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**Beneficiaries' Participatory Planning as a Strategy for Effective Project  
Implementation: A Case of Rwanda Tubura Project**

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### Beneficiaries' Participatory Planning as a Strategy for Effective Project Implementation: A Case of Rwanda Tubura Project



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#### Abstract

**Purpose:** Engaging local stakeholders is an important part of development work because it makes sure that the necessities and concerns of the local community are thought about and dealt with. Beneficiaries provide ideas during the planning phase of any project, and others add technical skills during the execution phase. The general objective of this study was to assess the effect of beneficiaries' participatory planning as a strategy for effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project. The specific objectives were to establish the effect of beneficiaries in project planning on effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project, assess the effect of beneficiaries in decision making on effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project and investigate the effect of beneficiaries' engagement on effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project.

**Methodology:** Target population of this study was 217 project staff of Rwanda Tubura Project including project coordinators, administrative staff and project mentors. The Solvin formula was employed for sample size determination due to its straightforward and practical approach. Utilizing this formula with the given dataset resulted in a sample size of 141. Cluster sampling entails the selection of participant groups, referred to as clusters, from the overall population. The study utilized the following instruments for data collection: a survey, interviews, and a review of relevant documents. To conduct data analysis, the researcher employed the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical methodology.

**Findings:** The coefficient of multiple determination (R-squared) was 0.671, signifying that approximately 67.1% of the variability in the dependent variable (effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura project) is explained by the combination of these predictors (beneficiaries' engagement, decision making, and project planning). This indicates a strong correlation between the predictors and the dependent variable. Project planning ( $\beta=0.257$ ,  $t=3.073$ ,  $p=0.003$ ), Decision making ( $\beta=0.383$ ,  $t=4.878$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), and Beneficiaries' engagement ( $\beta=0.254$ ,  $t=3.243$ ,  $p=0.002$ ) indicate that for every one-unit increase in these variables, there is a corresponding increase in the effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura project. Furthermore, the Significance values (Sig. 0.003, 0.000, 0.002) associated with beneficiaries' participatory planning as strategy variables were all notably below the typical significance level (0.05), demonstrating their strong statistical significance and emphasizing their significant roles in contributing to the effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura project.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Theoretical framework of this study concentrated on three theory namely participatory development theory, stakeholder theory and goal setting theory. Rwanda Tubura Project recommended to adapt effective implementation, strengthen project planning with comprehensive risk assessments and adaptive alignment. Also, Rwanda Tubura Project should establish a structured feedback mechanism for inclusive planning. Moreover, Rwanda Tubura Project should delegate decision-making authority to enhance on-the-ground responsiveness and efficiency. Rwanda Tubura Project should implement strong and continuous feedback mechanisms to assess beneficiary needs and create direct involvement platforms for beneficiaries in decision-making.

**Keywords:** *Beneficiary Participatory Planning, Strategy, Project Planning, Project Implementation, Decision Making, Beneficiary Engagement*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The motivation behind conducting this study is to comprehensively examine the effect of beneficiaries' ' participatory planning as a strategic approach in enhancing the successful execution of the Rwanda Tubura Project. This chapter presents the introductory chapter and provides key highlights of the research study, including its background, the actual problem statement, the study's objectives, the importance, the general scope, and the study's limitation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Insufficient project planning has been identified as a significant factor contributing to the failure of donor-funded projects in Rwanda. The challenges are amplified when projects involve beneficiaries' with specific needs, such as those who are deaf, and when certain projects demand specialized planning skills. These local challenges highlight the critical importance of addressing planning and execution issues in projects involving beneficiaries', especially those with unique requirements, to achieve successful project implementation (Kadiho, 2021).

Despite the fact that project managers dedicate a significant portion of their time to reflecting on strategies to achieve project objectives, it remains evident that a considerable number of projects encounter challenges in meeting their scheduled completion dates. Annually, a substantial amount of financial resources is expended by both corporate entities and governmental bodies on projects that ultimately prove unsuccessful, resulting in the waste of tens of millions of dollars. Previous research on beneficiaries' ' participation and project implementation has not specifically focused on the involvement and performance of beneficiaries' in agricultural projects in Rwanda at the global, regional, or local level. Against the backdrop of the aforementioned circumstances, the researcher formulated the suggestion to undertake a study that focuses on the effect of beneficiaries' in project planning, beneficiaries' in decision making and beneficiaries' ' participatory on effective implement of Rwanda Tubura Project.

### **Objectives of the Study**

#### **General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to assess the effect of beneficiaries'' participatory planning as a strategy for effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project.

#### **Significance of the Study**

The study will beneficial to various academic and managerial agents: The study will bring the researcher a better understanding of the project beneficiaries' ' participation in relation to its successful implementation. This study will play the role of increasing knowledge in this subject. In addition to contributing to existing knowledge, the study will also provide background information to researchers and scholars who would be interested in studying this subject in the future. The study also is a key source of information for researchers and stakeholders who may be interested in assessing the performance of projects carried out in Rwanda.

To Rwanda Tubura Project'' Management: Acknowledging the important role that beneficiaries' ' participation plays in development, the study will bring to the fore some findings that would be very helpful to development agencies in their quest to carry out projects with the participation of beneficiaries'. This will be an effective way of reducing the frequent incidences of failures in projects resulting from the lack of beneficiaries' ' involvement. The

outcome of this research will be additional teaching material to MKU, and summaries from different read and analyzed documents that will be brought together to improve existing literature.

### **Critical Review and Research Gap Identification**

Abraham's (2022) sheds light on the positive effects of beneficiary participation, it lacks a comprehensive exploration of the contextual factors and mechanisms that drive these effects. Additionally, the study's narrow focus on housing projects in a specific context might limit its generalizability to other types of projects or settings. While Uzair *et al.* (2019) provides insights into the role of functional teams and empowerment, it primarily focuses on the oil and gas sector. The findings might not be directly transferable to other industries or development projects. Additionally, the study could benefit from a more in-depth exploration of the specific mechanisms through which functional team involvement and empowerment contribute to project success.

Patricia and Lydia (2021) highlight the importance of stakeholder involvement for project viability but does not thoroughly explore the potential limitations or challenges of such engagement. A deeper analysis of the factors contributing to the negative impact of external factors could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved. Ahmed (2018) points out the need for increased community involvement and better project management practices. However, the study could benefit from a more detailed investigation into the specific barriers or reasons behind the minimal community engagement and low project success. Understanding these factors could guide the development of targeted strategies for improvement.

Across the reviewed studies, there is a consistent emphasis on the importance of beneficiaries' participatory for project success and sustainability. However, there is a lack of a unified framework or comprehensive model that explains the various factors influencing the relationship between engagement and project implementation. Additionally, the studies often focus on specific aspects of engagement (e.g., planning, decision-making) without fully integrating the nature of engagement throughout the project lifecycle. There is also room for research that investigates the challenges, barriers, and limitations of beneficiaries' engagement to provide a more understanding of its potential drawbacks.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

A research design is the overarching methodological framework for a study. It specifies how the data gathered and analyzed, as well as how inferences and conclusions reached. There is no way to do research without first developing a plan, and this is where the study design comes in. A survey and a correlational design used in the research (Creswell, 2018).

The researcher conducted both descriptive and correlational studies, also quantitative and qualitative approach applied in this study to provide a more comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the research topic

### **Sample Design**

Sample design is the process of choosing some people or things from the target population to use in a research survey. The goal of sample design is to make sure that the sample is a good representation of the population being studied so that the results of the study can be applied to the whole population.

## **Sample Size**

A sample is a subset of a larger group or population, and the size of the sample is an important consideration when designing experiments or conducting surveys. In statistical analysis, the sample size is an important thing to think about. Researchers should carefully think about the right sample size for their study to make sure they get accurate and reliable results (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The Solvin formula was employed for sample size determination due to its straightforward and practical approach. The researcher utilized the following formula to determine the appropriate number of participants for the study.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

## **Data Collection Methods**

The selection of a data collection method was contingent on several factors, including the research question, the nature of the data required, and the available resources. The following methods were employed in data collection methods in this research:

### **Data Collection Instruments**

To ensure the carefulness of the survey, accurate questions and statements were employed to examine each objective. The study utilized the following instruments for data collection: a survey, interviews, and a review of relevant documents.

### **Documentation Technique**

Documentary technique involves using data that has already been collected by others, such as government statistics, medical records, or previous research studies. Documentary data used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data (Saunders, 2019).

The researcher identified the types of documents that are relevant to the research. These included official records, historical documents, reports, memos, articles, photographs, and any other written or recorded material related to the topic.

### **Questionnaire Technique**

Questionnaire is a common method of collecting data in which participants are asked to respond to a set of questions. These questions were delivered in a variety of ways, such as by mail, online, or in person. For this study, 141 Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative and data related on Rwanda Tubura project.

### **Interview Technique**

Interview technique in research refers to the specific methods and strategies used to conduct interviews as a data collection tool. It encompasses the various approaches, principles, and skills employed by researchers when interacting with participants to gather qualitative information and insights. For this study, it was important to get information from the managerial staff on Rwanda Tubura Project.

**Table 1: Reliability Results**

Variables	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Project planning	6	.812
Decision making	6	.817
Beneficiaries' ' engagement	6	.820
Implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project	6	.836

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Introduction

This section primarily emphasized on presenting results and conducting data-analysis. The survey-objectives were addressed through a combination of descriptive techniques, including percentages, means, and standard deviations, as well as inferential methods such as regression and correlation-analysis. Statistical-Package for the Social-Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis.

**Table 2: Response Rate**

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percent
Returned	125	88.65
Unreturned	14	11.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Research Findings (2023)*

Response rate above outlines the response dynamics of a survey, showing that out of the 141 distributed questionnaires, 125 were returned, indicating a response rate of 88.65%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), a response rate of 70% and above is considered adequate.

Therefore, the obtained response rate of 88.65% was satisfactory for data analysis. This response rate was good enough to allow for a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the research objectives. The remaining 14 questionnaires (11.35%) were unreturned, and it's noteworthy that the non-responses were attributed to the absence of participants during the data collection process.

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Participants' demographic information was supplied so that the study's researchers could gauge the extent to which they had read and understood the questionnaire's contents.

**Table 3: Gender of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
Female	48	38.4
Male	77	61.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Research Findings (2023)*

In Table 3, the gender distribution of the study participants is presented. The table indicates that out of the total 125 respondents, 48 (38.4%) were female, while 77 (61.6%) were male. Analyzing gender distribution in Rwanda Tubura Projects allows researchers to consider

potential gender-based variations in responses and enhances the overall validity and contextual understanding of the study findings.

**Table 4: Working Experience with Tubura Rwanda project**

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5 years	42	33.6
6 to 10 years	62	49.6
11 to 15 years	15	12.0
More than 15 years	6	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Research Findings (2023)*

Table 4 outlines the distribution of respondents based on their experiences with the Tubura Rwanda project. The data shows that 33.6% of participants have less than 5 years of experience, 49.6% have 6 to 10 years of experience, 12.0% have 11 to 15 years of experience, and 4.8% have more than 15 years of experience. The concentration of individuals with 6 to 10 years of experience is significant, as it represents a cohort with a significant understanding of the project's dynamics, having been involved for an extended period. Having a diverse range of experience levels enriches the study by capturing varied perspectives and potentially uncovering trends or patterns related to different stages of engagement with Tubura Rwanda project.

**Table 5: The Effect of Beneficiaries' Engagement on Effective Implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project**

	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std. Dev.
	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%		
Beneficiaries' are actively involved in project activities.	6	4.8	11	8.8	5	4.0	37	29.6	66	52.8	4.17	1.155
Beneficiaries' have opportunities to provide feedback and suggestions.	3	2.4	16	12.8	11	8.8	27	21.6	68	54.4	4.13	1.164
The Rwanda Tubura Project encourages regular engagement with beneficiaries'.	7	5.6	16	12.8	5	4.0	24	19.2	73	58.4	4.12	1.280
Beneficiaries' feel a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for the project's success.	2	1.6	8	6.4	5	4.0	44	35.2	66	52.8	4.31	.937
The project fosters open communication with beneficiaries'.	2	1.6	12	9.6	5	4.0	41	32.8	65	52.0	4.24	1.019
Beneficiaries' are satisfied with their level of involvement in the project.	2	1.6	5	4.0	7	5.6	35	28.0	76	60.8	4.42	.891
<b>Overall</b>											<b>4.23</b>	<b>1.074</b>

*Source: Research Findings (2023)*

In Table 5, which assesses the effect of beneficiaries' engagement on effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project, the Likert scale ratings were utilized to gauge respondents' perceptions. The results are presented in frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

The majority of the respondents agreed on the statement that beneficiaries are actively involved in project activities, where 52.8% strongly agreed and 29.6% agreed. It further supported by the presence a high mean score of 4.17, indicating a strong positive agreement among respondents. However, the standard deviation of 1.155 highlights heterogeneity in responses. Also, a significant number of the respondents agreed on the statement that beneficiaries have opportunities to provide feedback and suggestions, where 54.4% strongly agreed and 21.6%

agreed. The high mean score of 4.13 indicates a strong positive agreement among respondents. However, the standard deviation of 1.164 highlights heterogeneity in responses. Numerous respondents agreed that Rwanda Tubura Project encourages regular engagement with beneficiaries with 58.4% strongly agreed and 19.2% agreed. The high mean score of 4.12 indicates strong positive agreement. The standard deviation of 1.280 highlights heterogeneity in responses. Furthermore, a significant number of respondents agreed that beneficiaries feel a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for the project's success where 52.8% strongly agreed and 35.2% agreed. It was confirmed by the very high mean score of 4.31, indicating a very strong positive agreement. However, the standard deviation of 0.937 highlights heterogeneity in responses. Moreover, 52.0% of respondents strongly agreed and 32.8% agreed that project fosters open communication with beneficiaries. The very high mean score of 4.24 indicates a very strong positive agreement and the standard deviation of 1.019 shows heterogeneity in responses. Lastly, a lot of respondents, 60.8% strongly agreed and 27.0% agreed that beneficiaries are satisfied with their level of involvement in the project. The very high mean score of 4.42 indicates a very strong positive agreement among respondents and the standard deviation of 0.891 highlights heterogeneity in responses.

A Project Mentor for the Rwanda Tubura Project stated, *"I believe that the active engagement of beneficiaries is important for the effective implementation of the initiative. The success of Tubura relies on strengthening a collaborative environment where beneficiaries play a central role, ensuring their observations and participation are integral to project outcomes, thereby enhancing sustainability and impact."*

Overall, the very high mean score of 4.23 indicates a very strong positive agreement among respondents that decision making influence effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project. The overall standard deviation of 1.074 highlights heterogeneity in responses across all statements.

The findings are supported by the emphasis of Pinto & Slevin (2019) on the significance of beneficiaries' engagement. Pinto & Slevin highlights the importance of actively involving beneficiaries in decision-making processes to empower them and enhance their quality of life. The findings, which show strong positive agreement on active involvement, feedback opportunities, and a sense of ownership among respondents in the Rwanda Tubura Project, align with the notion that effective beneficiary engagement is crucial for project success and impact.

## **Conclusions**

The general objective of this study was to assess the effect of beneficiaries' participatory planning as a strategy for effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project. Specifically, the study guided by the following objectives:

To establish the effect of project planning on effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project where the study showed that purchase project planning is a crucial element in influencing the effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project. The high level of agreement among respondents indicated the significance of having a strong project plan in effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project. This objective significantly impacts effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project, as evidenced by a statistical correlation ( $p=0.003<0.05$ ), rejecting the null hypothesis.

To assess the effect of decision making on effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project. The research indicated that decision making plays a vital role in the effective implementation



of Rwanda Tubura Project. Respondents show strong positive agreement in the importance of decision making. The statistical correlation supports the rejection of the null hypothesis, affirming the significance of this objective in driving effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project.

To investigate the effect of beneficiaries' engagement on effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project. Respondents showed a strong agreement that beneficiaries' engagement proved to be instrumental in influencing the effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project. The statistical correlation substantiates the connection, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Overall, the research conducted on Rwanda Tubura Project showed a strong positive agreement among respondents regarding the significant impact of beneficiaries' participatory planning as a strategy on the effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project. The analysis rejects all three null hypotheses (Ho1, Ho2, and Ho3) as the p-values for each hypothesis are less than 0.05, signifying statistical significance. These findings showed the importance of beneficiaries' participatory planning as a strategy in influencing effective implementation of Rwanda Tubura Project, providing empirical support for the positive contributions of project planning, decision making, and beneficiaries' engagement.

#### **Suggestions for Further Research**

To further understand the effect of beneficiaries' participatory planning as a strategy for the effective implementation of the Rwanda Tubura Project, the following topics are suggested for future research.

- Assessing the Impact of Comprehensive Risk Assessments on Rwanda Tubura Project Planning Effectiveness
- Examining the Relationship between Decision-Making Delegation and Rwanda Tubura Project Implementation Efficiency
- Investigating the Influence of Beneficiary Engagement Mechanisms on Rwanda Tubura Project Outcomes

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