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Beneficiary Participation and Performance of Agricultural Projects in Rwanda: A Case of Post Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project

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Abstract: ***Effective projects depend mainly on proper project selection, project design, project implementation, beneficiary participation and monitoring and evaluation. The study was guided by three objectives; to evaluate the effect of beneficiary participation in decision making on performance of Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project, to determine the effect of sharing project expectations with beneficiary on the performance of Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project and to analyse the effect of feedback exchange between project team and beneficiary on performance ofPost-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project. This study adopted correlational research design. The correlational design helps to establish the existence of relationship/ association/ interdependence between two or more aspects of a situation (Kumar, 2011).The researcher calculated the sample using Yamane Formula and came up with a sample of 399 respondents from beneficiaries and 17 employees and this gives a total 416 respondents.The target population of this study were 155, 518 beneficiaries and 17 Project staff. Sample size composed by 416 respondents. The findings revealed that Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project accommodated the suggestions of its beneficiaries at the rate of 85.8% during the project lifecycles. 75% of respondents agreed that the decision taken were reviewed. The findings also revealed that there is no sharing of appreciations between project team and beneficiaries, where the findings show that the level of appreciation is too low (39.5%). Thereis no-sharing of areas of improvements between project team and beneficiaries and this is proved by the lower number of appreciation, where only 14.1% appreciated this statement. Findings revealed that participation in decision making, sharing project expectations and ffeedback exchange between project team and beneficiary affected performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project, where (R=0.953) with variations in aspects of Participation in decision making, sharing project expectation and feedback exchange between project team and beneficiary contribute 90.5% to project Performance. Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Projectshould involve all beneficiaries in the project review and sharing the feedback of the ongoing and ended project's activities, because poor sharing of feedback between project team and beneficiaries affect negatively the performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project. Furthermore; its staff should continue and improve on working closely with beneficiaries because it has a significant effect on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project. The government of Rwanda should continue to launch many agricultural projects to support farmers in rural areas in order to increase their agricultural production.***

Keywords: Beneficiary participation, Performance of Agricultural projects

1. Introduction

All-over the world; government and non-governmental agencies realized more and more that the main reason of many unsuccessful development projects is the lack of active, effective and lasting participation of the intended beneficiaries. Consequently, several agencies started to promote the participation of people, in particular disadvantaged women and men, in development through various programmes, mostly on a pilot basis. People today have an impatient urge to participate in the events and processes that shape their lives and that impatience brings many dangers and opportunities" (Mohan, 2007). Since the 1970s the notion of participation has become widely acknowledged as a key component of development program. Participation is defined in a United Nations report (Desai & Potter, 2012) to mean 'sharing by people in the benefits of development, active contribution by people to development and participation of people in decision making at all levels of society'.The use and management of projects has risen to a new prominence, with projects seen as critical to economic in both the private and public sectors (Uphoff, 2009).

In Rwanda, the reason behind the expansion of project-based work typically arise due to the new challenging environment and opportunities brought about by technological developments, the shifting boundaries of knowledge, dynamic market conditions, changes in environmental regulations, the drive towards shorter product life cycles, increased customer participation and the increased scope and complexity of inter-organizational relationships (Kalisa, 2014). In most cases, the benefits of development projects or programs seem to end with the withdrawal of government or foreign assistance from the projects or programs. The USAID and World Bank's post evaluation show that the majority of development interventions have low levels of performance and sustainability after the completion of their activities. This has created the demand for governments and donors to finance projects that help beneficiaries become participants rather than completely depending on government and donors (Goldsmith, 2012).

The Government of Rwanda and International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) have set up new partnership to support agriculture production processing operations to help developing an efficient post-harvest system driven by the private sector to reduce post-harvest losses and ensure food security of staple crops in Rwanda. The US$85.862 million, funded by a loan and grant from IFAD, the government of Rwanda, private sector and

beneficiaries, intended to benefit 155, 518 beneficiaries comprising poor smallholder farmers either engaged in production and primary processing in the priority CIP crops and dairy, including poor farmers with some production potential and members of cooperatives who own small land plots, and smallholders who supplement their income through agricultural wage work including some privately owned SMEs (MINAGRI, 2013).

2. Statement of the Problem

Beneficiaries' participation in the agricultural projects has been applied in developing countries over the last two decades using a variety of approaches. While some success have been reported from the use of these approaches (Twebaze, 2010), detailed assessments of the effectiveness of the approaches used have been very few and scattered. There is no country which can be developed without the development and improvement of development projects. Development projects are undertaken to improve the livelihood of the community. Effective projects depend mainly on proper project selection, project design, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Nonetheless, without close monitoring, proper planning and involvement of stakeholders and beneficiaries in all stages of the project before its implementation, it is not possible to identify and consolidate or strengthen good practices of performance, sustainability and even deal with challenges. The lack of effective structures for people's participation has been a major constraint upon more widespread development. People's participation in their own projects has not yet attained the acceptable levels that qualify to imply full participation (Rural Communities Impacting Policy, 2002).

Involving the beneficiaries in ongoing projects is still a big issue in so many projects. Moreover, values, norms, social belief and opinions of the local people which are affected directly or indirectly by development interventions should also be considered. Otherwise, performance and sustainability of development projects may generally be questioned (Khwaja, 2011). Without detailed assessments, it is not possible to state if low stakeholders' participation in the project planning and project implementation processes can be related to poor performance and sustainability of the agricultural projects. Therefore, the study sought to assess the effect of beneficiary participation on performance of agricultural projects in Rwanda by considering Post Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project as the case study.

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this research was to assess the effect of beneficiary participation on the performance of agricultural projects in Rwanda by considering Post Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project as the case study.

The objectives of the study were set as follows:

1. To evaluate the effect of beneficiary participation in decision making on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project.
2. To determine the effect of sharing project expectations with beneficiary on the performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project.
3. To analyse the effect of feedback exchange between project team and beneficiary on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project

4. Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project (PASP) in all twelve districts in which it operated; with the main objective of assessing the effect of beneficiary participation on performance of Agricultural projects in Rwanda. These districts are Musanze, Nyabihu and Rubavu of North West of Rwanda; districts of Ruhango, Muhanga, Kamonyi and Nyanza of Southern Province and Nyagatare, Gatsibo, Kayonza, Ngoma and Kirehe districts in Eastern Province of Rwanda. In order to achieve the objectives of this study; the study covered the period of 2014-2016, the researcher preferred this period because it is when Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project started to implement its activities in Rwanda.

5. Limitations of the Study

This particular study had a number of limitations which affected the generalization of research findings. Because of time and financial limitations and the small sample taken, its findings cannot be generalized. The researcher focused on beneficiary participation and agricultural projects performance in Rwanda, by considering the case of Post-Harvest and Agri-business support project, therefore other factors outside beneficiary participation and agricultural project performance in Rwanda have not been captured and analyzed in this study.

6. Conceptual Framework of the Study

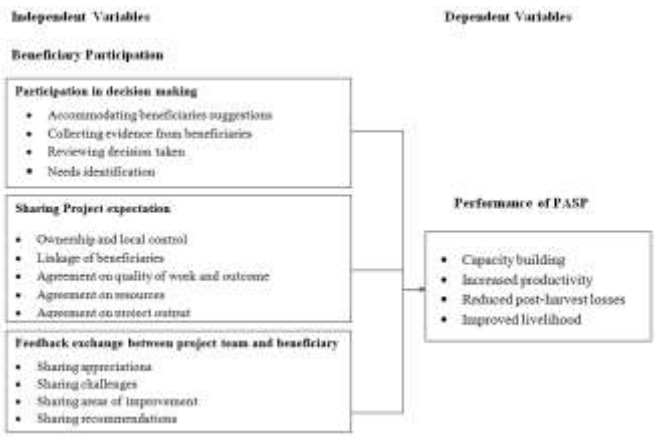

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

7. Methodology

The study adopted correlational design. The correlational design helps to establish the existence of relationship/

association/ interdependence between two or more aspects of a situation. The target population was 155, 535 people including beneficiaries and project staff. Because it couldn't be easy to collect data from all people in Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project and because it is time consuming and costly; The researcher calculated the sample and came up with a sample of 399 respondents from beneficiaries and 17 employees and this gave a total 416 respondents.The primary data for this study were collected by used questionnaires. Questionnaires were designed by the researcher and distributed to the staff and beneficiaries of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project. Questionnaires are less expensive, and help to save both human and financial resources. Since the study targeted a big number of respondents, also scattered over a wide geographical area, the questionnaires helped researcher to achieve the research objectives.

8. Research Findings

8.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

8.1.1 Time of respondents' residence in the district

The table below shows the time in which the respondents have been residents of the districts.

Table 1: Time of respondents 'residence in the district

	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 3 years	131	31.5
3 and 5 years	148	35.6
5 and above years	137	32.9
Total	**416**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data, 2017

The results in Table 1 show that 31.5% have been residents for less than 3 years and 35.6% have been residents between 3 to 5 years while 32.9% of respondents have been residents for the period above 5 years. This means that the majority of the respondents have been residents for the period of 3-5 years and this allowed them to know much about beneficiary participation and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project.

8.1.2 Level of education

The Table 2 shows the level of education of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project beneficiaries and its staff.

Table 2: Levels of education

	Frequency	Percentage
Primary education	172	41.3
Secondary education	185	44.5
Bachelor's degree	42	10.1
Master's degree	17	4.1
Total	**416**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data, 2017

By asking this question, the researcher wanted to know the levels education of the respondents involved in the study. The study results in the Table 2 indicated that none of respondents has PhD level of education but 41.3% and 44.5% of respondents have Primary and secondary level respectively. 10.1% of respondents acquired a bachelor's degree while only 4.1% acquired Master degrees. As revealed by the findings; every respondent involved in this study has the ability to read and write which was favorable to the researcher since every respondent completed the questionnaire on his/ her own.

8.2. Descriptive analysis

8.2.1 Participation in decision-making and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project

The Table 3 shows different agreements of respondents on statements related to participation in decision-making in Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project.

Table 3: Respondents' views on different statements relate to participation in decision-making in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project

Statements	SA		A		UN		D		1		Mean	St. Dev.
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Beneficiary's suggestions are accommodated throughout the project lifecycle	123	29.6	234	56.2	6	1.4	53	12.7	0	0	4.03	.906
The evidences from beneficiaries at all stages of the project	199	47.8	179	43.0	0	0	38	9.1	0	0	4.30	.871
Implementation of activities and the decisions taken	160	38.5	154	37.0	66	15.9	36	8.7	0	0	4.05	.943
The identification of all needs	210	50.5	114	27.4	64	15.4	28	6.7	0	0	4.22	.940

Source: Primary Data, 2017

The Findings in Table 3 revealed that most of respondents agreed that during the implementation of activities and tasks Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project beneficiaries participate in decision making at the level of 56.2% and 29.6% respectively. This means that during the period of project implementation; Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project accommodated its beneficiaries suggestions at 85.8% and this accommodation of beneficiaries' suggestions contributed to the performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project where it is proved by the mean of 4.03 and standard deviation of 0.906. During the implementation of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project activities 75% of respondents are agreed that the decisions taken were reviewed. This means that most of decisions taken during the project implementation were well reviewed by the

project Manager and others Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project staffs. Furthermore; during the project lifecycle all needs were identified, where the majority of respondents agreed with this statement with 77.9%. Project management has emerged as a discipline of high level decision making with the help of analogue and digital tools which would help augment the intuition of a Project Manager and his team for taking decisions in favor of the future of the project. These decision making tools are general, they are based on common sense and are used in all the trades for backing up the decisions taken by the decision making authorities. This theory of understood properly can help a project manager a great deal while working with human resources. Time, cost and scope are the triple constraints of any project. Any variation in the stipulated value of these three constraints is bound to affect the project's outcome. There are different decision project Manager can make in order to keep these three constraints in check. Through decision making models Manager and his team can plan for the risks, but Manager and his team can perform a reality check with what should be the step which shall be taken in response to a particular situation. This situation may account for positive or negative risks and for the risks Manager and his team can deduce a risk response plan accordingly (Vroom et, 2006). Important decisions needed for implementation requirements include identifying the human and financial capital required, and choosing communication methods and timelines. It begins by determining leadership roles and responsibilities, and getting commitment for budget and equipment required. Decide on a timeline for task completion and review dates, and then identify tasks or areas of the plan that may require additional hires or external consultants and finally choose a method and timeline for communicating updates on the project or program to staff and/or customers (Davids, 2010).

8.2.2 Sharing project expectations in Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project

The Table 3 shows respondents' agreements on sharing project expectations in Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project.

Table 3: Respondents' agreements on sharing project expectations in Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project

	SA		A		UN		D		SD		Mean	St. Dev.
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
The Beneficiaries of PASP have the ownership and local control in its activities.	176	42.3	113	27.2	40	9.6	87	20.9	0	0	3.91	1.162
There is linkage of all beneficiaries of PASP	185	44.5	186	44.7	25	6.0	20	4.8	0	0	4.29	.784
In PASP, there is an agreement on quality of work and outcome between all its stakeholders	200	48.1	175	42.1	6	1.4	35	8.4	0	0	4.30	.863
In PASP, there is an agreement on resources to be used in order to achieve the project expectations	244	58.7	149	35.8	11	2.6	12	2.9	0	0	4.50	.691
In PASP, there is an agreement on project output to be achieved.	246	59.1	67	16.1	43	10.3	60	14.4	0	0	4.20	1.111

Source: Primary data, 2017

The findings in Table 3 revealed that the beneficiaries of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project have the ownership and local control in activities of the project at 69.5% and there is linkage between all beneficiaries of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project at the level of 89.2%. The results from respondents also revealed that there is high level of agreement on quality of work to be done and outcome between all stakeholders of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project, where the respondents proved that the level of agreement is 90.2%. This means that Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project is working closely with its beneficiaries during project implementation. Also during the project implementation, Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project make an agreement on resources to be used in order to achieve the project expectations. The results show that the agreement on how resources are to be used during the project implementation contributed to project performance at the level of 94.5%. The agreement on project output contributed 75.2% to the performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project. The agreements in relation to sharing project expectations in Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project is proven by the mean 3.91, 4.29, 4.30, 4.50 and 4.20.

8.3 Feedback exchange and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project

The table 4 shows the effect of Feedback exchange on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project.

Table 4: Feedback exchange between project staff and beneficiary of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project

Statements	SA		A		UN		D		SD		Mean	St. Dev.
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
In PASP; there is sharing of appreciations between project team and beneficiaries	19	4.6	145	34.9	164	39.4	164	39.4	88	21.2	2.62	1.278
In PASP; there is sharing of areas of improvements between project team and beneficiaries.	1	0.2	58	13.9	0	0	240	57.7	117	28.1	2.00	.929
In PASP; there is sharing of recommendations between project team and beneficiaries	1	0.2	71	17.1	10	2.4	260	62.5	74	17.8	2.19	.933

Source: Primary data, 2017

The results in Table 4 show that there is no sharing of appreciations between project team and beneficiaries, where the level of appreciation is too low at 39.5%. Also there is no-sharing of areas of improvements between project team and beneficiaries, this is proved by the lower number of appreciation, where only 14.1% agreed with this statement. Again in Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project there is no sharing of recommendations between project team and beneficiaries where the level of appreciation is 17.3%. All results are proven by the low mean of 2.62, 2.00 and 2.19.There are many logical arguments for beneficiary participation in development agricultural projects and these include economic justifications. Public participation will mobilize greater resources and accomplish more with the same project budget. It is also economically efficient in that it uses generally under-utilized labor and, to a lesser extent, can build upon indigenous knowledge which also tends to be underutilized. Thus more services are provided at less cost.

Another benefit of participation is better project design. Participation ensures that felt needs are served. Presumably beneficiaries will shape the project to their specific needs in ways that outside planners cannot. A sense of immediate responsibility and ownership by beneficiaries puts pressure on a project to be truly worthwhile. The main obstacle to participation is that it takes additional time and resources to mobilize less developed communities. One has continuously to consult with far more people than if the project is executed without their involvement. Participatory projects can slow down or run out of energy. Fragile projects may become overburdened and collapse due to organizational complexity or the frustration of those involved in it. The participation increases project effectiveness and performance. The stages of participation are measured and correlated with a measure of project effectiveness. Those studies are also examined a number of other issues related to beneficiary participation. These are incorporated into other measures dealing with beneficiary commitment, contribution, organization, knowledge, control, and capacity (Mohan, 2008).

8.4 Regression analysis

Table 5: Regression Results for all independents variable and dependent variable

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.953[a]	.909	.905	.160
a. Predictors: (Constant), Participation in decision making, Sharing Project expectation and Feedback exchange between project team and beneficiary				

According to results in Table 5, Participation in decision making, Sharing Project expectations and feedback exchange between project team and beneficiary affect performance of PASP project, where (R=0.953) with variations in aspects of Participation in decision making, Sharing Project expectations and feedback exchange between project team and beneficiary is at 90.5% variations to Performance of Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support project. This implies that Participation in decision making, Sharing Project expectation and Feedback exchange between project staff and beneficiaries have a significant effect on performance of Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support project. The rule of Thumb is that, usually R square of more than 50% is considered as better. This implies that Participation in decision making, Sharing Project expectation and Feedback exchange between project staff and beneficiaries have significant contribution to the performance of Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project.

Table 6: ANOVA Results for independent variable and Performance of PASP Project

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	21.930	3	5.483	214.145	.000[a]
Residual	2.202	412	.026		
Total	24.132	415			

ANOVA results further show that decision making, Sharing Project expectation and Feedback exchange between project team and beneficiaries explains variations of performance of Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project. The Table 6 above shows the sig value (0.000) less than the level significance (0.05). The F-statistics (F=214.145) is far greater than the P-value (0.000) hence a further confirmation that aspects of decision making, Sharing Project expectation and Feedback exchange between project team and beneficiaries significantly influenced the performance of Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project. Furthermore, Table5 indicates that the residual value (2.202) is less than the regression value (21.930) which means that all independent variables contributed to the performance of PASP project.

Table 7: Regression Analysis of the influence of beneficiary participation on performance of Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	.671	.145		4.618	.000
Participation in Decision-making	448	.085	.505	5.264	.000
Sharing Project Expectation	.283	.084	.329	3.361	001
Feedback exchange between project team and beneficiary	.045	.069	.057	.653	.021
a. Dependent Variable: PASP Performance					

Using linear regression analysis from Statistical Package for Social Sciences database, shows that sharing decision making and Sharing Project expectation were significant with (sig=0.000 and 0.01) while feedback exchange between project team and beneficiaries is not significant with (0.021 is greater than 0.005). This means that all variables influence the performance of PASP except feedback exchange between project team and beneficiary. Where Participation in decision making (beta=0.505, t=5.264) and Sharing Project expectation (beta=0.329, t=3.361) while feedback exchange between project team

and beneficiary (beta=0.057, t=0.653). Y=0.671+0.448x1+ 0.283x2+.045x3+ε. The model showed that, the value of PASP performance without the influence of the predictor variables would be 0.671. This would be affected positively by a unit increase to any of the predictor variables in the model. This therefore reveals that, given a unit increase in the decision making would positively change by 0.448 times. Also, a unit increase in sharing project expectation would result to 0.283 times increases in the PASP performance while Increased the Feedback exchange between project team and beneficiary would result to 0.045 times increases in the PASP performance. This reveals that, decision making has the greatest influence to the performance of PASP followed by the sharing project expectation and the feedback exchange which also influences the performance of PASP project.

Table 8: Relationship between beneficiary participation and performance

		PASP Performance	Beneficiary participation
PASP Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.883**
Beneficiary participation	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	416416	
	Pearson Correlation	.883**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	416416	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)			

Pearson correlation coefficient, (r=0.883) shows that there is positive and significant relationship between beneficiary participation and performance of PASP agricultural project. The result shows that, there is High correlation between beneficiary participation and performance of PASP agriculture project, where the P-value is (P=0.000).

9. Conclusions and Recommendations of the study

9.1 Conclusions

From the results detailed in chapter four, it reflects that the beneficiaries' participation contributes to the performance of agricultural projects in Rwanda. Different activities carried out by Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Projectare related to decision making of project Managers. This means that Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project has successfully achieved its goals. The results further revealed that the majority of beneficiaries participated in decision making during the project lifecycle and there are few barriers to fully participation in decision-making. Pearson results show that there is a positive relationship between beneficiaries' participation and Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project performance. The findings revealed that there is poor feedback exchange between project team and beneficiaries of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project. This poor sharing of feedback affect negatively the performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project and development of beneficiaries, because beneficiary participation contributes to project effectiveness within the project activities, even if it is not the most important factor of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project performance. The participation of beneficiaries has definitely more important for continued project performance.

9.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study; the following recommendations are made:

- Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Projectshould involve all beneficiaries in the project review and sharing feedback of the ongoing and ended project's activities, because poor sharing of feedback between project team and beneficiaries affect negatively the performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project project.
- Post-Harvest and Agri-Business Support Project staff should continue and improve on working closely with its beneficiaries because it has a significant effect on performance of projects. The government of Rwanda should continue to encourage many agricultural projects to support farmers in rural areas in order to increase their agricultural production.

9.3 Areas for future studies

Since this study focused on beneficiary participation and agricultural projects performance in Rwanda, the researcher only investigated issues related to the subject matter of the study, however few areas for further research were identified and these include the following:

- Assessment of specific factors hindering beneficiary participation in government projects and
- Effect of beneficiary involvement on sustainability of non-agricultural projects in Rwanda

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