



The Strategic
JOURNAL of Business & Change
MANAGEMENT

ISSN 2312-9492 (Online), ISSN 2414-8970 (Print)



www.strategicjournals.com

Volume 12, Issue 1, Article 027

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF POVERTY REDUCTION PROJECTS IN TAITA TAVETA COUNTY. A CASE OF VILLAGE ENTERPRISE ORGANIZATION PROJECTS

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Accepted: March 22, 2025

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.61426/sjbcm.v12i1.3193>

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the participation and sustainability of poverty reduction initiatives in Taita Taveta County, focusing specifically on the level of community involvement at various stages of the projects conducted by VEO. This study examined the critical factors influencing project sustainability, with a particular focus on stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making processes, and community feedback mechanisms. To guide the investigation, the study evaluated Treseder's Degree of Participation theory and Stakeholder theory. A correlational study design was employed to determine the degree of link between the identified variables. A sample population of 181 respondents was drawn from selected projects and external stakeholders in Taita Taveta County. The main instruments for data collection included interview guides and self-administered questionnaires. The findings revealed that active stakeholder involvement during the planning phase significantly enhances project outcomes and community satisfaction by fostering a sense of ownership and addressing local needs. Capacity building emerged as a pivotal determinant of sustainability, as targeted initiatives improved community skills and knowledge, directly contributing to project success. Conversely, decision-making processes displayed a complex relationship with sustainability, highlighting challenges in effectively engaging all stakeholders, particularly marginalized groups. Furthermore, effective community feedback mechanisms were identified as essential for promoting accountability and responsiveness, thereby strengthening project sustainability. The study recommends structured stakeholder engagement frameworks, tailored capacity-building programs, inclusive decision-making practices, and robust feedback systems to enhance project sustainability. Future research should focus on the long-term impacts of stakeholder engagement, the efficacy of capacity-building components, the dynamics of decision-making frameworks, and the role of technology in community feedback, while also considering comparative studies across various contexts to identify best practices.

Key Words: Stakeholder Engagement, Capacity Building, Participation, Community Feedback

CITATION: Mwangi, S. W., & Mutuku, M. (2025). Community participation and sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. A case of village enterprise organization projects. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 12 (1), 376 – 399. <http://dx.doi.org/10.61426/sjbcm.v12i1.3193>

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing the lives and livelihoods of project recipients is the fundamental goal of all initiatives aimed at eradicating poverty. These could be social, intellectual, political, economic, or even environmental if organizations engage in certain projects. Most programs aimed at reducing poverty concentrate on the financial health of local communities. But because of the way societies are built and how the economy affects them, the projects eventually have an impact on people's social life, political decisions, and even environmental considerations. Because of the aforementioned, it is crucial to involve society in the implementation of programs aimed at raising the success rate. In order to guarantee that all stakeholders are fully involved and have a sense of ownership over the projects, it is necessary to include them at every step of project implementation. This will improve the projects' sustainability and the lifetime of the measures aimed at reducing poverty.

Project sustainability is a crucial goal that the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 envisioned as directing project implementation policies in the European countries with an emphasis on improved sustainable economic growth, political integration, and the perpetual upholding of human dignity. According to a recent World Bank assessment, once funding is stopped, the majority of programs either fail or stop producing the expected benefits (World Bank Sustainability Review, 2021). This shows that most initiatives are merely using resources, which goes against the notion that they should eventually produce enough resources on their own to support themselves.

A key component of project success is the ability to develop precise changes that are well-planned, coordinated, and managed effectively and efficiently, thanks to the proactive participation of all stakeholders in recent years. Silvius & associates (2016). Organizations now have to show accountability to all stakeholders regarding their sustainability plan, rather than only relying on

financial performance to disclose to shareholders (Silvius & Schipper, 2016).

Within the African context, the majority of countries are impoverished states that work hard every day to try and climb the global development ladder and become part of the developed world. According to a 2021 study on sustainable development in Africa, while there has been progress in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, recent years have seen a slowdown in growth. This has been linked to the inability of those implementing poverty reduction initiatives to fully involve all stakeholders in order to guarantee the project's sustainability after funding has ended and to maintain accurate data that can always be utilized to promote change (Nobuo and Haoyu, 2022). Furthermore, the focus on citizen or community representation continues to be a feature of many African nation-states' policies as well as contemporary international development initiatives. For this reason, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) made the concept of community participation extremely important in the newly independent South Africa and allowed the communities to define the issues affecting them. Development must be people-oriented to enhance the living standard of the oppressed and deprived people through development enfranchisement (African National Congress, 2014).

In East Africa, the governments and states have gone all out with the aim of accelerating economic growth and development. Much of that is done by engaging multilateral and global donors to fund different poverty reduction projects. A study in Tanzania indicated that for sustainability of projects to happen, it is critical to have government support and local acceptance (Flora Et Al, 2013). According to the World Bank Group Report of 2019, Productive social safety nets' programs, a program that heavily involves the beneficiaries, has posted great milestones in poverty reduction efforts due to inclusion of the beneficiaries in project implementation. However, the report also noted

the reluctance of the government to support poverty reduction projects especially where the donors have conflicting interests with the government.

Locally, there has been multiple initiatives by the government, NGOs, International Donors and the local philanthropists to eradicate astute poverty. However, challenges such as technological problems, misappropriation and inadequacy of funds, gender inequalities, non-collaboration with the local society and hostility and non-cooperation from the government entities has rendered the programs to have minimal benefits (Misaro et al, 2014).

Currently, Kenya is rated as one of the poorer countries globally, with 32% of its population being recorded as inadequate, with the lowest 24% being identified as being in chronic poverty. While increasing citizen participation in Kenya has helped ensure more inclusive representation in local government planning, implementation, and decision-making, among other domains, it has not necessarily translated to a situation whereby rural areas within the country are experiencing less poverty (Kimani-Murage et al., 2015).

From the perspective of Taita Taveta County, there is a consensus that poverty has risen, coupled with a raised inequality. This is because people in this region are now employed in very low-paying jobs, hence resulting in increased cases of poverty. People in communities are excluded in decisions, planning, project implementation, and evaluations, which in turn has impacted the efficiency of services they receive, with a subsequent growth in poverty in the region (Namukasa & Atwijukire, 2018). Therefore, this explains why citizens' participation can be important in eradicating poverty in Taita Taveta County and warrants the study.

Sustainability means the long-term, positive project influence on the community through the performance of the social, economic, and environmental project tasks (Gimenez et al., 2012).

The application of sustainability within project management involves the incorporation of the 'people', 'planet' and 'profit' (3Ps) aspects of sustainability. Therefore, project sustainability in this context means supporting services at the community without adverse consequences after the particular intervention; financial, technical, and managerial support has been pulled out (Komujuni et al., 2013).

Community participation refers to practices that enable local communities to share, access relevant information, and significantly contribute to project decisions, thereby building community capacity (Mulwa, 2010). A bottom-up strategy allows the local community to express their views according to their plans and expectations. The level of community participation can be classified as active, quasi, or passive. Passive participation involves directing people to execute pre-determined decisions, while quasi participation entails consultations with the community on what actions to take. In contrast, active participation means the community is fully involved in project design, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and control (Isidiho & Sabran, 2016).

Taita Taveta County, located in the coastal region of Kenya, has long grappled with endemic poverty despite being endowed with natural resources and potential for economic development (Munyembo, 2014). The county is characterized by a predominantly rural population, with a significant proportion living below the poverty line and facing various socio-economic challenges. Poverty in Taita Taveta County is often compounded by factors such as limited access to basic services, inadequate infrastructure, environmental degradation, and high unemployment rates, particularly amongst the youth (Makwata, 2022). In response to these challenges, various poverty reduction projects have been initiated in Taita Taveta County over the years, with the aim of improving livelihoods, enhancing socio-economic development, and empowering local communities. These projects encompass a wide range of interventions, including

microfinance initiatives, agricultural development programs, vocational training, and community-based enterprises, among others.

One notable approach to poverty reduction in Taita Taveta County is the establishment of Village Enterprise Organizations (VEOs). VEOs are community-driven initiatives that aim to empower local residents through the formation of self-help groups or cooperatives, which engage in income-generating activities and community development projects. These projects often target vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and marginalized communities, seeking to build their capacity, promote entrepreneurship, and foster sustainable livelihoods (Magogo, 2017).

The fact that poverty is still prevalent in Taita Taveta County even after implementing several poverty reduction projects, indicates the limitations of the existing literature. At the same time, some academic ambitions may be left behind. The problem is that there is no one to participate in the subsequent work of a project initiated by scientists and engineers, and the need for community support has been felt only after some successes were achieved, along with the problems resulting from their absence. Nevertheless, the specifics of community participation and its role in determining project longevity are still somewhat vague. Thus, this research filled this gap by comparing the levels of community participation in the projects to determine the sustainability of poverty projects in Taita Taveta County through a case study of Village Enterprise Organization poverty reduction projects.

Statement of the Problem

Concerns about Taita Taveta County's adoption of participation approaches to implement development programs that were intended to be relevant, appropriate, efficient, effective, and sustainable grew in the recent past as a means of improving the quality of life for the local population. The sources claimed that involving beneficiaries (the community) in development projects from the outset increased the programs' return on investment (Gnych et al., 2020). Although

the welfare monitoring surveys indicated a rise in poverty levels, the government and development actors nevertheless worked to strengthen social, political, and economic well-being in the development projects that had been launched in Taita Taveta County. This indicated that the current development initiatives were underperforming and had a short useful life when they were completed.

Despite the abundance of interest and research on participation in various settings, there was insufficient information on community engagement in poverty reduction programs concerning the Taita Taveta community projects. Organizations and individuals had not yet conducted a thorough investigation and assessment of the effects of community involvement on poverty alleviation programs in Taita Taveta. In light of this, further research was required to examine the community's involvement in and role in poverty reduction initiatives, with a particular emphasis on the Village Enterprise Organization's community development initiatives in Taita Taveta.

Despite the plethora of interest and research on participation in many settings, there remained insufficient information on community participation in poverty reduction projects regarding the Taita Taveta community projects. To date, organizations and individuals had yet to comprehensively investigate and evaluate the impacts of community participation on poverty alleviation initiatives in Taita Taveta. Given this, there was a need for further research on the role and involvement of the community in poverty reduction projects, focusing on the Village Enterprise Organization's community development projects in Taita Taveta.

Research Objectives

This study explored the influence of community participation on sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. A case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects. The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- To assess the effect of stakeholder engagement in planning on sustainability of

poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. A case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects.

- To determine the effect of capacity building on sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. A case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects.
- To assess the effect of participation in decision-making on sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. A case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects.
- To evaluate the effect of community feedback mechanisms on sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. A case of Village Enterprise Organization Projects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory relates business with all the individuals or groups who are interested in the companies or organizations, including their competitors, customers, employees, suppliers, creditors, communities, political parties, public bureaus, labor unions, and trade associations. Thus, understanding these connections is crucial when striving to understand the functioning of a particular company. Meanwhile, these relationships are maintained and built by the CEO or the entrepreneur to benefit the project and create value (Edward et al., 2010).

I find stakeholder theory to be beneficial in that it is not exclusively an economic theory; it also considers ethical implications. Employers have observed that the social-economic status of the firm has improved in society, and the general well-being of their employees has increased as a result of their increased satisfaction with their work environment. In accordance with stakeholder theory, a business can foster competition within the operations of others, thereby enhancing their development and the positive impact on their stakeholders (Pernille et al., 2006).

Political philosopher Charles Blattberg challenges stakeholder theory by asserting that it is impossible to satisfy all demands, as a stakeholder is any individual or group that can either have an impact on or be impacted by the organization. The continual conflict that would result if one or more stakeholders yielded to the more dominant 16 stakeholders would negate the advantages of the stakeholders concept (Pernille et al., 2006).

Khzaei et al. (2005) opine that the conventional proactive stakeholder map of an organization-oriented approach "misses the affected stakeholders in favor of influential ones," citing Roloff (2008). They also highlighted "issue-focused" stakeholder management, which involves the formation of a group of stakeholders who are equally relevant in order to address a specific issue. The theory is pertinent to the research objective of investigating the relationships between the various variables due to the aforementioned attributes.

Stakeholder theory promotes an inclusive approach to project analysis. It emphasizes the importance of considering the interests and perspectives of all relevant stakeholders involved in a project. In the context of community participation, this theory recognizes that multiple stakeholders, including local communities, government bodies, NGOs, and project implementers, have a stake in the success of poverty reduction projects. By considering the diverse needs and expectations of these stakeholders, Stakeholder theory will encourage a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the dynamics of community participation.

In addition to that, poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County are complex and multifaceted endeavours. They involve various social, economic, and environmental factors that interact with each other. Stakeholder theory provides a holistic perspective by analysing the relationships and interactions among different stakeholders. This approach helps researchers gain a nuanced understanding of the roles, interests, and power dynamics among stakeholders involved in the

Village Enterprise Organization projects. By examining these relationships, the theory allows for a deeper exploration of how stakeholders' involvement, engagement, and collaboration contribute to the long-term success of poverty reduction initiatives.

Review of Related Literature

A study by Kumar and Singh (2021) explored stakeholder engagement for sustainable development through a case study of urban infrastructure projects in India. This research utilized a qualitative methodology, conducting in-depth interviews with key stakeholders involved in urban infrastructure projects across three major cities. The findings indicated that effective stakeholder engagement significantly enhanced the sustainability of these projects, leading to improved project outcomes and community satisfaction. The study highlighted that early engagement of stakeholders in the planning process resulted in better identification of local needs and increased ownership among community members. However, it also identified a research gap in understanding how the lack of engagement from marginalized communities affects project sustainability.

Martinez and Gonzalez (2022) conducted a study on the role of stakeholder participation in project planning and its impact on sustainable agricultural practices. This research employed a mixed-methods approach, surveying 150 stakeholders involved in agricultural projects in rural Spain and complemented by focus group discussions. The results revealed that stakeholder participation in the planning phase led to the adoption of more sustainable agricultural practices, with stakeholders reporting higher levels of satisfaction and commitment to project goals. Despite the positive outcomes, the study pointed out a gap in examining the long-term effects of stakeholder engagement on the sustainability of agricultural practices over time.

A study by Nascimento and Silva (2021) investigated the impact of capacity building on the sustainability of community development projects

in Brazil. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the researchers conducted surveys and interviews with stakeholders involved in various community projects. The findings revealed that targeted capacity-building programs significantly enhanced the skills and knowledge of community members, which in turn led to improved project outcomes and sustainability. However, the study identified a research gap concerning the long-term effects of capacity building on project sustainability beyond the immediate post-training phase.

Wang and Zhang (2022) conducted a study on capacity building for sustainable development in urban infrastructure projects in China. This research employed a quantitative methodology, analyzing data from 150 infrastructure projects that included capacity-building initiatives. The results demonstrated a strong correlation between effective capacity building and the sustainability of urban projects, highlighting that projects with comprehensive training programs showed higher levels of community engagement and better environmental outcomes. Despite these findings, the study noted a gap in understanding the specific components of capacity-building programs that are most effective for different types of projects.

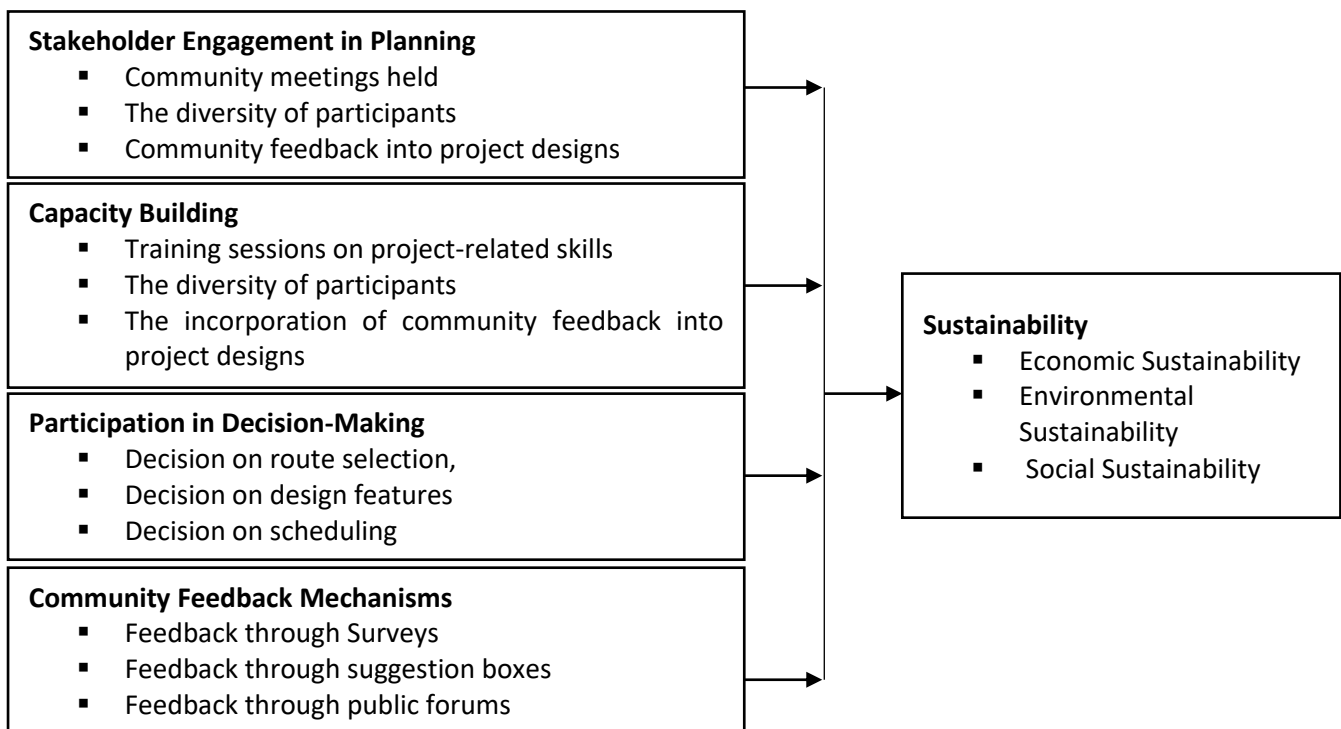
A study by Thomas and Green (2021) explored the influence of stakeholder participation in decision-making on the sustainability of infrastructure projects in the United States. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers conducted surveys and interviews with stakeholders involved in various infrastructure initiatives. The findings revealed that active participation in decision-making processes led to enhanced project sustainability, as stakeholders felt more invested in the outcomes. The study identified a research gap concerning the long-term impacts of participatory decision-making on sustainability metrics, suggesting a need for further investigation into how sustained participation affects project success over time.

Garcia and Martinez (2022) examined the role of community involvement in decision-making for

sustainable urban development in Mexico. Utilizing a case study methodology, they analyzed three urban development projects that emphasized community participation. The results indicated that when communities were actively involved in decision-making, projects were more likely to address local needs and achieve sustainable outcomes. However, the study highlighted a gap in understanding the challenges communities face when trying to engage in decision-making processes, particularly in contexts where power dynamics and socio-economic factors may hinder effective participation.

A study by Mensah and Agyemang (2021) investigated the role of community feedback mechanisms in enhancing project sustainability in Ghana. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the researchers conducted surveys and interviews with community members and project managers involved in various development initiatives. The findings indicated that effective feedback mechanisms allowed communities to express their

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2025)

concerns and suggestions, leading to improved project outcomes and higher satisfaction rates. However, the study identified a research gap regarding the scalability of these feedback mechanisms and their adaptability to different project contexts.

Wang and Li (2022) conducted a study on the impact of community feedback mechanisms on the sustainability of public health projects in China. This research employed a quantitative methodology, analyzing data from health projects that incorporated community feedback systems. The results demonstrated a positive correlation between the implementation of feedback mechanisms and project sustainability, as communities felt more engaged and invested in the health initiatives. Despite these findings, the study noted a gap in understanding the specific characteristics of effective feedback systems and how they vary across different regions and health contexts.

METHODOLOGY

This research was descriptive. This design was also appropriate for reporting circumstances, as the researchers could do so in a manner that preserved the study constructs in relation to the overall objectives of the study, as defined by Kothari (2004). The study adopted the simple random sampling method to determine the correct sample size. The target population of this study comprised 131 respondents selected through a stratified random sampling technique to ensure that vital stakeholders involved in the Village Enterprise Organization's poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County were adequately captured in the study.

Data analysis followed data collection and involved coding into segments to enhance the probability of better assessment. Exploratory analysis was used to analyze quantitative data in this research (Muathe, 2010). Frequency, standard deviation, and the mean were calculated as descriptive statistics for the participants. A regression model was utilized to assess the relationships between the independent variables—stakeholder engagement in planning, capacity building, participation in decision-making, and community feedback mechanisms—and the sustainability of poverty reduction projects. The model was specified as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

where:

- Y represents the sustainability of poverty reduction projects,
- X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4 represent stakeholder engagement in planning, capacity building, participation in decision-making, and community feedback mechanisms, respectively,
- β_0 is the intercept,
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ are the coefficients for each independent variable, and
- ϵ is the error term.

Regression and correlation analysis were used to determine the study's conclusions while working with a 5 percent significance level for the correlation results. The significance levels of each independent variable were analyzed using multiple linear regression. A t-test was employed to indicate the significance of each independent variable based on the nature of their responses between the two groups. Data presentation was conducted using graphs and frequency tables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The response rate refers to the proportion of respondents who participated in the study relative to the total sample size. In this study, the target population comprised 131 respondents from various categories, including community beneficiaries, project managers, local government officials, and NGO/CBO personnel involved in poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County.

Descriptive Analysis Results

This section presents the descriptive analysis results of the study, focusing on the key variables related to community participation and the sustainability of poverty reduction projects in Taita Taveta County. Descriptive analysis serves as a foundational step in understanding the characteristics of the data collected from respondents, providing insights into the overall trends and patterns observed in the study. By summarizing the responses to various statements regarding stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making participation, community feedback mechanisms, and sustainability, this section aims to highlight the degree of community involvement and its implications for project outcomes.

The results are organized into separate tables for each variable, presenting key statistics such as means and standard deviations. This quantitative analysis facilitates a clearer interpretation of the community's perceptions and experiences related to the Village Enterprise Organization projects. By examining these descriptive statistics, the study can identify strengths and weaknesses in community

participation, ultimately informing recommendations for improving project sustainability and effectiveness.

to assess the perceptions of respondents regarding the effectiveness and inclusiveness of community involvement in project planning.

Analysis on Stakeholder Engagement in Planning

The analysis of stakeholder engagement in planning was conducted using a set of statements designed

Table 1: Stakeholder Engagement in Planning

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Community meetings were regularly held to plan the project.	3.75	0.74
The meetings allowed for open discussions among community members.	3.80	0.78
All relevant community groups were represented in the planning process.	3.70	0.71
Community suggestions were taken into consideration during planning.	3.85	0.82
The project planning was transparent and inclusive of community input.	3.90	0.84
Planning meetings were well-publicized to ensure maximum participation.	3.82	0.77
Aggregate Score	3.80	0.78

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Results indicate that respondents generally hold positive perceptions regarding stakeholder engagement in planning. An aggregate score of 3.80 (SD = 0.78) reflects an overall agreement that stakeholder engagement practices are effective and contribute positively to the planning process. Among specific aspects, the highest mean score was for transparency and inclusivity of community input in project planning (M = 3.90, SD = 0.84). This finding suggests strong agreement regarding the importance of transparent processes and the value of community input. Literature supports the notion that transparency in planning fosters trust and enhances community participation (Chen, 2023).

The second-highest score pertains to consideration of community suggestions during planning (M = 3.85, SD = 0.82). This indicates that respondents feel their input is actively sought and integrated into planning decisions. Such perceptions are crucial, as they promote a sense of ownership among community members, which is often linked to improved project sustainability (Kumar & Singh, 2021). Conversely, representation of all relevant community groups in the planning process received the lowest mean score of 3.70 (SD = 0.71). This suggests concerns regarding the inclusivity of the

planning process, indicating that some community members might feel underrepresented. Ensuring inclusion of all relevant groups in planning discussions is vital for achieving equitable outcomes and addressing the needs of diverse stakeholders (Martinez & Gonzalez, 2022).

Furthermore, regularity of community meetings to plan the project received a mean score of 3.75 (SD = 0.74), indicating that while community meetings occur, there may still be room for improvement in their frequency or engagement level. This aligns with findings from Adama and Tengeh (2023), which emphasize the importance of regular engagement to maintain community involvement.

Overall, data reflect a positive view of stakeholder engagement in planning among respondents. However, variability in responses, particularly regarding the representation of all community groups, highlights an area for improvement. Efforts should be directed toward enhancing inclusivity in planning processes to ensure that the voices of all stakeholders are heard and considered.

Analysis on Capacity Building

The analysis on capacity building, as presented in Table 2 encompasses various statements related to

the effectiveness of training programs aimed at improving community skills for project sustainability.

Table 2: Analysis on Capacity Building

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Training sessions were provided to improve community skills for the project.	3.80	0.79
The training programs addressed specific needs of different community members.	3.75	0.76
The diversity of participants in training sessions was representative of the community.	3.72	0.73
The training helped increase the community's understanding of project activities.	3.85	0.82
Capacity building activities were tailored to improve long-term community development.	3.78	0.81
Community feedback was used to adjust the content of training sessions.	3.82	0.78

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The mean score of 3.80 (SD = 0.79) for the statement regarding the provision of training sessions suggests that respondents felt these sessions were instrumental in enhancing community skills relevant to the project. Similarly, the training programs were recognized for addressing the specific needs of different community members, reflected in a mean score of 3.75 (SD = 0.76). This indicates that the training was tailored to meet diverse community requirements, thereby increasing its effectiveness. The mean score of 3.72 (SD = 0.73) for the diversity of participants in training sessions suggests that while efforts were made to include a representative group, there may still be room for improvement in ensuring all community segments are adequately represented.

The statement regarding the training's impact on increasing community understanding of project activities received the highest mean score of 3.85 (SD = 0.82). This finding emphasizes the critical role that training plays in fostering awareness and comprehension of project objectives, which is vital for sustainable project implementation. Furthermore, the mean score of 3.78 (SD = 0.81) for capacity building activities tailored to improve long-term community development indicates a positive perception of the focus on sustainability within the training programs. Lastly, the mean score of 3.82 (SD = 0.78) regarding the use of community

feedback to adjust training content signifies an inclusive approach, acknowledging the importance of adapting training to reflect community input.

These findings suggest that capacity-building initiatives are well-received and perceived as effective in enhancing community skills and knowledge. The positive responses highlight the importance of tailoring training to community needs and ensuring diversity in participant representation. However, while the overall sentiment is favorable, there are opportunities for improvement in fully engaging all community segments and continuing to adapt training based on feedback. Further research could focus on evaluating the long-term impacts of these capacity-building programs on project sustainability and community empowerment, addressing identified gaps in existing literature.

The results of the current study on capacity building are consistent with empirical literature, highlighting the significant impact of targeted capacity-building initiatives on project sustainability. As evidenced by Nascimento and Silva (2021), the enhancement of skills and knowledge among community members leads to improved project outcomes and sustainability. This finding resonates with the current study's mean scores, which suggest that training sessions were perceived as beneficial for increasing community understanding of project

activities (mean = 3.85, standard deviation = 0.82) and addressing specific needs (mean = 3.75, standard deviation = 0.76). Both studies underscore the importance of well-structured training programs in fostering community engagement and enhancing project effectiveness.

Wang and Zhang (2022) further support these findings, noting a strong correlation between effective capacity building and sustainability in urban infrastructure projects. Their study demonstrated that comprehensive training programs resulted in higher community engagement and better environmental outcomes. Similarly, the current study reflects high mean scores for community engagement, as indicated by training programs being tailored for long-term development (mean = 3.78, standard deviation = 0.81) and participant diversity (mean = 3.72, standard deviation = 0.73). These results suggest that effective capacity-building initiatives can lead to enhanced community involvement, mirroring the positive outcomes observed in Wang and Zhang's research.

Romero *et al.*, (2023) highlighted the role of capacity building in agricultural projects, emphasizing the need for adaptability in training initiatives to improve productivity and sustainability. This aligns with the current findings, particularly regarding the tailored approach to capacity building that considers community feedback (mean = 3.82, standard deviation = 0.78). However, like Romero *et al.*, the current study also notes a potential gap in scalability and adaptability, suggesting that while training initiatives may be

effective, further research is needed to understand how they can be adjusted to suit varying community contexts.

The study by Patel and Kumar (2023) underscores the operational efficiency gained through well-designed capacity-building interventions in NGOs. Their findings, which point to improved project sustainability and community impact, align with the current study's results showing the positive perception of training sessions (mean = 3.80, standard deviation = 0.79). However, both studies identify a gap in understanding the barriers to effective capacity building, which could limit the effectiveness of these initiatives in different organizational contexts. The current study's acknowledgment of this gap reinforces the need for future research to explore these challenges in depth.

Mensah *et al.*, (2024) conducted a longitudinal analysis, demonstrating that sustained capacity-building efforts positively influence health project outcomes. Their findings echo the current study's emphasis on the importance of ongoing training and community involvement. However, both studies recognize a gap concerning the long-term sustainability of capacity-building initiatives, specifically regarding how community engagement influences these outcomes over time.

Analysis on Participation in Decision-Making

The analysis of participation in decision-making regarding community projects is presented in Table 3, which summarizes the survey data collected on various aspects of community engagement.

Table 3: Analysis on Participation in Decision-Making

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
The community was involved in deciding the route selection for the project.	3.78	0.74
Community members were given opportunities to contribute to design features.	3.72	0.71
The community participated in making scheduling decisions for the project.	3.65	0.70
The decisions made by community representatives reflected the interests of the larger community.	3.80	0.79
The project management team incorporated community suggestions in major decisions.	3.85	0.82
Community leaders were effective in representing community interests in decision-making processes.	3.87	0.83

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The results indicate that community involvement in decision-making is generally perceived positively, with mean scores ranging from 3.65 to 3.87 across different statements. The statement about community leaders effectively representing community interests received the highest mean score of 3.87 (Std. Dev. = 0.83), suggesting that respondents feel confident in their leaders' ability to advocate for broader community needs. This aligns with findings from Kim and Lee (2023), who reported that stakeholder engagement significantly enhances project sustainability, as engaged stakeholders often feel more satisfied and committed to project goals. The representation of community interests by leaders is crucial for ensuring that decisions reflect the collective needs and aspirations of the community, which in turn supports project sustainability.

The project management team's incorporation of community suggestions in major decisions also scored well, with a mean of 3.85 (Std. Dev. = 0.82). This finding is consistent with Thomas and Green (2021), who emphasized that active participation in decision-making processes leads to improved sustainability outcomes. By valuing community input, project teams can create more relevant and effective interventions that resonate with community members, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and investment in project outcomes.

Community involvement in deciding the route selection for the project received a mean score of 3.78 (Std. Dev. = 0.74), indicating that this aspect of participation was also positively viewed. Garcia and Martinez (2022) found similar results in their study on urban development, where community involvement was shown to enhance the relevance and sustainability of projects. These findings highlight the importance of local knowledge in making informed decisions that serve the community's interests.

However, the mean score for community participation in making scheduling decisions for the project was relatively lower at 3.65 (Std. Dev. = 0.70). This lower score may reflect challenges in ensuring that all community members have a voice in scheduling, which is crucial for accommodating diverse needs and preferences. Okafor and Nwankwo (2023) noted that while participatory decision-making fosters collaboration and trust, challenges such as power dynamics can impede effective engagement. The statement regarding opportunities for community members to contribute to design features yielded a mean score of 3.72 (Std. Dev. = 0.71), indicating a moderate level of satisfaction. This finding resonates with Patel and Singh (2024), who highlighted that when community members are involved in decision-making, projects are more likely to succeed and be

sustainable. However, the researchers also noted the need to explore how various factors, including gender and socio-economic status, influence participation, suggesting that more inclusive practices could further enhance engagement.

The findings from the survey indicate a generally positive perception of community participation in decision-making processes, with high mean scores for community representation and incorporation of suggestions. However, the relatively lower score for scheduling decisions points to an area where further improvement is needed. Comparatively, empirical literature supports these findings by

demonstrating that participatory decision-making is crucial for enhancing project sustainability, highlighting the need for continued efforts to engage communities effectively and inclusively

Analysis on Community Feedback Mechanisms

The analysis of community feedback mechanisms reveals critical insights into their role in enhancing project sustainability. The findings from the survey data are summarized in Table 4, which presents the mean scores and standard deviations for various statements related to community feedback mechanisms.

Table 4: Community Feedback Mechanisms

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Surveys were used regularly to gather feedback from the community.	3.80	0.76
Community members felt their feedback was valued and used in decision-making.	3.82	0.77
Suggestion boxes were placed in accessible locations for community members.	3.75	0.73
Public forums were held frequently to discuss the project's progress.	3.85	0.81
Community members received timely responses to their feedback.	3.87	0.82
Feedback from community members influenced adjustments to the project.	3.82	0.79

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The mean scores across the various statements indicate a generally positive perception of community feedback mechanisms among respondents, with all means exceeding 3.70. The highest mean score of 3.87 for the statement regarding timely responses to feedback suggests that community members feel their concerns are addressed promptly, fostering a sense of trust and engagement. This finding aligns with the empirical results from Mensah and Agyemang (2021), who found that effective feedback mechanisms enhance community satisfaction and project outcomes by allowing community members to express their concerns.

The use of surveys (mean = 3.80) and the placement of suggestion boxes (mean = 3.75) indicate that these mechanisms are integral to gathering community input. This is consistent with Wang and Li's (2022) study, which showed that

community feedback systems lead to higher engagement and investment in projects, reinforcing the importance of structured feedback channels in promoting sustainability. Public forums (mean = 3.85) serve as a vital platform for discussing project progress, reflecting the proactive efforts of project management teams to involve the community in decision-making. This aligns with Okafor et al. (2023), who highlighted that accessible feedback systems enable stakeholders to communicate effectively, resulting in more responsive project interventions.

Additionally, the finding that feedback from community members influenced project adjustments (mean = 3.82) echoes the results of Patel and Singh (2024), which identified feedback mechanisms as crucial for enhancing accountability and transparency in decision-making processes. These findings emphasize the significance of

community involvement in shaping project trajectories, which ultimately supports sustainability. The survey data indicates a robust framework for community feedback mechanisms, which is crucial for project sustainability. The findings resonate with the empirical literature, suggesting that when communities perceive their feedback as valued, as indicated by the mean of 3.82, they are more likely to engage actively in project processes. This aligns with the conclusions drawn by Romero and Gonzalez (2024), who noted that effective feedback systems lead to improved communication and more successful project outcomes.

However, despite the positive perceptions highlighted in this analysis, there are notable research gaps identified in the existing literature.

Table 5: Sustainability of Project

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
The project contributes to the economic sustainability of the community.	3.02	0.80
The project creates long-term employment opportunities for the community.	2.95	0.77
The project promotes environmental conservation and protection efforts.	3.00	0.78
The project enhances the social well-being of the community.	3.05	0.81
The project is designed to meet future needs without compromising current resources.	2.87	0.83
Community members feel confident in the project's long-term sustainability.	2.90	0.82

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The mean scores across the various statements indicate a somewhat lukewarm perception of the project's sustainability among community members, with means ranging from 2.87 to 3.05. The lowest mean score of 2.87 for the statement regarding the project's design to meet future needs suggests concerns about its ability to sustain resources and meet long-term community requirements. This is critical as sustainability is often evaluated based on the project's capacity to address both current and future needs (Patel & Singh, 2024).

The mean score of 3.05 for the statement about enhancing social well-being indicates a marginally positive perception but suggests that there may still

Mensah and Agyemang (2021) emphasized the need for further exploration of the scalability of feedback mechanisms, while Wang and Li (2022) pointed to a lack of understanding regarding the specific characteristics of effective feedback systems. Okafor et al. (2023) also noted the need for research on the long-term impacts of feedback mechanisms on project sustainability, suggesting that continuous engagement is crucial for sustained project success.

Sustainability of Project

The sustainability of the project is assessed through various dimensions, as summarized in Table 5. This table presents the mean scores and standard deviations for statements related to the project's contribution to economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

be significant room for improvement. Similarly, the scores related to economic sustainability (mean = 3.02) and long-term employment opportunities (mean = 2.95) reflect a cautious optimism but also signal that the community may not fully perceive the project's economic impact. These findings align with the literature, where projects that do not clearly demonstrate economic benefits often struggle to gain community support (Okafor et al., 2023).

The survey results reveal a relatively low level of confidence in the project's sustainability, especially in terms of meeting future needs. This aligns with the findings of Mensah et al. (2021), who reported that projects lacking clear sustainability frameworks

and community involvement often fall short in their perceived sustainability. The perception that the project is not adequately designed for future needs can lead to community skepticism about its longevity and effectiveness. The findings regarding economic sustainability and employment opportunities correlate with those of Thomas and Green (2021), who found that economic outcomes significantly influence perceptions of project sustainability. The low mean scores in these areas suggest a potential disconnect between project objectives and community expectations, highlighting the need for further engagement with community members to better align project goals with local needs.

In terms of environmental conservation, the mean score of 3.00 indicates a recognition of some positive contributions; however, it also suggests that community members may feel that these efforts are insufficient. Garcia and Martinez (2022) noted that successful projects must clearly communicate their environmental benefits to garner community support and trust. Overall, while some aspects of the project's sustainability are acknowledged, the findings indicate significant areas for improvement. The low mean scores suggest that project managers should prioritize transparency and community engagement to enhance perceptions of sustainability.

Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis involves making predictions or inferences about a population based on a sample of data. In this study, inferential analysis is used to determine the relationships between different variables related to the project's sustainability and community participation. Through this analysis, the

study seeks to establish patterns, trends, and the extent to which various factors, such as participation in decision-making and community feedback mechanisms, impact the sustainability of the project. Key techniques employed in this section include correlation analysis and regression analysis, both of which provide insights into the strength and direction of relationships among variables.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical technique used to examine the strength and direction of relationships between two or more variables. In this study, correlation analysis aims to determine how independent variables, such as Stakeholder Engagement in Planning, Capacity Building, decision-making processes, and feedback mechanisms, relate to the sustainability of the project. By evaluating the correlation coefficients, the study identifies whether the relationships are positive or negative and assesses their significance. The results of the correlation analysis provide a foundation for further inferential analysis, such as regression, to understand the impact of these factors on the overall sustainability of the project.

The Pearson Correlation coefficient (r) measures the strength and direction of relationships between variables. The correlation coefficient values range from -1 to +1, with positive values indicating a positive relationship, negative values indicating a negative relationship, and values close to 0 suggesting no relationship. The significance value (Sig.) is used to determine whether the correlation is statistically significant. If the Sig. value is less than 0.05, the correlation is considered statistically significant.

Table 6: Correlations

		Stakeholder Engagement in Planning	Capacity Building	Decision- Making	Community Feedback Mechanisms	Sustainability
Stakeholder Engagement in Planning	Pearson	1				
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Capacity Building	N	107				
	Pearson	.211*	1			
	Correlation					
Decision- Making	Sig. (2-tailed)	.069				
	N	107	107			
	Pearson	.277**	-.134	1		
Community Feedback Mechanisms	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.169			
	N	107	107	107		
Sustainability	Pearson	.245*	-.174	.480**	1	
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.073	.070		
	N	107	107	107	107	
	Pearson	.472**	.515**	.564**	.558**	1
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	107	107	107	107	107

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

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

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The correlation coefficient between stakeholder engagement in planning and sustainability is $r = .472$, which indicates a moderate positive relationship. This suggests that higher levels of stakeholder engagement in planning are associated with improved sustainability outcomes. This result is statistically significant (Sig. = .000), reinforcing the importance of involving stakeholders in the planning process to ensure long-term project sustainability. This finding aligns with a study by Thomas and Green (2021), who found that stakeholder involvement in decision-making positively impacted the sustainability of infrastructure projects. The correlation between capacity building and sustainability is $r = .515$, showing a strong positive relationship. This indicates that enhancing capacity-building initiatives significantly contributes to project sustainability. This relationship is also statistically significant (Sig. = .000). The findings support empirical literature, such as the study by Mensah et

al. (2024), which found that sustained capacity-building efforts improved health project sustainability in Ghana.

A strong positive correlation exists between decision-making and sustainability ($r = .564$), signifying that when communities participate in decision-making, projects tend to be more sustainable. This relationship is statistically significant (Sig. = .000). This result is consistent with findings from Okafor and Nwankwo (2023), who concluded that participatory decision-making improved the sustainability of environmental conservation projects. The correlation between community feedback mechanisms and sustainability is $r = .558$, also indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that effective feedback systems lead to better project sustainability. This finding is statistically significant (Sig. = .000) and supports the results of a study by Patel and Singh (2024), which found that feedback mechanisms

enhance transparency and accountability, contributing to sustainable infrastructure projects.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical technique used to explore the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. The regression model will offer both the coefficients of the independent variables and their statistical significance, helping to identify the predictive power of each variable. This section will interpret the results from the regression analysis, comparing them to the empirical studies discussed earlier to assess the alignment or divergence of the findings.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.858 ^a	.736	.726	1.62965

Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder Engagement in Planning, Capacity Building, Decision-Making Processes, and Feedback Mechanisms

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The R value of 0.858 indicates a strong positive correlation between the independent variables (stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making, and feedback mechanisms) and the dependent variable (project sustainability). This suggests that these factors collectively have a strong influence on project sustainability. The R Square (R^2) value of 0.736 shows that 73.6% of the variability in project sustainability is explained by the model, meaning the independent variables significantly contribute to predicting project sustainability. This indicates a high level of model fit.

The Adjusted R Square of 0.726 accounts for the number of predictors in the model, providing a slightly more conservative estimate. This suggests that even when adjusting for the number of variables, 72.6% of the variability in sustainability can still be explained by the four predictors, confirming their relevance. The standard error of the estimate is 1.62965, which reflects the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line. A smaller standard error suggests a better model fit. These results align with findings

In the context of regression analysis, R represents the correlation coefficient, showing the strength of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. R Square (R^2) indicates the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable (sustainability of the project) that is explained by the independent variables. Adjusted R Square adjusts for the number of predictors in the model, providing a more accurate reflection of the model's explanatory power, especially when dealing with multiple variables. The standard error of the estimate indicates how much the actual values deviate from the predicted values in the model.

from Mensah and Agyemang (2021), who reported that stakeholder engagement and community feedback mechanisms significantly improve project outcomes. Similarly, Wang and Li (2022) found that capacity building and decision-making were crucial for enhancing project sustainability. The strong explanatory power of the model in this study is consistent with these empirical findings.

Table 8 presents ANOVA (Analysis of Variance), Sum of Squares measures the total variability in the dependent variable (project sustainability). It is split into two components: Regression Sum of Squares represents the variability explained by the independent variables (stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making processes, and feedback mechanisms), while the Residual Sum of Squares accounts for the variability that is not explained by the model.

The degrees of freedom (df) are associated with the regression model and residual error. The Mean Square is obtained by dividing the sum of squares by the respective degrees of freedom. The F-statistic measures the overall significance of the

model by comparing the model's explained variance to unexplained variance. The Sig. value (p-value) shows whether the model is statistically significant,

with a value below 0.05 indicating a significant relationship.

Table 8: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	756.179	4	189.045	71.183	.000 ^b
	Residual	270.886	102	2.656		
	Total	1027.065	106			

a. Dependent Variable: Project Sustainability

b. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder Engagement in Planning, Capacity Building, Decision-Making Processes, and Feedback Mechanisms

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The Sum of Squares for regression (756.179) indicates that a large portion of the variability in project sustainability is explained by the independent variables (stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making processes, and feedback mechanisms). The Residual Sum of Squares (270.886) reflects the variability not accounted for by the model, which is relatively small compared to the total sum (1027.065), suggesting the model explains much of the variability in project sustainability.

The F-statistic of 71.183 with a p-value (Sig.) of .000 shows that the model is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that the independent variables have a significant effect on project sustainability. The large F-value suggests that the model provides a good fit and that stakeholder engagement, capacity building, decision-making processes, and feedback mechanisms are important contributors to the sustainability of the project.

These findings are consistent with studies such as Okafor et al. (2023), which emphasized the

significance of participatory decision-making in improving project outcomes, and Patel and Singh (2024), who found that community feedback and capacity building were critical to sustaining development projects over the long term. The strong significance in the ANOVA results underscores the value of involving stakeholders and building capacity for achieving sustainable project outcomes.

The data in Table 8 presents the coefficients for the independent variables—Stakeholder Engagement in Planning, Capacity Building, Decision-Making Processes, and Community Feedback Mechanisms—and their relationship to the dependent variable, Project Sustainability. The coefficients are interpreted based on their statistical significance (p-value) and direction of influence (positive or negative). Significant p-values (Sig.) indicate a meaningful impact of the independent variable on project sustainability.

Table 8: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	13.891	3.148		4.412	.000
	Stakeholder Engagement in Planning	.687	.180	.209	3.808	.000
	Capacity Building	1.291	.119	.588	10.861	.000
	Decision-Making Processes	-.488	.408	-.315	-1.198	.234
	Community Feedback Mechanisms	1.465	.420	.919	3.490	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Project Sustainability

Stakeholder Engagement in Planning and Project Sustainability

The coefficient for stakeholder engagement in planning is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.687$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that increased stakeholder engagement in the planning phase enhances project sustainability. This finding aligns with studies by Kumar and Singh (2021), Martinez and Gonzalez (2022), and Chen (2023), which emphasized the critical role of early stakeholder involvement in identifying local needs, increasing community ownership, and reducing project opposition. These studies highlight the importance of engaging diverse stakeholders to improve project outcomes. However, gaps in the literature, such as the impact of marginalized community involvement, remain unaddressed, as suggested by Kumar and Singh (2021) and Adama and Tengeh (2023). Thus, this research confirms that robust stakeholder engagement during planning positively contributes to sustainable project outcomes, consistent with prior empirical literature.

Capacity Building and Project Sustainability

Capacity building shows a significant positive effect on project sustainability ($\beta = 1.291$, $p = 0.000$), suggesting that enhancing stakeholders' skills and knowledge strongly contributes to the sustainability of projects. This outcome is supported by studies like Nascimento and Silva (2021), Wang and Zhang (2022), and Mensah et al. (2024), which found that well-structured capacity-building programs improve project outcomes through skill enhancement and operational efficiency. The high beta coefficient indicates that capacity building is a major predictor of project sustainability, consistent with the findings of Romero et al. (2023) and Patel and Kumar (2023). While these studies confirm the positive role of capacity building, they also point out the need for further investigation into the long-term effects and adaptability of these initiatives across different contexts, as noted by Patel and Kumar (2023) and Wang and Zhang (2022).

Participation in Decision-Making and Project Sustainability

Decision-making processes present an unexpected negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.488$, $p = 0.234$), though it is statistically insignificant, indicating no conclusive impact on project sustainability in this context. This finding contrasts with the conclusions of Thomas and Green (2021), Garcia and Martinez (2022), and Okafor and Nwankwo (2023), who reported that participatory decision-making enhances project sustainability by fostering collaboration and trust. The non-significance of decision-making processes in this study suggests that other variables may play a more critical role in sustainability, or that the nature of participation in this specific case was insufficiently structured to generate significant positive effects. Kim and Lee (2023) and Patel and Singh (2024) also noted that barriers to effective engagement, such as socio-economic status and exclusion of marginalized groups, could limit the impact of decision-making processes, which may explain the negative coefficient observed here.

Community Feedback Mechanisms and Project Sustainability

Community feedback mechanisms demonstrate a strong positive and significant effect on project sustainability ($\beta = 1.465$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that effective communication between communities and project teams greatly enhances sustainability outcomes. This finding corroborates the studies by Mensah and Agyemang (2021), Wang and Li (2022), and Okafor et al. (2023), which emphasize the value of timely and accessible feedback systems in improving project outcomes and responsiveness. The high beta value underscores the importance of feedback mechanisms as a major factor in sustainability. However, as noted by Patel and Singh (2024) and Romero and Gonzalez (2024), the effectiveness of feedback systems may vary depending on socio-economic factors and the integration of technology, which could further enhance or limit their impact on project sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions drawn from the inferential analysis affirm that stakeholder engagement in planning is pivotal to achieving project sustainability. The strong positive coefficient ($B = 0.687$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that effective stakeholder involvement not only enhances project outcomes but also fosters community satisfaction. This underscores the necessity of integrating stakeholder perspectives early in the planning process to ensure that projects are aligned with local needs and priorities. Thus, it can be concluded that stakeholder engagement serves as a crucial mechanism for enhancing the sustainability of development initiatives.

The analysis reveals that capacity building plays a significant role in promoting project sustainability, as evidenced by the robust positive coefficient ($B = 1.291$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that targeted capacity-building initiatives empower community members, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to manage projects effectively. Consequently, the conclusion drawn is that sustained investment in capacity-building efforts is essential for ensuring long-term project success and sustainability, highlighting the importance of developing local competencies as a foundational strategy in project planning and implementation.

The findings on decision-making processes indicate a complex relationship with project sustainability. Although the analysis did not find a statistically significant impact ($B = -0.488$, $p = 0.234$), this suggests that current decision-making practices may not adequately engage all stakeholders, particularly marginalized groups. Therefore, the conclusion is that while participatory decision-making has the potential to enhance project outcomes, it is imperative to address the barriers that hinder effective engagement. This highlights the need for tailored strategies to improve decision-making processes and ensure that all voices are heard in project planning.

The inferential results indicate that community feedback mechanisms are a vital component of project sustainability, as demonstrated by the positive coefficient ($B = 1.465$, $p < 0.001$). This finding supports the conclusion that effective feedback systems facilitate improved communication and responsiveness between project teams and community members. Consequently, incorporating robust feedback mechanisms can significantly enhance project accountability and community satisfaction. Thus, it is essential for future projects to prioritize the establishment of accessible and efficient feedback channels to promote sustainable development outcomes.

To enhance project sustainability through stakeholder engagement, it is recommended that project managers adopt a structured framework for stakeholder identification and involvement. This includes conducting thorough stakeholder mapping to ensure representation from diverse community groups, especially marginalized populations. Additionally, stakeholders should be actively involved in the planning process through workshops, focus groups, and community meetings to foster ownership and commitment. Implementing regular feedback loops will also help assess the effectiveness of engagement efforts and adapt strategies as necessary to ensure continued stakeholder participation throughout the project lifecycle.

To maximize the impact of capacity-building initiatives on project sustainability, it is recommended that organizations develop tailored training programs that address the specific needs of community members involved in project implementation. These programs should focus on practical skills that enhance local capacities, such as project management, financial literacy, and technical skills relevant to the specific project context. Moreover, partnerships with local educational institutions and NGOs can be leveraged to provide ongoing support and resources. Establishing mentorship and peer-learning

networks can further enhance the sustainability of capacity-building efforts by fostering knowledge sharing and continuous improvement within the community.

To improve decision-making processes, it is essential to create inclusive frameworks that promote active participation from all stakeholders, particularly those from marginalized groups. Recommendations include establishing clear guidelines for participatory decision-making that ensure transparency and equitable input from all community members. Training facilitators in inclusive decision-making techniques can also empower communities to express their needs and preferences effectively. Additionally, utilizing technology to facilitate remote participation in decision-making can enhance accessibility and engagement, ensuring that all voices are considered in project planning and execution.

To strengthen community feedback mechanisms, it is recommended that project teams establish clear and accessible channels for feedback, such as community hotlines, suggestion boxes, and digital platforms. Training community members on the importance of providing feedback and how to do so effectively can also enhance the quality of input received. Furthermore, regular community meetings should be organized to discuss feedback received and demonstrate how it has been incorporated into project adjustments. This

approach not only fosters trust and accountability but also encourages ongoing community engagement, ultimately contributing to the sustainability of development initiatives.

Suggestions for Further Study

Future research should explore the long-term effects of stakeholder engagement on project sustainability across different contexts, particularly focusing on how engagement strategies can be tailored to meet the needs of diverse communities. Additionally, studies could investigate the specific components of capacity-building programs that yield the most significant impacts on sustainability, examining how these elements can be adapted for various project types and cultural settings. It would also be beneficial to assess the influence of decision-making frameworks on the sustainability outcomes of projects, with particular emphasis on understanding the dynamics of power and participation among different stakeholder groups. Furthermore, research could delve into the role of technology in enhancing community feedback mechanisms, exploring how digital tools can facilitate greater community involvement and improve project responsiveness. Finally, comparative studies across different sectors or geographical regions would provide valuable insights into best practices and challenges in promoting project sustainability, allowing for the development of more effective strategies and interventions tailored to specific local context.

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