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# Stakeholder behavior, relationship building practices and stakeholder management in Public Private Partnership Projects in Uganda

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**Abstract**

**Purpose** - The purpose of this paper is to provide evidence of the influence of stakeholder behaviour and relationship building practices on stakeholder management in Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects.in Uganda

**Design/Methodology/approach** - We study 115 PPP projects in Uganda using a cross sectional design. Data was collected using a questionnaire survey and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

**Findings** - Results indicate that stakeholder behaviour and relationship building practices are significant predictors of stakeholder management in PPP projects. The interaction (multiplication) of understanding of stakeholders' behaviours and building relationships among them explains more of the variance in overall project management for project success than the direct influence of understanding of stakeholders' behaviours or relationship building on their own.

**Implications** - In order to manage stakeholders in PPP projects, there is need to build strong stakeholder relationships at the same time understanding project stakeholder behaviours.

**Originality** - We adduce evidence of the efficacy of understanding stakeholder behaviours and designing appropriate relationship building practices for better stakeholder management.

**Keywords** - public private partnership projects, stakeholder management, stakeholder behaviour, relationship building practices

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide initial evidence (as far we are aware) of the influence of stakeholder behavior and relationship building practices on stakeholder management in Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects. Stakeholder management is significant in PPP projects and has been widely acknowledged as an essential part of project management and a factor contributing to project success (Huemann, Eskerod and Ringhofer (2016). EL-Gohary

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pp 1-21

Osman and EL-Diraby (2006) suggest that managing stakeholders is necessary due to the view that stakeholders' negative attitudes toward a project can severely obstruct its progress, cause cost overruns and late delivery consistent with project delivery schedules. The essential premise of stakeholder management including addressing their concerns is that they provide resources and support for the projects to succeed (Chiniyio and Olomolaide, 2010) and also act as advocates, sponsors, partners and agents of change (Nsasira, Basheka and Oluka, 2013).

Moreover, as financing tools that operate through the principle of project financing, PPPs have three potential advantages for public decision-makers in Uganda who have strict spending limits. First, PPPs encourage cost-reducing innovations and are generally more viable than other procurement projects, with few or no cost overruns and delays (Saussier and Tran, 2013; Hoppe and Schmitz, 2013; Iossa and Martimort, 2012; Legros and Dewatripont, 2005). These characteristics benefit society as a whole and address the most frequently cited criticisms of traditional public procurements (Buso, Marty and Tran, 2017). The second advantage is that PPPs allow deferred payments for the project and an off-balance-sheet treatment of the debt associated with PPPs (Heald and Georgiou, 2011). Third advantage is that they transfer risk to the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) as well as result in improved design and more efficient work practices (Grimsey & Lewis, 2005; KPMG, 2015).

But, even with the afore-mentioned benefits of PPPs, many public private partnership initiatives around the world have faced stakeholder opposition often leading to project failure (EL-Gohary *et al.,* 2006). Williamson (1985) initially argued that some stakeholders have self-seeking behaviors. Savage *et al.,* (1991) would later predict that projects' failure was largely attributed to inability to manage such stakeholder behaviors. Such behaviors are believed to decrease reliability and integrity; in turn reduce trust and affect the project from managing interests and expectations of stakeholders (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Billows (2015) has shown that over 70% of the projects in the world have failed as a result of the inability to address stakeholder concerns. In Uganda, over 72% of projects fail to meet the conflicting interests and expectations of stakeholders calculating to over $300m (sh1.1 trillion) loss per year (Odyek, 2017).

Prior project stakeholder research on how to better manage stakeholders has primarily focused on the conceptual development of stakeholder management tools and frameworks (Karlsen, 2002; Cleland & Ireland, 2007; Yang & Shen, 2014; Chinyio & Akintoye, 2008). For example Chinyio and Akintoye (2008) recommended trade-offs and negotiations for managing stakeholders. Karlsen (2002), Cleland and Ireland (2007), Yang and Shen (2014), developed stakeholder management process to aid project owners to manage stakeholders. While these can be considered commendable attempts, we argue that they are less than adequate in a sense that they fail to recognize that for a project to manage the stakeholders' interests and expectations, it is important to first understand how different stakeholders behave and then build relationships with them (Savage *et al.,* 1991). Research has begun to note that the impact of stakeholder behavior on stakeholder management has received minimum attention and that little research has addressed stakeholder behavior in project context (Beringer *et al*, 2013). This is unfortunate. Understanding stakeholder behavior helps project managers understand the positive or negative stakeholder influences on project outcomes and design better strategies to manage them (Nguyen *et al*., 2009). This paper addresses this void in that it provides initial evidence on the influence of stakeholder behavior and relationship building practices on stakeholder management in Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects.

Using SPSS and a questionnaire we analyse stakeholder responses from 115 PPP projects. We find that understanding stakeholder behavior is vital in the management of interests and expectations of stakeholders. We also find that understanding stakeholders' behavior

further helps the project to design appropriate relationship building practices which are vital in stakeholder management. These results are significant due to a number of reasons. They contribute to the provision of a useful reference on achieving PPP project success in Uganda. We also contribute to theoretical and practical insights on mechanism through which stakeholder behavior and relationship building practices influence stakeholder management. The 'how to manage stake holders' question is answered in paper and therefore providing the initial evidence of the efficacy of understanding stakeholder behavior and relationship building practices in enhancing **s**takeholder management in Public Private Partnership Projects.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows: the next section is an overview of public private partnerships in Uganda. Literature review then follows. The fourth section is methodology. The next section is the results obtained. The last section is discussion of results, conclusion and study implications.

**Overview of public private partnerships in Uganda**

The understanding of the phrase "Public Private Partnerships" by different polity can best be described as tautological. The phrase is a sort of an "umbrella notion" covering a broad range of agreements between public institutions and the private sector, aimed at operating public infrastructures or delivering public services (Education International 2009). On the basis of this understanding, the framework for PPPs in Uganda include: 1) the PPP unit, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development as the implementing agency and 2) the Public-Private Partnership Framework Policy and the Uganda Public Private Partnership Act 2015 as applicable policy and Law. Uganda's private partnerships received a great impetus on 5/8/2015 when the President of Uganda signified his assent to the bill, 'The Public Private Partnerships Act, 2015'. Among others, the bill sought to provide for the management of PPPs. One of the principles under this Act is the promotion of participation of Ugandans [as key stakeholders] as private parties in public private partnerships.

Uganda's adoption of PPP projects was largely because of the Government of Uganda's need to fast-track the construction of infrastructure projects, the continued budgetary constraints faced and huge demand for infrastructure investment as well as frequent low project management efficiencies in the public sector. PPPs were therefore seen as more subtle alternatives for accessing private sector resources/ private capital in the delivery and operation of public facilities. Were PPPs to succeed, the expectation of reducing government financial burdens, attracting foreign and private investments, improving management and operational efficiencies, facilitating technology transfer and promoting infrastructure development would fruition. A cursory look shows that by 2012, the following PPPs were on-going in Uganda:

- Construction of Bujagali power dam
- Kalangala infrastructure services project
- Electricity for rural transformation (ERT) project – management of power lines and distribution
- Nakawa – Naguru housing project
- Provision of Education services (UPE, USE)

It was hoped that involvement of the private sector would bring the much needed effective and efficient management of project and more specially, stakeholder management. The implementation of many of the PPPs projects has however been bedeviled with stakeholder management problems. For example in its Editorial, the observer newspaper of May 24, 2017

lamented that almost ten years since an agreement was signed between the government of Uganda and the UK-based real estate investor Opec Prime Properties to redevelop the Nakawa-Naguru estate into a modern satellite city, no progress had been made. It also noted the mess by government of allocating some of the land it had already given to the main developer to other parties, leading to threats of litigation from Opec Prime Properties, and perhaps contributing to the subsequent loss of interest. Similarly, almost every component of the Bujagali project that was commissioned in 2012 proved to be problematic. Problems were found in both Bujugali's Build Own Operate Transfer (BOOT) contract and the signed Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA). A number of resettlement, compensation and socio-cultural impacts of the dam remain unresolved. According to Prayas (2002) on top of the high capital cost, the Bujagali PPA contained a number of unusual requirements which are detrimental to Uganda. The Ugandan government will have to make yearly payments of up to $132 million for the project (and not $111 million as claimed by the PPA and the World Bank). A PPA and capital cost which are in line with international standards would reduce Uganda's yearly payment obligations for Bujagali by about $40 million initially, and by an average $20 million over the lifetime of the project. This would result in savings with a net present value of $280 million for Uganda

Given:

a) the PPP aspirations and opportunities in Uganda that include infrastructure development – roads and HEP generation - and service delivery – medical services, education, and
b) the analyzed situation pertaining to the PPPs projects in Uganda,
how to ensure effective PPP projects' stakeholder management in Uganda remains an empirical question.

**Literature Review**

***Theory***

Stakeholder theory underpins the theoretical framework used in this paper. Stakeholder theory was deemed the most applicable theory for exploring the purpose of this study. We evaluated other theoretical approaches such as agency and incomplete theory, however we could not adopt the use of incomplete contract theory because it is more appropriate in a longitudinal study of PPPs (Burke & Demirag, 2016), as potential discrepancies or missing requirements in the PPP contract can be better evaluated at the end of the PPP's lifecycle. Also, we did not pursue agency theory because it examines just the principal-agent relationship (public sector and Special Purpose Vehicle) and not the interrelationships between a number of stakeholder groups and therefore their management as explored in this paper.

In the formative work on stakeholder theory, Freeman (1984, p. 46) defines a stakeholder as 'any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives', while El-Gohary, Osman, and Diraby (2006, p. 596) define stakeholders as 'any person or organisation that has a legitimate interest in a project'. Businesses should incorporate the interests of all key stakeholders and they should not be merely viewed as tools towards maximising profitability (Gibson, 2000). Donaldson and Preston (1995) explain that stakeholders are individuals or groups with a valid interest in the firm and are identified by virtue of this interest, even if the firm has very little interest in them. The interests of every stakeholder are valuable to the firm, as individual stakeholders contribute to the firm in different

ways; moreover, as multiple stakeholders exist within organisations (Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001), businesses should strive to satisfy them all so that they prosper continuously in the long term (Freeman, Wicks, & Parmar, 2004). Satisfying the needs of every stakeholder is very problematic (Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001) yet unless all their interests are considered, achieving organisational goals will be difficult (Clarkson, 1995). Mitchell et al. (1997) argue that stakeholders may possess one or more of the following relationship traits: first, the power possessed by the stakeholder and their ability to influence the firm; second, the legitimacy of the relationship between the stakeholder and the firm; and third, the urgency of the stakeholders' claim on the organisation. Although they may overlap, power and legitimacy can exist irrespective of each other (Burke & Demirag, 2016). Power refers to the extent to which stakeholder's can impose their will in relationships with other stakeholders, while legitimacy relates to the degree to which a stakeholders' claims are worthy of consideration and urgency concerns the speed with which stakeholders' needs are met (Burke & Demirag, 2016).

The legitimacy of stakeholders' needs, the power they possess, and the urgency of their claims must be considered carefully (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Mitchell et al., 1997) and in the context of this paper, managed; moreover as these factors are dynamic and may change over time, they need to be continuously monitored (Chinyio & Akintoye, 2008). Proactively managing stakeholders involves doing as much as possible to address their concerns; therefore those that are integral to the company's survival, such as employees and customers (primary stakeholders or *destination community in the case of PPPs*), should be proactively managed or, at the very minimum, accommodated (Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001), emphasis added. Furthermore, Chinyio and Akintoye (2008) argue that organisations should proactively manage stakeholders in order to maintain good relationships rather than just responding when difficulties with stakeholders occur. Accommodation incorporates a less active approach to stakeholders as the company accepts that it is accountable to stakeholders but it will negotiate with them on certain issues rather than just accepting the stakeholders' perspective. In contrast, a strategy of defense involves just doing the minimum for stakeholders that is required legally. A reactive strategy involves being negative towards addressing stakeholders concerns or disregarding the stakeholders completely. Defensive and/or reactive strategies tend to be used for stakeholders of less importance but as Jawahar and McLaughlin (2001) note, these two strategies are riskier than proactive strategies. This paper advances understanding stakeholder behaviours and relationship building strategies as proactive strategies necessary for better management of stakeholders.

***Hypotheses development***

Evidence is mounting to suggest a possible relationship between stakeholder behavior and stakeholder management (Savage *et al*., 1991; Nguyen *et al*., 2009; Lo, 2013; Freeman, 1984; Polonsky, 1996; Yang *et al*., 2014). The theoretical premise behind the mounting evidence is that since stakeholder behavior refers to the willingness of stakeholders to threaten or cooperate with the project management team (Savage *et al.,* 1991), the capacity and willingness of project stakeholders to threaten or cooperate with the project may be important in managing stakeholders (Yang et al, 2009). The analysis of stakeholder behaviors can help project team to be aware of the positive or negative stakeholder influences on project outcomes (Nguyen *et al*., 2009). When stakeholders work with others for a common good, share information, voluntarily help others, and seek mutually satisfactory solutions to problems, their interests

like getting necessary information are always met. In addition, when stakeholders provide direction, offer support and clarity to others enables them to deliver effectively, create the right climate for people to do their best work and ensure that there is a culture of mutual respect, support, honesty, learning and constructive challenge, organizations will endeavor to meet their needs (Lo, 2013). Scholars in the area of stakeholder management have argued that by cooperating with stakeholders, organizations can increase their control over uncertainty and create organizational flexibility (Freeman, 1984; Polonsky, 1996). When stakeholders behave in a cooperative manner, information exchange and problem sharing becomes possible and chances of opposition reduce (Savage *et al*., 1991). Yang *et al*., (2014) further noted that cooperative stakeholder behaviors are important when dealing with stakeholder claims. We thus hypothesize that;

$H_1$: *Stakeholder behavior is significantly associated with stakeholder management*

Although there are less notable studies suggesting a relationship between understanding stakeholder behavior and relationship building, when stakeholder behaviours are properly understood, the expectation of building relationship building becomes real. This line of reasoning finds support from Briner *et al*. (1996) who noted that when stakeholders provide support and are committed (a positive stakeholder behaviour), the project managers will always endeavor to communicate (a relationship building practice) with them. Savage et al (1991), Freeman, (1984) also observed that when stakeholders cooperate (a positive stakeholder behaviour), it helps the project develop common goals and values (a relationship building practice). Friedman and Miles (2006) are also of the view managers who work cooperatively with other managers of other entities, both public and private ensure that risks and harms are minimized and, where they cannot be avoided, appropriately compensated. This helps in the development of useful relationships beneficial to all parties. Yukl (2010) further noted that it is more satisfying to work with someone who is friendly, cooperative, and supportive than with someone who is cold and impersonal, or worse, hostile and uncooperative. From the discussion, we hypothesize that:

$H_2$: *Stakeholder behavior significantly associate with relationship building practices*

Relationship building practices such as engagement, trust and communication are associated with stakeholder management. There are a number of leads to expect this conjecture. Jeffery (2009) has noted that stakeholder engagement is premised on the notion that those groups who can affect or are affected by the achievements of an organization's purpose' should be given the opportunity to comment and input into the development of decisions that affect them. Firms that engage in proactive relationships with their stakeholders will be able to integrate the gained stakeholder insights into their process of organizational innovation from a sustainable development viewpoint. According to GRI, (2013) and AccountAbility (2015), the involvement of stakeholders in the accounting and reporting process enables organizations to identify and incorporate their material concerns, issues, perceptions, needs and expectations. Quality stakeholder engagements generates creative solutions to address stakeholders' concerns (Lawrence, 2002), increases responsiveness, transparency and accountability (Brown and Hicks, 2013; GRI, 2013), establishes closer ties to stakeholders interested in sustainability performance (Hörisch et al., 2015), enhances mutual understanding while encouraging relationship building among stakeholders (Brown & Hicks, 2013), assists in collecting information about the community's needs and expectations and incorporating

them in sustainability initiatives (Kaur & Lodhia, 2018). Menoka et al (2013) added that a well-managed stakeholder engagement process helps the project stakeholder to work together to increase comfort and quality of life, while decreasing negative environmental impacts and increasing the economic sustainability of the project.

Moreover, under conditions of trust, stakeholders may be more willing and comfortable to reveal private or sensitive information to the firm believing that the information provided will not be used against their best interests and this makes well-functioning relationship sustained (Karlsen, 2008). Empirical evidence is beginning to show up regarding the efficacy of trust and positive stakeholder management (see e.g.Yin-Hsi Lo, 2013). Besides, stakeholder communication is vitally important to stakeholder management (Turkulainen, Aaltonen & Lohikoski, 2015; Yang et al; 2009; Bourne, 2005; Friedman & Miles; 2006). The central views from this body of literature lead us to conclude that communication between the stakeholders can help in facilitating the exchange of ideas, visions, and the overcoming of difficulties; project managers should adjust their communication strategies to ensure that they understand, manage, and meet the needs and expectations of current key stakeholders. We thus hypothesize that;

$H_3$. *Relationship building practices are positively associated with stakeholder management*

Overall, our review of available literature suggests that both understanding stakeholder behavior and also building relationships among project stakeholders are necessary ingredients for proper management of project stakeholder for project success. Stakeholder behavior will positively influence stakeholder management for project success given a level of relationship building among project stakeholders and relationship building will positively influence stakeholder management for project success given a level of projects' understanding of stakeholder behaviour. Thus both predictor cause a magnitude effect on stakeholder management if this assumption of non-additivity is met (Friedrich, 1982; Aiken and West, 1991; Jose, 2008). If this were to hold, we would then argue that the interaction of these could provide better project success than the direct influence of understanding stakeholder behaviours and relationship building among stakeholders, on their own. In our literature search, we have not come across any empirical study investigating this possibility. We believe this is a promising complement to extant studies addressing stakeholder management for project success. Indeed stakeholder theory suggests that the destination community for projects must be understood and engaged before project implementation to enlist their support. We argue that understanding without engagement is futile in generating successful projects and it also true for engagement without understanding. Accordingly, the following hypothesis will be stated:

$H_4$. *The interaction (multiplication) of understanding of stakeholders' behaviours and building relationships among them explains more of the variance in overall project management for project success than the direct influence of understanding of stakeholders' behaviours or relationship building on their own.*

**Methodology**

The study adopted a cross sectional design covering a population of 141 Public private partnership projects in the different sectors in Uganda (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2016). A sample size of 135 public private partnership projects was selected basing on the guidelines for sample size selection (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

According to Field's (2009) guidelines, three stakeholders were randomly targeted from every PPP project and afterwards their responses were aggregated to a project level as the unit of analysis. We thus targeted 405 stakeholders from 135 PPP projects. Overall complete and usable responses were from 115 PPP projects – a percentage of 87.1%. Stratified random sampling was employed in order to divide the PPP projects into smaller groups known as strata basing on the shared attributes. Then random samples were taken in proportion from each strata created. Stratification took into account the differences in population across the different public private partnership projects in the different sectors of the country (Hoxha & Capelleras, 2010).

Data was collected using self administered questionnaires. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section 1 provides the background information, sections 2 and 3 focused on issues under study. The questionnaire was anchored on six likert scale to provide adequate options for respondents (Chomeya, 2010). Since a questionnaire was used to collect data, we had to address common methods bias in order to reduce the measurement error (random and systematic errors) which normally threatens the validity and conclusions about the relationships between measures (Podsakoff, Mackenzie & YeonLee, 2003). To control for non-response bias, each questionnaire was accompanied by a letter providing explanations and assurances that all individual responses would be treated confidentially. Furthermore, a number of precautionary procedures were undertaken such as questionnaire simplification and the use of different scale anchors. We avoided vague, ambiguous, double barreled questions (Podsakoff et al, 2003). We also incorporated negatively worded or reversed-coded items in the questionnaires (Hinkin, 1998) to act as cognitive "speed bumps" that require respondents to engage in a more controlled, as opposed to automatically cognitive processing.

***Background characteristics***

On the characteristics of the respondents, majority of the respondents were born between 1981- 2000 representing 45.8%. Since one of the characteristics of millennials is to collaborate and cooperate with each other, it means this group is very much interested in collaborating and cooperating with other stakeholders to achieve the common goal. On gender, majority of the respondents were male representing 55.4% implying a male dominance in PPP projects in Uganda. On level of education, majority of the respondents were degree holders representing 46% implying that majority of our respondents could easily understand items in the questionnaire and provide reliable information. On experience with the project, majority of the respondents had an experience of 6-10 years with projects representing 47.83%. This implies that they understood how interests and expectations of stakeholders are handled. On stakeholder group, majority of our respondents were beneficiaries and project staff representing 42.61% and 39.1% respectively. This implies that most of majority of our respondents were at the centre of addressing and having interests and expectations in PPP projects. On the PPP projects studied, majority have been in existence for a period of 6-10 years and 1-5 years respectively representing a total percentage of 47.83% implying that PPP arrangement in Uganda is in its infantry stage and a new experience. On project type, majority of the projects studied were energy projects representing 23.48% indicating that PPP arrangement was first embraced in the energy sector. On project capital, majority of the PPP projects in Uganda representing 68.7% have less than $ 100m invested in them. This explains the fact that PPP arrangement in Uganda is still in the infantry stage and not a lot of money has been invested in them.

### *Measurement of variables*

Stakeholder management was operationalized to mean the different ways and means the PPP project can undertake to meet the interests and expectations of stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). It was measured using five indicators (interdependence, collaboration, consultation, monitoring and defending stakeholder actions) as measures for managing stakeholders' interests and expectations. Stakeholder behavior was operationalised as the different ways and means taken by the stakeholder to cooperate with the project in achieving project goals. It was measured using two indicators that is supportive and interactive behavior (Yang *et al*, 2014). Relationship building practices were conceptualized to mean the practices carried out to build and maintain relationships with the stakeholders. It was operationalized using four indicators that is communication, engagement, commitment and trust according to Morgan and Hunt (1994) and Schaufeli et al. (2006).

### *Validity and Reliability*

Validity of the questionnaire was established using content validity index (CVI) to determine the relevance of the questions in measuring the variables. Field (2009) explained content validity as evidence that the content of a test corresponds to the content of the construct it was designed to cover. The overall CVI for this study is 0.875. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Cronbach's coefficient alpha to test for the internal consistence of the scales used to measure the variables (Cronbach 1951). All the alpha coefficients values for individual test variables (stakeholder behavior 0.789, relationship building practices 0.890, stakeholder management 0.852) were above 0.7 meaning the instrument was acceptable (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Nunnally, 1978; Hair *et al.,* 2013).

To establish convergent validity, the principal components for each variable were extracted by running principal component analysis. Using SPSS, the factor structures and items resulting from principle component analysis with varimax rotation are presented in tables that immediately follow. More than one component is derived from each rotated component matrix which is essential in establishing a convergent validity. Essentially, results in Table I reveal two factors that capture stakeholder behavior: cooperative and interactive behavior. The factor structure of the relationship building practices is communication, trust, commitment and engagement (see Table II). The factor structure of stakeholder management is interdependence, collaboration, monitoring, consultation and defending (see Table III).

| Item/ factor | Cooperative Behavior | Interactive Behavior |
|---|---|---|
| We have offered all the information to the project | .896 | |
| We have always been sincere in whatever we do | .870 | |
| We have always responded positively whenever called upon | .885 | |
| We have been cooperative in all project activities | .881 | |
| We have always been accommodative to the project | .776 | |
| We have been helpful to the project | .682 | |
| We have given all the necessary time to the project | .651 | |
| We relate well with other stakeholders when doing project activities | | **.605** |
| Our networking abilities have enabled us to perform better | | **.576** |
| We have worked together to achieve a common goal | | **.511** |
| Eigen Value | 5.666 | **1.288** |
| Variance% | 51.508 | **11.707** |
| Cumulative% | 51.508 | **63.214** |

**Table I: Rotated component matrix for stakeholder behavior**

| Item/ factor | Communication | Trust | Commitment | Engagement |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The project frequently communicates with project stakeholders. | .777 | | | |
| Stakeholders spend little time to get to know more about the project | .813 | | | |
| The project favors communications with stakeholders | .598 | | | |
| There is good communication between stakeholders in this project | .710 | | | |
| The project uses effective methods to communicate with stakeholders | .817 | | | |
| Stakeholders communicate well their expectations towards the project. | .802 | | | |
| The project provides stakeholders with relevant project information | .860 | | | |
| Stakeholders believe in the information that the project provides | | .792 | | |
| The project has been addressing our interests and expectations | | .790 | | |
| The project has been considered trust worthy | | .803 | | |
| The project has been transparent in carrying out activities | | .790 | | |

**Table II. Rotated component matrix for Relationship building practices**

**Cont..**

**Table II. Rotated component matrix for Relationship building practices**

| Item/ factor | Communication | Trust | Commitment | Engagement |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The project has made reliable promises to stakeholders | | .696 | | |
| The project has been open to stakeholders | | .741 | | |
| The project has shown care for the project stakeholders | | .638 | | |
| The project has been honest in dealing with stakeholders | | .788 | | |
| Our dedication to the project deserves is worth maintaining | | | .778 | |
| Project- stakeholder relationship is something we really care about | | | .840 | |
| Stakeholders feel emotionally attached to the project | | | .709 | |
| Stakeholders have a sense of obligation to the project | | | .823 | |
| Stakeholders are committed to the success of a project | | | .794 | |
| Stakeholders are committed to completing the project within budget. | | | .822 | |
| We have invested a considerable amount of effort on this project. | | | .831 | |
| We feel a strong sense of belonging to this project. | | | .851 | |
| We have been consulted throughout project process | | | | **.825** |
| The project involves us in the identification of solutions | | | | **.865** |
| The project engages us at the appropriate time | | | | **.728** |
| Eigen values | 14.314 | 2.192 | 1.609 | **1.431** |
| Variance % | 55.053 | 8.430 | 6.189 | **5.502** |
| Cumulative % | 55.053 | 63.483 | 69.672 | **75.174** |

**Table III. Rotated component matrix for Stakeholder management**

| Item/ factor | interdependence | collaboration | Consultation | Monitoring | defending |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The project relies on its stakeholders for finances | .540 | | | | |
| The project depends on its stakeholders for advice | .577 | | | | |
| The project relies on information from stakeholders to perform well | .761 | | | | |
| The project depends on its stakeholders for inputs | .650 | | | | |
| The project relies on its stakeholders for manpower | .670 | | | | |
| The project team consults stakeholders before making decisions | | .608 | | | |

| Item/ factor | interdependence | collaboration | Consultation | Monitoring | defending |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| We share information on the status of the project | | .838 | | | |
| Our opinions are always considered by the project | | .839 | | | |
| The project always seek for advice from stakeholders before making decisions | | | .701 | | |
| Our input is always taken seriously by the project | | | .820 | | |
| We always meet to discuss project progress | | | .736 | | |
| We always meet to discuss the way forward in case of a problem | | | .821 | | |
| We ensure that interest of stakeholders are balanced | | | | .682 | |
| We always check on the progress of the project | | | | .794 | |
| We regularly observe activities taking place in a project | | | | .760 | |
| We keep track of project activities | | | | .737 | |
| Stakeholder's have been performing oversight role on the project | | | | . 688 | |
| Our interests and expectations are always protected | | | | | .630 |
| The project ensures that the demands of its stakeholders are satisfied | | | | | .843 |
| Information from stakeholders is always shielded | | | | | 692 |
| Eigen | 9.054 | 2.564 | 1.429 | 1.330 | 1.091 |
| Variance % | 45.272 | 12.818 | 7.145 | 6.648 | 5.454 |
| Cumulative % | 45.272 | 58.090 | 65.235 | 71.883 | 77.337 |

**Cont.**

**Table III. Rotated component matrix for Stakeholder management**

## Findings

### *Descriptive statistics*

Table IV shows the means and standard deviations that we generated to summarize the observed data. Excepting project characteristics, all the mean scores of the items range from 2.44 to 3.37 with the standard deviations from 0.380 to 0.894. The low variations relative to the means suggest that the data points are close to the means and hence calculated means highly represented the observed data (Field, 2009).

| Variable | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project type | 3.5043 | 2.20992 | 115 |
| Age of the project | 1.6000 | .68569 | 115 |
| Corporative behavior | 2.6062 | .39336 | 115 |
| Interactive | 2.9184 | .41780 | 115 |
| Stakeholder behavior | 2.7623 | .38006 | 115 |
| Communication | 2.5744 | .51614 | 115 |
| Trust Building | 2.5486 | .42319 | 115 |
| Commitment | 2.4622 | .43457 | 115 |
| Engagement | 2.6084 | .53342 | 115 |
| Relationship building practices | 2.5484 | .45283 | 115 |
| Interdependence | 2.7716 | .89402 | 115 |
| Collaboration | 2.8764 | .52835 | 115 |
| Consultation | 2.7304 | .58955 | 115 |
| Monitoring | 2.4393 | .53044 | 115 |
| Defending stakeholder actions | 2.6675 | .56696 | 115 |
| Stakeholder management | 3.3713 | .64668 | 115 |

**Table IV. Descriptive statistics**

***Correlation and regression analysis results***

The purpose of this paper is to provide evidence of the influence of stakeholder behavior and relationship building practices on stakeholder management in PPP projects in Uganda. Results in Table V show that stakeholder behavior is positively and significantly associated with stakeholder management in PPP projects ($r = .472^{**}$, p values < 0.01). This provides support for $H_1$ which stated that '*Stakeholder behavior is significantly associated with stakeholder management*'. This result means that when stakeholders willingly provide support in form of financial, information provision and other resources to the project – a positive stakeholder behaviour, PPP projects will then have to meet their interests and expectations. The finding also suggests that when project stakeholders' are supportive, perform tasks allocated willingly to them, work together to achieve a common goal; their interests and expectations in the project will be addressed. Results also reveal that stakeholder behavior is significantly and positively associated with relationship building practices in PPP projects ($r = .473^{**}$, p values < 0.01) providing the initial support for $H_2$ which stated that '*Stakeholder behavior significantly associated with relationship building practices*'. This result indicates that when stakeholders demonstrate the willingness to cooperate with the project, the project will always find it easy to build strong bonds with them. It also implies that when stakeholders freely interact to achieve a common goal, PPP project would easily engage, trust and communicate with them. The finding thus suggests that when stakeholders demonstrate selfless behavior and act or conduct themselves positively especially towards others, relationships among them can easily be built. Results in Table V further indicate that relationship building practices is positively associated with stakeholder management in PPP projects ($r = .615^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). Because of this, $H_3$ which stated that '*Relationship building practices are positively associated with stakeholder management*' was supported. This means that when there is a strong bondage among stakeholders, their interests and expectations can be easily addressed. When project stakeholders freely interact, trust each other, easily communicate or share information, their interests and expectations can be easily identified by the project and addressed.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project type (1) | 1 | | | | | |
| Age of the project (2) | .204* | 1 | | | | |
| Stakeholder behavior (3) | .151 | .000 | 1 | | | |
| Relationship building (4) | .084 | .114 | .473** | 1 | | |
| Interaction Term (5) | .174 | .042 | .838** | .859** | 1 | |
| Stakeholder management (6) | .258** | .038 | .472** | .534** | .615** | 1 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

**Table V. Correlation analysis results**

The position of this paper has been to test the hypothesis ($H_4$) that '*The interaction (multiplication) of understanding of stakeholders' behaviours and building relationships among them explains more of the variance in overall project management for project success than the direct influence of understanding of stakeholders' behaviours or relationship building on their own*'. In essence hypothesizing that understanding of stakeholder behaviours interacts with building relationships with project stakeholders to positively influence stakeholder management. The results in Table V suggest a positive relationship between the multiplicative effects and stakeholder management ($r = .534^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). However this needs further substantiation. In this analysis we explored six (6) models. Model I in Table VI presents the baseline model employing the control variables and predicts 6.7% of the variance in stakeholder management. The F =4.021, however small, is significant at 5% level or better. Models II and III are intended to provide further substantiation of $H_1$ and $H_3$ but have to be used to substantiate $H_4$ too. It turns out to be that stakeholder behavior and relationship building are true drivers of stakeholder management explaining 25.8 % and 33.5 % of the variance in stakeholder management. Because these variables are advanced in literature as possible explanations of stakeholder management, we explored model IV to investigate this possibility. We also explore Model V following the same reasoning but the model tests the multiplication effects without controlling for the main effects. Models IV and V return coefficient of determination of 0.361 and 0.386 respectively. While the model F = 24.919 for Model V is larger than Model F = 17.080 for model IV, they are both significant at 1% level or better. Still, Model VI in Table VI indicates that the multiplicative effects of stakeholder behavior and relationship building have a significant influence on stakeholder management. Overall, the predictors explain 39% of the variance. While the coefficient of determination in model VI is marginally better than that in Model V, the Model V in Table VI is the better model. This concludes so because the F = 24.919 is Larger than F = 15.581 in Model VI and it is unlikely an F this large could occur by chance. As such $H_4$ is supported.

| Variables | Model 1 | Model II | Model III | Model IV | Model V | Model VI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 88.536** | 47.158** | 45.783** | 32.009** | 58.712** | 97.108** |
| Control variables | | | | | | |
| Project type | 2.886** | .2.115* | .2.520** | 2.166** | 1.765* | 1.464 |
| Age of Project | -.545 | -.044 | -2.430 | -1.719 | -.698 | -.026 |
| Stakeholder behavior | | .732** | | .415** | | -.773 |
| Relationship building | | | .373** | .289** | | -.275 |
| Interaction term | | | | | .004** | .010** |
| Model F | 4.021* | 12.886** | 18.677** | 17.080** | 24.919** | 15.581** |
| R | .259 | .508 | .579 | .619 | .634 | .646 |
| $R^2$ | .067 | .258 | .335 | .383 | .402 | .417 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | .050 | .238 | .317 | .361 | .386 | .390 |
| Durbin-Watson | .120 | .436 | .524 | .601 | .635 | .653 |

**Table VI. Regression analysis**

Notes: **Significant at the 0.001 level
*Significant at the 0.05 level
Model 1 predictors: (Constant), Age of the project, Project type
Model 2 predictors: (Constant), stakeholder behavior, Age of the project, Project type
Model 3 predictors: (Constant), Relationship building, Age of the project, Project type
Model 4 predictors: (Constant), Interaction term, Age of the project, Project type
Model 5 predictors: (Constant), stakeholder behavior, Relationship building, interaction term, Age of the project, Project type

**Discussion, conclusion and implications**

The results reported in this paper suggest the following:

1) Cooperative and interactive behaviours (Table I) are ex-ante stakeholder behaviours for better project management. These behaviours are manifest in the stakeholders' provision of the necessary information and other resources to the project that makes projects meet their stakeholder interests and expectations in return. When stakeholders offer all the necessary information, respond positively whenever called upon and give all the necessary time to the project, PPP project reciprocates by meeting their interests and expectations. This expectation is valid because the PPP project will always collaborate and interact with the willing stakeholders who can provide any assistance when needed so as to achieve its goals. These results offer support to Friedman and Miles (2006) who found that managers always work cooperatively with other managers of other entities, both public and private, to ensure that risks and harms arising are minimized and, where they cannot be avoided, appropriately compensated. They also render support to leadership scholars such as Yukl (2010) who has noted that it is more satisfying to work with someone who is friendly, cooperative, and supportive than with someone who is cold and impersonal, or worse, hostile and uncooperative.

2) Cooperative and interactive behaviours are ex-ante stakeholder behaviours for relationship-building practices of communication, trust, commitment and engagement (Table II) in PPP projects. This means that when stakeholders demonstrate the willingness to cooperate with the project, it becomes easier for the project to build strong bonds with them. When stakeholders exhibit cooperative behaviors like working together, interaction, it becomes possible for the project to identify and address the interests and expectations of stakeholders which is crucial for project success. The results support those of Briner et al. (1996); that when stakeholders provide support and are committed to the project, the project will always endeavor to communication with them., those of Savage et al (1991) and Freeman (1984): that cooperating activities of stakeholders help the project develop common goals and values and this reduces the chances of opposition. The result further offers credence to stakeholder theory (Donaldson and Preston 1995; Freeman 1984) that when stakeholders are supportive in a way offering the necessary information, responding positively whenever called up on and giving all the necessary time to the project, the project will always endeavor to build bondage with them.

3) Relationship-building practices of communication, trust, commitment and engagement in PPP projects are the necessary practices for stakeholder management in terms of creating interdependence, collaboration, consultations, project monitoring and defense (Table III). This suggests that when there is trust, communication and stakeholder engagement, stakeholders' interests and expectations can be easily identified and addressed. For instance, when stakeholders are involved by the project at the project design, their ideas are incorporated and this increases the likelihood of those issues being addressed during the project implementation. In addition, when the PPP project believes that stakeholder actions are free from doubt and honest, it will endeavor to satisfy their interests in return. This means that when stakeholders are perceived to be reliable, a mutual understanding is easily be built and stakeholder interests and expectations can be easily addressed. For example, when stakeholders trust each other, they can easily interact, share information and in the long run, it leads to the meeting of their needs and wants. Finally, when stakeholders are kept informed of project decisions and expectations, stakeholder management is enhanced. Effective communication among the stakeholders creates, shapes, maintains stakeholder relationships and endorses mutual understanding between the project and its stakeholders. When stakeholders easily communicate or share information, their interests and expectations can be easily identified and addressed. Studies in the accounting discipline had earlier alluded to these possibilities by showing that the involvement of stakeholders in the accounting and reporting process enables organizations to identify and incorporate their material concerns, issues, perceptions, needs and expectations (GRI, 2013; AccountAbility, 2015). Quality stakeholder engagement in the sustainability reporting and accounting process generates creative solutions to address stakeholders' concerns (Lawrence, 2002), increases responsiveness, transparency and accountability (Brown and Hicks, 2013; GRI, 2013) and establishes closer ties to stakeholders interested in sustainability performance (Hörisch et al., 2015). The results of this study also provide substantiation for studies in stakeholder engagement (Brown & Hicks, 2013), trust (Karlsen, 2008; Yin-Hsi Lo, 2013), stakeholder communication (Turkulainen, *et al*., 2015; Yang et al., 2009; Cheng et al., 2000; Jerges *et al*., 2000; Friedman & Miles; 2006; Gray & Larson, 2002).

4) The interaction of understanding stakeholder behaviours with relationship building among various project stakeholders is more important to PPP project stakeholder management than the direct influence of these variables on their own. This is true based on intuitive reasoning. It makes sense to build relations as you understand the behavior of PPP projects partners and it is unlikely that these two may be pursued in a strict order. The positive interaction effects confirm the idea that understanding stakeholder behaviours is less than sufficient to improve project stakeholder management and so too is building stakeholder relationships.

In sum, the results of this paper cover the limitation of those studies that have ignored the inclusion of the interaction term in the model for stakeholder management via understanding stakeholder behaviours and relationship building among the PP stakeholders. Therefore this study advances the value of stakeholder theory as a relevant framework for understanding stakeholder management. Stakeholder behaviours and relationships are true drivers of stakeholder management in PPPs in Uganda.

From a theoretical stance, this paper extends the stakeholder theory by advancing the view that stakeholders need to be cooperative and interactive if their concerns are to be heard and addressed by PPP projects. For interests and expectations of stakeholders to be addressed, stakeholder behavior should be given great emphasis. Cooperative and interactive behaviors among stakeholders need to be emphasized. This is because they influence the way PPP projects can urgently address their issues. For practice, in order to manage stakeholders in PPP projects, there is need to build strong stakeholder relationships at the same time understanding project stakeholder behaviours. This is because when there are relationships between the stakeholders, communication becomes easy, trust and commitment is enhanced and all the stakeholders will easily participate in all project activities to achieve the project goal as strong and beneficial relationships are build. Thus relationship building practices among stakeholders needs to be emphasized if the interests and expectations of the stakeholders are to be addressed. The paper thus provides valuable insights on the ongoing discussions on the adoption of Public Private Partnership arrangement in Uganda as a way of improving efficiency and provision of public services with the help of the efficiency of the private sector. The study contributes to academic research by producing empirical evidence to support stakeholder theory in addressing interests and expectations of stakeholders by the simultaneous understanding the behavior of stakeholders and designing appropriate relationship building practices.

We recognize limitations to our study. This study considered data from on PPP projects in Uganda. Although anecdotal evidence has shown little difference in stakeholder management between PPP projects, the findings from this study should not be directly applied to other projects apart from PPP projects. While we controlled for PPP type, we did not under evaluate event regularities for this variable stakeholder management. This is left to future researchers. Be that as it may, this study contributes to the current body of stakeholder management literature and may be the first to uncover the important role of understanding stakeholders and relationship building among them in project stakeholder management.

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