

Role of Stakeholder Management on Project Sustainability; A Case of Compassion International Supported Projects in Huye District of Rwanda

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Abstract: *Stakeholder management has been seen as a core activity for creating project success from the time of Cleland's work on the topic. It has since then gained considerable attention in project management research and practice, particularly with the current focus on sustainability in project delivery. Accordingly, researches conducted include studies on project management approach and maturity has addressed issues of managing development programs. The general objective of this research was to analyze the role of Stakeholder management on project Sustainability in Rwanda. Its specific objectives were to determine the role of project team involvement on sustainability of Compassion International supported projects in Huye District. To establish the role of beneficiaries' participation on sustainability of Compassion International supported projects in Huye District and to identify the role of sponsors' involvement on project sustainability within Compassion international supported projects in Huye District. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The research targeted the project team, beneficiaries and partners of Compassion international supported projects in Huye district, regardless of their age or gender. From the target population of 2060 people, a sample size of 335 respondents has been determined and is the one to be used in the study. In this study, the researcher personally administered structured questionnaires to the target group in order to collect the primary data. After the process of data collection, the data were carefully organized, coded then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 23) to generate descriptive statistics about the sample. The results of correlation indicated that the correlation between involvement of project team and sustainability was at the rate of 0.478 mean that the project team influences the sustainability at 47.8%. Therefore, the researcher concluded a significant relationship between involvement of project team and sustainability of Projects supported by Compassion in Huye District as their p-value (0.000) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The result of correlation between beneficiaries' participation and sustainability of projects supported by Compassion International was at 0.512 mean that beneficiaries' participation was at the level of 51.2% which prove the weak relationship between beneficiaries' participation and sustainability of projects supported Compassion International in Huye District. There is a significant relationship between beneficiaries' participation and sustainability of projects supported Compassion International in Huye District because their p-value (0.000) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The results of correlation between sponsors' involvement and sustainability are at the rate of 0.567 meaning that sponsors' involvements affect sustainability of the projects supported by Compassion International in Huye at the level of 56.7%. Therefore there is a significant relationship between sponsors and sustainability. The study recommends the project managers and funders to always focus on involving the project team in all stages of project including planning, implementation, evaluation and closure since the project team is the one that deals with the day to day activities of the project. They should also let the project team members voice their ideas and point of views in the meetings since the management can get more in depth about key challenges in project progress.*

Keywords: Stakeholder management, Project sustainability

1. Introduction

Worldwide; projects can only be successful through contributions from stakeholders, and it is the stakeholders that evaluate whether they find the project successful beyond receiving the project deliverables. One of the major concerns coming forth in the management of projects is the recognition and management of project stakeholders since the stakeholders are a major source of uncertainty in construction project. The successful project management can be carried out only when the responsible managers take into account the potential influence of the different project's stakeholders. More often than not, these criteria are implicit and change during the project course. This is an enormous challenge for project managers. The route to better projects, say lies in finding ways to improve project stakeholder management, i.e., project managers must consider stakeholder's interests, needs and requirements and manage them ensure project success (Aaltonen, 2010).

International non-government organizations support a number of projects in developing countries. These projects play a key role in the creation of wealth and wellbeing around the world. These projects are not performed in a vacuum – they are performed within a company, within society, within an industry and within a market (Burke, 2014). As a result, projects usually have a wide range of individuals, groups or organizations with different and sometimes competing interests, who can have significant influence over the eventual success or failure of the project, and these, are called project stakeholders (Takin, 2009). In Africa as revealed by the study of Alen (2014) the main factors affecting the stakeholder management process are hiring a project manager with high competency, transparent evaluation of the alternative solution, ensuring effective communication between the project and its stakeholder, setting common goal and objective of the project, and exploring the stakeholder need and expectation. Over the years various definitions and categorization attempts of project stakeholders have been presented in the existing project management literature ranging from broad to rather narrow views

(Bourne & Walker 2005; Karlsen 2002; Newcombe 2003; Drew 2011; and Zolin 2012).

2. Statement of the Problem

Projects are needed to be completed within the planned time frame, budgeted cost; required quality and they have to show their impacts after they have been closed. Yet, paradoxically, the poor performance of projects and the disappointment of project stakeholders and beneficiaries seem to have become the rule and not the exception in contemporary reality (Harris, 2010). Stakeholder management has been seen as a core activity for creating project success from the time of Cleland's work (2006) on the topic. It has since then gained considerable attention in project management research and practice, particularly with the current focus on sustainability in project delivery. The shift to stakeholder satisfaction criteria resulted from the problems and uncertainly caused by project stakeholders contribution to project failure. Many scholars have cited "the ignorance or poor stakeholder management" as one of the key reasons responsible for project failure (Aaltonen, 2010; Atkin et al., 2008; Bourne and Walker, 2006; El- Gohary et al., 2006; Ika, 2009; Jepsen and Eskerod, 2009; Karlsen, 2002; Olander, 2007; Yang et al, 2011). All of these studies have claimed the inability of project managers to take into account the concerns, claims and influences from project stakeholders as one of the root causes for project failure and highlighted the importance of managing stakeholders. As a result, the management of project stakeholders is now widely acknowledged as an essential part of project management and as a factor contributing to project sustainability.

4. Conceptual Framework

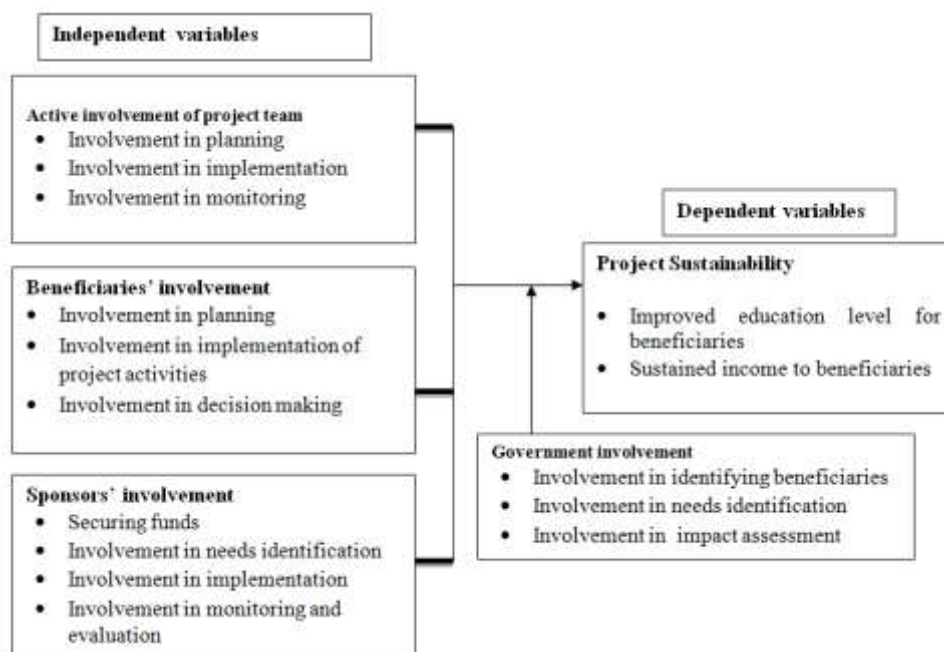


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

In Rwanda most of projects are funded by external donor, and the international non-governmental organization acted as the mediator for the donor, and these implemented agencies take the responsibilities of managing the project, and they hire management team to take care of these responsibilities. The management team always faces a lot of challenges one of them is how to manage project stakeholder, since the list of these stakeholder contain a large number of stakeholders with different goals. Olander (2007) mentioned that the project management worldwide has a poor record of stakeholder management during the past decades, and the Compassion International in Rwanda is not an exceptional case. So, there is a need to study and analyze the role of stakeholder management in the projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District of Rwanda and to build a framework for managing the stakeholder in the project lifecycle.

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective was to analyze the role of Stakeholder management on project Sustainability in Rwanda.

Specific objectives

1. To determine the role of active involvement of project team on sustainability of Compassion International supported projects in Huye District.
2. To establish the role of beneficiaries' participation on sustainability of Compassion International supported projects in Huye District.
3. To identify the role of sponsors' involvement on project sustainability within Compassion international supported projects in Huye District.

5. Methodology

• **Research Design:** This study adopted a descriptive research design. Kothari (2004) explains descriptive research studies as those studies which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group. Since the aim is to analyze the role of stakeholder management on project

sustainability, a descriptive design was suitable for this study.

• **Target Population:** the researcher was targeting the project team, beneficiaries and partners of compassion international supported projects in Huye district, regardless of their age or gender. The following table shows the total population and stratification of respondents who was involved in this study.

Table 1: Stratification of respondents

Target Group	Target population	Sample size
Beneficiaries	1920	312
Church partners	14	2
Team members/social workers	70	12
Government authorities	56	9
Total	2060	335

Source: Compassion International (2017)

• **Data Collection Instruments:** Data were collected using questionnaires. The study used questionnaires, which contained a five point Likert scale questions. Closed ended or structured questions gave respondent

limited and pre-determined response option to choose from and this has a great advantage that they are easy to be analyzed.

6. Research Findings

6.1: Determination of the role of active involvement of project team on sustainability of Compassion international supported projects in Huye District

Table 1: Involvement of project team in planning of project activities

Likert scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
	232	69.3	69.3
	97	29.0	98.2
	6	1.8	100.0
Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings in Table 2 revealed that 69.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that the project team has been actively involved in planning of the project activities, 29.0% agreed that the project team has been actively involved in planning of the project activities in projects support by Compassion International in Huye district, while only 1.8% of all respondents were neutral on this statement.

project activities, 32.5% of respondents agreed that the project team is actively involved in implementation of project activities while 1.8% of all respondents were neutral to this statement.

Table 2: Involvement of project team in implementation of project activities

Likert scale	Frequency Percentage Cumulative Percentage		
	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	220	65.7	65.7
Agree	109	32.5	98.2
Neutral	6	1.8	100.0
Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings in Table 3 revealed that 65.7% of respondents strongly agreed that in projects support by compassion international in Huye District, the project team has been actively involved in implementation of

Table 3: Involvement of project team in monitoring of project activities

Likert scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	199	59.4	59.4
Agree	118	35.2	94.6
Neutral	12	3.6	98.2
Disagree	6	1.8	100.0
Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

According to the findings in Table 4, 59.4% of all respondents strongly agreed that the project team is actively involved in monitoring of project activities, 35.2% of all respondents agreed the involvement of project team in monitoring of project activities; 3.6% of all respondents were neutral on this statement while only 1.8% of all respondents disagreed that the project team is

actively involved in monitoring of project activities in projects support by compassion international in Huye district.

Table 5: Allowance of project team members to voice their ideas in meetings

Likert scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	180	53.7	53.7
Agree	125	37.3	91.0
Strongly Disagree	24	7.2	97.2
Neutral	6	1.8	100.0
Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings in Table5 revealed that 53.7% of all respondents strongly agreed that the project team members are allowed to voice their ideas in meetings, 37.3% of respondents agreed that they are allowed to voice their ideas in meetings while only7.2% of all respondents strongly disagreed that in projects support by compassion international in Huye district, the project team members are allowed to voice their ideas in meetings while only 1.8 % of all respondents were neutral to this statement.

Table 4: Satisfaction of the project team on its involvement in project implementation

	Likert scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly	Agree	148	44.2	44.2
	Agree	156	46.6	90.7
	Neutral	24	7.2	97.9
	Disagree	7	2.1	100.0
	Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings in Table 6revealed that 44.2% of respondents strongly disagreed that the project team is always satisfied by its involvement in project implementation, 46.6% of all respondents agreed that they are satisfied by their involvement in project implementation, 7.2% of all respondents were neutralon this statement while only 2.1% of all respondents disagreed that they are not satisfied by their involvement in project implementation.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics on determination of the role of active involvement of project team on sustainability of Compassion International supported projects in Huye District

Indicators	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The project planning activities	335	1.3254	.50605
Implementation of project activities	335	1.3612	.51706
Involvement in monitoring of project activities	335	1.4776	.65566

Allowance of team to voice of ideas in meetings	335	1.6955	1.05385
Satisfaction of team on its involvement in project implementation	335	1.6716	.70047
Valid N (listwise)	335		

Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings in Table 7 revealed that the mean values for the first, second and third statements are 1.33; 1.36 and 1.48 which are approximately equal to the code of Strongly Agree, the fourth and the fifth means are 1.70 and 1.67 respectively which are rounded off to 2 the code for Agree. The standard deviation for the all statements are above than 0.5 meaning that respondents' answers on these statements were far different from the mean, in other words, their answers to the statement were heterogeneous.

Table 6: Correlation between involvement of project team and sustainability

		Project team	Sustainability
Project team	Pearson Correlation	1	.478**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	335	335
Sustainability	Pearson Correlation	.478**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	335	335

Source: Field Data (2017)

The results of correlation in Table8 above indicated that the correlation between involvement of project team and sustainability was at the rate of 0. 478 mean that the project team influences the sustainability at 47.8%. Therefore, the researcher concluded a weak relationship between project team and sustainability. By considering the level of significance which is 0.05, there is a significant relationship between involvement of project team and sustainability of Projects supported by Compassion in Huye District as their p-value (0.000) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance.

6.2 Establish the role of beneficiaries' participation on sustainability of Compassion International supported projects in Huye District

Table 7: Participation of beneficiaries in project planning process

Likert scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Agree	160	47.8	47.8
Strongly Agree	105	31.3	79.1
Disagree	36	10.7	89.8
Neutral	27	8.1	97.9
Strongly Disagree	7	2.1	100.0
Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings in Table 9 revealed that; 47.8% of all respondents agreed that the beneficiaries participate in project planning process within projects support by Compassion International in Huye District, 31.3% of respondents strong agreed that beneficiaries participate in project planning, 10.7 % of all respondents disagreed and 8.1% of all respondents were neutral while only 2.1 % of all respondents Strongly disagreed that the beneficiaries participate in project planning process within projects support by Compassion International in Huye District.

Table 8: Participation of beneficiaries in implementation of project's activities

Likert scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Agree	197	58.8	58.8
Strongly Agree	81	24.2	83.0
Neutral	32	9.6	92.5
Disagree	13	3.9	96.4
Strongly Disagree	12	3.6	100.0
Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings in Table 10 revealed that 58.8% of respondents agreed that in projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District; beneficiaries participate in implementation of project's activities, while 24.2% of all respondents strongly agreed that beneficiaries participate in implementation of project's activities, 9.6% of all respondents were neutral to the statement while only 3.9% of all respondents disagreed that beneficiaries participate in implementation of project's activities and only 3.6% strongly disagreed that beneficiaries participate in implementation of project's activities.

Table 9: Participation of beneficiaries in decision making within the projects

Likert	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
	Strongly Agree	127	37.9	37.9
	Agree	108	32.2	70.1
	Disagree	57	17.0	87.1
	Neutral	30	9.0	96.1
	Strongly Disagree	13	3.9	100.0
	Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

According to the results from table11, 37.9% of all respondents strongly agreed that beneficiaries participate in decision making processes within the projects supported by Compassion International, 32.2 % of all respondents agreed beneficiaries participate in decision making processes within the projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District; 17.0 % of all respondents disagreed that beneficiaries participate in decision making processes within the projects supported by Compassion International, 9.0 % of all respondents were neutral to this statement while only 3.9% strongly disagreed that beneficiaries participate in decision making

processes within the projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District.

Table 10: Involvement of beneficiaries in all implementation processes

Likert	scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
	Strongly Agree	161	48.1	48.1
	Agree	110	32.8	80.9
	Neutral	40	11.9	92.8
	Disagree	18	5.4	98.2
	Strongly Disagree	6	1.8	100.0
	Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

According to the information from table 12; 48.1% of all respondents strongly agreed that stakeholders are involved in all implementation process of projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District, 32.8 % of all respondents agreed that stakeholders are involved in all implementation process of projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District, 11.9 of all respondents were neutral to this statement, 5.4 % of all respondents disagreed that stakeholders are involved in all implementation process of projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District while only 1.8 % of all respondents strongly disagreed that stakeholders are involved in all implementation process of projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District.

Table 11: Implementation of projects involving in beneficiaries

Likert	scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
	Agree	150	44.8	44.8
	Strongly Agree	111	33.1	77.9
	Neutral	61	18.2	96.1
	Disagree	13	3.9	100.0
	Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

Based on the findings in table13; the researcher find out that, when it is easy to implement projects that have involved beneficiaries that those that have not at agree level according to 44.8% of all respondents. 33.1% of all respondents reported that implement projects focuses to strongly agree, 18.2% of all respondents on their involvement beneficiaries at neutral level during the implementation while 3.9% of all respondents were at a disagree level on this statement.

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics on establishing the role of beneficiaries' participation on sustainability of Compassion International

Indicators	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Projects supported by compassion international	335	2.0448	1.00646
Implementation of project's activities	335	2.0388	.90325
Beneficiaries participate in decision making	335	2.1672	1.21448
All implementation processes	335	1.8000	.96898
Projects involved beneficiaries	335	1.9284	.81579
Valid N (listwise)	335		

Source: Field Data (2017)

From Table 13, the mean values for the first, second, third, fourth and fifth statements are 2.04; 2.03; 2.16; 1.80 and 1.92 respectively which are rounded off to 2 the code for agree. This means that in general respondent have agreed that beneficiaries participate in project planning process; participate in decision making within the projects; are involve in all implementation processes and those that have not the standard deviation of all statements is above 0.5 meaning that respondents' answers on these statements were far different from the mean, in order words, their answers to the statement were heterogamous. To mean that the views of on the above statements were varied.

Table 13: Correlation between beneficiaries and sustainability

		Beneficiaries	Sustainability
Beneficiaries	Pearson Correlation	1	.512**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	335	335
Sustainability	Pearson Correlation	.512**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	335	335

Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings in Table 15 revealed that, the results of correlation between beneficiaries' participation and sustainability of projects supported by Compassion International was at 0. 512 mean that beneficiaries' participation was at the level of 51.2% which prove the weak relationship between beneficiaries' participation and sustainability of projects supported Compassion International in Huye District. If the researcher considers the level of significance which is 0.05, there is therefore a significant relationship between beneficiaries' participation and sustainability of projects supported Compassion International in Huye District because their p-value (0.000) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance.

6.3 Identification of the role of sponsors' involvement on sustainability of projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District

Table 14: Provision of enough funds to support all requirements of the projects

Likert scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Agree	157	46.9	46.9
Strongly Agree	49	14.6	61.5
Neutral	62	18.5	80.0
Disagree	61	18.2	98.2
Strongly Disagree	6	1.8	100.0
Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

According to the results from table 16, 46.9% of all respondents agreed that funds provided by donors of Compassion International are enough to support all the project requirements in Huye district, 14.6 % of all respondents strongly agreed that funds provided by donors of Compassion International are enough to support all the project requirements in Huye district, 18.2% of all respondents disagreed that funds provided by donors of Compassion International are enough to support all the project requirements in Huye district, 1.8% of all respondents strong disagreed that funds provided by donors of Compassion International are enough to support all the project requirements in Huye district while 18.5 of all respondents were neutral on this statement.

Table 15: Involvement of Funders in needs identification

	Likert scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly	Agree	153	45.7	45.7
	Agree	152	45.4	91.0
	Neutral	30	9.0	100.0
	Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings in table 17 revealed that 45.7% of all respondents strongly agreed that the funders of projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District are involved in needs identification, 45.4% of all agreed that the funders of projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District are involved in needs identification, while only 9.0% of all respondents were neutral on this statement.

Table 16: Involvement of funders in implementation of project activities

	Likert scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly	Agree	161	48.1	48.1
	Agree	156	46.6	94.6
	Neutral	12	3.6	98.2
	Disagree	6	1.8	100.0
	Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings in Table 18 revealed that 48.1% of respondents strongly agreed that compassion international funders are actively involved in implementation of project activities in Huye district, while 46.6% of all respondents agreed that compassion international funders are actively involved in implementation of project activities in Huye district, 3.6% of all respondents were neutral to the statement while only 1.8% of all respondents disagreed that that compassion international funders are actively involved in implementation of project activities in Huye district.

Table 17: Involvement of funders in monitoring and evaluation

	Likert scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly	Agree	169	50.4	50.4
	Agree	142	42.4	92.8
	Neutral	12	3.6	96.4
	Disagree	12	3.6	100.0
	Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

According to the information from table 19, 50.4% of respondents of strongly agreed that funders of Compassion International are actively involved in monitoring and evaluation of project activities. 42.4% of all respondents agreed that funders of Compassion International are actively involved in monitoring and evaluation of project activities; 3.6% of all respondents disagreed that funders of Compassion International are actively involved in monitoring and evaluation of project activities while also 3.6 % of all respondents were neutral on this statement.

Table 18: Requiring project progress reports for project activities

	Likert scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly	Agree	172	51.3	51.3
	Agree	119	35.5	86.9
	Neutral	44	13.1	100.0
	Total	335	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings in Table 20 revealed that 51.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that the sponsors require progress reports for project activities that are supported by Compassion International within Huye district, 35.5% agreed that the Sponsors require progress reports for project activities while 13.1% of all respondents were neutral on this statement.

Table 19: Descriptive statistics on identification of the role of sponsors' involvement on sustainability of projects

Indicators	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Enough funds provided by donors compassion international	335	2.4567	1.00764
Involvement of funders in needs identification	335	1.6328	.64241
Involvement of funders in project activities	335	1.5910	.64967
Involved of funders in monitoring and evaluation	335	1.6030	.72632
Sponsors require progress reports	335	1.6179	.70730
Valid N (listwise)	335		

Source: Field Data (2017)

The findings in table 4.21, revealed that the mean of the first, second, third, fourth and fifth are nearer to 2 coded as agree and their standard deviation are far to 0.5 mean that they are heterogeneous.

Table 22: Correlation between sponsors' involvement and sustainability of projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District

	Pearson Correlation	Sponsors	Sustainability
Sponsors		1	.567**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	335	335
Sustainability	Pearson Correlation	.567**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	335	335

Source: Field Data (2017)

The results of correlation between sponsors' involvement and sustainability are at the rate of 0.567 meaning that sponsors' involvements affect sustainability of the projects supported by Compassion International in Huye at the level of 56.7%. Therefore there is a significant relationship between sponsors and sustainability. On the other hand, by considering the level of significance which is 0.05, hence sponsors has a significant effect on sustainability because their p-value (0.000) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance hence a weak correlation between sponsors and sustainability.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

According to the interpretation of collected and analyzed data during the course of this study; the researcher came up with the following conclusions:

The researcher concluded a significant relationship between involvement of project team and sustainability of Projects supported by Compassion in Huye District as their p-value (0.000) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The study also concluded a significant

relationship between beneficiaries' participation and sustainability of projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District because their p-value (0.000) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance.

Finally; the researcher concluded a positive relationship between sponsors' involvement and sustainability of projects supported by Compassion International in Huye because their p-value (0.000) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. Therefore the sustainability of Projects supported by Compassion International in Huye District of Rwanda depends on effective stakeholder management which is mainly in three aspects that are active involvement of project team, participation of project beneficiaries and involvement of sponsors.

7.2 Recommendations

After analysis and interpretation of data, the researcher came up with the following recommendations:

- i. The project managers and funders should always focus on involving the project team in all stages of project including planning, implementation, evaluation and closure since the project team is the one that deals with the day to day activities of the project. They should also let the project team members voice their ideas and point of views in the meetings since the management can get more in depth about key challenges in project progress.
- ii. The management of the project and funds providers should give attention and seek how to increase the beneficiaries' participation since the study findings revealed that beneficiaries' participation significantly affect project sustainability
- iii. The project funders should be actively involved in project needs' identification to be aware of real funds they need to avail for effective implementation of their funded projects. They should also require the progress reports to the implementing team so that they may make sure funds are being used as planned and activities are being done in the manner that has been set.

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