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SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

**ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF PROJECT GOVERNANCE
STRUCTURES ON PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED
GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES IN ZAMBIA.**

A dissertation submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Lusaka in partial fulfillment of the award of Master of Science Degree in Project Management.

By

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January 2024

DECLARATION

DECLARATION

I, Malita Lungu Siluka, do declare that this work is my own and that the work of other persons utilized in this dissertation has been duly acknowledged. This work presented here has not been previously presented at this or any other university for similar purposes.

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SUPERVISOR'S RECOMMENDATION

I hereby confirm that the dissertation written by Malita Lungu Siluka has been checked and read through by myself; it meets the minimum standard of the University and is therefore recommended for examination.

Supervisor: Dr. Janis Kabwe

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Date: 17/01/2024

DEDICATION

I dedicated this work to my family. To my children, may this work be an inspiration for you to reach greater heights in academics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank the Almighty God for granting me strength to undertake my work to the end. Many thanks to Dr. Janis Kabwe, my supervisor, for her insightful advice, constructive criticism, and scholarly comments that helped shape my research effort. Without her support, my work would not have been possible. I remain greatly indebted to her. My sincere gratitude goes to my family for their encouragement, concern and moral support.

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ABSTRACT

In the current global landscape, it is believed that effective project management within government Ministries is paramount for driving socio-economic development and achieving national objectives. Across diverse sectors ranging from infrastructure to public services, the successful execution of projects hinges upon strong governance structures that facilitate decision-making, accountability, communication, and resource allocation. Thus, within this context, this study embarks on an exploration, aimed to assess the impact of project governance structures on project performance within selected government Ministries in Zambia. Therefore, this study employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the impact of decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication strategies, and resource allocation on project performance in Zambian government Ministries. Data collection involved qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys with a sample of 90 respondents. Analysis methods included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and thematic analysis. The findings revealed positive correlation between effective decision-making processes, robust accountability mechanisms, streamlined communication practices, efficient resource allocation, and favorable project performance. Thematic analysis further highlighted the dynamics that exist within project governance structures. Collective decision-making emerged as a noteworthy theme, emphasizing collaboration among project teams guided by hierarchical leadership roles. Further, clear role definitions foster accountability, while structured communication practices facilitate transparency, albeit with challenges in interdepartmental communication and role transitions. Additionally, resource allocation, guided by project approvals and budgets, encounters delays impacting project timelines, necessitating improved communication and feasibility studies. The study offered additional insights which underscore the importance of documentation, role clarity, and private sector consultation, while highlighting challenges related to funding, communication, and decision-making delays. Similarly, policy implications stress the importance of well-established governance structures, clear decision-making processes, robust accountability mechanisms, effective communication practices, and efficient resource allocation for enhancing project performance. These insights offer valuable guidance for policymakers and organizational leaders seeking to improve project

outcomes within Zambian Government Ministries. Therefore, recommendations from the study include the need for streamlining decision-making, clarifying roles, improving communication channels, and conducting diligent feasibility studies for resource allocation.

keywords: *Project governance structures, Project performance, Government Ministries, decision-making*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Chapter one provides the introduction and background of the study, giving reasons why such a study was a necessary undertaking. The chapter proceeds to highlight the research problem, research objectives, research questions, the scope of the study, delimitations and significance of the study. Further, the chapter outlined the justification and the limitations for the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

In today's global landscape, effective project management within government ministries is paramount for driving socio-economic development and achieving national objectives. Across diverse sectors ranging from infrastructure to public services, the successful execution of projects hinges upon strong governance structures that facilitate decision-making, accountability, communication, and resource allocation (Adesopo, 2011). Within this context, this study embarks on a comprehensive exploration, aimed to assess the impact of project governance structures on project performance within selected government ministries in Zambia.

The interplay between project governance structures and project performance is of profound significance, influencing not only the successful delivery of individual projects but also the broader socio-economic outcomes for the nation (Cao, et al., 2024). By investigating this relationship, this research endeavors to shed light on key mechanisms that underpin effective project governance and their implications for achieving developmental goals.

Furthermore, this study is motivated by the recognition of the pivotal role that government ministries play in driving socio-economic development agendas. As custodians of public resources and stewards of national projects, these ministries are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring efficient and effective project management practices. Understanding how governance structures within these ministries impact project

performance is crucial for optimizing resource utilization, enhancing service delivery, and ultimately fostering sustainable development.

Moreover, the interest in this topic stems from a recognition of the challenges and opportunities inherent in project management within government contexts. With complex stakeholder dynamics, regulatory frameworks, and budgetary constraints, navigating project governance in government ministries poses unique challenges that necessitate tailored approaches and innovative solutions (Wirick, 2011). This research attempted to offer practical insights that can guide policy-making, enhance organizational procedures, and add to the larger conversation on governance and development by examining the subtleties of project governance in this setting. Therefore, this research endeavored to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in project management and governance within government ministries. Through assessing the effect of project governance structures on project performance, it sought to offer practical recommendations for enhancing project outcomes, driving socio-economic development, and ultimately fostering a more prosperous future for Zambia

Moreover, effective project governance is a prominent factor in ensuring the successful implementation of government initiatives. It encompasses decision-making procedures, accountability mechanisms, communication and information flow, and resource allocation and management, all of which significantly influence project performance and outcomes (Garland, 2009). Understanding the impact of different governance systems is vital for enhancing project results and meeting goals effectively. The role of project governance cannot be overstated when it comes to achieving project success. Decisions made during the project lifecycle have far-reaching consequences, affecting not only the project itself but also the broader socio-economic landscape. Effective decision-making procedures within project governance frameworks ensure that the right choices are made at critical junctures. It empowers stakeholders to evaluate alternatives, consider risks, and prioritize actions that align with the overarching goals of the project (Alvi, 2019).

In addition, accountability mechanisms form the backbone of project governance, instilling a sense of responsibility among all stakeholders involved (Turner & Müller, 2003). When individuals and organizations are held accountable for their roles and contributions, they

are motivated to perform at their best. This fosters a culture of commitment and dedication towards achieving project objectives. Moreover, accountability also helps in identifying and addressing potential bottlenecks or challenges that may arise during project execution. Communication and information flow play a pivotal role in the seamless functioning of project governance. Clear and transparent communication ensures that all relevant stakeholders are informed of project developments, milestones, and potential hurdles (Tywoniak & Bredillet, 2017). Effective information flow enables informed decision-making, as stakeholders have access to critical data and insights to guide their actions. A well-established communication network facilitates collaboration, fosters teamwork, and minimizes misunderstandings that could hinder project progress.

On the other hand, resource allocation and management are crucial aspects of project governance, particularly in government-led projects that aim to address poverty and inequality (UNDP, 2014). Properly allocating resources to projects that have the most significant impact on poverty reduction is essential for optimizing the utilization of public funds. Effective governance ensures that resources are utilized efficiently, with a focus on projects that align with the needs and priorities of the society (Banda, 2019). It also helps prevent wastage and misallocation of resources, ensuring that the maximum benefit is derived from every investment. Therefore, effective project governance plays a fundamental role in the successful execution of government-led projects. Within project governance frameworks, decision-making processes hold immense significance, as they determine the project's direction and goals. Clear and well-informed decisions enable stakeholders to assess risks, explore alternatives, and prioritize actions that align with the project's overall objectives (Bekker & Steyn, 2009).

Moreover, effective project governance is indispensable for the successful implementation of government initiatives aimed at addressing poverty and inequality. Zambia faces significant challenges in combating poverty and inequality, making it crucial to address these issues through effective project governance. The World Bank (2023) indicates that while the incidence of poverty worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts to revert to pre-pandemic levels by 2025 are underway, particularly in the urban sectors (World Bank, 2023). However, rural poverty poses greater uncertainty, despite

projected growth in the agriculture sector. To tackle complex and risky mega projects in the public sector, unconventional governance systems become necessary (Garland, 2009). Mega infrastructure projects, with their long duration, uncertainties, and multiple stakeholders, require specialized governance approaches (Miller & Hobbs, 2005). Such projects also carry significant impacts on communities, the economy, technology, and the environment (Li Zhai & Cheng, 2009). Project governance becomes the beacon guiding project involvement and decision-making throughout the project lifecycle. Understanding how project governance influences project outcomes becomes imperative, underscoring the need for this research undertaking. The following segment is an account of selected projects that the Government of the Republic of Zambia is involved in. The discussion aims to shed light on the impact of project governance on government-led projects in Zambia.

1.2.1 Agricultural and Rural Development

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Zambian government jointly initiated the formulation of the new Program for Country Partnership (PCP) program in early 2019. This program holds great potential to create new jobs, improve the skills and competencies of national agriculture and livestock experts, and ensure value addition to the Zambian SMEs (UNIDO, 2020). By combining cutting-edge digital technologies and innovative production techniques, the PCP aims to significantly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of all actors in the targeted value chain. To ensure a sustainable impact, the project envisions a comprehensive capacity-building program that includes training activities for farmers, feed makers, and food processors. Additionally, the project incorporates an Industry 4.0 dimension, leveraging backscattering methods through satellite imaging, drones, and mobile smartphones to detect eligible bush species for animal feed production. Through fostering innovation, enhancing competitiveness, and promoting market orientation, the PCP aims to advance the goat value chain in the Republic of Zambia (UNIDO, 2020).

The Lake Tanganyika Development Project (LTDP) aligns with Zambia's Long-Term Vision 2030, which aims to transform the country into a prosperous middle-income nation. The project's integrated approach focuses on protecting the ecological integrity of the

Lake Tanganyika basin and improving the quality of life for the basin population (AFDB, 2023). This is achieved through the provision of essential economic infrastructure and support for sustainable livelihoods. Implemented over a five-year period in the Mpulungu and Nsama districts within the basin's catchment area, the LTDP aims to improve the fish supply in weight and value by up to 20-25% for beneficiaries, including fisher-folks (both women and men) and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) along the fish value chain. The project promotes the wider adoption of sustainable land, forest, and water management practices and technologies to reduce land degradation, deforestation, and increase agricultural production (AFDB, 2023). Furthermore, the LTDP facilitates the conservation and preservation of wildlife and unique heritage resources in the area, particularly the national park, which has the potential to contribute to economic development, employment generation, government revenues, rural development, and entrepreneurship. The estimated total cost of the project is USD 29.62 million (AFDB, 2023). With its development objective to improve the quality of livelihoods for populations depending on Lake Tanganyika while protecting the ecological integrity of the lake basin, the project aims to unlock the potential of the lake's resources and increase incomes for rural households through priority growth areas. The project specifically focuses on promoting sustainable and equitable management and utilization of the lake's natural resources, improving livelihoods through economic infrastructure, human resources development, market linkages, and value chain development for natural resource products (AFDB, 2023).

1.2.2 Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure development remains a significant challenge to growth, economic diversification, and human development in Zambia. The International Trade Administration (ITA) (2022) highlights various areas for development within the sector, including investment in health, education, water, and sanitation (ITA, 2022). Enhancing power generation capacity through upgrading existing facilities and constructing new generation facilities, along with exploring alternative energy sources, is crucial. Expanding and improving the rail network is also necessary to reduce the burden placed on road infrastructure. Additionally, constructing additional inter-provincial and inter-district roads

is essential to open up the country, particularly through projects such as the Link Zambia 8000 initiative. The housing shortage in Zambia is estimated at 1.5 million units, necessitating the construction of approximately 110,000 units per year for the next decade to clear the backlog (ITA, 2022).

Despite the continued need for new infrastructure investment, the Zambian government's financing ability may be constrained in the short-to-medium term as it embarks on fiscal reforms and renegotiates existing debts with commercial creditors (ITA, 2022). The Link Zambia 8000 project is a transformative endeavor that seeks to change Zambia from a landlocked to a land-linked nation. The project's scope includes paving 8,201 kilometers of roads at an estimated cost of \$5.6 billion. To finance road maintenance and broaden financing options for road infrastructure development, Zambia is expanding the collection of road tolls on major roads. Initiatives such as the Pave Zambia 2000 program, aimed at rehabilitating 2,000 kilometers of urban roads, and the L400 project, focused on constructing or rehabilitating 400 kilometers of urban roads in Lusaka, further contribute to infrastructure development (ITA, 2022).

Other Projects:

The Local Government Association of Zambia (LGAZ) in collaboration with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) has launched the "Enhancing Local Government Capacity for Development" project. This project aims to strengthen the capacities of local authorities to effectively and efficiently deliver on their expanded mandates within the decentralization framework. As local authorities assume increased responsibilities, strategic engagement with citizens in local governance and development becomes crucial. By implementing the Decentralization Policy, this project ultimately contributes to the achievement of the 7th National Development Plan, which focuses on sustainable development goals (LGAZ, 2023). All in all, addressing poverty and inequality in Zambia necessitates effective project governance for government-led initiatives. Mega projects and infrastructure development projects play a vital role in this pursuit. By understanding the impact of project governance on these initiatives, Zambia can enhance its development efforts and work towards achieving sustainable growth and prosperity. Through projects in agricultural and rural development, infrastructure development, and

other sectors, the government aims to uplift communities, improve livelihoods, and promote sustainable practices.

1.2.3 Project Governance

Project governance plays a pivotal role in the successful implementation and performance of projects across various industries and sectors (Klakegg, et al., 2007). It serves as the foundation for decision-making procedures, resource allocation, and risk management among project participants. The concept of project governance can be understood as an internal control framework designed to safeguard the interests of project owners and stakeholders while effectively managing project risks throughout its lifecycle (Wallace, et al., 2004). This framework encompasses a range of management systems, rules, protocols, relationships, and organizational structures that collectively provide a structured framework for project development and execution to achieve strategic business objectives (Bekker & Steyn, 2009).

While the definitions of project governance vary, it is essential to tailor the concept to specific industry contexts to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in practice. Customizing project governance to fit the unique requirements of each industry helps ensure that projects are delivered successfully, meeting their intended goals and objectives. The foundation of project governance principles can be traced back to corporate governance in the realm of business management. As projects evolved to become more complex and integral to an organization's strategic objectives, the Association of Project Management (2004) recognized the inherent link between project governance and corporate governance principles (PMI, 2004).

A key aspect of project governance lies in accountability and responsibility. The National Audit Office (NAO, 2006) underlines the importance of these governance principles in project management. Accountability ensures that individuals and entities involved in the project are answerable for their actions and decisions, fostering transparency and instilling confidence among stakeholders. Responsibility, on the other hand, ensures that each participant knows their role and obligations throughout the project's lifecycle. Regardless of the specific definition or application, the central objective of project governance remains constant: to expedite project progress and ensure efficiency in

project delivery and support (Pratt, 2011). With effective project governance, organizations can navigate complex projects more effectively, adhering to timelines, budgets, and quality standards.

In the context of developing countries like Zambia, where the public sector is primarily responsible for championing and financing projects, the inclusion of robust governing structures in project documents becomes even more critical (Pratt, 2011). Ensuring clear roles, well-defined decision-making processes, active participation, and robust accountability mechanisms among participating organizations becomes essential for successful mega projects in these countries. Given the paramount importance of project governance, empirical research is essential to assess its specific impact on project performance in the context of government ministries in Zambia. This research aims to bridge this information break by examining the relationship between project governance practices and project performance in selected government ministries. The study seeks to gain valuable insights into how governance frameworks influence project outcomes and how they can be enhanced to achieve better project results and more efficient utilization of public resources.

Understanding the influence of project governance on the outcomes of government-led projects is a critical research area. This knowledge can help identify best practices and areas for improvement in governance frameworks within government ministries in Zambia. By conducting a thorough examination of project governance practices, this study aims to provide valuable insights into enhancing governance structures for more efficient and successful project delivery. Through enhancing project governance in government ministries, Zambia can strengthen its efforts towards poverty reduction, economic growth, and overall societal development. The successful implementation of projects in agricultural and rural development, infrastructure development, and other sectors can have a transformative impact on communities, improve livelihoods, and promote sustainable practices across the country.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Government departments in Zambia are at the forefront of implementing various initiatives aimed at addressing social needs and achieving critical developmental objectives (LGAZ,

2023). However, despite substantial investments and efforts, concerns persist regarding the effectiveness of project governance structures and their impact on project performance. A troubling pattern has emerged wherein certain projects experience delays, cost overruns, poor quality, or fail to achieve their intended outcomes (Banda, 2019). At the crux of this problem lies the inefficiency of project governance mechanisms within Zambian government ministries.

It appears that there is inefficacy of project governance structures within Zambian government Ministries, which contributes to project delays, cost overruns, poor quality, and a failure to achieve desired project outcomes. It appears that there has been limited specific research examining how project governance structures influence project outcomes within this context. While decision-making processes are acknowledged as pivotal for making timely and informed choices aligned with project goals, the precise nature of this relationship remains understudied. Similarly, the impact of accountability mechanisms, effective communication, and resource management on project performance in Zambian government ministries presents an area for investigation. Investigating these factors and their interplay can provide insights crucial for enhancing project outcomes and optimizing resource utilization.

This study fills the gap in existing research by conducting a comprehensive examination of project governance structures within Zambian government Ministries. Through empirical investigation and analysis, this study contributes to the advancement of knowledge in project management and governance, ultimately facilitating more effective and efficient project delivery within Zambian government Ministries.

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to analyze the effects of project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- i. Establish the impact of decision-making processes within project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

- ii. Investigate the influence of accountability mechanisms within project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.
- iii. Analyze the role of communication and information flow within project governance structures in relation to project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.
- iv. Determine the influence of resource allocation and management within project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions are:

- i. What is the impact of decision-making processes within project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia?
- ii. What is the influence of accountability mechanisms within project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia?
- iii. What is the role of communication and information flow within project governance structures in relation to project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia?
- iv. What is the influence of resource allocation and management within project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia?

1.6 Hypotheses

This segment presents the null and alternative hypotheses of the study:

- i. H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between decision-making processes within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.
H₁₁: There is a significant relationship between decision-making processes within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

- ii. H0₂: There is no significant relationship between accountability mechanisms within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.
H1₂: There is a significant relationship between accountability mechanisms within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

- iii. H0₃: There is no significant relationship between communication and information flow within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.
H1₃: There is a significant relationship between communication and information flow within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

- iv. H0₄: There is no significant relationship between resource allocation and management within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.
H1₄: There is a significant relationship between resource allocation and management within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

1.7 Scope of the study

The scope of the study encompassed various aspects of project governance, such as decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication and information flow, and resource allocation and management, within these ministries. To ensure a comprehensive analysis, the study involved the participation of key stakeholders directly engaged in initiatives within the Ministries of Agriculture, Infrastructure, Green economy and Local Government. This included project managers, project team members, and other relevant stakeholders who play pivotal roles in project implementation and management. A mixed methods approach was adopted to gather and analyze data from multiple perspectives. The study utilized both questionnaires and interviews as data collection methods. The study focused on projects that have been operational between

2019 and 2023. This specific timeframe was chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of the long-term effects of project governance structures on project performance. By considering projects within this period, the study sought to capture a diverse range of projects, enabling a thorough exploration of project governance's impact on various types of initiatives undertaken within the government ministries. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles, ensuring informed consent from all participants and safeguarding their rights and privacy. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly upheld during data collection, storage, and reporting processes to protect the participants' identities and foster an environment of trust.

1.8 Significance of the study

This study potentially, sheds light on the connection between project governance frameworks and project performance inside Zambian government agencies. In examining this connection, the research findings could assist the selected Ministries' project management procedures, policy creation, and decision-making processes. In addition, the identification of strengths and weaknesses in project governance structures can pave the way for targeted interventions and reforms, ultimately leading to more efficient and successful project outcomes. Government officials, project managers, project team members, and other stakeholders directly involved in project execution within Zambian ministries stand to benefit from the study's findings. Understanding the factors that influence project success could enable these stakeholders to devise strategies for enhancing decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication and information flow, and resource allocation and management within their projects. As a result, project delivery can be streamlined, and public value can be maximized, leading to favorable socioeconomic benefits for the nation.

This study has the potential to provide necessary steps for improving the prudent utilization of public resources and strengthening transparency and accountability in project implementation within government ministries.

1.9 Organization of the report

Chapter One: This section commences with a comprehensive overview of the subject matter, establishing the necessary context for the investigation. An articulation of the

problem statement underscores the specific issue at hand. The research's objectives and inquiries are delineated, guiding the inquiry's trajectory. The study's scope is specified, demarcating the boundaries and limitations of the exploration. Furthermore, the chapter accentuates the study's significance to relevant stakeholders. Key terminologies are elucidated, ensuring lucidity of language throughout the research. Lastly, an outline of the remaining chapters is presented, furnishing a roadmap for the overall research endeavor.

Chapter Two: In this segment, an extensive literature review is executed. This chapter entails a meticulous examination of pre-existing literature, articles, bulletins, and credible sources germane to the research subject. An exhaustive exploration of online resources and other reputable references is undertaken to amass pertinent information. The data and theoretical underpinnings of prior research studies are critically evaluated to assess their applicability to the present investigation. The objective of this literature review is to furnish a comprehensive comprehension of the existing knowledge and pinpoint gaps the current study endeavors to fill.

Chapter Three: This chapter expounds upon the research methodology and procedures employed in the study. Detailed elucidation is provided regarding the research population, sample size, sampling technique, and instruments employed for data collection. Furthermore, the data processing procedures, encompassing any statistical methods or software utilized, are explicated. This chapter strives for transparency and clarity regarding the methodology embraced in the research, thereby ensuring the credibility and validity of the study's findings.

Chapter Four: The fourth chapter is dedicated to the presentation and interpretation of the findings yielded during the research. A detailed exposition of the facts and analysis derived from the gathered data is provided. To delve into the data, factor analysis and correlation analysis are executed, facilitating a more profound examination of relationships and patterns within the dataset. The objective is to present a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the research findings, thereby contributing to the overall comprehension of the subject under scrutiny.

Chapter Five: This chapter entails an exhaustive analysis of the research results derived from the sampled population. A thorough exploration and examination of the data

collected from the selected sample is conducted. The findings are extensively discussed, interpreted, and contextualized within the ambit of the research objectives and research questions. The chapter furnishes a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes and implications of the study based on the analysis of the sample population.

Chapter Six: The final chapter encapsulates a summary of the research results, consolidating the key findings organized in alignment with the research objectives. Additionally, a compilation of recommendations derived from these findings is presented, offering practical insights and suggestions for further action or improvement. The chapter culminates with a section dedicated to proposing directions for future research, spotlighting areas that necessitate additional investigation or exploration to enhance knowledge and understanding in the field. This segment aims to inspire and guide future researchers in building upon the current study's findings and addressing any lingering gaps or unresolved questions.

1.8 Definition of key terms and concepts

1.8.1 Project Governance Structures: Refers to “the frameworks, processes, and mechanisms that guide decision-making, accountability, communication, and resource allocation and management within projects. It includes the organizational structures, policies, procedures, and practices that govern how projects are planned, executed, and controlled” (PMI, 2017).

1.8.2 Project Performance: “Encompasses the achievement of project objectives, adherence to project schedules and budgets, quality of deliverables, stakeholder satisfaction, and overall success of the project. It is a multidimensional concept that evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation” (PMI, 2017). In the context of this study, project performance is not a one-dimensional measure; rather, it encapsulates the relationship of various elements that collectively define the triumph or challenges encountered in a project. By adopting the Project Management Institute's (PMI) definition, the researcher acknowledges that success isn't solely about meeting timelines or financial targets; it's about delivering high-quality outcomes that align with stakeholder expectations. Recognizing and applying this detailed understanding of

project performance is paramount for a thorough analysis that delves into the complexities of governance structures and their impact on diverse project dimensions.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a review of the context, goals, and importance of the research, laying a strong basis for the whole study. It began by defining and characterizing the issue that was being looked into, explaining the underlying presumptions, and laying the framework for further research. The study's background provided a wide hold of the situation, which resulted in a concise problem definition. The chapter also provided a clear explanation of the research's precise goals and established parameters for pursuing them, resulting in a methodical and focused examination. The study's importance was emphasized, highlighting its applicability in filling up current information gaps. Essentially, this chapter has successfully emphasized the significance and relevance of the study, providing the foundation for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an examination of pre-existing literature, articles, bulletins, and credible sources relevant to the research subject. An exhaustive exploration of online resources and other reputable references is undertaken to amass pertinent information. The data and theoretical underpinnings of prior research studies are critically evaluated to assess their applicability to the present investigation. The objective of this literature review is to furnish a comprehensive comprehension of the existing knowledge and pinpoint gaps the current study endeavors to fill. The chapter starts with an empirical review, followed by a theoretical review and it ends with a conceptual framework.

2.2 Empirical Review

Sankaran et al (2008) investigated the “association between project governance and project performance in the context of shutdown maintenance projects in the marine industry, Australia” (Sankaran, et al., 2008). According to Sankaran et al (2008), “the difficulty in understanding and regulating project operations stems from the various lines of communication, which can be defined as chaotic. The planning phase of the project is well-structured and documented, with specific roles defined. However, difficulties develop during project execution owing to overlapping tasks, a proliferation of jobs, and an unwillingness to look beyond local areas of responsibility” (Sankaran, et al., 2008). There is a propensity to develop a "need-to-know" attitude, which is motivated by business considerations and a reluctance to disclose knowledge. The regional contracts manager controls information dissemination, which operates as a bottleneck, however this issue is likely to be overcome when the function is absorbed by the Single Point of Accountability (SPO).

The study by Sankaran et al (2008) also emphasizes issues such as role duplication and inefficient delegating. Power distribution within the project is disconnected, with persons in roles that should have power not always having that authority. Accountability is ambiguous because the project superintendent is accountable for

project results but lacks financial or technical delegation. Contract administration and management are the responsibility of the project manager, who reports to the project superintendent, and things outside the financial delegation of the project manager require clearance from the Planning and Liaison Team (Sankaran, et al., 2008). This highlights the complex nature of project governance challenges in the marine industry and underscores the urgent need for regulatory frameworks to guide financial delegation in such projects, contributing to a more efficient and effective project environment. Establishing clear guidelines for financial delegation can lead to streamlined decision-making processes, enhanced accountability, and ultimately, improved project performance and outcomes. The findings by Sankaran et al (2008) also indicate that governance issues, such as role ambiguity, poor delegation, and uneven power allocation, exist in the projects under consideration. The lack of approved laws surrounding financial delegation for external consultants complicates matters even further. Understanding and addressing these governance concerns is critical to increasing project performance in marine shutdown maintenance projects. Overall, the study offers light on the complexities of project governance in the maritime setting and identifies key areas that need to be addressed and improved in order to improve project performance and results.

However, in the context of increasingly complex mega projects, effective project governance assumes a pivotal role in ensuring successful implementation and optimal performance. As Nigeria experiences rapid economic growth and undertakes ambitious mega projects, the importance of streamlined project governance becomes even more pronounced. The study by Ekung et., (2017) explored the impact of project governance practices on mega project performance through an examination of two significant case studies in Nigeria. By evaluating the level of adherence to project governance essentials and analyzing its effects on project outcomes, the research offered valuable insights for enhancing project governance in the public sector of developing countries.

Further, to comprehensively assess the influence of project governance on mega project performance, the study adopted a mixed-method approach. Data collection involved the distribution of structured questionnaires to key stakeholders involved in the two selected

mega projects. Additionally, a thorough scrutiny of project archives was undertaken to gather historical data and performance indicators. The questionnaires were carefully designed to evaluate stakeholders' perceptions of project governance practices and their potential impact on the projects' overall performance. The collected data were subjected to rigorous analysis to determine the level of adherence to project governance essentials and their protracted implications on project performance. Kerzner's criteria, which encompassed key aspects such as cost and time overrun, served as the basis for evaluating respondents' assessments. The mean scores and the Spearman Correlation test were utilized to derive deeper insights from the data and draw meaningful correlations between project governance practices and project performance outcomes (Ekung, et al., 2017). This study emphasizes the need for a detailed understanding of project governance in mega projects and suggests that addressing identified gaps can significantly contribute to more effective project governance, thereby enhancing mega project performance in Nigeria and similar developing contexts. The findings by Ekung et., (2017) emphasized the paramount importance of well-established project governance structures in ensuring the success of mega projects. It became evident that projects with robust governance frameworks demonstrated better performance outcomes in terms of cost and schedule management. Improved project governance structures were shown to positively impact project outcomes, particularly in terms of cost and time management. However, the research also uncovered areas that require improvement, indicating that project governance structures in the analyzed mega projects could be further optimized (Ekung, et al., 2017). One key lesson learned from this study is that effective implementation and selection of project governance structures should be based on established industry principles and prioritized needs. Stakeholders in the public sector of developing countries must recognize the significance of adhering to best practices and tailoring project governance strategies to suit specific project contexts (Ekung, et al., 2017). These insights are invaluable for developing countries' public sectors, guiding stakeholders towards enhanced project governance practices and ultimately improving the performance of mega projects.

The research conducted by Sirisomboonsuk, Ching Gu, Cao, and Burns (2018) seeks to shed light on how project performance can be improved by exploring the relationships

between information technology (IT) governance, project governance, and project performance. “Through an empirical survey methodology, the study gathered data from 533 working professionals across various industries, resulting in 282 usable responses with a response rate of 53.91%” (Sirisomboonsuk, et al., 2018). The study's findings revealed that both IT governance and project governance play a significant role in positively influencing project performance;

Specifically, three dimensions of IT governance—strategy setting, value delivery, and performance management—were found to have a positive association with project performance. Similarly, all three dimensions of project governance—portfolio direction, project sponsorship, and project effectiveness & efficiency, as well as disclosure & reporting—were positively linked to project performance. These findings demonstrate that both IT governance and project governance are crucial components of the operational strategy to facilitate the success of projects (Sirisomboonsuk, et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the research highlighted the importance of alignment between IT governance and project governance in enhancing project performance. When both governance structures are aligned, they can work cohesively to maximize project outcomes and optimize the use of resources. This alignment fosters better coordination and communication between IT and project management teams, leading to improved decision-making and overall project success. The following Lessons can be drawn from the study by Sirisomboonsuk, et al., (2018):

(i) Holistic Approach: The study's results underscore the significance of adopting a comprehensive approach that considers both IT governance and project governance in project management. Recognizing and integrating these two governance frameworks can lead to better project outcomes and overall organizational success.

(ii) Strategic Implementation: Effective strategy setting and value delivery within IT governance and project governance are vital for enhancing project performance. Organizations should focus on aligning these strategies with their overall business objectives to ensure seamless execution and success.

(iii) Reporting and Transparency: The study highlights the importance of disclosure and reporting in project governance. Maintaining transparent communication and providing accurate project progress reports contribute to better decision-making and increased stakeholder satisfaction.

(iv) Collaborative Synergy: The research emphasizes the significance of alignment between IT governance and project governance. Collaborative synergy between these two governance frameworks enables smoother coordination, enabling project teams to work more efficiently and effectively.

In summary, the findings of the research by Sirisomboonsuk et al. (2018) provide valuable insights for project management professionals. Through recognizing the positive impact of IT governance and project governance on project performance, organizations can integrate these governance structures into their operational strategies. The study also highlights the importance of aligning IT governance with project governance, which fosters better coordination and communication, ultimately leading to improved project outcomes and overall success (Sirisomboonsuk, et al., 2018). This highlights the growing recognition of the interconnectedness of IT governance and project governance in the contemporary project management landscape. Professionals in the field are encouraged to integrate and align these governance aspects for a more holistic and effective approach to project execution, thereby ensuring optimal performance and success.

Alvi et al (2019) conducted research that focused on the effects of good project governance on project performance in Pakistan's construction sector. "The researchers admit that project failure and hazards are common challenges in the construction business, affecting project success rates" (Alvi, et al., 2019). Using agency theory as a theoretical lens, the study analyzed the relation between successful project governance and project performance, with risk management serving as a mediating factor. Data was gathered from 190 respondents in Pakistan's building industry.

The study's findings show a substantial positive association between good project governance and project performance. Furthermore, it was discovered that risk management might somewhat moderate the link between project governance and project performance. This implies that combining risk management activities and

adopting strong project governance methods can contribute to successful project results (Alvi, et al., 2019).

Based on the findings above, the research proposes that “construction project managers collaborate with overall corporate governance and emphasize risk management to achieve effective project outcomes” (Alvi, et al., 2019). The study provides theoretical as well as practical consequences for professionals in Pakistan's construction sector, giving insights into the link between project governance, risk management, and project performance. Overall, this study adds to the scant literature on the link between efficient project governance, risk management, and their combined influence on project performance in the context of Pakistan's construction sector.

2.2.1 Critique of the Literature Review

The literature review from the empirical review studies presents valuable insights into the relationships between project governance and project performance in various industries. Each study addresses different contexts and industries, providing essential information to understand the influence of project governance on project outcomes. However, the studies have some limitations, including lack of specific effect sizes, statistical significance levels, and detailed descriptions of instruments and sampling procedures. By addressing potential threats to internal validity and incorporating improvements such as inferential statistics and qualitative methods, future research can provide more robust and generalizable findings on the relationship between project governance and project performance. The table below presents a detailed perspective of the specific limitations of the reviewed studies.

Table 1 Gaps in Literature

Study Title and Year	Methodology	Study Findings	Limitations	Author
<i>"Association between Project Governance and Project Performance in Shutdown Maintenance Projects in the Marine Industry"</i>	Case study (Empirical survey)	Governance issues (e.g., role ambiguity) prevalent in marine industry's projects.	Specific questions and validity of the questionnaire not detailed. Effect size and generalizability not clear. Survey method's limitations (selection bias).	Sankaran et al. (2008)
<i>"Influence of Project Governance on Project Performance: Nigerian Case Studies"</i>	Mixed-method approach	Positive association between project governance and improved outcomes in cost and time management.	Inadequate details on sample size and selection. Lacks inferential statistics for statistical significance. Could include qualitative methods and more sample information.	Ekung et al. (2017) -
<i>"Relationships between Project Governance and Information Technology Governance and Their Impact on Project Performance"</i>	Empirical survey approach	Positive impact of IT and project governance on project performance.	Lacks specific effect sizes and statistical significance levels. Survey limitations and potential bias. More industry and organization details needed. Could use inferential statistics and qualitative methods.	Sirisomboonsuk et al. (2018)

<p><i>"The Effects of Good Project Governance on Project Performance in Pakistan's Construction Sector"</i></p>	<p>Mixed-method approach</p>	<p>Strong positive association between good project performance. Risk management moderates the relationship.</p>	<p>Specific effect sizes and significance levels not provided. Limited details on sample selection and project representativeness. Could improve with rigorous sampling, inferential statistics, and qualitative methods. No reliable sampling frame.</p>	<p>Alvi et al. (2019) -</p>
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The knowledge gap from the information in the table (1) shows a lack of comprehensive research in the field of project governance and its influence on project performance, particularly in the context of different industries and regions. While the studies provide some insights, two significant knowledge gaps in the existing literature are evident:

(i) Lack of Exploration in Zambia's Public Sector: Most notably, there is a scarcity of studies specifically conducted within Zambia's public sector. None of the referenced studies in the table focus on the unique context of Zambia's government ministries or public sector projects. This absence highlights a critical gap in understanding how project governance impacts project performance in the specific socio-economic and administrative context of Zambia. The need for research within Zambia's public sector is crucial, as the dynamics, governance structures, and project management practices in government ministries can vary significantly from those in the private sector or in other countries. The public sector often involves specific challenges related to resource allocation, accountability, and decision-making, which require tailored research and insights.

(ii) Lack of Effect Size and Generalizability Details: Another knowledge gap is the limited presentation of specific effect sizes and statistical significance levels in the studies included in the table. While these studies offer valuable insights into the relationships between project governance and project performance, the absence of precise effect sizes

and significance levels hampers the generalizability of their findings. This missing information makes it challenging to assess the strength and magnitude of the relationships observed. To address this limitation, future research should aim to include these essential statistical details, ensuring a more comprehensive and robust understanding of the impact of project governance on project performance.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

In this study, three theoretical perspectives that is the Agency Theory, the Institutional Theory, and the Resource Dependence Theory have been thoughtfully selected to offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricate relationship between project governance structures and project performance within government ministries in Zambia. The justification for choosing these specific theories, as opposed to others, is based on their relevance and suitability for this study.

On one hand, Agency Theory has been chosen because it offers a compelling lens through which to examine the dynamics of governance structures, especially in scenarios where decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, and delegation of authority are paramount. In government ministries, the delegation of authority to various stakeholders involved in project execution is a fundamental aspect of governance, and Agency Theory is particularly adept at shedding light on how these delegations influence project outcomes.

On the other hand, Institutional Theory is another vital component of this research framework. It has been selected because of its ability to elucidate the impact of societal norms, external influences, and institutional pressures on the behaviour and practices of government ministries. Given that government ministries operate within a broader institutional context, this theory helps us understand how external forces shape governance practices and impact project performance.

Furthermore, Resource Dependence Theory finds its place in this study due to its direct relevance to the public sector, where projects rely heavily on the availability and management of resources. The selection of this theory is justifiable because it offers insights into how resource allocation, control, and interdependence affect project performance. In the context of Zambia's government ministries, where resource

management plays a crucial role in project execution, Resource Dependence Theory serves as a valuable analytical tool.

2.3.1 Agency Theory

Agency Theory, introduced by Jensen and Meckling (1976), is a prominent theoretical framework that examines the relationship between principals and agents in organizations. In the context of project governance, this theory becomes particularly relevant as it helps understand the dynamics between government ministries (principals) and project managers and teams (agents) who act on behalf of the principals. One of the key aspects of Agency Theory is the concept of agency costs, which refers to the conflicts of interest and information asymmetry between principals and agents (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). In the context of government-led projects, agency costs may arise due to differing objectives and incentives between the ministries and project teams. These conflicts can lead to suboptimal decision-making and hinder project performance.

To address agency costs and improve project performance, the theory emphasizes the importance of monitoring and incentive alignment. Effective project governance should include mechanisms that enable the ministries to monitor the progress and performance of the projects. Regular reporting, clear communication channels, and project reviews can help ensure transparency and accountability. Incentive alignment is another crucial aspect highlighted by Agency Theory. It involves aligning the interests of the agents with those of the principals to motivate desirable behaviors and outcomes (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). In the context of project governance, this can be achieved through performance-based rewards, recognition, and clear performance targets that are aligned with the ministries' objectives.

Moreover, the application of Agency Theory in project governance can help identify potential sources of agency costs and design strategies to mitigate them. By understanding the incentives and motivations of project teams, government ministries can implement governance structures that foster a culture of responsibility and accountability. The relevance of Agency Theory to the research topic on "Assessing the Effect of Project Governance on Project Performance in Selected Government Ministries in Zambia" is significant. As Zambia seeks to address poverty and inequality through various

government-led projects, it becomes crucial to ensure that these projects are efficiently managed and executed.

Through the application of the Agency Theory, the study can explore how decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, and incentive systems within project governance structures impact project performance. It can help identify potential agency costs and challenges that may arise in the implementation of government projects. Furthermore, the theory can guide the design of effective project governance frameworks that align the interests of the ministries and project teams, leading to improved project outcomes. The lessons learned from Agency Theory can also inform the development of practical recommendations for enhancing project governance in Zambia's government ministries. By focusing on monitoring, incentive alignment, and reducing agency costs, the study can provide valuable insights to stakeholders on how to optimize project performance and resource utilization.

2.3.2 Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory, as introduced by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), is a theoretical framework that explores the influence of societal norms, ideals, and external factors on organizations and their behaviors. Institutional Theory provides valuable insights into the impact of institutional elements on project performance. Within the realm of project governance, Institutional Theory examines how decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication, and resource allocation are influenced by established norms, rules, and institutional constraints (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In this context, institutions refer to the broader societal structures, including laws, regulations, industry standards, and cultural norms, that shape and guide the behavior of organizations and individuals involved in projects.

Institutional forces can have a significant impact on project governance practices and, consequently, project outcomes. Organizations operating within a particular institutional context may be compelled to adopt specific methods or approaches due to external pressures or expectations from stakeholders. For example, government ministries in Zambia may be influenced by national policies, international development agendas, or donor requirements, which can shape their project governance practices. By analyzing

the influence of institutional elements on project governance, the study can identify potential challenges and opportunities in achieving project success. It can shed light on how institutional factors may drive or hinder effective decision-making, accountability, and resource allocation within government ministries' project management processes.

Moreover, Institutional Theory highlights the importance of isomorphism, which refers to the tendency of organizations to adopt similar practices and structures to fit within the prevailing institutional environment. Isomorphic pressures can lead government ministries to adopt certain project governance practices that are deemed appropriate or acceptable in the broader institutional context (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The study can use Institutional Theory to assess how isomorphism influences project governance in Zambia's government ministries. It can examine whether ministries conform to certain project management practices to align with institutional norms or if they innovate and adapt to unique circumstances.

Additionally, Institutional Theory emphasizes the role of legitimacy, wherein organizations seek to gain approval and recognition from stakeholders by conforming to prevailing institutional norms. In the context of government-led projects, the study can explore how ministries' adherence to certain governance practices enhances their legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the public, donors, and other stakeholders. The findings from applying Institutional Theory to project governance in government ministries can have several implications. It can provide insights into the contextual factors that influence project decision-making and resource allocation. The study can identify potential areas for improvement in aligning project governance practices with institutional norms and expectations. Furthermore, the research can highlight the role of external influences, such as donor requirements or international best practices, in shaping project governance in Zambia. This understanding can guide policymakers and project managers in adopting effective governance strategies that not only comply with institutional norms but also contribute to improved project performance and outcomes.

2.3.3 Resource Dependence Theory

Resource Dependence Theory, originally proposed by Pfeffer and Salancik in 1978, is a theoretical framework that focuses on the influence of resource availability, control, and

reliance on organizational behavior and performance. When applied to the context of project governance, Resource Dependence Theory provides valuable insights into how resource allocation and management methods impact project performance. In the context of project governance, Resource Dependence Theory highlights the critical role of resources in determining the success of projects. Projects often require various resources, including financial resources, human capital, technology, and infrastructure, to be effectively executed. The availability and control of these resources can significantly influence project outcomes.

The theory emphasizes the importance of appropriate resource allocation techniques in project management. Efficient allocation of resources is essential to ensure that the necessary inputs are provided to different project activities in a timely and effective manner. Proper resource allocation can enhance productivity, reduce delays, and ultimately contribute to improved project performance. Additionally, Resource Dependence Theory underscores the significance of resource acquisition for project success. Projects may face resource constraints, and the ability to acquire necessary resources externally or through partnerships can be critical in ensuring project progress (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). For government ministries in Zambia, collaborating with development partners or securing funding from international organizations can play a vital role in supporting project initiatives aimed at poverty reduction and inequality alleviation.

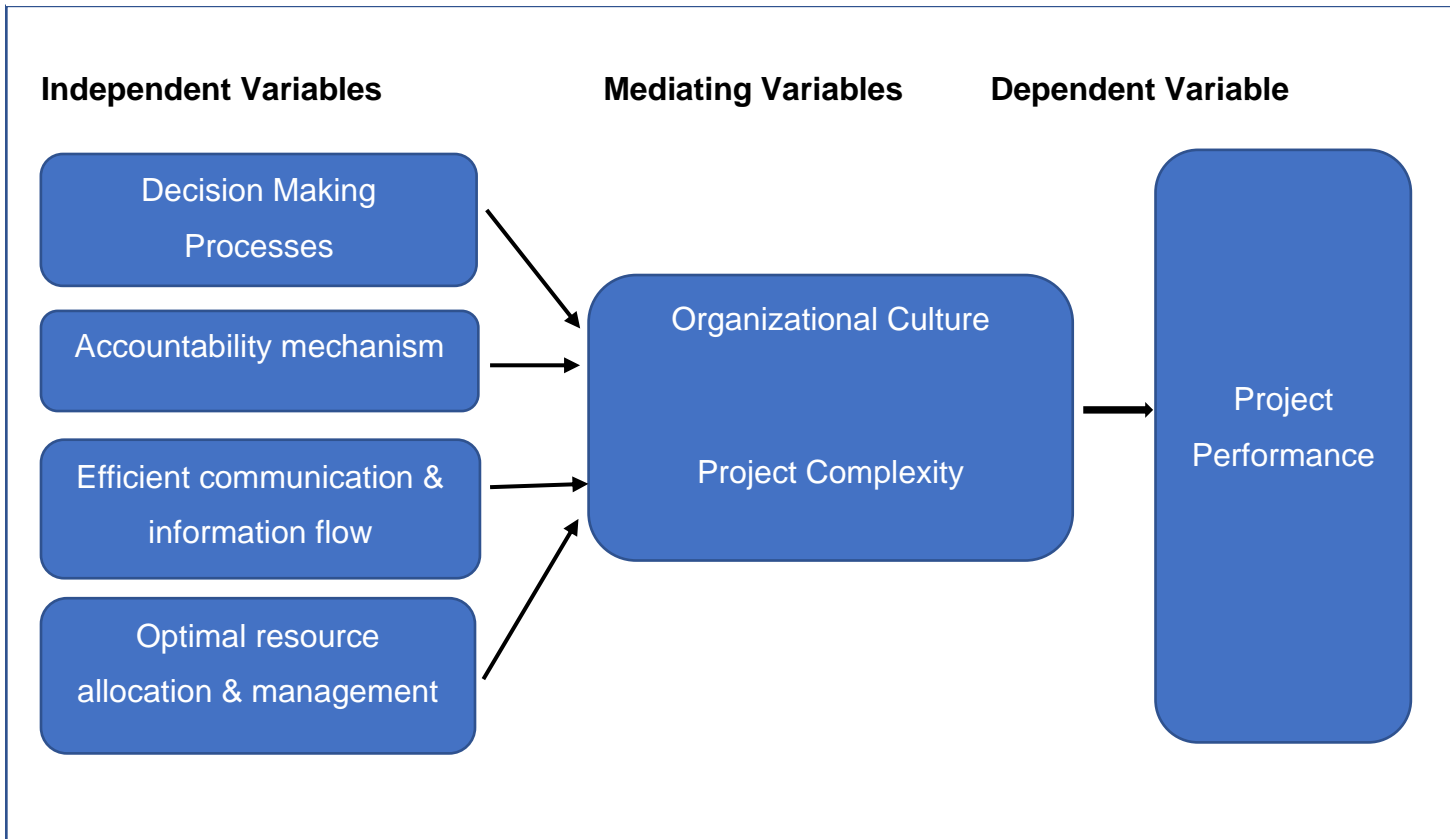
Moreover, the theory highlights the concept of resource dependence management, which refers to the strategies employed by organizations to manage their reliance on external resources. In the context of project governance, government ministries may need to proactively manage their dependence on external funding sources or expertise. Diversifying funding streams, building local capacity, and fostering self-reliance can be strategies to mitigate the risks associated with resource dependence. By utilizing Resource Dependence Theory in the study, the research can gain a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between resource management and project outcomes. The study can examine how the availability and control of resources within government ministries influence their project governance practices and, subsequently, project performance.

Furthermore, the research can explore the strategies employed by government ministries to acquire and manage resources for their projects. Understanding how ministries navigate resource dependence can provide valuable insights for other organizations facing similar resource challenges in the context of poverty reduction and inequality alleviation projects. The lessons learned from applying Resource Dependence Theory can inform project managers and policymakers in government ministries about the importance of resource allocation, acquisition, and dependence management. The research findings can guide decision-making processes related to project financing, resource planning, and collaboration with external partners. Moreover, the study can shed light on potential areas for improvement in resource management practices within government ministries. This includes identifying strategies to optimize resource allocation, reduce reliance on external resources, and build internal capacity to enhance project performance.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework depicts the interdependence of the independent factors (decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication and information flow, and resource allocation and management) and the dependent variable (project performance). It implies that effective project governance structures, characterized by sound decision-making, strong accountability mechanisms, efficient communication and information flow, and optimal resource allocation and management, will have a positive impact on project performance within Zambian government ministries.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework



2.4.1 Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework

In this section, the operationalization of the conceptual framework will be discussed. This entails providing a detailed account of how the measurement, assessment, and analysis of the key components of the research will be conducted. Both the independent and dependent variables will be defined and described in the context of this study.

2.4.2 Independent Variables

Independent variables are factors or conditions that are manipulated or observed to assess their effect on the dependent variables (Goddard & Melville, 2004). In this study, independent variables represent the various aspects of project governance structures within Zambian government ministries. These include decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication and information flow, and resource allocation and management.

The independent variables of the conceptual framework are expounded as follows:

2.4.3 Decision-Making Processes: This variable pertains to the methods, protocols, and structures employed within project governance frameworks to make decisions related to project planning, execution, and control. It encompasses the decision-making authority, decision criteria, and decision-making procedures followed by project managers and stakeholders involved in the projects. Effective decision-making processes ensure that the right decisions are made at the appropriate levels of the project, leading to efficient project execution and successful outcomes (Bredillet, et al., 2010). The quality of decisions made during project execution can significantly impact project success. Efficient decision-making authority structures and well-defined decision criteria can prevent bottlenecks and ensure that critical choices align with project goals.

2.4.4 Accountability Processes: This variable involves the practices and mechanisms established within project governance structures to ensure transparency and accountability among project stakeholders. Accountability processes include roles and responsibilities, performance monitoring, and reporting mechanisms (Kerzner, 2013). Robust accountability processes foster a culture of responsibility, where project participants are answerable for their actions and decisions, promoting a sense of ownership and commitment to project success.

2.4.5 Communication and Information Flow: This variable focuses on the channels, methods, and systems used by project stakeholders to exchange project-related information within the project governance structures. Effective communication and information flow facilitate collaboration, coordination, and timely decision-making among project teams and stakeholders (Kloppenborg, et al., 2014). A well-established communication network ensures that relevant information is conveyed to the right individuals, reducing misunderstandings and enhancing overall project performance.

2.4.6 Resource Allocation and Management: This variable encompasses the techniques, processes, and practices employed to allocate and manage project resources efficiently within the project governance frameworks (Hobbs & Aubry, 2007). Resource allocation involves distributing resources such as funds, manpower, and materials according to project needs, while resource management entails monitoring and optimizing resource utilization (Cleland & Ireland, 2007). Effective resource allocation and

management contribute to cost control, timely delivery of project milestones, and improved project outcomes.

2.4.7 Dependent Variable Project Performance

This variable represents the overall success and effectiveness of projects within the selected government ministries. Project performance is assessed based on various criteria, including adherence to project schedules, cost control, quality of deliverables, stakeholder satisfaction, and achievement of project objectives (Patanakul & Shenhar, 2012). A high level of project performance indicates that the projects have been executed successfully, meeting stakeholders' expectations and fulfilling project goals. The selection of "Project Performance" as the dependent variable is justified as it incorporates key criteria for evaluating project success within government ministries. This approach ensures a comprehensive assessment, aligning with the detailed nature of project outcomes in Zambian government contexts

2.4.8 Moderating Variables

2.4.8.1 Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, norms, and behaviours that characterize an organization (Turlais & Dubkevics, 2017). Organizational culture can moderate the relationship between project governance structures and project performance by influencing how decision-making processes are perceived and enacted, how accountability mechanisms are embraced, how communication and information flow are facilitated, and how resources are allocated and managed. For example, in organizations with a hierarchical and bureaucratic culture, decision-making may be centralized, leading to slower response times and potentially impacting project performance. Conversely, in organizations with a more collaborative and innovative culture, decision-making may be decentralized, fostering agility and adaptability in project execution.

2.4.8.2 Project Complexity

Project complexity refers to the level of complexity and uncertainty inherent in project objectives, tasks, stakeholders, and environments (Rolstadås & Schiefloe, 2017). Project

complexity can moderate the effectiveness of project governance structures by influencing the applicability and suitability of decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication strategies, and resource allocation practices. Complex projects may require more flexible decision-making processes, robust accountability mechanisms, advanced communication technologies, and adaptive resource management approaches to navigate uncertainties and achieve desired outcomes.

2.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter two presented the literature review for this study. The literature review acts as a foundation for the empirical research to be done in the following chapters, providing a considerable knowledge basis as well as a clear explanation for the study's methods and aims. Further, this chapter explained the key concepts and theories that support the research. It emphasizes the relationship between project governance structures and project performance in line with empirical evidence.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology and procedures employed in the study. In addition, research Philosophy is briefly elaborated in this chapter to reveal the philosophy on which the study is underpinned. Further, detailed clarification is provided regarding the research population, sample size, sampling technique, and instruments employed for data collection. Furthermore, the data processing procedures, encompassing any statistical methods or software utilized, are explicated. This chapter strives for transparency and clarity regarding the methodology embraced in the research, thereby ensuring the credibility and validity of the study's findings.

3.2 Research Philosophy

In this study, the chosen research philosophy is pragmatism. Philosophy, in the context of research, refers to the underlying framework guiding the researcher's approach, shaping their worldview, and influencing the methods chosen to investigate a phenomenon (Saunders, et al., 2019). Pragmatism is a philosophy that prioritizes practical outcomes and emphasizes selecting methods that best serve the research objectives (Morgan, 2014).

3.2.1 Ontology

Ontology deals with the nature of reality and the existence of entities (Saunders, et al., 2019). In this study, the ontological position is practical realism. It acknowledges the existence of practical realities within the research context, emphasizing the importance of understanding and addressing these realities for practical outcomes. Saunders et al (2019) highlights those ontological assumptions shape the way in which researchers see and study research objects, such as organizations and management (Saunders, et al., 2019).

3.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired (Saunders, et al., 2019). In this study, a mixed-methods approach is employed, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. This aligns with a pragmatic epistemological stance, recognizing that different types of knowledge are valuable for addressing the research questions (Morgan, 2014). Perspective emphasizes that epistemology determines what constitutes acceptable, valid, and legitimate knowledge (Saunders, et al., 2019).

3.2.3 Axiology

Axiology involves the study of values (Saunders, et al., 2019). In this study, axiology is considered in terms of the value of practical outcomes and insights. The research aims to provide valuable, practical insights into improving project governance structures and project performance (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The axiological choice involves explicitly recognizing and reflecting on values, as well as considering the impact of values on research decisions and interpretations (Saunders, et al., 2019).

These philosophical considerations lay the foundation for the research, guiding the choice of methods and shaping the overall approach to understanding the relationship between project governance structures and project performance.

3.3 Research Approach

To fulfill the aims of the study on assessing the effect of project governance on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia, a mixed-methods research approach was adopted. This research strategy combined both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the study issue. "It enables a more thorough knowledge of the study issue by collecting quantitative data to quantify the influence of project governance structures on project performance, as well as qualitative data to investigate the underlying mechanisms and processes" (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The use of quantitative methods in the research enabled the collection of numerical data to quantify the influence of project governance structures on project performance. In addition to quantitative data, qualitative methods were employed to investigate the underlying mechanisms and processes related to

project governance and project performance. The use of mixed-methods research allows for triangulation, which enhances the validity and reliability of the findings (Creswell, 2014). Through comparing and contrasting the results from quantitative and qualitative analyses, the research can verify and validate the findings, ensuring a more robust and comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

3.4 Research Design

In this study, the concurrent embedded design was applied. “This strategy includes simultaneously gathering quantitative and qualitative data while prioritizing one type of data. In this situation, the quantitative data gathered from surveys was the major emphasis, with qualitative data from interviews giving additional insights and context” (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Therefore, the quantitative approach dominated the embedded design making it the primary approach. The benefit of letting the quantitative approach dominate is the level of precision and objectivity. Quantitative methods provide precise numerical data allowing for objective analysis and interpretation. This precision enhances the credibility and reliability of the findings (Creswell, 2014). The use of a concurrent embedded design allowed for the integration of different data types, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The chosen research design also allows for the triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. Through the comparing and contrasting of the results from quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the study validated and cross-validated the findings, providing a more robust and comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Creswell, 2014). The concurrent embedded design aligns with the research's aims by offering a stable integration of quantitative and qualitative data. This methodological choice enabled a thorough exploration of the multifaceted relationship between project governance structures and performance outcomes. Moreover, the emphasis on data triangulation enhances the credibility of the study's insights, providing a distinct and holistic understanding of the dynamics within government ministries in Zambia.

3.5 Target Population

The research population included project managers, project team members, and stakeholders from several ministries in Zambia. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Local Government were specifically included in the research population.

3.6 Sample Size

The determination of an appropriate sample size is a crucial aspect of any research study, as it directly impacts the reliability and generalizability of the findings. In the case, the sample size was calculated using the Yamane formula established in 1967. The formula is denoted as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

- n = Sample size
- N = Population size
- e = Desired margin of error (10% level of significance)

Substituting the given values into the formula, with a population size of 3,164,748 individuals employed in Zambia's government ministries in 2021, and a desired margin of error of 10%:

$$n = \frac{3,164,748}{1 + 3,164,748 \times 0.05^2} = 100$$

The calculated sample size of approximately 100 individuals was deemed sufficient for our research project. This decision was made considering various factors, including time limitations and the scope of the study. Given the constraints of the research project, it was not feasible to survey the entire population of civil servants in Zambia's government ministries. By selecting a sample size of 100, the researcher aimed to strike a balance between obtaining meaningful insights and managing practical constraints. This sample

size allows for a representative subset of the population to be surveyed, providing valuable data for analysis while ensuring the feasibility of data collection within the available resources and timeframe.

The response rate of 90 respondents, comprising 85 questionnaires and 5 interviews, indicates a high level of engagement from the participants. This response rate further enhances the reliability of the data collected, as it reflects a strong willingness among respondents to contribute their perspectives to the research. However, it's important to acknowledge the limitations associated with sampling methods. While the sample size of 90 offers valuable insights, it may not fully capture the diversity and distinctions present within the entire population of civil servants. Therefore, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings of the study to the broader population.

3.7 Sampling Techniques

The following sampling techniques were employed to select participants, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive representation of relevant stakeholders:

3.7.1 Stratified Sampling: Stratified sampling was utilized to divide the research population into distinct and relevant strata based on specific criteria. In this study, the strata consisted of project managers, project team members, and stakeholders involved in the government ministries' projects. This sampling technique ensures that each stratum is well-represented in the sample, allowing for a more accurate and precise understanding of the relationship between project governance and project performance. A proportional number of participants will be selected from each stratum to ensure a balanced representation.

3.7.2 Purposive Sampling: Purposive sampling was employed to select key individuals with relevant expertise and experience in project governance structures and project performance. This sampling technique allowed for the targeted selection of participants who possess valuable insights and knowledge in the field. Project managers, government officials, and other experts with direct involvement in project governance decision-making processes will be purposefully chosen to provide in-depth and valuable perspectives on the research topic.

3.7.3 Snowball Sampling: Snowball sampling was also used to identify additional participants who were difficult to reach through conventional sampling methods. This technique involves initially selecting a few participants and then asking them to refer other individuals who possess the desired characteristics for the study. Snowball sampling is particularly useful for identifying individuals who may have specialized knowledge or experiences related to project governance but may not be easily identifiable through traditional sampling approaches. This method ensures a broader and more diverse sample, enriching the study's findings with unique perspectives and insights.

All in all, the study employed all the three sampling techniques explained in this study aimed to ensure a comprehensive representation of relevant stakeholders, considering the diverse nature of project governance structures and project performance within government ministries. Stratified sampling was utilized to divide the research population into distinct strata, including project managers, project team members, and stakeholders involved in government projects. By categorizing participants based on their roles and involvement, this technique ensured that each stratum was well-represented in the sample, enhancing the accuracy and precision of the study's findings. Additionally, purposive sampling was employed to purposefully select key individuals with relevant expertise and experience in project governance decision-making processes. This approach allowed for the targeted selection of participants who could provide valuable insights and knowledge on the research topic. Finally, snowball sampling was used to identify additional participants who may have been challenging to reach through conventional methods. By leveraging referrals from initial participants, this technique facilitated the inclusion of individuals with specialized knowledge or experiences related to project governance, enriching the diversity of the sample and enhancing the study's comprehensiveness. Overall, the combination of these sampling techniques ensured a well-rounded and diverse participant pool, enabling a thorough exploration of the relationship between project governance structures and project performance in government ministries.

3.8 Data Collection

The data collection methods included questionnaires, interviews, and document review, combining quantitative and qualitative data to provide a thorough and holistic understanding of the research topic.

3.8.1 Questionnaires: Structured questionnaires were chosen as a data collection instrument due to their ability to gather quantitative data efficiently and systematically. The design of the questionnaires was aligned with the specific objectives of the study, ensuring that relevant information was captured. Closed-ended questions and 5-point Likert scale items were included to facilitate standardized data collection while allowing participants to express their opinions and perceptions. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), closed-ended questions are useful for gathering precise information that can be easily analyzed and compared across respondents. Likewise, Likert scale questions provide a continuum of responses, offering insights into participants' attitudes and perceptions (Babbie, 2016). Distributing the questionnaires to project managers, team members, and stakeholders within the selected government ministries ensured representation from key stakeholders directly involved in project governance processes, enhancing the validity and comprehensiveness of the data collected.

3.8.2 Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were selected as a complementary method to gather qualitative data that could offer deeper insights and perspectives on project governance structures and their impact on project performance. Through engaging with selected participants, including government officials and project managers, the interviews provided an opportunity to explore complex issues in greater detail (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allowed participants to elaborate on their responses, share personal experiences, and provide contextual information, enriching the understanding of the research topic (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Tailoring the interview questions to the study's objectives ensured that relevant topics were covered, aligning with the research goals. Additionally, interviewing key stakeholders enabled the researchers to access insider perspectives and first-hand accounts, enhancing the credibility and richness of the qualitative data collected.

3.8.3 Document Review: Document review emerged as a valuable research instrument for accessing existing records, reports, policies, and project documentation related to project governance structures and project performance within the selected government ministries in Zambia. This method provided a comprehensive understanding of formal governance frameworks, processes, and guidelines in place, as well as project performance indicators and outcomes (Bowen, 2009). Analysing official documents offered insights into the historical evolution of project governance practices and their implementation over time, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the research context. Document review also served to validate and triangulate the data collected through questionnaires and interviews, enhancing the credibility and reliability of the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By incorporating document analysis into the research methodology, the study ensured a holistic approach to data collection, capturing both qualitative and quantitative aspects of project governance and performance.

3.9 Data analysis

The data analysis process encompassed both quantitative and qualitative techniques. These methods aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic by utilizing a mix of numerical and textual data.

3.9.1 Quantitative Data Analysis: To begin, descriptive statistics was used to summarize and present the data collected from the questionnaires. Measures such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and frequency distributions were calculated to provide an overview of the participants' responses and perceptions regarding project governance and project performance. Subsequently, inferential statistics were employed to identify significant associations, patterns, and trends within the quantitative data. The inferential data analysis approach such as Pearson correlation analysis were employed to analyze the quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). "Inferential data analysis involves drawing conclusions and making inferences about the population based on the data collected from a sample" (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Through this approach, the study was able to generalize findings from the sample to the broader population of government ministries in Zambia.

3.9.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data: The qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews underwent thematic analysis. “Thematic analysis involves transcribing the interview data, categorizing it, and identifying recurrent themes and patterns” (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The goal was to extract essential insights and conclusions related to decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication and information flow, and resource allocation and management. The thematic analysis involved several steps. Firstly, the interview data was transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and fidelity to the participants' responses. Next, the transcripts were carefully read and re-read to immerse the researcher in the data and identify preliminary codes or themes. Subsequently, the researcher organized the identified codes into meaningful categories and themes. This process involved reviewing and refining the themes iteratively to ensure their accuracy and coherence. The final step was to interpret and analyze the themes in the context of the research objectives, allowing for a deeper understanding of the relationships between project governance practices and project performance.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical principles to protect the rights and well-being of the participants and ensure the integrity of the research process.

3.10.1 Informed Consent: Prior to data collection, all participants were provided with clear and comprehensive information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits. Informed consent was sought from each participant, ensuring they understand the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences. Participants were informed that their decision to participate or not will not impact their relationship with the government ministries or their employment status.

3.10.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity: To protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, all data collected during the study was treated with strict confidentiality. Personal identifiers will be removed, and data was stored securely in password-protected electronic files or locked cabinets. Any information that may potentially reveal the identity

of the participants will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with unauthorized individuals.

3.10.3 Data Security: The data collected was stored securely and accessed only by the researcher. Access to the data was restricted to authorized members who are directly involved in the research process. Data will be stored for a specific period, as determined by institutional guidelines, after which it will be securely deleted or destroyed.

3.10.4 Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval: The research study underwent ethical review and approval by the University of Lusaka ethics committee before data collection commences. This approval process ensured that the study meets all ethical requirements and adheres to international standards for conducting research with human participants.

3.10.5 Minimization of Harm: Every effort was made to minimize any potential harm or discomfort to the participants. The researcher took steps to avoid asking sensitive or invasive questions that could have caused distress. When participants expressed any discomfort during the study, appropriate measures were taken to address their concerns.

3.10.6 Transparency and Full Disclosure: Throughout the research process, the participants were informed about the use of their data and the intended reporting and dissemination of the study's findings. The researcher provided transparent and clear explanations of the research outcomes to the participants and other relevant stakeholders.

Through the incorporation of these ethical considerations, the study aimed to ensure the well-being of the participants, protect their rights, and maintain the integrity and validity of the research. Adhering to ethical principles not only enhances the credibility of the study but also upholds the ethical responsibilities of the researchers to the participants and the broader community. As such, the research findings can be used with confidence to inform decision-making and policy development in the context of poverty reduction and inequality alleviation projects in government ministries in Zambia.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines the systematic approach that was employed to investigate the impact of project governance structures on project performance in Zambian government ministries. It provides a clear roadmap for the research, focusing on data collection methods such as questionnaires and interviews, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. The chapter emphasizes the significance of using a mixed-method approach for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Moreover, it highlights the importance of adhering to ethical principles, gaining informed consent from participants, and ensuring data confidentiality throughout the study. This chapter serves as a foundation for the empirical research that follows, allowing for a rigorous investigation into the research objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA FINDING AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter unveils the culmination of the study's objectives through a detailed analysis. It commences with an exposition of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Following this, the chapter unfolds the outcomes of both descriptive and correlation analyses, presented in the form of charts, frequency tables, and figures. The researcher engaged 100 questionnaires and garnered responses from 85 participants. Additionally, 5 interviews were conducted with key stakeholders intimately involved in the project management process. This chapter articulates the discoveries arising from both the questionnaire responses and the insights derived from the interviews.

4.2 Demographic Results

In this subsection, the researcher delves into the demographic profiles of the participants, encompassing gender, age, level of education, and years of experience.

4.2.1 Gender

Figure 2 elucidates the distribution of gender among the respondents. The discerned findings indicate that 60 percent of the participants were male, with the remaining 40 percent being female.

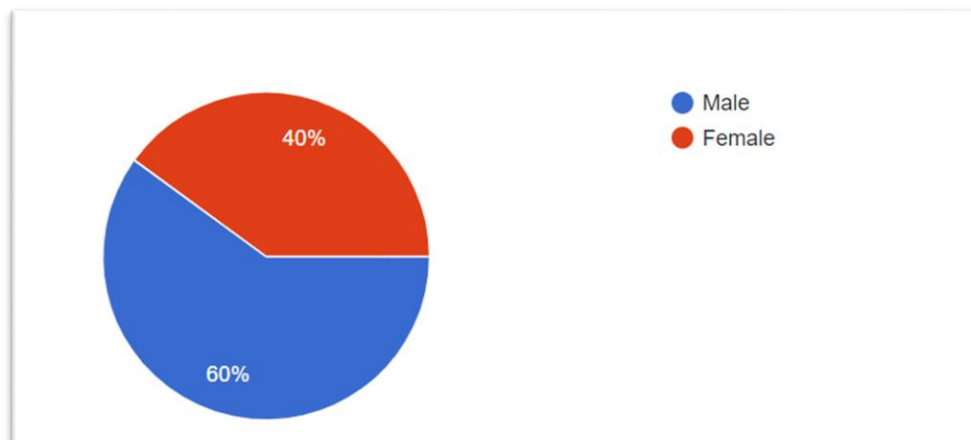


Figure 2 Age Distribution

4.2.2 Age of the Respondents

The age distribution of the respondents is visualized in Figure 3. The majority, constituting 51.8% of the respondents, fell within the age bracket 18 to 35 years. The subsequent age group, comprising individuals aged between 36 and 45 years, constituted 29.4%. Respondents aged between 46 and 55 years represented 10.6%, while those above 55 years comprised only 8.2%.

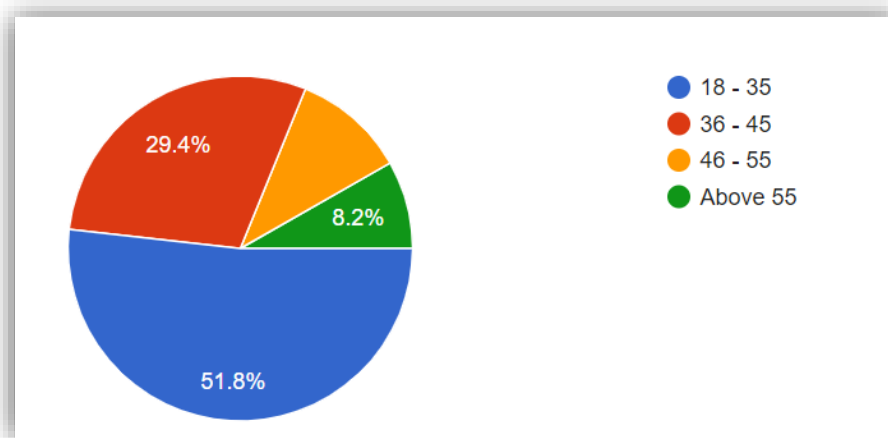


Figure 3 Age of the Respondents

4.2.3 Level of Education

Among the 85 respondents, 63.5% held a bachelor's degree, while 21.2% possessed a master's degree. Those with college diplomas accounted for 14.1%, and a marginal 1.2% held tertiary certificates.

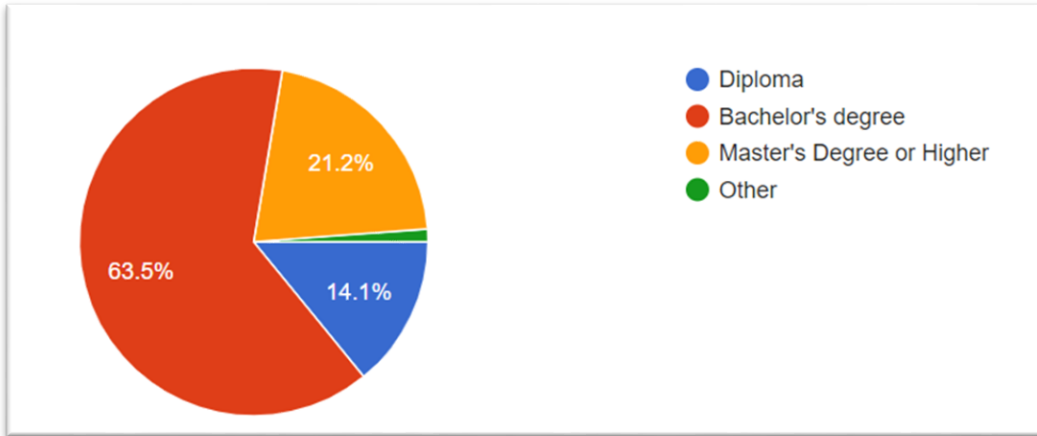


Figure 4 Level of Education

4.2.4 Years of Experience

The distribution of respondents based on years of experience is portrayed in Figure 5. The majority (40%) reported between 3 and 5 years of experience, followed closely by participants with experience ranging from 0 to 2 years. Those with 6 to 10 years of experience constituted 17.6%, while the remaining 11.8% had over 11 years of professional experience.

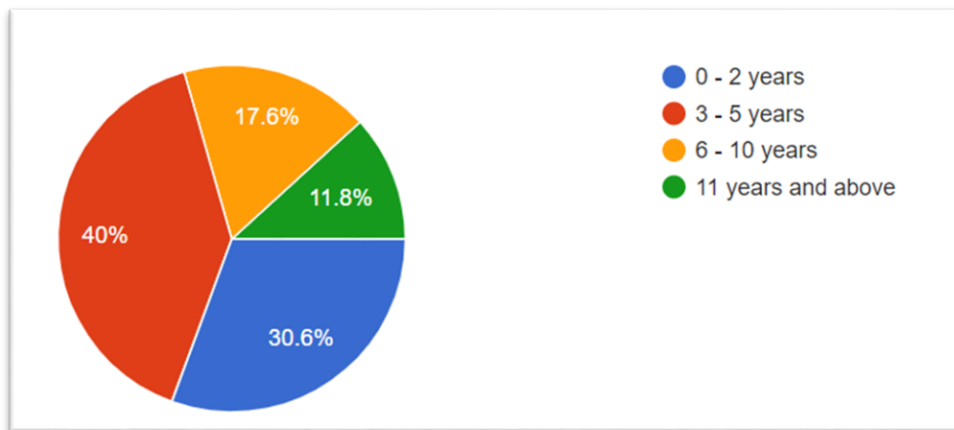


Figure 5 Years of Experience

4.3 Governance Structures

This section delves into the presence and efficacy of project governance structures within the organizations, exploring aspects such as their establishment, effectiveness, decision-making roles, documentation processes, and an overall summary of their impact.

4.3.1 Establishment of Governance Structures

In response to whether their organizations have well-established project governance structures, the majority (74.1%) of the respondents agreed, with an additional 12.9% strongly agreeing. Only 11.8% were indifferent, and the remaining (1.2%) respondents disagreed. This indicates a predominantly positive perception regarding the existence of clear governance structures.

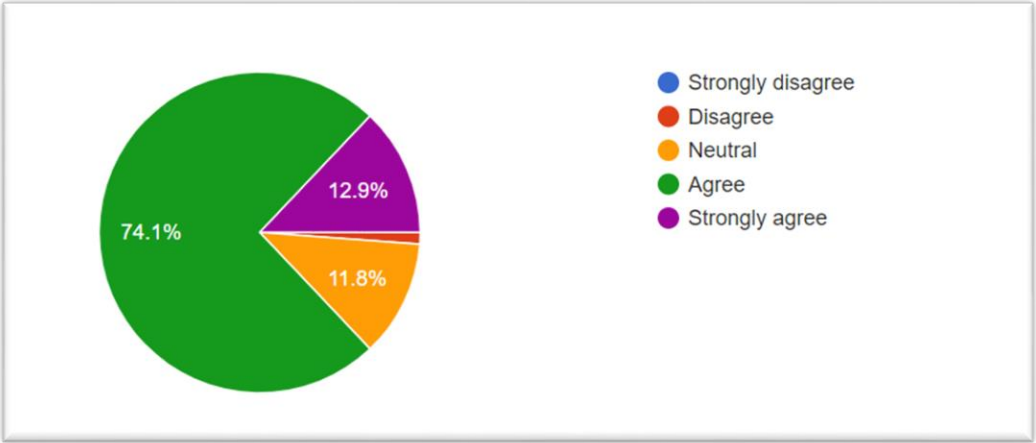


Figure 6 Establishment of Governance Structures

4.3.2 Effectiveness of Governance Structures

When asked to rate the effectiveness of the current project governance structure, 57.6% of respondents perceived the structures as effective. Meanwhile, 21.2% maintained a neutral stance, 12.9% rated the structures as very effective, and the remaining 8.2% deemed them ineffective. This highlights a generally positive sentiment regarding the perceived effectiveness of the existing governance structures.

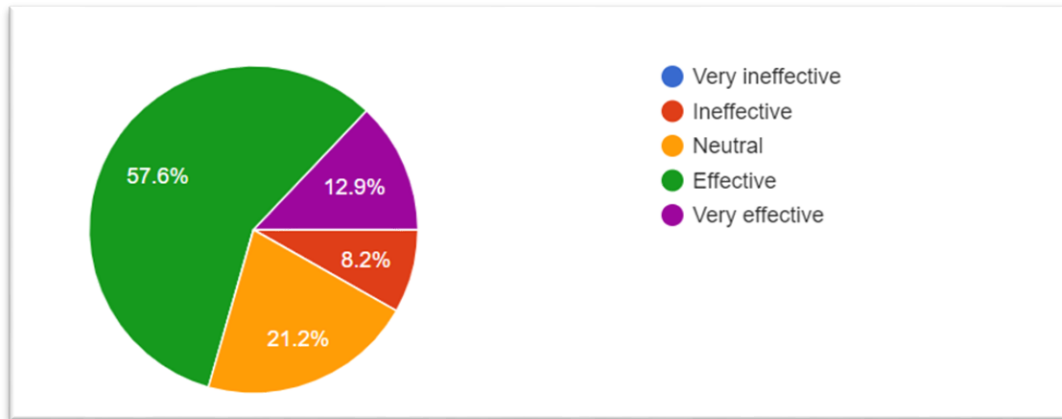


Figure 7 Effectiveness of Governance Structures

4.3.3 Decision Making Roles and Responsibilities

Regarding the clarity of decision-making roles and responsibilities within the current project governance structures, 70.6% of respondents agreed. Indifference was expressed by 12.9% of respondents, 11.8% strongly agreed, and 4.7% disagreed. This suggests a notable alignment on the perception that governance structures define decision-making roles and responsibilities.

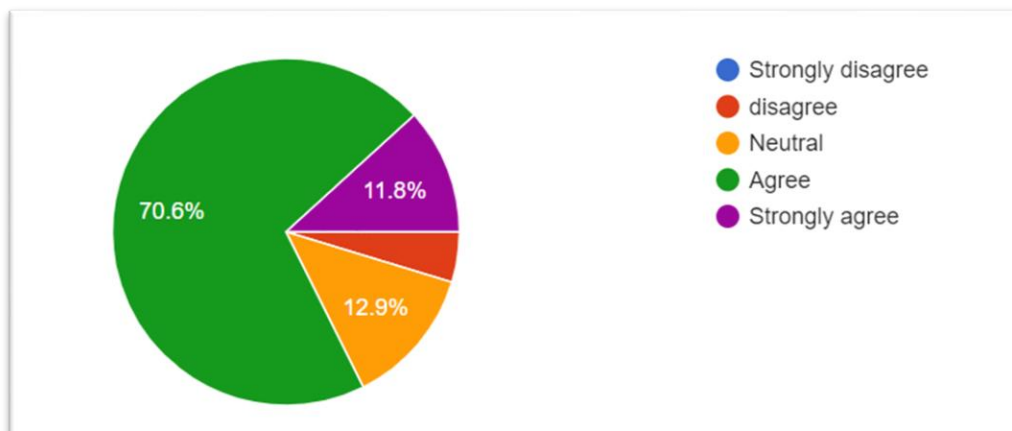


Figure 8 Decision Making Roles and Responsibilities

4.3.4 Documentation and Communication of Decision-Making roles and responsibilities

Respondents were questioned about the documentation and communication of decision-making processes within the project governance structure. The majority agreed, with 23.5% expressing indifference, 20% in disagreement, and 5.9% strongly agreeing. This suggests a need for improvement in the documentation and communication processes.

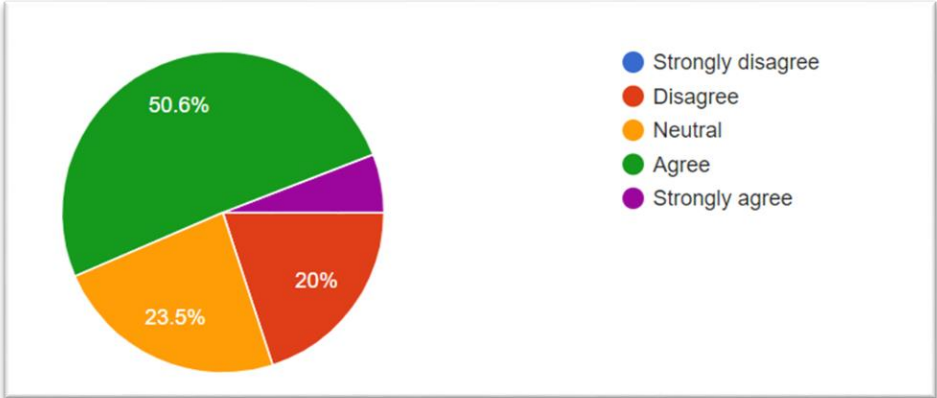


Figure 9 Documentation and Communication of Decision-Making roles and responsibilities

4.3.5 Summary of the effectiveness of Governance Structures

Table 2 provides a comprehensive summary of respondents' evaluations regarding the effectiveness of governance structures in various crucial aspects of project management. The statistical measures, including the standard deviation, offer insights into the consensus and variability of opinions among the respondents.

The following can be noted from table 2:

		Structures Ensure Accountability	Structures Promote Transparency	Structures Facilitate Effective Communication	Structures Allocate Resources Efficiently	Structure Ensures Alignment with Objectives
N	Statistic	85	85	85	85	85
Range	Statistic	4	3	3	4	3
Minimum	Statistic	1	2	2	1	2
Maximum	Statistic	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	Statistic	3.68	3.45	3.51	3.40	3.88
	Std. Error	.105	.091	.088	.098	.081
Std. Deviation	Statistic	.966	.838	.811	.902	.747
Variance	Statistic	.934	.703	.658	.814	.557

Table 2 Summary of the effectiveness of Governance Structures

4.3.5.1 Ensure Accountability: The mean score of 3.68 suggests a substantial level of agreement that governance structures contribute significantly to ensuring accountability within projects. The standard deviation of 0.966 indicates a moderate level of variability in responses. While there is a consensus, some respondents might hold more extreme views.

4.3.5.2 Promote Transparency: With a mean score of 3.45, respondents generally agree that governance structures play a positive role in promoting transparency. The standard deviation of 0.838 suggests a moderate level of

variability, indicating that there are varied opinions among respondents about the extent of transparency promotion.

4.3.5.3 Facilitate Effective Communication: Governance structures are perceived as moderately effective in facilitating communication, as indicated by a mean score of 3.51. The standard deviation of 0.811 suggests a moderate level of variability in responses, indicating that while there is an agreement, there are differing opinions about the extent of effectiveness.

4.3.5.4 Allocate Resources Efficiently: Respondents' opinions suggest a moderate effectiveness in the allocation of resources by governance structures, with a mean score of 3.40. The standard deviation of 0.902 implies a moderate level of variability in responses, signifying diverse opinions regarding the efficiency of resource allocation.

4.3.5.5 Ensure Alignment with Objectives: The highest mean score of 3.88 indicates a strong consensus among respondents that governance structures are particularly effective in ensuring alignment with organizational objectives. The standard deviation of 0.747 suggests a relatively lower level of variability, indicating a more unanimous agreement on this aspect.

In summary, while there is an overall positive perception of the effectiveness of governance structures, the standard deviations highlight the diversity in respondents' opinions, underlining areas where views are more uniform and areas where there's more variability.

4.4 Project Performance

This section explores the assessment of project performance, highlighting the overall perception, major influencing factors, and the frequency of cost overruns and scheduled delays.

4.4.1 Overall Project Performance

Respondents were asked to provide a subjective rating of the overall performance of projects within their organizations. The majority (45.9%) expressed a positive view, rating

the performance as high. A significant portion (32.9%) remained indifferent, while 12.9% and 8.2% rated the performance as low and very high, respectively (see Figure 10).

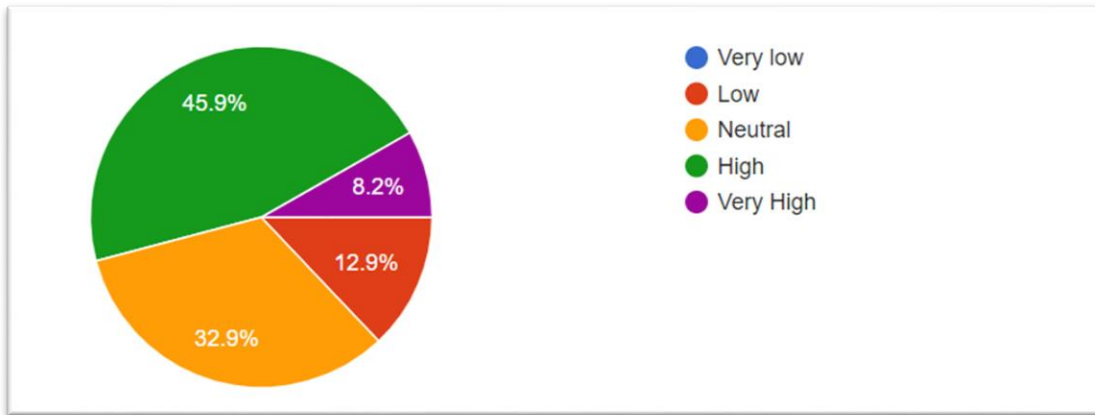


Figure 10 Project Performance

4.4.2 Major Factors influencing Project Performance

Table 3 outlines the major factors identified by respondents as influencing project performance. Respondents identified several key factors influencing project performance. The most prevalent concern was insufficient resource allocation, with 17.6% highlighting the impact of limited resources on project outcomes. This was closely followed by ineffective decision-making processes, acknowledged by 15.3% of respondents as a significant detriment to project success. Lack of accountability ranked next at 14.1%, emphasizing the critical role clear responsibility structures play in project performance.

Scope changes were identified by 14.1% of respondents, indicating the challenges associated with shifting project dynamics. Poor communication (7.1%) and team-related issues (8.2%) were recognized as substantial contributors to project performance challenges. External factors, such as those beyond the project team's control, were noted by 9.4% of respondents.

Inadequate planning (7.1%) and technology-related issues (2.4%) were identified as concerns affecting project outcomes. The least mentioned factors were inadequate risk management (4.7%), suggesting a relatively lower focus on addressing and mitigating project risks. Overall, the findings underscore the multifaceted nature of challenges

impacting project performance, ranging from resource constraints to communication and team dynamics.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Inadequate planning	6	7.1	7.1	7.1
Poor communication	6	7.1	7.1	14.1
Insufficient resource allocation	15	17.6	17.6	31.8
Ineffective decision-making	13	15.3	15.3	47.1
Lack of accountability	12	14.1	14.1	61.2
External factors	8	9.4	9.4	70.6
Scope changes	12	14.1	14.1	84.7
Inadequate risk management	4	4.7	4.7	89.4
Team-related issues	7	8.2	8.2	97.6
Technology-related issues	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 Factors Influencing Project Performance

4.4.3 Frequency of Cost Overruns

Respondents were questioned about the frequency of cost overruns in their projects. The majority (60%) reported facing overruns occasionally, while 20% stated they frequently encountered cost overruns. A comparable percentage (20%) mentioned rarely experiencing cost overruns (see Figure 11).

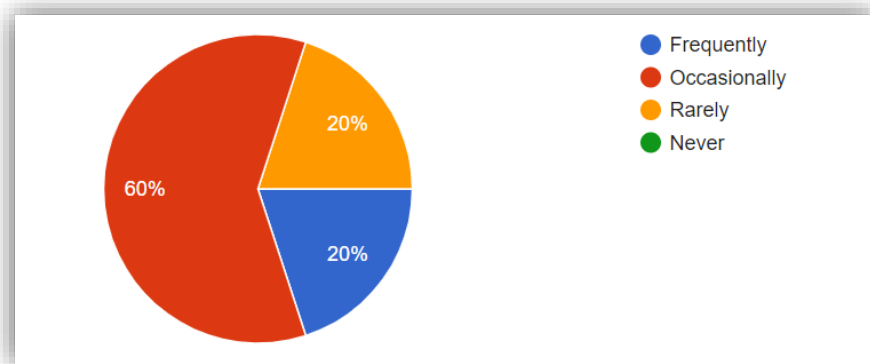


Figure 11 Frequency of Cost Overruns

4.4.4 Frequency of Scheduled delays

Regarding the frequency of scheduled delays, 57.6% of respondents stated facing delays occasionally, 35.3% reported frequent delays, and 7.1% indicated rarely experiencing delays in their projects (see Figure 12).

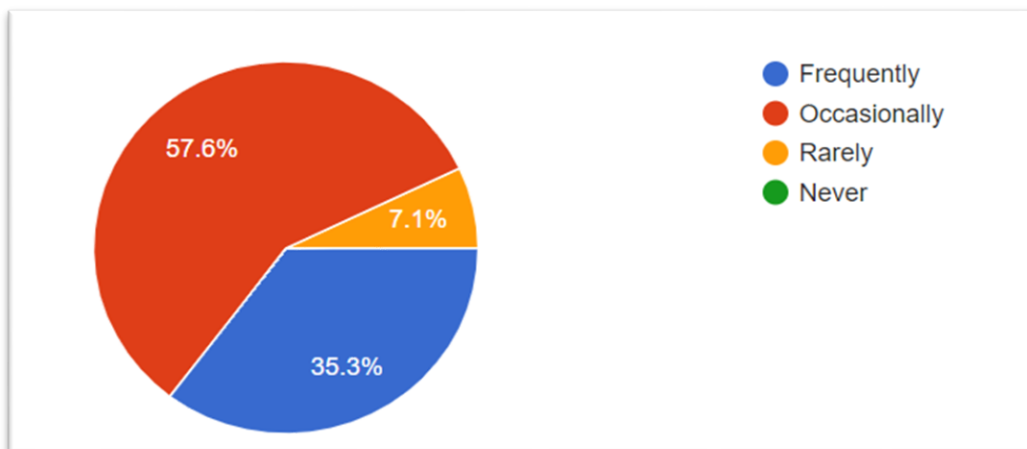


Figure 12 Frequency of Scheduled delays

4.5 Challenges to Current Project Governance Structures

When asked to highlight the multiple significant challenges to the current project management structures, majority (61.2%) of the respondents highlighted Limited communication about governance changes, followed by Inefficient decision-making processes (57.6%) and Insufficient resources allocated to governance implementation (56.5%). 54.1% of the respondents highlighted Lack of accountability measures, 44.7%

selected Inadequate training on governance processes while 43.5% highlighted Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities. Other challenges highlighted were Difficulty in adapting to changes in the governance structure (34.1%), Poor documentation of governance procedures (27.1%) and Resistance to the governance structure from team members (22.4%) as depicted in figure 13.

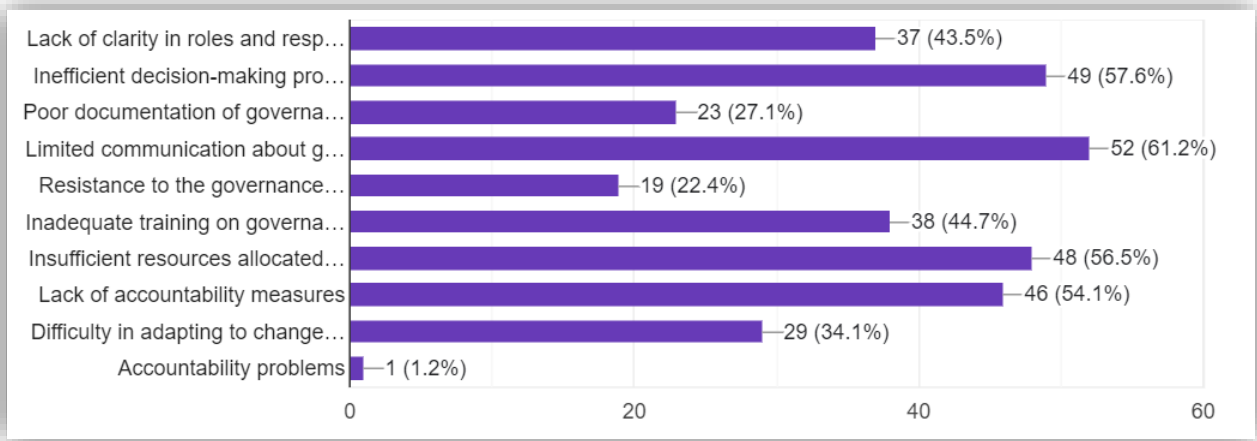


Figure 13 Challenges to Current Project Governance Structures

4.6 Areas of Improvement to Current Project Governance Structures

Respondents were asked to state the areas of improvement to the current governance structures and the findings are depicted in figure 14. Majority of the respondents highlighted Decision-making processes (63.5%), followed by Communication and information flow (62.4%), Resource allocation and management (62.4%) and Training and education on governance (62.4%). 54.1% stated Accountability mechanisms, 47.1% highlighted Roles and responsibilities definition while 25.9% highlighted Documentation of governance procedures. Other areas include; Adaptability to change (42.4%) and financial allocation (1.2%).

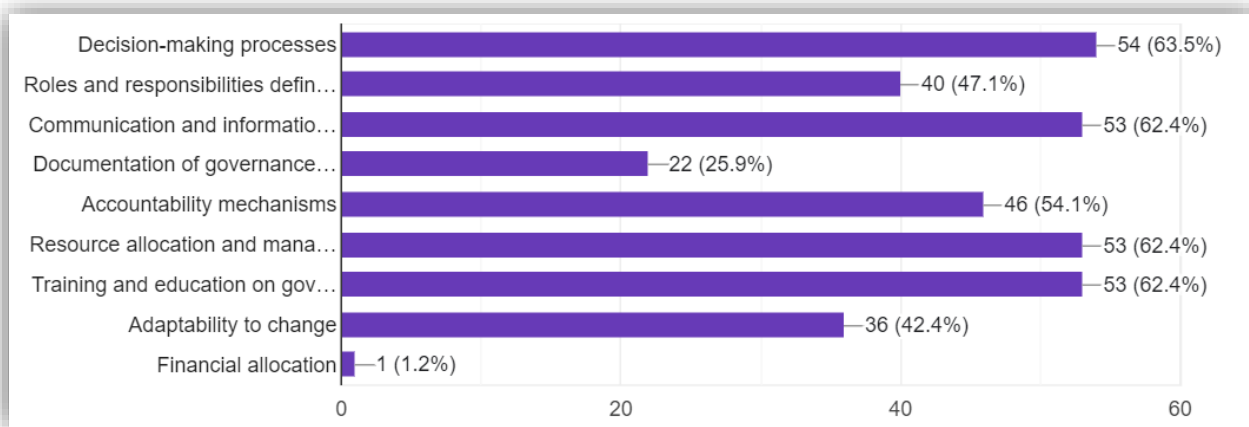


Figure 14 Areas of Improvement to Current Project Governance Structures

4.7 Alignment of Current Project Governance Structures with Objectives

When asked how the project governance structures align with the overall objectives and goals of the organization. Majority (60%) of the respondents stated that there is strong alignment followed by 28.2% selected partial alignment while 7.1% were indifferent. 3.5% selected limited alignment and 1.2% selected no alignment.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid No Alignment	1	1.2	1.2	1.2
Limited Alignment	3	3.5	3.5	4.7
Neutral	6	7.1	7.1	11.8
Partial Alignment	24	28.2	28.2	40.0
Strong Alignment	51	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 Alignment of Current Project Governance Structures with Organizational Objectives

4.8 Correlation Analysis

To achieve the specific objectives of this study, Pearson correlation analysis was employed using SPSS to scrutinize the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

4.8.1 Correlation between decision-making processes and project performance.

The positive correlation between decision-making processes within project governance structures and project performance is evident in Table 5. The Pearson correlation coefficient of .545** signifies a significant positive relationship between effective decision-making processes and favorable project performance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Decision Making processes	Project Performance
Decision making processes	Pearson Correlation	1	.545**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	85	85
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation	.545**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	85	85

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

Table 5 Correlation between decision-making processes and project performance

In line with the following hypothesis set:

H01: There is no significant relationship between decision-making processes within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

H11: There is a significant relationship between decision-making processes within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

The positive correlation between decision-making processes within project governance structures and project performance is evident in Table 5. The Pearson correlation coefficient of .545** signifies a significant positive relationship between effective decision-making processes and favorable project performance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Therefore, **H01 is rejected**, and **H11 is supported**.

4.8.2 Correlation between accountability mechanisms and project performance.

Table 6 showcases a positive correlation between accountability mechanisms within project governance structures and project performance. The Pearson correlation coefficient of .438** indicates a significant positive association between robust accountability mechanisms and enhanced project performance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Project Performance	Accountability Mechanisms
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.438**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	85	85
Accountability Mechanisms	Pearson Correlation	.438**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	85	85

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

Table 6 Correlation between accountability mechanisms and project performance.

The following hypothesis was set:

H02: There is no significant relationship between accountability mechanisms within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

H12: There is a significant relationship between accountability mechanisms within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

Table 6 showcases a positive correlation between accountability mechanisms within project governance structures and project performance. The Pearson correlation coefficient of .438** indicates a significant positive association between robust accountability mechanisms and enhanced project performance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Therefore, **H02 is rejected**, and **H12 is supported**.

4.8.3 Correlation between communication and information flow and project performance

In Table 7, the positive correlation between communication and information flow within project governance structures and project performance is evident. The Pearson correlation coefficient of .316** indicates a significant positive relationship at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Project Performance	Communication and Information Flow
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.316**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	85	85
Communication and Information Flow	Pearson Correlation	.316**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	85	85

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

Table 7 Correlation between communication and information flow and project performance

The following hypothesis was set:

H03: There is no significant relationship between communication and information flow within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

H13: There is a significant relationship between communication and information flow within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

In Table 7, the positive correlation between communication and information flow within project governance structures and project performance is evident. The Pearson correlation coefficient of .316** indicates a significant positive relationship at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Therefore, **H03 is rejected**, and **H13 is supported**.

4.8.4 Correlation between resource allocation and management and project performance.

The correlation analysis in Table 8 showcases a positive relationship between resource allocation and management within project governance structures and project performance. With a Pearson correlation coefficient of .531**, the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), indicating that efficient resource allocation and management positively impact project performance.

Correlations

		Project Performance	Resource Allocation and Management
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.531**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	85	85
Resource Allocation and Management	Pearson Correlation	.531**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	85	85

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

Table 8 Correlation between resource allocation and management and project performance.

The following hypothesis was set:

H04: There is no significant relationship between resource allocation and management within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

H14: There is a significant relationship between resource allocation and management within project governance structures and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

The correlation analysis in Table 8 showcases a positive relationship between resource allocation and management within project governance structures and project performance. With a Pearson correlation coefficient of .531**, the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), indicating that efficient resource allocation and management positively impact project performance. Therefore, **H04 is rejected**, and **H14 is supported**.

4.9 Thematic results

The demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the semi-structured interviews are outlined in the table 9. In terms of gender distribution, 80% of the respondents were male, and 20% were female. Regarding age, 40% fell within the 18 - 35 range, 40% within 46 - 55, and 20% were 56 and above. In the educational qualification category, 40% held bachelor's degrees, and 60% had master's degrees. Regarding years of experience, 60% of the respondents had over 10 years of experience, while 20% fell within each of the 0-2- and 3-5-years' experience categories. This comprehensive overview provides insights into the diverse backgrounds of the respondents involved in the interviews.

<i>Demographic Characteristic</i>	Options	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>	Male	4	80%
	Female	1	20%
<i>Total</i>		5	100%
<i>Age</i>	18 - 35	2	40%
	36 - 45	0	0%
	46 - 55	2	40%
	56 and above	1	20%
	<i>Total</i>		5
<i>Educational Qualification</i>	High School Diploma	0	0%

<i>Total</i>	Bachelor's Degree	2	40%
	Master's Degree	3	60%
		5	100%
Years of Experience			
<i>Total</i>	0-2 years	1	20%
	3-5 years	1	20%
	6-10 years		0%
	Above 10 years	3	60%
		5	100%

Table 9 Interview Demographics

4.9.1 Thematic Analysis: Enhancing Project Governance Structures

The interviews with five individuals, each with distinct roles and years of experience, provide valuable insights into project governance structures within their respective organizations. The respondents include an Assistant Director Projects (over 10 years of experience), a Chief Planner (4 years of experience), a Civil Engineer (less than 2 years of experience), a Systems Engineer (more than 16 years of experience), and a Technical Advisor – Projects (more than 5 years of experience). This analysis explores key themes derived from their responses, shedding light on decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, resource allocation and management, alignment with organizational objectives, and additional insights.

4.9.2 Decision-Making Processes:

Across the interviews, a common thread emerges in terms of decision-making processes. Collective decision-making is emphasized, indicating that decisions are not made in isolation but involve the collaboration of project teams. Leadership roles, particularly those of the Permanent Secretary (PS), steering committees, and project managers, play pivotal roles in the decision-making hierarchy. The flow of decisions from the PS to

Directors and down to project teams is a recurring pattern, highlighting a structured approach to governance.

4.9.3 Accountability Mechanisms:

4.9.3.1 Defined Roles: Roles within the governance structures are clearly defined, ensuring that each team member is accountable for specific responsibilities. This clarity helps in fostering collective responsibility within the teams.

4.9.3.2 Communication and Information Flow: Structured documentation, adhering to government policies, is a common practice among the interviewees. Regular meetings and documented reports are essential for maintaining transparency and ensuring that information flows seamlessly. However, challenges are identified, particularly in communication across departments and delays associated with role changes.

4.9.3.3 Challenges: Common challenges in accountability mechanisms include lengthy decision-making processes, lack of experience in key staff, and overlapping roles. These challenges highlight the need for streamlining decision-making and clarifying roles within governance structures.

4.9.4 Resource Allocation and Management:

4.9.4.1 Budget Allocations: Resource allocation is contingent upon project approval, with budgets guiding the distribution of resources. However, delays and adjustments in resource allocation pose challenges, impacting project timelines.

4.9.4.2 Challenges and Improvements: Challenges related to resource allocation are echoed across interviews, particularly in the context of government projects. Delays in allocation negatively affect project performance. Recommendations include improved information flow, clear channels of communication, and due diligence in feasibility studies to address these challenges.

4.9.5 Alignment with Organizational Objectives:

Alignment with organizational objectives varies among respondents. While some emphasize alignment with project charters, others underscore the need for realignment in human capital management. Successful projects are often attributed to effective

governance structures, exemplified by projects like the rehabilitation of markets in Lusaka and the implementation of an electronic ticketing system.

4.9.6 Additional Insights:

Key insights from the respondents encompass the importance of documentation, clarity in roles, due diligence in feasibility studies, and the need for private sector consultation to enhance existing structures. The respondents also highlight challenges related to lack of funds, communication gaps, and delays in decision-making, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of project governance.

In conclusion, the thematic analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of project governance structures. The collective decision-making approach, clear roles, and structured communication mechanisms underscore the importance of a well-defined governance framework. Challenges in resource allocation, decision-making delays, and communication gaps require targeted improvements for enhanced project performance. The alignment with organizational objectives and successful project examples further emphasizes the pivotal role of governance structures in achieving overall goals. The additional insights from experienced professionals offer valuable recommendations for optimizing existing structures and ensuring their adaptability to evolving project needs.

4.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the analysis and the findings of the study. The chapter provided a description of the demographic characteristics of the 85 questionnaires and 5 interviews. The chapter presented the findings of the study regarding the perceptions of the respondents regarding the impact of decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication strategies, and resource allocation on project performance. The chapter also presented the results of the Pearson correlation analysis of each independent variable and the dependent variable. The chapter concludes with additional insights drawn from the interviews.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the study's findings, unraveling the dynamics of demographic characteristics and various facets of project governance structures. As the section navigates the realms of demographics, governance structures, decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication, and resource allocation, the chapter contextualizes these revelations within the broader theoretical frameworks of Agency Theory, Institutional Theory, and Resource Dependence Theory.

5.2 Demographic Characteristics

5.2.1 Gender Distribution

The demographic breakdown of the study participants, as revealed in the findings, provides essential context for interpreting research outcomes, aligning with insights from relevant empirical studies. Notably, the 60 percent male representation suggests a potential gender bias, consistent with broader historical imbalances in the project management field (Sankaran, et al., 2008; Sirisomboonsuk, et al., 2018). This distribution prompts consideration of how gender-related dynamics may influence shared perspectives and experiences. Additionally, the predominant age group of 18 to 35 years indicates a relatively young cohort, in line with observations from Ekung et al. (2017). This youthfulness could impact views on project governance, introducing diverse expectations and approaches, especially when compared to more experienced professionals.

The prevalence of participants with bachelor's and master's degrees, as found in Alvi et al.'s (2019) study, suggests a well-educated sample likely to contribute distinct and sophisticated responses. Furthermore, the concentration of respondents with 3 to 5 years of experience, as seen in Ekung et al. (2017), aligns with the youthful age distribution, pointing to an early-career cohort. This alignment emphasizes potential variations in challenges and perspectives, highlighting unique issues faced by less experienced professionals compared to their more seasoned counterparts. In summary, these

demographic characteristics align with existing literature, deepening our understanding and adding valuable context to the interpretation of research outcomes.

5.3 The Existence of Governance Structures within Government Ministries

The findings regarding the existence and effectiveness of project governance structures reveal a predominantly positive perception among respondents. A significant majority (74.1%) agree that their organizations have well-established project governance structures, with an additional 12.9% strongly agreeing. This aligns with the insights from Ekung et al. (2017), emphasizing the importance of well-established governance structures in ensuring the success of projects. According to Agency Theory, such structures are vital in clarifying roles, promoting accountability, and aligning actions with organizational goals (Van Puyvelde, et al., 2012). The positive sentiment extends to the perceived effectiveness of these structures, with 57.6% considering them effective and 12.9% rating them as very effective. This aligns with Sirisomboonsuk et al.'s (2018) emphasis on the significance of IT and project governance in positively influencing project performance. The correlation analysis, particularly the highest mean score of 3.88 for ensuring alignment with objectives, supports the idea that effective governance structures contribute significantly to organizational goals.

The mean scores for accountability (3.68), transparency (3.45), effective communication (3.51), resource allocation (3.40), and alignment with objectives (3.88) signify general agreement among respondents. However, the standard deviations suggest some variability in opinions, reflecting the moderate diversity in perceptions. This echoes Sankaran et al.'s (2008) findings, which indicated challenges such as role ambiguity and uneven power allocation within governance structures. The moderate variability aligns with the understanding that despite general agreement, nuances and challenges exist in how governance structures are perceived and implemented.

The theoretical lenses of Institutional Theory and Resource Dependence Theory support these findings. Well-established governance structures can be seen as institutionalized practices that organizations adopt to conform to industry norms and expectations (Huerta & Zuckerman, 2009). The perceived effectiveness in ensuring accountability, promoting transparency, facilitating communication, and aligning with objectives resonates with the

idea that governance structures are resources critical for organizational survival and success (Alvi, et al., 2019).

5.4 The relationship between decision-making processes within project governance structures on project performance

The first specific objective was to establish the impact of decision-making processes within project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia. In order to meet the objective, a Pearson correlation analysis was employed. The study found a positive correlation (Pearson correlation coefficient of .545**) between decision-making processes within project governance structures and project performance. This aligns with the collective decision-making emphasis identified in the interviews. The recurring pattern of decisions flowing from the Permanent Secretary (PS) to Directors and down to project teams reflects a structured approach, resonating with the collaborative decision-making highlighted in the interviews. This aligns with the emphasis on collective decision-making in Sirisomboonsuk et al.'s (2018) study, which stressed the significance of alignment between IT governance and project governance for enhanced project performance.

The strong consensus (70.6%) among respondents regarding the clarity of decision-making roles and responsibilities further reinforces the positive relationship. This aligns with the insights from Agency Theory, emphasizing the importance of well-defined roles and responsibilities for effective decision-making and project success (Alvi, et al., 2019). The leadership roles of the Permanent Secretary, steering committees, and project managers, identified in the interviews, play pivotal roles in the decision-making hierarchy, supporting the theoretical framework of Agency Theory.

Institutional Theory is relevant here as well, suggesting that decision-making processes become institutionalized within organizations as part of their governance structures (Heikkila & Isett, 2004). The structured flow of decisions identified in the interviews reflects how decision-making practices are ingrained in the institutional fabric of the organization, contributing to a positive correlation with project performance. This aligns with the theoretical framework that emphasizes the institutionalization of decision-making processes for improved project outcomes.

5.5 The influence of accountability mechanisms within project governance structures on project performance

The second specific objective of the study was to investigate the influence of accountability mechanisms within project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia. The study sought to meet this objective through the utilization of Pearson Correlation analysis. The findings show a positive correlation (Pearson correlation coefficient of .438**) between accountability mechanisms within project governance structures and project performance is substantiated by the interviews. Roles within governance structures are explicitly defined, fostering collective responsibility among team members. This aligns with Sirisomboonsuk et al.'s (2018) emphasis on the importance of alignment between IT governance and project governance for enhanced project performance.

The structured documentation and adherence to government policies identified in the interviews contribute to the positive relationship observed. Regular meetings and documented reports, despite challenges in communication across departments and delays associated with role changes, underscore the significance of accountability mechanisms. These findings resonate with the insights from Agency Theory, asserting that well-defined roles are crucial for aligning individual and organizational interests (Alvi, et al., 2019). The clarity in defined roles, as identified in the interviews, is a manifestation of this alignment.

The challenges identified in accountability mechanisms, such as lengthy decision-making processes, lack of experience in key staff, and overlapping roles, highlight the need for streamlining decision-making and clarifying roles. This aligns with Ekung et al.'s (2017) assertion that accountability is integral to well-established project governance structures and contributes to better project outcomes. The positive correlation observed in this study underscores the notion that when accountability mechanisms are robust and well-integrated into governance structures, they significantly contribute to favorable project performance.

Institutional Theory supports these findings, suggesting that accountability mechanisms become institutionalized practices within organizations adhering to industry norms

(Huerta & Zuckerman, 2009). Organizations adopt accountability mechanisms not only for internal alignment but also to legitimize their actions and ensure compliance with stakeholder expectations. This alignment between accountability mechanisms and project performance indicates that accountability, as an institutionalized practice, plays a crucial role in enhancing project outcomes. The positive correlation observed reinforces the relevance of theoretical frameworks like Agency Theory and Institutional Theory in explaining the dynamics between accountability mechanisms and project performance within project governance structures.

5.6 The role of communication and information flow within project governance structures on project performance

This study sought to analyze the role of communication and information flow within project governance structures in relation to project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia as the third specific objective. The results of the analysis show a positive correlation (Pearson correlation coefficient of .316**) between communication and information flow within project governance structures and project performance. This aligns with the findings of Sankaran et al. (2008) and Sirisomboonsuk et al. (2018). Sankaran et al. (2008) highlighted the challenges in communication within project governance structures, emphasizing the need for effective communication to overcome issues during project execution. The positive relationship observed in this study supports the argument that when communication and information flow are streamlined within governance structures, project performance improves.

Agency Theory provides a lens through which to interpret these findings. Effective communication is crucial for ensuring that information flows seamlessly through various hierarchical levels, facilitating better decision-making and coordination (Alvi, et al., 2019). The positive correlation underscores the idea that when governance structures are designed to promote effective communication, they contribute positively to project performance. Institutional Theory complements this by suggesting that communication practices become institutionalized within organizations as part of their governance structures, shaping how information is shared and utilized (Sirisomboonsuk, et al., 2018).

5.7 The influence of resource allocation and management within project governance structures on project performance

Finally, the study sought to determine the influence of resource allocation and management within project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia. The results show that there is a positive relationship (Pearson correlation coefficient of .531**) between resource allocation and management within project governance structures and project performance is echoed in the interviews. Resource allocation, contingent upon project approval and guided by budgets, poses challenges such as delays and adjustments that impact project timelines. These challenges align with the findings of Alvi et al. (2019), who emphasize the significance of combining risk management activities with strong project governance methods for successful project results. The positive correlation observed in this study suggests that efficient resource allocation and management, embedded within governance structures, indeed positively impact project performance.

Resource Dependence Theory provides a relevant theoretical lens, positing that organizations depend on resources for survival and success (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2015). In the context of project governance, efficient resource allocation becomes a critical resource, and the positive correlation supports the argument that when governance structures effectively allocate and manage resources, they significantly contribute to improved project outcomes.

These findings are supplemented by Institutional Theory, which emphasizes that resource allocation techniques are ingrained inside organizations within the framework of their structures of governance, determining how resources are dispersed and utilized (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The challenges identified in the interviews, particularly in the context of government projects, reinforce the relevance of theoretical frameworks. Recommendations for improved information flow, clear channels of communication, and due diligence in feasibility studies align with the principles of Institutional Theory, indicating that resource allocation practices, when institutionalized, contribute to favorable project performance.

In summary, the positive correlation observed in this study strengthens the argument that resource allocation and management practices within project governance structures play a pivotal role in influencing project performance. The alignment with theoretical frameworks, particularly Resource Dependence Theory and Institutional Theory, provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the dynamics of resource allocation within project governance and its impact on project outcomes.

5.8 New Knowledge Generated

The study's exploration of findings has yielded novel insights into the dynamics of project governance within government ministries in Zambia. Through an examination of unique and unexplored demographic characteristics found in some government ministries of Zambia and various dimensions of project governance structures. The research has unveiled previously unexplored facets of organizational behaviour and decision-making processes. Specifically, the analysis has shed light on the influences of gender distribution, age demographics, and educational backgrounds on project governance practices, enriching the understanding of how diverse stakeholder profiles shape organizational dynamics.

Furthermore, the investigation into the existence and effectiveness of governance structures within government ministries has provided fresh insights into the institutionalization of project governance practices. Leveraging theoretical frameworks such as Agency Theory, Institutional Theory, and Resource Dependence Theory, the study has uncovered the underlying mechanisms governing the alignment between governance structures and organizational goals, thereby deepening the understanding of the organizational dynamics underpinning project management processes.

Moreover, the exploration into the relationships between decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication, resource allocation, and project performance has revealed critical insights into the drivers of organizational success. By identifying positive correlations between these dimensions and project performance, the study underscores the importance of structured decision-making, transparent accountability mechanisms, effective communication channels, and efficient resource allocation in driving project success.

In summary, the new knowledge generated from this study transcends statistical associations, offering profound insights into the complex interplay between demographic characteristics, governance structures, and project performance. By synthesizing empirical evidence with theoretical frameworks, the research lays the groundwork for future inquiry and exploration in the field of project management, paving the way for enhanced organizational effectiveness and project outcomes within government ministries in Zambia.

5.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, discussion of the study findings, beginning with an exploration of demographic characteristics and their implications for interpreting subsequent research outcomes. The positive perceptions regarding project governance structures unfolded, aligning with Agency Theory, Institutional Theory, and Resource Dependence Theory. The correlations between decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication, resource allocation, and project performance were explored, each finding grounded in theoretical underpinnings. This chapter, as a cohesive whole, adds a layer of depth to our understanding of project governance dynamics, integrating empirical evidence with established theoretical perspectives.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter draws the end of the exploration, summarizing the essence of the study, its findings, and their implications. Through investigation into the decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication dynamics, and resource allocation within project governance structures in Zambian government ministries, this study contributes to the discourse on project management and governance.

6.2 Conclusion

This study which aimed to assess the effect of project governance structures on project performance within selected government ministries in Zambia has provided a comprehensive examination of the relationship between decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication dynamics, resource allocation, and project performance within government ministries in Zambia. Through the investigation of four specific objectives and corresponding research questions, significant insights have been revealed, deepening the understanding of project governance dynamics in this context. The positive correlations observed between effective decision-making processes and favourable project performance underscore the critical importance of structured decision-making hierarchies and clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. These findings not only validate the theoretical frameworks of Agency Theory and Institutional Theory but also emphasize the practical implications for enhancing project outcomes.

This study aimed to dissect the multifaceted relationship between decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication, resource allocation, and project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia. The study had four specific objectives with four corresponding research questions:

6.2.1 To establish the impact of decision-making processes within project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia. This objective was not only answered but extensively highlighted by the findings. The study unveiled a significant positive correlation between effective decision-

making processes and favorable project performance. Through in-depth interviews, a consistent theme of collective decision-making emerged, underscoring the collaborative nature of decisions involving various project teams. Leadership roles, especially those held by the Permanent Secretary (PS), steering committees, and project managers, emerged as pivotal in this hierarchical decision-making structure. The structured flow of decisions from the PS to Directors and down to project teams highlighted a meticulously organized approach to governance, indicative of a well-defined decision-making hierarchy.

The significant consensus (70.6%) among respondents regarding the clarity of decision-making roles and responsibilities further reinforced this positive relationship. This strong alignment aligns seamlessly with the principles of Agency Theory, which posits that well-defined roles and responsibilities are fundamental for effective decision-making and, consequently, project success. The positive correlation observed in the study further solidifies the role of Institutional Theory in explaining how decision-making practices become integral to organizational culture, thereby influencing project outcomes positively.

6.2.2 To investigate the influence of accountability mechanisms within project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

This objective was adeptly addressed, revealing an understanding of the relationship between accountability mechanisms and project performance. Roles within governance structures were found to be explicitly defined, fostering a collective sense of responsibility among team members. This clarity in roles aligns with the insights from Sirisomboonsuk et al. (2018), who emphasized the importance of alignment between IT governance and project governance for enhanced project performance.

Structured documentation and adherence to government policies, identified through interviews, contributed to the positive and significant relationship observed. Despite challenges in communication across departments and delays associated with role changes, the study underscored the significance of accountability mechanisms. These findings resonated deeply with the principles of Agency Theory, asserting that well-defined roles are crucial for aligning individual and organizational interests (Alvi, et al.,

2019). The study provided empirical evidence of the clarity in defined roles as a manifestation of this alignment.

Challenges identified in accountability mechanisms, such as lengthy decision-making processes, lack of experience in key staff, and overlapping roles, highlighted the need for streamlining decision-making and clarifying roles. The positive correlation observed in this study underscores the notion that when accountability mechanisms are strong and well-integrated into governance structures, they significantly contribute to favorable project performance.

Institutional Theory supports these findings, suggesting that accountability mechanisms become institutionalized practices within organizations adhering to industry norms. Organizations adopt accountability mechanisms not only for internal alignment but also to legitimize their actions and ensure compliance with stakeholder expectations. This alignment between accountability mechanisms and project performance indicates that accountability, as an institutionalized practice, plays a crucial role in enhancing project outcomes. The positive correlation observed reinforces the relevance of theoretical frameworks like Agency Theory and Institutional Theory in explaining the dynamics between accountability mechanisms and project performance within project governance structures.

6.2.3 To analyze the role of communication and information flow within project governance structures in relation to project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

The objective was equally pursued and answered, shedding light on the critical link between communication dynamics and project performance. The positive relationship observed in this study also supported the argument that when communication and information flow are streamlined within governance structures, project performance improves. Agency Theory provided a lens through which to interpret these findings, asserting that effective communication is crucial for ensuring that information flows seamlessly through various hierarchical levels, facilitating better decision-making and coordination. Institutional Theory complemented these findings by suggesting that communication practices become institutionalized within organizations as part of their

governance structures, shaping how information is shared and utilized. The study provided empirical evidence supporting this theoretical perspective, indicating that effective communication practices, when embedded in governance structures, influence project outcomes positively.

6.2.4 To determine the influence of resource allocation and management within project governance structures on project performance in selected government ministries in Zambia.

This objective was strongly addressed just like the other three discussed, unraveling the relationship between resource allocation, management practices, and project performance. The positive relationship (Pearson correlation coefficient of .531**) between resource allocation and management within project governance structures and project performance echoed insights from reviewed literature. Combining risk management activities with strong project governance methods contributes to successful project results. The positive and significant correlation observed in this study suggested that efficient resource allocation and management, embedded within governance structures, indeed positively impact project performance.

Resource Dependence Theory provided a relevant theoretical lens, positing that organizations depend on resources for survival and success. In the context of project governance, efficient resource allocation becomes a critical resource, and the positive correlation supports the argument that when governance structures effectively allocate and manage resources, they significantly contribute to improved project outcomes.

Institutional Theory complemented these findings by emphasizing that resource allocation practices become institutionalized within organizations as part of their governance structures, shaping how resources are distributed and utilized. The challenges identified in the interviews, particularly in the context of government projects, reinforced the relevance of theoretical frameworks. Recommendations for improved information flow, clear channels of communication, and due diligence in feasibility studies aligned with the principles of Institutional Theory, indicating that resource allocation practices, when institutionalized, contribute to favorable project performance.

In conclusion, this study has provided a comprehensive examination of the relationship between decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication dynamics, resource allocation, and project performance within government ministries in Zambia. Through the investigation of four specific objectives and corresponding research questions, significant insights have been revealed, deepening the understanding of project governance dynamics in this context. The positive correlations observed between effective decision-making processes and favourable project performance underscore the critical importance of structured decision-making hierarchies and clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. These findings not only validate the theoretical frameworks of Agency Theory and Institutional Theory but also emphasize the practical implications for enhancing project outcomes.

Similarly, the analysis of accountability mechanisms within project governance structures has elucidated the integral role of accountability in fostering organizational alignment and driving project success. By highlighting the challenges and opportunities associated with accountability practices, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on organizational governance and performance management. Furthermore, the examination of communication and information flow has underscored the pivotal role of effective communication in facilitating coordination, collaboration, and decision-making processes. The positive relationship between streamlined communication practices and project performance reinforces the importance of institutionalizing communication within governance structures. Lastly, the investigation into resource allocation and management practices has shed light on the nuanced dynamics of resource dependence and institutionalization within project governance structures. By demonstrating the positive correlation between efficient resource allocation and project performance, this research reaffirms the critical role of resource management in driving project success.

Therefore, this study advances the understanding of project governance dynamics within government ministries in Zambia and provides valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers alike. By synthesizing empirical evidence with established theoretical perspectives, this research contributes to the ongoing dialogue on effective project management and governance in the public sector.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and summary, the following recommendations are proposed:

6.3.1 Define Decision-Making Criteria

Ministries should establish a cross-functional committee comprising senior management, project managers, and subject matter experts to collaboratively define decision-making criteria. This can be done through conducting workshops and brainstorming sessions to identify key decision points, establish decision criteria matrices, and develop decision trees to guide the decision-making process.

6.3.2 Training and Capacity Building:

Government Ministries should partner with reputable training institutions or management consultancy firms specializing in leadership and decision-making skills development. The trainings can be help design tailor-made training programs incorporating case studies, role-playing exercises, and interactive workshops to enhance participants' practical decision-making capabilities.

6.3.3 Establish Clear Communication Channels

This can be done by Government officials, Project Managers, and Stakeholders through the use of existing communication platforms and tools within the organization, such as email, intranet portals, and project management software. This can be implemented through the definition of communication protocols, establishing of communication channels tailored to specific project needs, and designate communication champions responsible for disseminating information and fostering collaboration.

6.3.4 Implement Performance Monitoring Systems

Ministries should utilize project management software or custom-built dashboards to track project performance metrics in real-time. The implementation involves defining key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with project objectives, establish data collection mechanisms, and conduct regular performance reviews to identify areas for improvement and corrective action.

6.3.5 Feedback Mechanisms

Ministries should integrate feedback mechanisms into existing communication channels and project management processes. Implement feedback surveys, suggestion boxes, or regular stakeholder meetings to solicit input, analyse feedback received, and incorporate actionable insights into project governance practices.

6.4 Areas of Further Research

Building on the findings and summary, areas for further research include:

6.4.1 Longitudinal Studies: Longitudinal studies tracking project performance over time can reveal the sustained impact of governance structures and practices.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

Acknowledging the boundaries of this study, certain limitations should be considered:

6.5.1 Sample Size: The study's reliance on a specific number of government ministries limits the generalizability of findings.

6.5.2 Self-Reporting Bias: Findings based on participant self-reports may introduce bias, and future research could explore more objective measures.

6.5.3 Limited Scope: The study was only limited to four ministries; findings may not be directly applicable to all the ministries in Zambia.

6.6 Contribution to the Body knowledge

The study contributes to knowledge by providing insights into decision-making processes and their impact on project performance, accountability mechanisms, communication dynamics, and resource allocation and management within project governance structures. Through empirical evidence and theoretical support, the study enhances understanding.

6.7 Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter encapsulates the study's journey, from the formulation of objectives to the detailed exploration of findings. The theoretical foundations provided a lens through which empirical evidence was examined, unveiling correlations that

contribute to the evolving narrative of project governance. The recommendations and avenues for further research serve as beacons, guiding future explorations into the complex landscape of project management within government ministries.

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APPENDICES

i) Research Instruments

Questionnaire



**UNIVERSITY
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Title: Questionnaire on Project Governance and Project Performance

Dear Respondent,

The title of this research is "Assessing the Effect of Project Governance on Project Performance in Selected Government Ministries in Zambia."

This questionnaire aims to gather quantitative data on decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, communication and information flow, and resource allocation and management within the project governance structures of the government ministries. I'm cordially requesting your participation in this study. The information you submit for this research and the data generated from it, alongside the study findings will be kept strictly for academic purposes; no respondent will be mentioned in this research to ensure confidentiality of the data collection process. Please be enthusiastic about answering all questions. Thank you for your participation.

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Gender:

Male

Female

2. Age:

18 - 35

36 - 45

46 - 55

56 and above

3. Educational Qualification:

High School Diploma

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Ph.D. or higher

4. Years of Experience in Project Management or involvement/attachment to any project:

0-2 years

3-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16 years and above

Section 2: Project Governance Structure

1. In your organization, is there a well-defined project governance structure in place?

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

2. The project governance structure clearly define decision-making roles and responsibilities.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

3. Are the decision-making processes within the project governance structure well-documented and communicated?

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

4. How would you rate the effectiveness of the current project governance structure in your organization?

Very ineffective

Ineffective

Neutral

Effective

Very effective

If effective, what makes it effective?

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If not, what makes it ineffective?

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5. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the project governance structure in your organization? (Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The project governance structure ensures clear accountability for project outcomes					
The project governance structure promotes transparency and openness in decision-making					
The project governance structure facilitates effective					

communication and information flow					
The project governance structure allocates resources efficiently to support project success					
The project governance structure ensures alignment with organizational objectives					

Section 3: Project Performance

6. How would you rate the overall performance of projects in your organization that you are familiar with?

- Very High
- High
- Neutral
- Low
- Very Low

7. In your experience, what are the major factors that influence project performance in your organization?

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8. How often do projects within your organization experience cost overruns?

Frequently

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

9. How often do projects within your organization experience schedule delays?

Frequently

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

Section 5: Challenges and Improvements

10. what are the key challenges or limitations of the current project governance structure in contributing to project success?

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.....

11. Are there any specific areas of the project governance structure that require improvement to enhance project performance?

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Section 6. Alignment with Organizational objectives

12. How does the project governance structure align with the overall objectives and goals of the organization?

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Section 7: Recommendations

10. Based on your experience, what improvements or changes would you suggest to enhance project governance structures and project performance in your organization?

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Interview Guide



**UNIVERSITY
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Title: Interview guide on Project Governance and Project Performance

Dear Respondent,

Welcome to this interview on project governance and project performance. Your insights and experiences are valuable to this research. The purpose of this interview is to gather in-depth information about the project governance structures and their influence on project performance within your organization. Please feel free to provide detailed responses, and your answers will remain confidential. Let's begin:

SECTION A: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEMOGRAPHY

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Gender:

Male

Female

2. Age:

18 - 35

36 - 45

46 - 55

56 and above

3. Educational Qualification:

High School Diploma

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Ph.D. or higher

4. Years of Experience in Project Management or involvement/attachment to any project:

0-2 years

3-5 years

6-10 years

11 and above

Section 2: Background Information

1. Can you please tell me about your role and responsibilities within the organization and your involvement in project management?

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2. How long have you been working in this role, and what projects have you been involved in recently?

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Section 3: Project Governance Structure

3. How would you describe the project governance structure within your organization?

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4. Can you explain how decision-making processes are managed within the project governance structure?

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5. How is accountability defined and allocated within the project governance framework?

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6. Are there any specific mechanisms or guidelines in place to ensure transparency and openness in decision-making processes?

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7. How does the project governance structure facilitate effective communication and information flow among project stakeholders?

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Section 4: Project Performance

8. In your experience, how do project governance structures impact project performance within the organization?

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9. What are the major factors that influence project performance in projects overseen by the current governance structure?

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10. How are resources allocated and managed within projects, and how does it affect project performance?

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11. Can you share your observations on the relationship between project governance structures and project outcomes, such as cost management, time management, and project deliverables?

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Section 5: Challenges and Improvements

12. From your perspective, what are the key challenges or limitations of the current project governance structure in contributing to project success?

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13. Are there any specific areas of the project governance structure that require improvement to enhance project performance?

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14. What recommendations or changes would you suggest to optimize the project governance structure for better project performance?

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Section 6: Alignment with Organizational Objectives

15. How does the project governance structure align with the overall objectives and goals of the organization?

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16. Can you provide examples of successful projects that were attributed to the effectiveness of the project governance structure?

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Section 7: Additional Insights

17. Is there any other information or insights you would like to share related to project governance and project performance?

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Thank you for participating in this interview. Your input is highly valuable to the success of this research. All the information you have provided will be kept confidential. If there is any additional information you think of later, please do not hesitate to reach out. Have a great day!

ii) Introductory Letter



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Phone: +260 211 233407, 258409, Fax: +260 211 233409, E-mail: vicechancellor@unilus.ac.zm, registrar@unilus.ac.zm
Website: www.unilus.ac.zm

All correspondence should be addressed to the Vice Chancellor

26th July, 2023

TO WHOM IT CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: DATA COLLECTION REQUEST: ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF PROJECT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES ON PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES IN ZAMBIA

This letter serves to introduce **MALITA LUNGU SILUKA** Identity Number **MSCPM221129780** as a bona fide student of the University of Lusaka pursuing Master of Science in Project Management.

MALITA LUNGU SILUKA is required to submit a Dissertation as part of the requirements for the award of a Master of Science in Project Management Studies and therefore seeks to collect data from your institution. Her Dissertation title is stated above. The data will be used solely for Academic purposes and a copy of the final document can be availed to you upon request.

Any assistance given to her will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mwamba Chagda'.

Mwamba Chagda (Mr.)

DEPUTY REGISTRAR



Passion for Quality Education! Our Driving Force

iii) Ethical Clearance



SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

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UNILUS-RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Ref no: FWA00033228-5312/23

Date: 10th December 2023

STUDENT NAME: MALITA LUNGU SILUKA

**ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF PROJECT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES ON
PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES IN
ZAMBIA**

The above research was submitted to the research ethics committee for review.
The study has no major ethical problems and is approved subject to the following:

1. The study cannot be changed without express permission of the UNILUS research ethics committee.
2. Approval from the necessary authority should be sought.

Congratulations and the committee wishes you success in your work.



Professor Kasonde Bowa

MSc(Glasgow), M.Med(UNZA), FRCS(Glasgow), FACS, FCS, DPH(LSTMH), MPH(UCL)

Chairman- UNILUS REC

Professor of Urology and Consultant Urologist

Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Research and Innovation

Executive Dean - School of Medicine and Health Sciences