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EFFECTS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC PROJECTS IN TANZANIA

Peter KISOBERE
Tanzania Institute of Project Management, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
kisobere2025@gmail.com

Lwidiko BADI
Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
lwidikobadi2015@gmail.com

Abstract
This study assessed the effect of project management practices on the performance of public projects in Tanzania. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with project managers, government officials, and other stakeholders across selected public projects. A total of 80 respondents participated in the survey. Study findings revealed that project management practices such as planning, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement were found to improve performance, though implementation challenges, including weak risk management and insufficient capacity building, hindered their full effectiveness. Conversely, the adoption of modern practices, including digital tools and Agile methodologies, was positively perceived as enhancing efficiency, transparency, and accountability, yet barriers such as limited technical skills and financial constraints were evident. The study concludes that while Tanzanian policy frameworks and project management practices provide a foundation for public project performance, their effectiveness is curtailed by frequent policy revisions, weak enforcement, limited stakeholder engagement, and inconsistent adoption of modern tools. The study recommends strengthening policy enforcement, institutionalizing capacity-building programs, promoting stakeholder participation, and adopting cost-effective digital solutions will enhance project efficiency and sustainability. This study contributes to the understanding of the interplay between policy, project management practices, and stakeholder dynamics, offering actionable insights for improving the planning, execution, and sustainability of public infrastructure projects in Tanzania.
Keywords: Regulatory framework, Project planning, Monitoring, Risk management practices, Performance of projects.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Effective project management practices particularly planning, execution, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement are foundational to achieving successful project outcomes and aligning with national development goals (Gasemagha & Kowang, 2021). In Tanzania's public sector, where infrastructure,

education, and health projects aim to improve socio-economic conditions, the success of such initiatives relies on how effectively they are managed. Reports from institutions like the African Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank highlight that delays, resource inefficiencies, and poor implementation in public projects are often linked to weak policy frameworks and inconsistent governance mechanisms (Beschel et al., 2018; Olatunji et al., 2025). These policy-related obstacles ranging from ambiguous directives to a lack of institutional coordination directly influence project planning and execution.

Tanzania, despite its commitment to public infrastructure and service delivery improvements, faces recurrent issues such as budget overruns, limited stakeholder engagement, and underutilization of modern project management techniques. Higher learning institutions like the Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE) and the Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT) are not exempt, with project performance in these institutions reflecting gaps in strategic planning and monitoring systems (Matto, 2023). Global comparisons underscore the importance of adopting contemporary tools and frameworks: countries with standardized and technology-driven project management methods demonstrate higher levels of performance and accountability (Strang & Vajjhala, 2025; Lazim et al., 2025). In contrast, many African nations including Tanzania struggle with contextual constraints such as bureaucracy, political interference, and limited institutional capacity, which affect the efficiency and sustainability of project implementation (Abera, 2023; Nyadera et al., 2022). Despite a growing body of literature, there is a notable gap in assessing how specific project management practices such as planning, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement and the adoption of modern methodologies influence public sector project performance in Tanzania. Moreover, a deeper investigation into institutional and contextual factors such as policy alignment, administrative structures, and governance is essential to develop actionable strategies for enhancing project delivery.

Existing studies on project management performance both globally and in Tanzania has predominantly concentrated on private sector initiatives (Venczel et al., 2021; Urassa, 2021; Kullaya et al, 2022; Matto, 2023), with public sector frameworks remaining comparatively underexamined. Much of the literature relies on qualitative approaches that lack empirical thoroughness, leaving gaps in substantiating project outcomes. In Tanzania, despite the institutionalization of practices such as stakeholder engagement, planning, monitoring, and risk mitigation, public infrastructure projects are frequently characterized by inefficiencies, including delays, cost escalations, and suboptimal delivery. These persistent challenges underscore concerns regarding the contextual relevance and operational effectiveness of existing project management frameworks. Furthermore, inconsistencies in documentation and limited empirical assessments hinder evidence-based policymaking. Consequently, this study will address that gaps by comprehensively assess the effectiveness of key project management practices in enhancing public

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infrastructure project performance, focusing on case institutions DUCE and DIT in Dar es Salaam. The findings are expected to inform policy reform and improve the sustainable delivery of essential public services.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study will be guided by two relevant management theories. These are the theory of constraints (TOC), and institutional theory. The use of these theories is described in details in the following sections.

2.1 Theory of constraints (TOC)

The Theory of Constraints (TOC) was founded by Eliyahu M. Goldratt to identify and address the most critical bottleneck within a system to improve its overall performance (Rahman, 1998). Additionally, TOC underscores streamlining processes and eliminating delays to improve efficiency. It incorporates tools such as the Critical Chain Project Management (CCPM) methodology, which efficiently manages resources and tasks to optimize project outcomes. Thus, by focusing on processes and resource allocation, TOC proves to be highly effective in identifying inadequacies and improving project timelines and resource utilization, making it particularly applicable to public sector projects. Scholars like Jugdev, (2004) have applied TOC in project management research, demonstrating its relevance and applicability. Despite its relevance, TOC is criticized by oversimplifying complex systems by concentrating solely on constraints, potentially overlooking other essential factors that influence project outcomes (Şimşit et al., 2014).

Since the objectives of this study include examining project planning, monitoring, resource use, and risk management. TOC directly will guide this study to addresses public sector projects often suffer from inefficient timelines and poor resource allocation TOC is built to diagnose and solve these problems. Thus, the TOC's integration with Critical Chain Project Management (CCPM) in this study enhance the analysis of task prioritization and constraint mitigation. As a result of its emphasis on constraints and integration of complementary methodologies such as Lean, TOC in this study provide a robust framework for analysing and articulating collected findings about project management effectiveness in the Tanzanian public sector. Additionally, it serves as a way of articulating critical practices, including planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring. The theory is useful to understand the broader issues of policy frameworks, institutional challenges, and the implementation of modern project management tools in public project management in Tanzania.

The theory emphasis on constraints and integration of complementary methodologies such as Lean, TOC in this study provides a robust framework for analyzing and articulating collected findings about project management effectiveness in the Tanzanian public sector. Additionally, serves as a way of articulating critical practices, including planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring. The theory is useful to understand the broader issues of policy frameworks, institutional challenges, and the implementation of modern project management tools in public project management in Tanzania.

2.2 Institutional theory

The institutional theory was developed in 1948 by Philip Selznick to explain how organizations conform to rules, norms, and culture to secure legality and sustainability (Özkan, 2025). According to this theory, organizational behaviour and performance are shaped by institutional pressures, which can be categorized as coercive, normative, and mimetic. Regulations and laws exert coercive pressure, professional standards exert normative pressure, and organizational simulation under uncertainty exerts mimetic pressure (Özkan, 2025). Therefore, since this study analyse government policy frameworks, governance standards, and professional norms, Institutional Theory helps to capture how these pressures shape behaviour. It also supports this study's focus on stakeholder compliance, adoption of best practices, and institutional responses to uncertainties. Tanzania's regulatory environment and capacity-building efforts are perfect contexts for testing coercive, normative, and mimetic pressures.

This theory is used to study the effectiveness of project management practices on the performance of public projects in Tanzania in several ways. First is used to analyze how coercive institutional pressures, such as government policies and regulatory frameworks, affect the adoption of project management practices and compliance with governance standards. It also used to evaluate the impact of normative pressures, such as professional norms and capacity-building programs, on the standardization and quality of project execution. The theory is used to explore the role of mimetic pressures, such as adopting the best international practices in Agile emphasizes flexibility and responding to change through iterative development, while Lean focuses on eliminating waste and optimizing processes, and digital project management tools, as a response to institutional inadequacies and uncertainties in public projects.

Scholars such as DiMaggio and Powell (1983) applied institutional theory to study organizational dynamics under institutional pressures (Kim et al., 2024). However, its weaknesses lie in its limited focus on organizational agency and its tendency to exaggerate conformity, overlooking the potential for innovation and resistance within organizations. In addressing these gaps, institutional theory can be complemented with systems theory, which highlights organizational abilities by considering the situational factors driving unique responses to institutional pressures.

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In Tanzania's context, incorporating these approaches can provide a holistic understanding of how project management practices can be optimized to improve the performance of public projects. In summary, the two theories provide the frameworks for guiding this study as Institutional Theory brings the macro lens how institutions shape behavior while TOC provides the operational scalpel how to cut away inefficiencies. Together, they offer a balanced framework to analyze both systemic drivers and practical constraints in Tanzanian public sector project performance.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section presents the methodology used to examine the effectiveness of project management practices on the performance of public sector projects in Tanzania. It included the research paradigm, research design, approach, research area, target population, sample size, sampling techniques and procedures, data collection methods, validity and reliability, data management and analysis techniques.

3.1 Research paradigm

The study adopted a mixed-methods research paradigm to evaluate project management effectiveness in Tanzania's public sector, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches for comprehensive analysis. The quantitative method, based on positivism, applied descriptive and inferential statistics to assess project efficiency, stakeholder satisfaction, and institutional compliance. Conversely, the qualitative approach, rooted in interpretivism, employed open-ended interviews and thematic analysis to examine subjective experiences and contextual challenges. By combining these methodologies, the study achieved a holistic perspective, balancing empirical data with human-centered insights. This approach strengthened analytical depth, ensuring robust evaluation and practical recommendations for enhancing public sector project management in Tanzania.

3.2 Research approach

A research approach is a framework to ensure that a research is systematic, logical, and effective in meeting its objectives. A mixed-methods research approach was used to evaluate project management effectiveness in Tanzania's public sector, integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses (Bryman, 2012). In terms of the quantitative analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics examined trends and relationships, while the qualitative analysis, through open-ended interviews and thematic analysis, captured stakeholder perspectives and challenges. This approach ensured a balanced evaluation,

integrating statistical data with contextual insights to enhance decision-making and recommendations for improved project management outcomes.

3.3 Research design

In research, the methodology provides a systematic exploration of the subject, yielding reliable findings (Kothari, 2004). The study employed a mixed-methods design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component focused on surveys, while the qualitative element explored in-depth interviews. Employing this design, as argued by Creswell (2014), facilitated comprehensive insights into project management practices and performance.

3.4 Study area

The study was conducted in Tanzania, focusing on key regions such as Dar es Salaam, which served as a central hub for major public sector projects due to its economic and infrastructural significance. The city hosted large-scale government initiatives, including housing, transportation, and administrative projects. However, delays in public projects had been widely reported. For instance, a parliamentary report highlighted issues such as disputed contractor payments, inadequate monitoring, and poor site selection, leading to project delays in various councils (The Citizen, 2025). Research on National Housing Corporation projects in Dar es Salaam revealed that weak technical capacity and poor communication delayed timely completion (Urassa, 2021; Kullaya et al., 2022; Matto, 2023). Similarly, railway projects in Tanzania experienced cost overruns, political pressure, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, contributing to significant delays (Mussa et al., 2023). Examining these challenges allowed the study to identify solutions to improve project management efficiency and ensure timely completion of public sector initiatives.

3.5 Population

The target population comprised public project managers, contractors, and officials from Project Management Offices (PMO), as these stakeholders directly influenced project execution and outcomes. Participants were drawn from locations where public projects were carried out in Tanzania, specifically in Dar es Salaam.

3.6 Sample size

The total population of public sector project which will be used to obtain sample size is hypothetically estimated to be 100 in Dar es Salaam city. The sample size for the study is determined using Yamane's

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(1967) formula, which is widely used to calculate a representative sample from a given population. The sample size of this study therefore involved 80 respondents.

3.7 Sampling technique and procedures

The study involved 80 respondents drawn from public sector projects implemented at the Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE) and the Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT). Sampling procedures included:

3.7.1 Stratified random sampling

A total of 60 participants were selected using stratified random sampling. The population was divided into strata based on project type (e.g., infrastructure, educational services), institution (DUCE or DIT), and stakeholder role (internal staff, contractors, student beneficiaries). Participants were randomly selected within each stratum to ensure fair representation and reduce sampling bias.

3.7.2 Purposive sampling

Twenty participants were selected through purposive sampling, targeting individuals with deep knowledge and strategic responsibility. These included project managers, policy officers, procurement or planning officers, and administrative staff overseeing project coordination. This combination of sampling techniques provided both quantitative representativeness and qualitative depth.

3.8 Data collection methods

3.8.1 Primary data

Structured questionnaires were employed to collect quantitative data, with Likert-scale questions measuring respondents' perceptions of project management practices and their impact on performance. Open-ended interviews were conducted to gather qualitative insights from project managers, contractors, and government officials (Fowler, 2013). These methods were selected because structured questionnaires provided standardized responses suitable for statistical analysis, while Likert-scale questions quantified subjective opinions, facilitating comparison. The open-ended interviews allowed respondents to provide detailed explanations, capturing nuances often overlooked in structured surveys. Questionnaires included closed-ended questions with numerical rating scales, whereas interviews were conducted either face-to-face or remotely, ensuring participants could fully articulate their experiences. The collected data were analyzed collectively, with quantitative results highlighting measurable trends and qualitative insights

providing contextual understanding, thereby enhancing comprehension of project management effectiveness.

3.8.2 Secondary data

Secondary data were obtained from government reports, including those from the Project Management Office (PMO) and the World Bank, as well as audit reports from the Controller and Auditor General, which provided reliable official records and historical insights into public project performance. Additionally, published books, journal articles, dissertations, and theses contributed peer-reviewed scholarly perspectives, ensuring both theoretical and empirical depth. Collectively, these sources provided contextual data, enabled comparative analysis, validated findings, and incorporated diverse perspectives, improving the overall understanding of project management effectiveness (Newman et al., 2020).

3.9 Data management and analysis techniques

All collected data were systematically managed to ensure accuracy and reliability. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages to summarize trends, while inferential statistics, including regression and correlation, were applied to examine relationships between project management practices and public sector performance using SPSS software. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and insights from project managers, contractors, and government officials (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Combining these methods allowed for comprehensive interpretation, enhancing analytical precision, stakeholder understanding, and the development of practical recommendations to strengthen Tanzania's public sector project management.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study. The results are organized thematically according to the specific research objectives, beginning with the background information of the respondents to provide context for the interpretation of the findings. Both quantitative and qualitative data have been presented, supported with tables, figures, and verbatim quotes where appropriate. The discussion compares the findings with existing empirical studies and theoretical frameworks, thereby situating the results within the broader academic and practical context.

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4.1 Demographic information of the respondents

This section presents the demographic and professional characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. The background information is organized under sub-sections, including gender, educational level, work experience, and stakeholder category. The interpretation of the findings is provided to link respondent characteristics to their potential contributions to the study.

4.1.1 Gender of respondents

Gender distribution was analyzed to ensure representation of both male and female participants in the study. From Table 1, the majority of respondents were male (60%), while females accounted for 40% of the sample. This indicates a slightly higher participation of male stakeholders in public infrastructure projects, reflecting a common trend in the Tanzanian public sector where technical and managerial roles are predominantly occupied by men. However, the female representation is also substantial, suggesting inclusive engagement across gender in project management roles.

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY GENDER

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	48	60
Female	32	40
Total	80	100

Source: Survey findings (2025)

4.1.2 Educational level

Respondents' educational qualifications were assessed to determine their capacity to understand and implement project management practices effectively. As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents held a Bachelor's degree (50%), followed by Master's degree holders at 35%, and Diploma holders at 15%. This indicates that most participants possess a solid academic background, capable of understanding and applying modern project management principles. The high proportion of graduates and postgraduates suggests that the responses are informed by professional knowledge and experience, enhancing the credibility of the study's findings.

TABLE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Education level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Diploma	12	15
Bachelor's	40	50
Master's	28	35
Total	80	100

Source: Survey findings (2025)

4.1.3 Work experience

Work experience in public projects was assessed to gauge the respondents' exposure to project management practices and challenges. Table 3 reveals that a significant portion of respondents (40%) had more than 10 years of work experience, while 35% had between 5–10 years, and 25% had less than 5 years of experience. This suggests that the study captured insights from participants with substantial professional exposure, likely familiar with both traditional and modern project management practices. The mix of experience levels also ensures that perspectives reflect both long-term institutional knowledge and newer approaches in project implementation.

TABLE 3. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 5 years	20	25
5–10 years	28	35
More than 10 years	32	40
Total	80	100

Source: Survey findings (2025)

4.1.4 Stakeholder category

The respondents were categorized based on their roles in public infrastructure projects, reflecting their responsibilities and potential influence on project outcomes. According to Table 4, the largest group of respondents were project managers (45%), followed by contractors (30%), and administrative or policy staff (25%). This distribution indicates that the study predominantly reflects insights from those directly responsible for planning and executing projects, ensuring that the findings on project management effectiveness are well-informed. The inclusion of contractors and administrative staff adds a complementary perspective, capturing both operational and strategic viewpoints on project challenges and performance.

TABLE 4. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY

Stakeholder category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Project managers	36	45
Contractors	24	30
Administrative/Policy staff	20	25
Total	80	100

Source: Survey findings (2025)

4.2 Effects of current project management practices on the performance of public projects in Tanzania

This section explores how current project management practices influence the performance of public sector infrastructure projects in Tanzania. The study aimed to assess key practices including planning, monitoring and evaluation, communication, stakeholder coordination, quality control, and risk

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management, and how these practices affect project outcomes such as timely completion, resource utilization, and overall quality. The findings (Table 5) show that planning and scheduling practices are perceived positively, as the majority of respondents 22 strongly agreed and 34 agreed (total 56 out of 80, 70%) reported that structured planning enhances the timeliness of project completion, reflected in a mean of 4.0. This indicates that proper scheduling facilitates coordination of activities, allocation of resources, and adherence to project timelines, which are critical for achieving performance targets. Similarly, current practices were perceived to promote cost efficiency, with 18 strongly agreeing and 30 agreeing (total 48 respondents, 60%), and a mean of 3.7. Adequate resource allocation was also supported, as 18 strongly agreed and 30 agreed (60% of respondents), indicating that systematic budgeting and prioritization remain vital for minimizing cost overruns and enhancing project outcomes.

TABLE 5. RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE EFFECTS OF CURRENT PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Aspect of Project Management Practice	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
Planning and scheduling improve timeliness of project completion	22	34	14	6	4	4.0
Current practices ensure cost efficiency	18	30	18	10	4	3.7
Monitoring and evaluation enhance project outcomes	15	28	20	12	5	3.5
Risk management is effectively implemented	12	25	25	10	8	3.3
Stakeholder involvement positively influences performance	14	28	22	10	6	3.5
Challenges in project management hinder performance	20	30	15	10	5	3.8
Communication and reporting mechanisms are effective	16	26	22	10	6	3.5
Resource allocation practices are adequate	18	30	18	10	4	3.7
Training and capacity building improve project outcomes	12	28	25	10	5	3.4
Use of modern project management tools enhances efficiency	14	30	20	10	6	3.6

Source: Survey findings (2025)

Monitoring and evaluation practices received mixed responses, with 15 strongly agreeing, 28 agreeing, and 20 neutral responses (total 43 agreed, 53.75%) and a mean of 3.5. This implies that although mechanisms exist to track and assess project progress, their implementation may be inconsistent, limiting their overall impact on performance. Risk management practices were perceived neutrally, with only 12 strongly agreeing and 25 agreeing (total 37 respondents, 46.25%), while 25 remained neutral, and a mean of 3.3. This indicates that the identification, assessment, and mitigation of project risks are not always consistently applied, potentially exposing projects to delays, budget overruns, and operational inefficiencies.

Stakeholder involvement was also rated neutrally, as 14 strongly agreed and 28 agreed (42 respondents, 52.5%), with 22 neutral responses, suggesting that while engagement is acknowledged; it may be superficial rather than meaningful. Effective participation from contractors, local communities, and authorities can improve accountability and ownership, but inconsistent involvement reduces these benefits. Communication and reporting mechanisms were similarly rated neutrally, with 16 strongly agreeing and 26 agreeing (total 42 respondents, 52.5%), reflecting challenges in information flow and coordination, which are critical for timely decision-making and problem-solving in project execution.

The study further indicates that challenges in project management practices hinder performance, as 20 strongly agreed and 30 agreed (total 50 respondents, 62.5%) that inefficiencies negatively impact public project outcomes, with a mean of 3.8. The use of modern project management tools was supported by 14 strongly agreeing and 30 agreeing (44 respondents, 55%), with a mean of 3.6, suggesting that technology adoption can enhance efficiency and improve coordination when applied properly.

The survey findings presented indicate that that public projects in Tanzania experience moderate effectiveness due to the partial and uneven implementation of project management practices, rather than complete neglect of management frameworks. Insights from qualitative interviews reinforce and contextualize these survey results. A project manager elaborated on the practical challenges experienced during project execution:

> "Most public projects have formal planning documents, detailed work breakdown structures, and specified timelines, but in practice, these plans are often adjusted without proper notification to all stakeholders. Monitoring activities are carried out sporadically, and corrective actions are either delayed or poorly executed. This leads to situations where tasks overlap, resources are misallocated, and deadlines are missed, which inevitably affects both the performance and credibility of public projects. The lack of consistent adherence to planned procedures makes even simple tasks unnecessarily complicated and increases the risk of conflict among contractors and government staff." (Interview, Project Manager, 16 September 2025).

This statement highlights a critical gap between formal project management frameworks and their practical execution. While planning exists on paper, poor enforcement, inadequate follow-up, and inconsistent monitoring compromise its effectiveness. The result is that public projects face operational inefficiencies, delays, and increased costs, which negatively influence overall performance. This observation underscores that having structured project management frameworks alone is insufficient; effective implementation, continuous oversight, and accountability are necessary for realizing tangible project benefits. Furthermore, communication and stakeholder collaboration were highlighted as significant factors affecting project performance. A senior government official noted:

> "Project teams often struggle with both internal and external communication. Contractors, government officers, and local community representatives are not always informed of progress, changes, or emerging challenges. Meetings are sometimes held only as a formality, and decisions are poorly disseminated, resulting in misunderstandings, duplicated efforts, and missed opportunities to address issues proactively. These gaps in coordination ultimately compromise project timelines, reduce operational efficiency, and affect the quality of outcomes." (Interview, Senior Government Official, 18 September 2025).

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This insight demonstrates that inadequate communication and weak coordination mechanisms are major obstacles in the effective implementation of public projects. Even when planning and monitoring frameworks are in place, if communication channels are inefficient or stakeholder collaboration is limited, project execution suffers. The qualitative evidence indicates that consistent reporting, clear communication lines, and collaborative decision-making are essential for ensuring that projects are delivered on time, within budget, and to the desired quality standards. Risk management and quality assurance were also found to be inconsistently applied, further affecting project performance. A procurement officer highlighted:

> "Although risk management policies and guidelines are included in project documentation, their implementation is often reactive rather than proactive. Teams tend to respond to issues as they arise, rather than anticipating potential risks and developing mitigation strategies in advance. Additionally, quality assurance checks are sometimes irregular or inadequately conducted, leading to rework, unnecessary delays, and additional costs. These gaps are largely due to budgetary constraints, limited capacity, and lack of enforcement, leaving projects exposed to risks that could have been avoided with better adherence to project management practices." (Interview, Procurement Officer, 19 September 2025).

This explanation reinforces the survey findings, showing that while the technical frameworks for risk management exist, practical application is inconsistent. The lack of proactive risk planning and systematic quality checks exposes projects to unnecessary challenges, contributing to delays, cost overruns, and reduced performance outcomes. This demonstrates that effective project management is not solely about having policies and procedures in place but also ensuring consistent application, adequate resourcing, and continuous supervision.

The findings of this study indicate that while structured planning and defined project roles positively influence the execution of public projects in Tanzania, other project management practices such as monitoring, communication, and risk management are inconsistently applied. This pattern suggests that formal frameworks exist, but practical enforcement and adherence remain uneven, which limits overall project performance. These results align with the observations of Urassa (2021) and Kullaya et al. (2022), who noted that inefficiencies in planning, monitoring, and stakeholder coordination often hinder the timely completion of public projects. Moreover, similar challenges have been documented globally; for instance, in Kenya and Uganda, structured project management approaches were insufficient to prevent delays and cost overruns due to weak implementation and poor communication among project stakeholders (World Bank, 2019). This discussion emphasizes that having robust project management policies on paper does not automatically translate into improved performance unless complemented by effective enforcement, supervision, and coordination mechanisms.

The study highlights that gaps in communication and stakeholder engagement significantly affect project outcomes. Qualitative evidence showed that ineffective communication channels and limited collaboration among contractors, government officials, and community representatives often result in misunderstandings, duplicated efforts, and missed opportunities to address emerging challenges proactively. This finding corroborates the work of Matto (2023), who argued that stakeholder participation, though formally embedded in policy and project frameworks, often remains superficial in practice, which reduces project efficiency and contributes to delays. Comparisons with global studies reveal a similar trend; research in India and South Africa found that weak communication and limited stakeholder engagement were primary contributors to cost overruns and project inefficiencies despite the presence of structured management methodologies (Musa & Yeom, 2023). This suggests that project management effectiveness is not merely a function of planning and procedural documentation but critically depends on active stakeholder involvement and transparent communication throughout the project lifecycle.

Finally, the study's findings regarding risk management and capacity-building practices resonate with prior empirical research emphasizing institutional and resource constraints in developing countries. Mwakasege and Nyoni (2023) observed that risk management procedures in Tanzania are often inadequately implemented due to limited technical capacity and budgetary constraints, which mirrors the current study's interview insights. Likewise, Petrov (2020) in Russia highlighted "institutional porosity," where political interference and lack of monitoring weakened accountability systems, leading to inefficiencies and cost overruns. These comparisons demonstrate that while formalized project management practices provide a foundation for successful project execution, their effectiveness is contingent upon sufficient institutional support, trained personnel, and consistent enforcement. For Tanzania, this implies that adopting best practices from global contexts such as digital project management tools, participatory stakeholder frameworks, and systematic capacity-building initiatives can strengthen current practices and improve overall public project performance, aligning with the country's broader developmental goals.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study. The study aimed to assess the effect of project management practices on the performance of public infrastructure projects in Tanzania. Drawing from both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the section synthesizes the key insights on project management practices. The conclusions provide a summary of the major findings, while the recommendations offer practical guidance for policymakers, project managers, and other stakeholders to improve public project outcomes.

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5.1 Conclusions

This study sought to assess the effectiveness of planning, monitoring, and risk management practices on the performance of public infrastructure projects in Tanzania. The study further revealed that current project management practices contribute positively to project performance, particularly in enhancing timeliness and cost efficiency. Effective planning, scheduling, monitoring, and evaluation practices were observed to support successful project delivery, yet these practices are often constrained by limited staff capacity, bureaucratic delays, and resource insufficiencies. Risk management strategies, although formally outlined in policy, were inconsistently implemented across projects, leaving many public projects exposed to unforeseen challenges that could have been mitigated through proactive planning and follow-up. Overall, while Tanzania's policy frameworks and project management practices provide a foundation for public project success, practical implementation gaps and systemic challenges continue to impede timely, cost-effective, and high-quality project delivery.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, it is recommended that Tanzanian public institutions strengthen the implementation of existing policy frameworks to ensure consistent guidance and minimize disruptions caused by frequent policy changes. This can be achieved through the development of clear enforcement mechanisms, regular monitoring, and capacity-building programs for project managers and staff. Policies should not only exist on paper but also be actively communicated and operationalized, ensuring that all stakeholders from government agencies to local communities understand their roles and responsibilities.

Public sector institutions are encouraged to enhance the adoption of modern project management practices. Tools such as digital platforms, e-procurement systems, agile methodologies, and participatory planning techniques should be integrated into standard project workflows. Training programs and technical support should accompany the introduction of these innovations to equip staff and contractors with the necessary skills, reduce resistance to change, and promote effective utilization. Such modernization is likely to improve transparency, efficiency, and stakeholder collaboration, ultimately enhancing project outcomes.

The study also highlights the importance of strengthening stakeholder engagement throughout project lifecycles. Public projects should actively involve local communities, contractors, and relevant agencies in planning, monitoring, and evaluation processes. Structured participation frameworks, feedback mechanisms, and accountability measures can help ensure that stakeholders' contributions are recognized and incorporated into decision-making. This approach is critical for minimizing conflicts, fostering cooperation, and building trust, which are essential for timely and cost-effective project completion.

5.3 Limitation of the study

First, the study was conducted to two public institutions in Tanzania, which are Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE) and Dar es Salaam Institutes of Technology (DIT). However, there many public Institutions where projects are conducted and a study could have been conducted.

Second, the sample size of the study was small and this limits the availability of detailed information that could have enriched the study findings.

Third, the scope of the study was limited to Dar es Salaam region, however public Institutions are not only in Dar es Salaam. There are other public institutions in other regions such as Mbeya, Morogoro, Arusha and else, where study could have been conducted and the results could have been different.

5.4 Areas for further study

A comprehensive study can be conducted to incorporate all public Institutions in Tanzania which are doing construction projects.

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DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work the authors used Grammarly in order to check the grammar. After using this tool/service, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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