whitty (2015) stress that the level of control and autonomy facilitates project success. With these results, it is no doubt that organizational rationality is key in every project. Notwithstanding, these empirical evidences suggest an existence of a positive relationship between organizational rationality and project success without providing any form of statistical analysis to affirm this assertion. This empirical gap is fully addressed in the current study.

Project Resources and Project Success

Findings noted that project resources is positively associated with project success. These findings suggested that enhancing project resources is likely to enhance the propensity of project success. Indeed, the study indicates that project resources are inevitable in every project. With the possession of specific tangible and intangible resources, the project is able to function properly. For instance, to be able to execute activities and programs of the project, human resources are necessary. These provide specific skills, knowledge and abilities which enable projects to fulfill objectives in the most efficient manner. Moreover, for a project to have the capacity to maintain personnel, it must possess financial resources to compensate them in terms of salaries, wages and allowances as a way of encouraging them to work efficiently. Accordingly, the current study teaches us that we must make sure that the project has adequate resources including tangible and intangible resources in order to enrich chances of achieving project success.

Indeed, the relevance of project resources in enhancing project success is a dominant issue in prior literature. Notably, Kock and Gemünden (2019) pointed out that project resources are inevitable because they determine the success or failure of any project. Similarly, Maniak and Midler (2014) emphasized that the level of success registered by any project has a bearing on the resources committed towards such a project. This study therefore adds knowledge to already existing literature explaining the relationship between project resources and project success. However, what is special about the current study is the fact that the study is conducted in a local context. Accordingly, this study is important since because it provides empirical evidence in support of the existence of a positive relationship between project resources and project success in Uganda's environment.

Project Procedures and Project Success

It was postulated that project procedures is positively associated with project success. Herein, the study emphasized that improving project procedures would lead to possible improvement in project success. The current study therefore stresses that project procedures should not be taken for granted especially in circumstances where the project wants to enhance efficiency, achieve organizational benefits as well as ensure that stakeholders are satisfied by the project. The current research gives the assurance that when a project adopts favorable project procedures, it will increase the propensity of attaining these success indicators. In fact, project procedures are important because they determine the structural processes upon which the project operates.

On that note, it can be concluded a project with an appropriate procedure is less likely to encounter operational difficulties. It will have a clear system explaining who, what, how and when activities are supposed to be conducted. As a consequence, a project is likely to be efficient, minimize delay and unprecedented costs which would compromise the ability of the project to exercise efficiency and achieve intended benefits. This is consistent with Müller et al., (2019) who emphasized that a project procedure enables projects to have a systematic way of doing things which is associated with increases efficiency and other project outcomes. Furthermore, Müller (2017) assert that project procedures define the command, control and hierarchy that must be followed to achieve project success. Much as these studies unveil consistent findings, none of them provides statistical evidence to prove the association between project procedure and project success , a gap fully addressed herein.

Organisational Rationality, Project Resources and Procedures

The findings herein found out that organizational rationality and project resources significantly predicted project procedures. The findings obtained hereunder affirmed that any change that occurs to organizational rationality will significantly affect project procedures. At the same time, the findings portrayed that significant change in the level of project resources directly impacts project procedures.

Therefore, we learn from this study that both organizational rationality and project resources contribute to project procedures. This is because project procedures simply provide structures, rules and processes upon which a project should operate effectively. Moreover, the project must align project procedures with the intended internal controls and external autonomy that the project seeks to achieve. Furthermore, this study suggests that project procedures are designed in consideration of project resources. This is because procedures cannot be operational without

resources. For instance, a project which within its structures puts emphasis on continuous monitoring of activities will need financial resources to fund the process. Failure to possess such funds will propel the project to reduce on the frequency of monitoring activities to avoid overstretching.

Conclusion

It is proved herein that organizational rationality is positively associated with project success. This signifies that organizational rationality is a potential driver of project success. It emphasizes that as policy makers and managers; organizational rationality should not be taken for granted because when it is improved, projects stand a chance to succeed. We therefore need to find ways of enhancing internal control and gaining external autonomy when running any project. It is also unearthed that project resources has a positive connection with project success. By this, we learn that the more projects enhance resources, the more it is likely to be successful. On that note, this study emphasizes that policy makers and managers must make sure that the project is equipped with sufficient tangible and intangible resources required to operate. This will increase the probability of efficiency, attainment of organizational benefits and stakeholder satisfaction.

It is also proved that project procedures and project success are positively associated. What this means is that the ability of any project to achieve organizational benefits, stakeholder satisfaction and efficiency can be inclined to the structural processes upon which such a project operates. On that note, this study communicates that policy makers and managers should devote focus as they determine project procedures to guide operations. If these are favorable, then; policy makers and managers should be expectant of enhancing efficiency, attaining organizational benefits and satisfying stakeholders. Lastly, it is unleashed that organizational rationality and project resources predict project procedures. Moreover, the study affirms that organizational rationality is a better predictor of project procedures.

Recommendation

Organizational rationality should be intensified within projects to enhance project success. This should be attained through improving interdepartmental coordination, communication and carrying out frequent monitoring within the project.

Government institutions should enhance project resources to projects if they are to succeed. They should properly plan, forecast and allocate appropriate resources to the various project activities and programs as this will ensure continuity and minimize delays. This will culminate in project efficiency as well as increase the propensity of attaining organizational benefits.

Government institutions should improve project procedures to stimulate project success by continuously formulating new structures, rules and procedures that are dependent upon the situation at hand during the implementation of the project.

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