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INFLUENCE OF STAKEHOLDER'S SYNERGY ON PERFORMANCE OF FAITH - BASED ORGANIZATIONS PROJECTS IN UGANDA CASE STUDY OF CARITAS NEBBI

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ABSTRACT

*Project stakeholders are persons or entities who have specific interest in the projects, are affected by the decision, activity or the performance of the project. The synergy between project stakeholder's and the project is critical because it directly determines the project success, influence the scope and fosters necessary trust while ensuring that the outputs meet the actual needs of those involved.The study examined the influence of stakeholder'ssynergy on performance of faith – based organizations. Specifically, the study examined the influence of cooperation, coordination, collaboration and control. The study was anchored on Social Exchange Theory. Descriptive research design was applied; data was congregated from 181 respondents carefully selected using Yamane's formula and stratified sampling techniques from 310. Primary data was congregated by means of structured questionnaires, whereas secondary data were collected from organizational documents. Data was analyzed using Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis with SPSS version 24.0 and presented using descriptive statistics. The results indicates that cooperation among stakeholders exhibited by strongest positive correlations of 0.541** with p-value 0.000,coordination 0.540** p-value 0.000 strong and collaboration 0.319** p-value 0.000 moderate. The study concludes that cooperation between project stakeholder's and the project is critical as it directly determines the project success while influencing the scope, fosters necessary trust and ensuring that the outputs meet the actual needs of the project and those involved. The*

study recommends strengthening collaboration mechanisms to have strong links for better performance which involves collective decision making while observing the rules and procedures, standardization, mutual adjustments and direct supervision among others.

KEYWORDS: *Collaboration, Coordination, Cooperation, project performance.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The project stakeholders are internal or external individuals or groups who influence or are affected either directly or indirectly with the project activities or outcome (PMI,2021)

Effective stakeholders' management involves identify them, understanding their interest and managing their expectations for sustained synergyinvolving combined factors of coordination, collaboration and cooperation to ensure project success which is achieved by meeting requirements, mitigating risks and sustaining the commitments throughout the project life-cycle (PMBOK,2022).

The project stakeholder'senvironmental complexity, regulatory uncertainty and increasing stakeholder expectations, organizations must collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders to achieve competitive advantages and successful project performance (Albino et al., 2012; Romero-Torres, 2020). This is especially relevant in large projects that are characterized by a large number and variety of stakeholders working together in a network of synergy that require coordination,cooperation and collaboration (Liu et al., 2021). Project stakeholders typically comprise internal and external stakeholders who are an essential part of the project team such as owner organization, contractors, designers and consultants and external stakeholders who are not part of the project team but who may influence or be influenced by the project, such as governmental authorities and agencies, suppliers and end users (Aaltonen, K., Kujala, J., Lehtonen, P. and Ruuska, I. (2010), Lahdenpera, P. (2012),

Inter-organizational cooperation, coordination and collaboration have been defined and explained by scholars and researchers from different perspectives.Spekman, R., Kamauff,Wand-Myhr,N(1998), discussed these concepts (cooperation, coordination and collaboration) from the perspective of supply chain management to gain strategic advantage and improve performance. Mellewigt, T., Madhok, A. and Weibel, A. (2007), tested the interplay between control and coordination and their relationship with contractual complexity geared towards project performance.

Dietrich, P., Eskerod, P., Dalcher, D. and Sandhawalia, B. (2010), argues that different elements of collaboration and their interdependencies in inter-organizational projects plays a

role in project performance. Romero-Torres (2020) explained different factors linked with collaboration and their impacts on inter-organizational synergy leads to better performance. Klessova, S., Thomas, C. and Engell, S. (2020), explored the interplay between knowledge integration and coordination in setting up collaborative projects which enhances the project performance.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The complexity of large projects is driven by different factors, including technological uncertainty, environmental uncertainty, socioeconomic transformations and organizational interdependency (Bosch-Rekveldt et al., 2011; Aaltonen and Kujala, 2016; Elia et al., 2021), which makes inter- organizational cooperation, coordination and collaboration vital for successful project delivery (Pekkinen and Kujala, 2014; Castaner and Oliveira, 2020). Such inter-organizational practices have been implemented through relational project delivery arrangements for instance project partnering, integrated project delivery and project alliancing to manage inter-organizational relationships and collaboration in complex projects (Lahdenpera, 2012; Pauna, 2021).

These concepts are at the core of stakeholder relationships in collaborative projects (e.g. project alliancing) but have been used interchangeably without a clear distinction of their meaning (Castaner and Oliveira, 2020). Hence, there is still a need to develop frameworks that explain the interplay between cooperation, coordination and collaboration as the links between these terms and how they develop in an organization synergy settings remain largely unknown, especially for inter-organizational projects.

The study addressed this research gap by developing a conceptual framework for these concepts based on the review of existing literature, identifying challenges in a case project and creating preconditions in relation to developing the synergy at different project phases.

1.3 Purpose of the study

To investigatethe effects of stakeholder's collaboration, cooperation and coordinationon the performance of faith – based organization's projects in West Nile Sub-Region, Uganda.

2. Review of Literature

2.1: Project stakeholder's collaboration

Project stakeholders' collaboration is a structured two –way process where project team actively works with individuals or groups interest in nor affected by the project to align with

the goals , share resources and create solutions. Effective collaboration builds trust, reduces resistance and mitigate risks making it crucial for project high performance.

Collaboration between project stakeholders is viewed as one of the key success factors in projects performance (ErrastiA., Beach R., OyarbideA, &Santos, J.,2007). Existing research on collaboration between project stakeholders often focuses on beneficiary-client customer-supplier relations. Several studies have examined the role and process of partnering in construction projects (Bresnen, M & Marshall, N, 2000). Prevalent research indicates that collaboration between customer, beneficiaries and supplier reduces the costs of controlling, decreases the probability of failure, and creates potential for innovations and learning (Ahola, 2009; Dubois & Gadde, 2000; Ingram & Baum, 2001). In addition, in-depth empirical studies have been executed to understand other essential relations between different project stakeholders and their effects on the project performance (Ahola et, al 2009).

2.2: Stakeholders'cooperation

Stakeholder's cooperation in projects involves shifts from simply managing stakeholders to actively engaging stakeholders through openness, transparency and clear and honest communication (Harold, 1991). The goal is to move stakeholders from being aware of the project to becoming partners in the project performance (Lahdenpera, P. 2012).Cooperation also involves aligning internal and external stakeholders towards shared goals through proactive engagement, consistent honest communication and trust building(John W., Paul G., 1984). This requires understanding and analyzing the influence in order to make tailored, transparent and strategic communication to minimize risks and ensure project performance(Faerman, R,.McCaffrey, P., & Van M., (2001). This calls for early engagement, active listening and celebrating the project performance with all stakeholders.

2.3: Coordination.

Stakeholders' coordination in project activities involve early identification, mapping their interest and influence and implementing tailored made communication plan for each stakeholder (Zungu M. & Fore S.,(2022). This is a move away from mere stakeholder's management to active engagement and continuous interaction to align the diverse expectations with the project goals (Baharuddin A., Ismail H.,Adnan W., and Piri I.,(2022). The stakeholder's coordination is a core people management. Receiver focused approach through open and continuous interaction to understand the needs from their perspective to lead to better commitment and project performance.

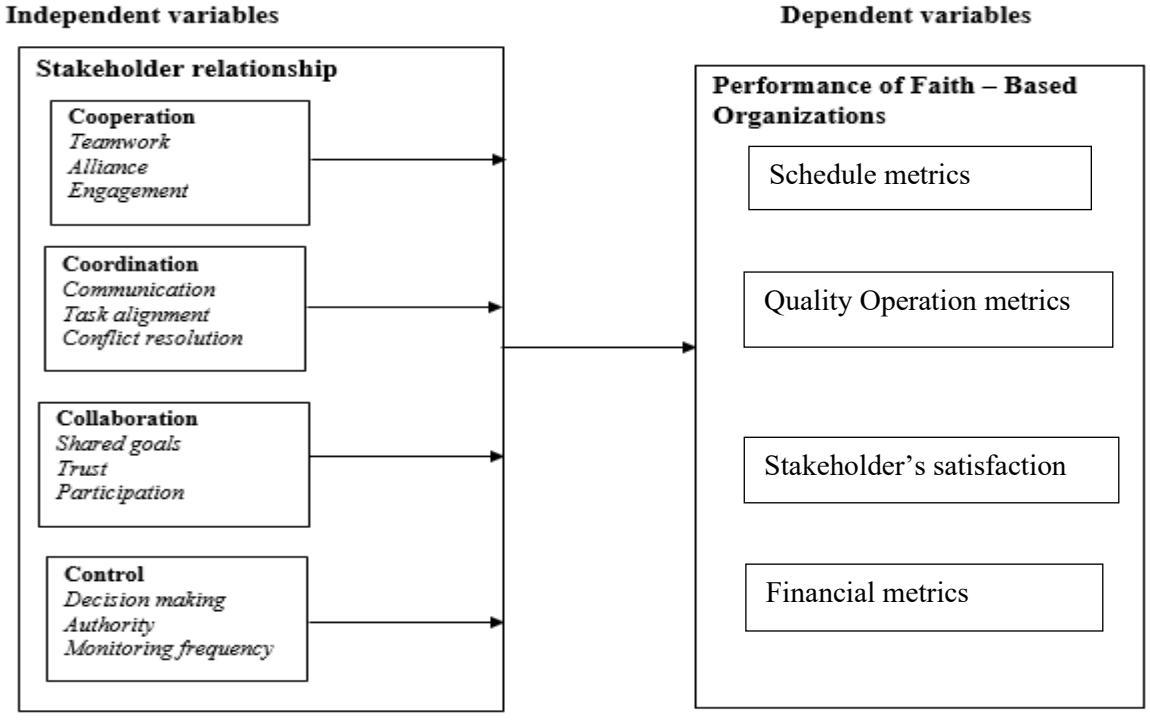
2.4: Theoretical review

2.4.1: Social Exchange Theory

The study was guided by Social Exchange Theory, posits that social behavior is a result of a cost benefit analysis, where individuals or organizations aim to maximize rewards like resources and minimize cost like time, effort and conflict in a relationship. Relationships are maintained when the rewards or interest outweigh the cost often relying on reciprocity and equity. This explains the relationship between the project and the stakeholders as synergy of cooperation, coordination, collaboration and for project performance ordinarily measured in terms of scheduled metric, quality operation metric, financial metric and stakeholders' satisfaction.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 Conceptual Frame work



Source: *Researcher's own impression, 2025*

3.: Research Methodology

The researchers used quantitative research which specifically captures a case study. It expounded the research design, the population under study, sampling techniques and processes, data collection instruments and data processing and analysis.

3.1: Research Design

The researchers employed descriptive and inferential designs, to scrutinize how quality synergy impacts on performance of faith - based organizations in West Nile sub – region, Uganda.

3.2: Target population and respondents

The target group were Directors, Program Officers, M&E officers, project accountants, project sponsors and project recipients in Caritas Nebbi organization totaling to 181.

4: RESULTS

4.1.1 Stakeholder relationships in Caritas Nebbi project

Table 1: Stakeholder relationships collaboration, cooperation and coordination in Caritas Nebbi.

	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
CN engages all the stakeholders	4.24	.052	.694
Collaborationof the stakeholders in CN	3.91	.041	.551
There's good cooperation among the stakeholders in CN	3.94	.055	.747
There's coordination among the stakeholders in CN	4.13	.048	.650
Valid N (list wise)	181		

Source: Researcher, 2025

Table 4.1: The mean of 4.24 indicates that most respondents strongly agreed that CN actively engages all stakeholders in its activities. A low standard deviation (0.694) suggests consistency in responses, showing strong agreement across the board. This suggests effective collaboration, which prospectively enhances project ownership and sustainability thereby increased performance. (Bedwell et al., 2012).

The mean of 3.91 reflects a positive perception, implying that fairly well integrated into CN's stakeholder network. Standard deviation (0.551) is low, showing that responses are consistent. This implies a well-structured stakeholder model with diverse institutional cooperation. (Aaltonen et al., 2010; Lehtinen et al., 2019).

A mean of 3.94 suggests that coordination is generally effective among stakeholders. However, the standard deviation (0.747) is slightly higher, indicating some variation in experiences, possibly due to coordination challenges in certain areas or with certain groups. Strong coordination is a key performance driver, affecting projectperformance. (de Carvalho, 2013)

A mean of 4.13 signifies that stakeholders are perceived to be committed and supportive of CN's objectives. The moderate standard deviation (0.650) suggests most respondents agree, though not unanimously. Effective coordination usually correlates with better progress, and high performance. Dietrich et al. (2010).

Table 4.2: Effect of Stakeholder relationships collaboration, coordination and cooperation and project performance.

	Mean		**Std. Deviation**
	Statistic	**Std. Error**	**Statistic**
Collaboration among stakeholders have improved performance of CN.	4.04	.035	.476
Coordination of CN on stakeholders have improved performance of CN.	3.96	.041	.557
Cooperation among stakeholders have improved performance of CN.	4.09	.042	.571
Valid N (list wise)	181		

Source: Researcher, 2025

The table 4.2: above showing the effect of Stakeholder relationships in Caritas Nebbi. The mean of 4.04 indicates that respondents generally agree that there is strong collaboration among stakeholders in Caritas Nebbi. The low standard deviation (0.476) shows consistency in responses, suggesting that collaboration is a well-established and stable factor enhancing stakeholder effect.

The mean of 3.60 suggests moderate agreement about the level of control stakeholders have. The relatively high standard deviation (0.867) indicates varied responses, possibly due to differences in perceived influence or authority among stakeholder groups. This variability may signal the need for clearer roles or power balance among stakeholders in Caritas Nebbi.

A mean of 3.96 reflects good coordination efforts among stakeholders. A standard deviation of 0.557 indicates consistent views, pointing to structured and effective coordination mechanisms within Caritas Nebbi's operations.

The mean of 4.09 is the highest in this set, showing strong stakeholder cooperation. The relatively low standard deviation (0.571) supports the idea that this is widely experienced and agreed upon. Cooperation contributes significantly to the success and smooth running of stakeholder-involved projects in Caritas Nebbi.

Table4.3: Correlation –collaboration, coordination and Cooperation and project performance.

Correlations		Collaboration among stakeholders have improved performance of CN.	The control of CN on stakeholders have improved performance of CN.	Coordination of CN on stakeholders have improved performance of CN.	Cooperation among stakeholders have improved performance of CN.
Collaboration among stakeholders have improved performance of CN.	Pearson Correlation	1	.186*	.345**	.540**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.012	0.000	0.000
	N	181	181	181	181
					181
Coordination of CN on stakeholders have improved performance of CN.	Pearson Correlation	.345**	.421**	1	.541**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000
	N	181	181	181	181
Cooperation among stakeholders have improved performance of CN.	Pearson Correlation	.540**	.319**	.541**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	181	181	181	181
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

The table 4.3: above shows Relationship between stakeholder relationship and project performance of Caritas Nebbi.Collaboration and control have a correlation of 0.186* and the significance p value is 0.012 which is a weak but significant positive correlation. This suggests that as collaboration increases, perceived control by Caritas Nebbi may also slightly contribute to performance.

Collaboration and coordination have a correlation of 0.345** and the significance p value is 0.000 which indicates a moderate, significant positive correlation. Collaboration and coordination are interrelated in improving performance of Caritas Nebbi.

Collaboration and cooperation have a correlation of 0.541** and the significance p value is 0.000 which indicates a strongest correlation. Collaboration and cooperation are highly interlinked in driving performance of Caritas Nebbi.

Cooperation and coordination have a correlation of 0.319** and the significance p value is 0.000 which indicates a moderate, significant correlation. Some level of control coexists with cooperation, though less strongly in Caritas Nebbi.

Coordination and cooperation have a correlation of 0.540** and the significance p value is 0.000 which indicates a strong correlation. Coordination and cooperation strongly reinforce each other in enhancing performance of Caritas Nebbi.

5.: Summary Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1: Summary of Key Findings

The findings indicates that cooperation among stakeholders exhibited by strongest positive correlations of 0.541** with p-value 0.000, coordination 0.540** p-value 0.000 strongcollaboration0.319** p-value 0.000 moderate.The cooperation and coordination of the project is fairly good however the achievement of the success involves adequate stakeholders' control and managementwhich further indicatesthe need for improvement on the project control. These outcomes reflect a strong system in coordination and collaboration that enhances the overall success of the project. But weaker stakeholders control mechanisms.

5.2: CONCLUSION

The study concludes that CaritasNebbi enhances the cooperation between project stakeholder's and the project to foster relationship as it is criticaland directly determines the project success while influencing the scope, necessary trust and ensuring that the outputs meet the actual needs of the project and those involved.The results confirm that strong stakeholder relationships are critical determinants of project on improvements in how stakeholders interact, communicate and coordinate directly enhancing smooth performance.

5.3: RECOMMENDATION

Strengthen control mechanisms to have strong synergy for better project performance. This may involve collective decision making while observing the rules and procedures, standardization, mutual adjustments and direct supervision among others. Having the practice of control mechanisms judiciously, as they show weaker correlation compared to collaboration and cooperation. These are systems and structures put in place to ensure that activities, processes and outcomes align with Caritas Nebbi goals, standards and policies.

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