



PROJECT SCOPE CREEP ON IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS: A CASE OF ISIMBI POULTRY PROJECT RWANDA

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Abstract:

Background: Scope creep in projects is a prevalent issue, often pursued without adequate studies on its profitability. Despite existing research interest, there is a lack of thorough assessment of its effectiveness in community development projects, particularly those sponsored by governments.

Aim: This study aimed to investigate how project scope creep impacts the implementation of community development projects in Rwanda

Materials and Methods: The study drew on stakeholder theory, resource-based theory, risk management theory, and project management theory. A descriptive survey research design was employed with 124 participants from the Isimbi poultry project. Reliability assessment was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. Data analysis included qualitative and quantitative methods, utilizing SPSS software version 21 for analysis. Data coding categorized responses addressing scope creep in community development initiatives

Results and Discussions: The study revealed a strong positive relationship ($\beta = 0.693$, $p < .001$) between scope definition and project success, supporting previous findings on the importance of precise scope definition in project management (Smith et al., 2019; Jones & Smith, 2020). Additionally, scope planning ($\beta = 0.161$, $p = .015$), scope changes ($\beta = 0.144$, $p = .036$), and scope control ($\beta = 0.243$, $p < .001$) were significant contributors to project success, consistent with prior studies highlighting effective scope management techniques

Conclusion: Effective scope management practices are critical for successfully implementing community development projects in Rwanda. Clear scope definition, meticulous planning, proactive change management, and vigilant scope control are essential to mitigate risks, enhance stakeholder collaboration, and achieve sustainable development outcomes. This study underscores the importance of implementing robust scope management strategies to improve project effectiveness and contribute to advancing project management practices in community development contexts.

Keywords: *Scope changes, Scope control, Scope Creep*

1. Introduction

Community development projects play a crucial role in fostering social, economic, and environmental progress within diverse communities. These projects aim to address local needs and empower residents to actively participate in shaping their future (Kenny & Kretzmann, 2020). However, despite their noble intentions, such initiatives often encounter challenges related to scope creep, where the project's objectives expand beyond the initially defined boundaries, leading to delays, budget overruns, and diminished impact (Harkins & Collins, 2019). Scope creep can be particularly detrimental in community development efforts, as it not only affects project outcomes but also erodes trust and confidence among stakeholders, including community members, funders, and partnering organizations.

Effective scope management strategies are essential for mitigating the impacts of scope creep on community development projects in the US. By implementing robust change control processes, engaging stakeholders proactively, and maintaining transparency throughout the project lifecycle, project managers can better anticipate and address scope changes as they arise (Robinson et al., 2020). Furthermore, leveraging technology and data-driven approaches can enhance project monitoring and decision-making, enabling more agile responses to scope creep challenges (White & Green, 2022). Despite the inherent complexities of scope management in community development, adopting a proactive and adaptive approach can help ensure the successful delivery of projects that meet the evolving needs of US communities (Pinto, 2019).

Despite the growing emphasis on community development initiatives, the effective implementation of such projects in Asia remains a complex and multifaceted endeavor (Biswas, 2019). Issues such as inadequate funding, insufficient capacity at the local level, and competing interests among stakeholders often hinder the successful execution of community development programs (UNDP, 2017). Additionally, cultural factors, governance structures, and power dynamics within communities can influence the outcomes of development interventions (ADB, 2021). Understanding these contextual factors is crucial for designing and implementing community development projects that are responsive to the needs and priorities of Asian communities (Cohen, 2020).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, resources are often limited and communities are vulnerable to various socio-economic and environmental stressors, effectively managing scope creep is crucial for ensuring the success and long-term impact of development initiatives (Munyai & Mugwisi, 2020). However, the complex socio-cultural dynamics, diverse stakeholder interests, and rapidly changing contextual factors in the region pose unique challenges to scope management in community development projects (Mashau & Makamu, 2019). Moreover, inadequate communication and collaboration among project stakeholders can further exacerbate scope creep by allowing for divergent interpretations of project goals and requirements (Paton, 2018).

With a rich tapestry of cultures and diverse communities, Ghana faces a myriad of development issues ranging from poverty and unemployment to inadequate infrastructure and healthcare access (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2017). In response, various government agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and international development partners have initiated community development projects aimed at improving living standards, promoting economic empowerment, and enhancing social cohesion across the country (Kwakye, 2018). However, the implementation of these projects is often fraught with challenges, including scope creep, which can hinder their effectiveness and sustainability (Ackah, 2019).

In Kenya, community development initiatives are essential for tackling the social, economic, and environmental issues that local communities face (Ongori & Kariuki, 2017). However, these projects often encounter scope creep, leading to delays, budget overruns, and reduced effectiveness in achieving their objectives (Karanja & Wang'ombe, 2018). Addressing scope creep in community development projects requires a multifaceted approach that involves proactive planning, stakeholder engagement, risk management, and effective change control processes (Kabare, 2018; Owino & Adam, 2019). Furthermore, fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and learning within project teams can help build resilience and adaptability in the face of evolving project dynamics (Muriithi & Crawford, 2017).

Scope creep in community development projects in Rwanda poses significant implications for both project effectiveness and the well-being of beneficiary communities (World Bank, 2020). As the country strives to achieve its development goals outlined in Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1), managing scope creep becomes paramount to ensure efficient resource allocation and maximize the impact of development interventions (Government of Rwanda, 2021). Additionally, given Rwanda's commitment to a participatory approach to development, involving communities in project planning and decision-making processes is essential to fostering ownership and sustainability (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2018). However, scope creep can undermine community involvement by diverting resources and attention away from agreed-upon priorities, leading to frustration and disengagement among stakeholders (World Vision International, 2017).

The Isimbi Poultry Project, situated in Rwanda, represents a noteworthy initiative aimed at fostering community development through sustainable agricultural practices. Rwanda, often celebrated for its remarkable strides in economic recovery and poverty reduction post-genocide, has increasingly emphasized the role of community-based projects in ensuring inclusive growth (World Bank, 2020). A large percentage of the workforce is employed in agriculture, which is crucial to the nation's economy and is especially prevalent in rural areas (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2018). The Isimbi Poultry Project aligns with the Rwandan government's strategic focus on enhancing agricultural productivity and promoting income-generating activities to uplift local communities (Republic of Rwanda, 2017).

Furthermore, the poultry sector in Rwanda has gained prominence as a viable avenue for economic empowerment. Poultry farming not only contributes to food security but also provides income opportunities for smallholder farmers (Twizerimana & Tuyishime, 2020). Against this backdrop, the Isimbi Poultry Project emerges as a case study that warrants closer examination to understand its impact on community development, given the unique socio-economic and agricultural landscape of Rwanda.

2. Materials and Methods

Research design

The study was grounded in stakeholder theory, resource-based theory, risk management theory, and project management theory. A descriptive survey research design was employed, targeting 124 participants who were currently employed as project staff at the Isimbi Poultry Project. Reliability assessment was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the data collected. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized for data analysis, with SPSS software version 21 employed for statistical processing. The data were systematically coded to categorize responses addressing key research questions related to scope creep in community development initiatives.

Data Collection Techniques and Data Sources

The study employed descriptive survey research, targeting 124 participants who are currently employed as project staff at Isimbi Poultry Project. Data collection included both qualitative and quantitative methods, analyzed using SPSS software version 21. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Qualitative data were coded to categorize responses on scope creep in community development initiatives. The study emphasized stakeholder theory, resource-based theory, risk management theory, and the theory of project management to investigate the relationships between scope management practices and project success in Rwanda's community development projects.

3. Results and Discussions

This section streamlines the analysis by consolidating agreement and disagreement scores. Responses of "highly agree" and "agree" are summed to represent agreement, while "strongly disagree" and "disagree" are combined to indicate disagreement. This method clarifies the data, simplifies result interpretation, and helps identify trends or consensus among respondents.

Scope Definition

The study aimed to analyze the relationships among six variables related to scope definition in community development projects. Table 1 presents descriptive results on scope clarity, documentation, communication, and their impact on project coordination. This analysis highlights the importance of clear project scope for effective execution in Rwanda.

Table 1: Scope Definition Descriptive Results

Scope definition statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev.
The clarity of project scope contributes to better coordination and collaboration among project stakeholders.	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	39.8%	58.2%	4.56	.539
The objectives of community development projects in Rwanda are clearly defined from the outset.	0.0%	2.0%	6.1%	36.7%	55.1%	4.45	.705
The scope of work for community development projects is well-documented and communicated to all stakeholders	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	25.5%	67.3%	4.60	.622
The scope definition process helps to identify potential risks and challenges that may impact project implementation.	0.0%	2.0%	8.2%	26.5%	63.3%	4.51	.736
The clarity of project scope contributes to better coordination and collaboration among project stakeholders.	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	43.9%	54.1%	4.52	.542
There is effective communication regarding the project scope between project managers and stakeholders	0.0%	0.0%	5.1%	41.8%	53.1%	4.48	.596

Source: **Primary data**, (2024).

Table 1 highlights stakeholder perceptions of scope definition in community development projects, focusing on clarity, communication, and risk identification. There is a strong consensus that clear project scope enhances coordination and collaboration (Mean = 4.56, Std Dev. = 0.539). Most respondents agree that objectives are well-defined (Mean = 4.45, Std Dev. = 0.705), and scope is well-documented and communicated (Mean = 4.60, Std Dev. = 0.622). The scope definition process is also recognized for identifying risks (Mean = 4.51, Std Dev. = 0.736). However, some respondents had neutral or slightly negative views on the effectiveness of communication between project managers and stakeholders (Mean = 4.48, Std Dev. = 0.596). These findings align with

existing literature on the importance of clear scope definition and communication in project success and risk management (Turner, 2019; Kerzner, 2020).

Scope Planning

The study examined how scope planning impacts community development initiatives in Rwanda. Table 2 details stakeholder involvement in the planning stage, highlighting their contributions to defining project scope. The study aims to clarify scope planning's role in promoting collaboration, aligning project goals with stakeholder expectations, and enhancing the success of community development projects..

Table 2 : Scope Planning Descriptive Results

Scope Planning statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev.
The scope planning phase of our community development projects in Rwanda adequately identifies project objectives and deliverables	2.0%	6.1%	18.4%	38.8%	34.7%	3.98	.984
The scope planning process helps in establishing realistic timelines and milestones for project implementation	0.0%	6.1%	15.3%	41.8%	36.7%	4.09	.874
The involvement of stakeholders during scope planning enhances project buy-in and commitment.	1.0%	1.0%	7.1%	38.8%	52.0%	4.40	.756
Scope planning activities contribute to the effective allocation of resources for project implementation.	0.0%	6.1%	15.3%	41.8%	36.7%	4.09	.874
Changes in project scope are minimized as a result of thorough scope planning.	0.0%	12.2%	16.3%	33.7%	37.8%	3.97	1.020

Source: **Primary data**, (2024).

Table 2 presents descriptive results on scope planning in Rwandan community development projects, showing generally positive perceptions. Respondents strongly agree on the identification of project objectives (Mean = 3.98) and the establishment of realistic timelines (Mean = 4.09). Stakeholder involvement is seen as highly beneficial for project buy-in and commitment (Mean = 4.40). However, the slightly lower score for minimizing scope changes (Mean = 3.97) suggests room for improvement in scope management. These findings align

with Turner & Müller (2019) and the Project Management Institute (2017) on the importance of stakeholder involvement and comprehensive planning for project success.

Scope Changes

In Rwanda, scope modifications significantly affect community development projects. This study examines this impact using six statement items, with results summarized in Table 3. The table provides key insights into the dynamics of scope changes and their consequences for project implementation.

Table 3: Scope Changes Descriptive Results

Scope Changes statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev.
Changes to the project scope are minimized throughout the implementation phase, ensuring project focus and alignment with objectives	0.0%	12.2%	16.3%	33.7%	37.8%	3.97	1.020
Scope changes often lead to delays in project completion.	0.0%	1.0%	9.2%	30.6%	59.2%	4.48	.707
Scope changes result in increased project costs.	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	31.6%	67.3%	4.66	.496
Scope changes can compromise the quality of project deliverables.	0.0%	0.0%	5.1%	38.8%	56.1%	4.51	.596
Effective communication helps mitigate the negative impact of scope changes on project implementation.	0.0%	1.0%	2.0%	35.7%	61.2%	4.57	.592
Adequate contingency planning is essential to address unforeseen scope changes during project implementation.	0.0%	0.0%	9.2%	31.6%	59.2%	4.50	.662

Source: **Primary data**, (2024).

Table 3 presents the descriptive results on scope changes and their impact on project implementation. Respondents generally perceive scope changes as common, with significant agreement on their negative effects. Specifically, 59.2% agree that scope changes often lead to project delays, 67.3% note increased project costs, and 56.1% believe they can compromise the quality of deliverables. These findings align with existing literature on scope

management, which highlights the potential adverse consequences of scope changes on project outcomes (Larson & Gray, 2018; Pinto & Slevin, 2019).

Scope Control

The study's fourth goal was to assess scope control's influence on how community development initiatives are carried out in Rwanda. This involved the utilization of seven statement items to assess the influence of various elements within scope control on project implementation. The findings, presented in Table 5.4, utilized frequencies and percentages to elucidate the intricate relationship between scope control and the successful execution of community development projects in Rwanda.

Table 4: Scope Control Descriptive Results

Scope Control statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev.
There were effective mechanisms in place for scope control.	0.0%	0.0%	8.2%	32.7%	59.2%	4.51	.646
Changes to the scope were reviewed and approved systematically.	0.0%	0.0%	5.1%	42.9%	52.0%	4.47	.596
Scope control measures were implemented consistently.	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	48.0%	50.0%	4.48	.542
Scope control measures, such as clearly defined project objectives and deliverables, were established at the outset of the project	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	38.8%	59.2%	4.57	.537
Changes to the project scope were carefully evaluated and approved through a formal change control process	0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	41.8%	52.0%	4.46	.612
Scope control measures helped to prevent scope creep and maintain project focus on key objectives	0.0%	0.0%	5.1%	48.0%	46.9%	4.42	.591

Source: **Primary data**, (2024).

Table 4 presents descriptive results on scope control mechanisms in community development projects. The findings indicate generally positive perceptions of scope control effectiveness. Respondents largely agreed or strongly agreed that effective mechanisms were in place for scope

control (Mean = 4.51, Std Dev. = 0.646) and that scope changes were systematically reviewed and approved (Mean = 4.47, Std Dev. = 0.596). They also recognized consistent implementation of scope control measures, including establishing clear project objectives (Mean = 4.57, Std Dev. = 0.537). However, there were indications that scope changes might not always undergo careful evaluation and formal approval (Mean = 4.46, Std Dev. = 0.612), suggesting areas for improvement. These findings align with previous research emphasizing the importance of robust scope control systems in mitigating scope creep and maintaining project focus (Levine et al., 2019; Heagney, 2016).

Project Implementation

This section evaluates Project Implementation, with results summarized in Table 5. The table likely includes key metrics for the Isimbi Poultry Project, covering aspects such as patient outcomes, resource use, stakeholder engagement, or financial sustainability. This analysis is vital for assessing project effectiveness, offering insights into its success and areas needing improvement.

Table 5: Project Implementation Descriptive Results

Project statements	Implementation	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev.
The community development project was implemented within the allocated timeframe		0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	34.7%	64.3%	4.63	.505
The project objectives were clearly defined and communicated to all stakeholders.		0.0%	1.0%	3.1%	50.0%	45.9%	4.41	.606
Adequate resources (financial, human, and material) were allocated to support project implementation		0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	45.9%	53.1%	4.52	.522
Community members actively participated in the planning and execution of project activities.		0.0%	0.0%	5.1%	42.9%	52.0%	4.47	.596
The project effectively addressed the needs and priorities of the target community.		0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	55.1%	42.9%	4.41	.534

Sustainability measures were incorporated into the project design to ensure long-term impact and effectiveness.	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	45.9%	53.1%	4.52	.522
The project plan was flexible enough to accommodate unexpected challenges.	1.0%	2.0%	12.2%	32.7%	52.0%	4.33	.847

Source: **Primary data**, (2024).

Table 5 provides descriptive results on the implementation of community development projects, covering aspects such as adherence to timelines, stakeholder communication, resource allocation, community participation, addressing community needs, sustainability measures, and project planning flexibility. The findings show generally positive perceptions, with most respondents agreeing that projects met allocated timelines (Mean = 4.63, Std Dev. = 0.505), had clear objectives (Mean = 4.41, Std Dev. = 0.606), and allocated adequate resources (Mean = 4.52, Std Dev. = 0.522). Community participation (Mean = 4.47, Std Dev. = 0.596) and addressing community needs (Mean = 4.41, Std Dev. = 0.534) also received high marks. However, there were slightly lower scores for incorporating sustainability measures (Mean = 4.52, Std Dev. = 0.522) and project planning flexibility (Mean = 4.33, Std Dev. = 0.847). These findings align with research emphasizing flexible project design, resource allocation, stakeholder participation, and clear communication as crucial for successful community development programs (Bryson et al., 2018; Cameron & Green, 2015).

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis assesses the strength and direction of relationships between variables (McLeod, 2019). The correlation coefficient "r," ranging from -1 to +1, indicates the degree of correlation: -1 for perfect negative, +1 for perfect positive, and 0 for no correlation (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014). Widely used in psychology, economics, and social sciences, this method supports hypothesis testing, prediction, and decision-making by revealing how variables interact. Table 5.6 likely displays correlation coefficients between variables in your study, offering insights into their relationships.

Table 6: Correlation and the coefficient of determination

		Project implementa tion	Scope Definiti on	Scope Planni ng	Scope Chang es	Scope Contro l
Project implementatio n	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed)	1				

	N	98				
Scope Definition	Pearson Correlation	.716**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	98	98			
Scope Planning	Pearson Correlation	.137	-.077	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.179	.450			
	N	98	98	98		
Scope Changes	Pearson Correlation	.297**	.272**	.013	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.007	.898		
	N	98	98	98	98	
Scope Control	Pearson Correlation	.230*	-.013	.115	-.153	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	.897	.260	.133	
	N	98	98	98	98	98

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: **Primary data**, (2024).

Table 6 presents correlation coefficients between project implementation and aspects of scope management: scope definition, scope planning, scope changes, and scope control. Statistically significant positive correlations are found between project implementation and scope definition ($r = 0.716, p < .01$), as well as scope changes ($r = 0.297, p < .01$). This indicates that clearly defining project scope and managing scope changes effectively are linked to better project outcomes. However, correlations with scope planning ($r = 0.137, p > .05$) and scope control ($r = 0.230, p < .05$) are weaker and not statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This suggests a less pronounced association with project implementation compared to scope definition and scope changes. These findings are consistent with literature underscoring the critical role of clear scope definition and effective scope change management in project success (Kerzner, 2020; Turner, 2019).

4. Conclusions

The study highlights the critical role of a clear project scope in enhancing coordination and collaboration. Consistent definition of project objectives is essential for aligning stakeholders and ensuring goal congruence, while effective documentation and communication are key. Scope planning emphasizes setting clear objectives and involving stakeholders, which fosters

collaboration. Although planning typically achieves realistic timelines and resource optimization, opinions differ on managing scope changes, which can lead to delays, increased costs, and compromised deliverables. Effective communication and robust contingency planning are crucial in addressing these challenges. In summary, precise scope definition boosts the success of community development projects by improving coordination, collaboration, and risk management. Despite generally positive perceptions of clarity and planning, refining communication strategies is essential for optimizing outcomes and managing risks in future projects.

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Conflict of interest statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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