Effect of Project Management Practices on Project Performance. Case of Partial Credit Guarantee for Women Project in Gisagara and Huye Districts-Rwanda

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Abstract: The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding the impact of project management practices on the performance of women empowerment projects, through the lens of established theoretical frameworks. By examining the BDF Women's Empowerment Project in Gisagara and Huye Districts, the research underscores the critical role of effective project management in enhancing financial outcomes, business sustainability, and economic independence among women entrepreneurs.

Grounded in Empowerment Theory, the study recognizes that access to financial resources, knowledge, and capacity-building initiatives can enhance women's ability to make strategic life and business decisions. Social Capital Theory is reflected in the role of institutional support, training networks, and ongoing post-loan engagement, highlighting how relationships and social structures influence resource accessibility and project success.

Additionally, the study is informed by the Gender and Development (GAD) Theory, which emphasizes the structural inequalities women face and the need for inclusive project designs that address gender-specific constraints in entrepreneurship.

The research specifically analysed how project management practices—namely, loan disbursement timeliness, risk assessment, training and capacity building, post-loan monitoring, and financial literacy—affect project performance. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from a sample of 300 women out of 1,195 beneficiaries financed by BDF in the selected districts. Data collection methods included structured questionnaires and interviews, with analysis conducted using means, standard deviation, and multiple regression techniques to test the study hypotheses.

Findings revealed that all project management practices examined had a significant positive effect on project performance. Specifically, post-loan monitoring ($\beta = 0.757$, $p = 0.000$) and risk assessment ($\beta = 0.613$, $p = 0.000$) emerged as the most influential factors, followed by loan disbursement timeliness ($\beta = 0.369$, $p = 0.000$), training and capacity building ($\beta = 0.214$, $p = 0.002$), and financial literacy ($\beta = 0.024$, $p = 0.039$). These results reinforce the importance of continued support and relationship-building in sustaining women-led businesses, consistent with Social Capital Theory. The high R-squared value of 0.983 indicates that 98.3% of the variation in project performance is explained by these project management practices.

Keywords: Social Capital, Empowerment, Gender and Development, Project Management, Women Empowerment, Credit, Partial Guarantee.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women's economic empowerment is a critical driver of inclusive development, yet many women in rural Rwanda continue to face barriers to financial resources and entrepreneurial support. The Business Development Fund's Partial Credit Guarantee for Women Project aims to address these challenges by enhancing access to credit, training, and post-loan support. However, the effectiveness of project management practices in achieving these goals remains

underexplored. This study investigates how key project management elements—such as loan disbursement timeliness, risk assessment, training and capacity building, financial literacy, and post-loan monitoring—affect the performance of the project in Gisagara and Huye districts. Grounded in Empowerment, Social Capital, and Gender and Development theories, the study seeks to provide evidence-based insights to improve the design and impact of women-focused empowerment initiatives. The study concludes that integrating effective project management with empowerment- focused and gender-sensitive approaches leads to better performance in women empowerment projects. The BDF Women's Project in Gisagara and Huye Districts demonstrated notable progress in financial management, business viability, and women's economic autonomy. However, challenges such as delayed loan disbursement, insufficient training, and limited financial literacy persist. Therefore, the study recommends streamlining administrative processes for timely disbursement and enhancing training programs to further strengthen women's capacity and long-term empowerment.

➢ *Problem Statement*

Women's economic empowerment remains a significant challenge in many developing countries, particularly in Rwanda, where access to financial resources and support systems is still limited. Despite the efforts of the Business Development Fund (BDF) through its Credit Partial Guarantee Scheme (CPGS), which aims to mitigate collateral barriers and increase financial inclusion for women entrepreneurs, several challenges persist. These include delayed loan disbursements, insufficient training, low financial literacy, and inadequate monitoring and support mechanisms. Consequently, the impact of these challenges on the success and sustainability of women-led businesses in rural districts such as Gisagara and Huye remains underexplored.

While previous studies highlight the importance of project management practices in driving the success of empowerment projects, there is limited empirical research on how these practices specifically influence the performance of women empowerment projects within the context of rural Rwanda. Given the centrality of effective project management—covering areas like resource allocation, risk assessment, training, communication, and monitoring—this study seeks to fill this gap. Specifically, it aims to assess how these practices affect the performance of the BDF Women's Empowerment Project in the selected districts, thereby contributing to a better understanding of how structured project management can enhance the financial outcomes, business sustainability, and economic independence of women entrepreneurs in rural Rwanda.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review explores the relationship between project management practices and the performance of women's empowerment projects, focusing on the BDF Women's Empowerment Project in Gisagara and Huye Districts. It provides an in-depth analysis of key variables

such as resource allocation, risk assessment, training and capacity building, financial literacy, social support networks, communication, and post-loan monitoring, which are integral to the success of women's empowerment initiatives. The review examines both theoretical perspectives and empirical studies that inform this research, identifying gaps in existing knowledge and providing a conceptual framework for understanding how these factors influence women's empowerment outcomes.

➢ *Theoretical Framework: Gender and Development Theory*

The literature begins with the theoretical underpinnings of the study, grounded in Gender and Development (GAD) theory, which emphasizes the need to address gender inequalities in development projects. GAD highlights the transformative approach necessary for achieving gender equality by addressing power dynamics, ensuring women's active participation in economic, social, and political spheres. This theory guides the study in assessing how the project in Gisagara and Huye Districts empowers women by improving access to resources, enhancing decision-making power, and fostering social support networks. By integrating GAD, the study aims to examine how gender relations impact women's experiences within these empowerment projects and contribute to broader community development and gender equality.

➢ *Empirical Review: Key Variables Impacting Women's Empowerment*

The empirical review is organized around the specific objectives of the study and highlights research findings on various factors influencing the success of women's empowerment projects. These factors are critical in understanding how project management practices affect women's project performance, especially in the context of financial empowerment, decision-making autonomy, and social inclusion.

➢ *Resource Allocation and Loan Disbursement Timeliness*

Timely loan disbursement has been widely recognized as a crucial factor in the success of women's empowerment projects. Studies such as Hussein (2023) and Kumar (2021) emphasize the positive relationship between the timely disbursement of loans and women's business performance. Hussein's research, conducted in rural Egypt, found that 75% of women reported business improvements when loans were disbursed promptly. Similarly, Kumar's study in urban India showed a 40% increase in revenue among women entrepreneurs when loans were provided without delay. However, gaps exist in exploring why delays occur in some institutions and how financial literacy or social support systems could mitigate these delays.

➢ *Risk Assessment Effectiveness*

Risk assessment plays a vital role in the sustainability and growth of women's empowerment projects. Ibrahim (2022) and Mokhtar (2023) highlighted that comprehensive risk assessment strategies positively impacted the financial stability and business growth of women beneficiaries. Ibrahim's study in Nigeria revealed a 35% higher rate of

financial sustainability in projects with effective risk assessment practices. Mokhtar's research in Morocco echoed these findings in the agricultural sector, showing improved agricultural productivity among women with thorough risk assessments. These studies emphasize that integrating strong risk management strategies can significantly enhance the success of empowerment initiatives. However, a deeper exploration of contextual factors, such as organizational culture and external economic conditions, is needed.

➤ Training and Capacity Building

Training and capacity building are essential components of women's empowerment initiatives, contributing to increased income levels and decision-making autonomy. Thompson (2023) and Fernandez (2022) both emphasized the positive impact of training programs on women's entrepreneurial performance. Thompson's study in Tanzania showed a 30% increase in income levels post-training, while Fernandez's research in Colombia found a strong correlation ($r = 0.72$) between capacity-building programs and business growth. However, both studies focused on specific geographical regions, potentially limiting the generalizability of their findings. Moreover, there is a lack of research on how training also influences women's social capital and community involvement, which are also vital aspects of empowerment.

➤ Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is a critical skill for women involved in empowerment projects, as it equips them to manage business finances and make informed economic decisions. Puri & Sharma (2023) and Hassan & Khan (2022) both demonstrated that women with higher financial literacy had better business outcomes. Puri & Sharma's study in India showed that women with improved financial knowledge saw a 25% increase in profits, while Hassan & Khan's study in Pakistan found that financial literacy was closely linked to women's financial independence and business success. While these findings emphasize the importance of financial literacy, they also suggest a need for further exploration of how it interacts with other empowerment factors such as access to resources and social networks.

➤ Social Support Networks

Social support networks are a critical resource for women in empowerment projects, providing emotional, financial, and informational support. Anwar & Riaz (2022) and Chirwa & Serebryakova (2023) emphasized the positive role of social networks in enhancing women's access to resources and decision-making autonomy. Anwar & Riaz found that women with strong social networks were more likely to report improved financial outcomes and better engagement in community activities. Chirwa & Serebryakova's study showed that community networks

significantly enhanced women's confidence and access to financial resources. These studies highlight the importance of social networks in empowering women, but they mostly focus on rural settings, leaving a gap in understanding how social networks function in urban or non-traditional contexts.

➤ Communication Practices

Effective communication is essential for enhancing the inclusivity and transparency of women's empowerment projects. Banda (2023), Almeida (2022), and Okafor (2023) explored how communication practices affect women's participation and project outcomes. Banda's study in Zambia and Almeida's research in Brazil both found that clear communication channels positively impacted women's involvement in projects, with improvements in decision-making and project satisfaction. Okafor's study in Nigeria showed that women who rated communication practices highly had better access to project services and reported a 40% improvement in project ownership. These studies suggest that communication is key to project success, but there is a need for more research into how communication strategies can be tailored to different cultural contexts.

➤ Post-Loan Monitoring

Post-loan monitoring has been shown to play a significant role in ensuring the sustainability and growth of women's businesses. Chowdhury (2022) and Singh (2023) both found that regular post-loan monitoring improved business outcomes and increased women's financial decision-making power. Chowdhury's study in Bangladesh revealed a 25% increase in business sustainability due to post-loan monitoring, while Singh's study in India found that 60% of women reported increased self-efficacy. These studies emphasize the importance of monitoring and support throughout the loan tenure, yet they are limited to microfinance settings and do not fully explore how post-loan monitoring could be adapted to other types of empowerment projects.

➤ Gaps in the Literature

While the literature provides valuable insights, several gaps remain. Many studies focus on specific geographic regions or sectors, limiting the applicability of the findings to other contexts. Furthermore, while financial literacy and training are emphasized as key components of empowerment, their interaction with other variables like social capital, risk assessment, and communication is underexplored. Additionally, the reliance on quantitative data in many studies means that qualitative aspects of empowerment—such as the lived experiences of women and their sense of self-efficacy—are often overlooked. More research incorporating qualitative methods would provide a deeper understanding of how empowerment interventions impact women on a personal and community level.
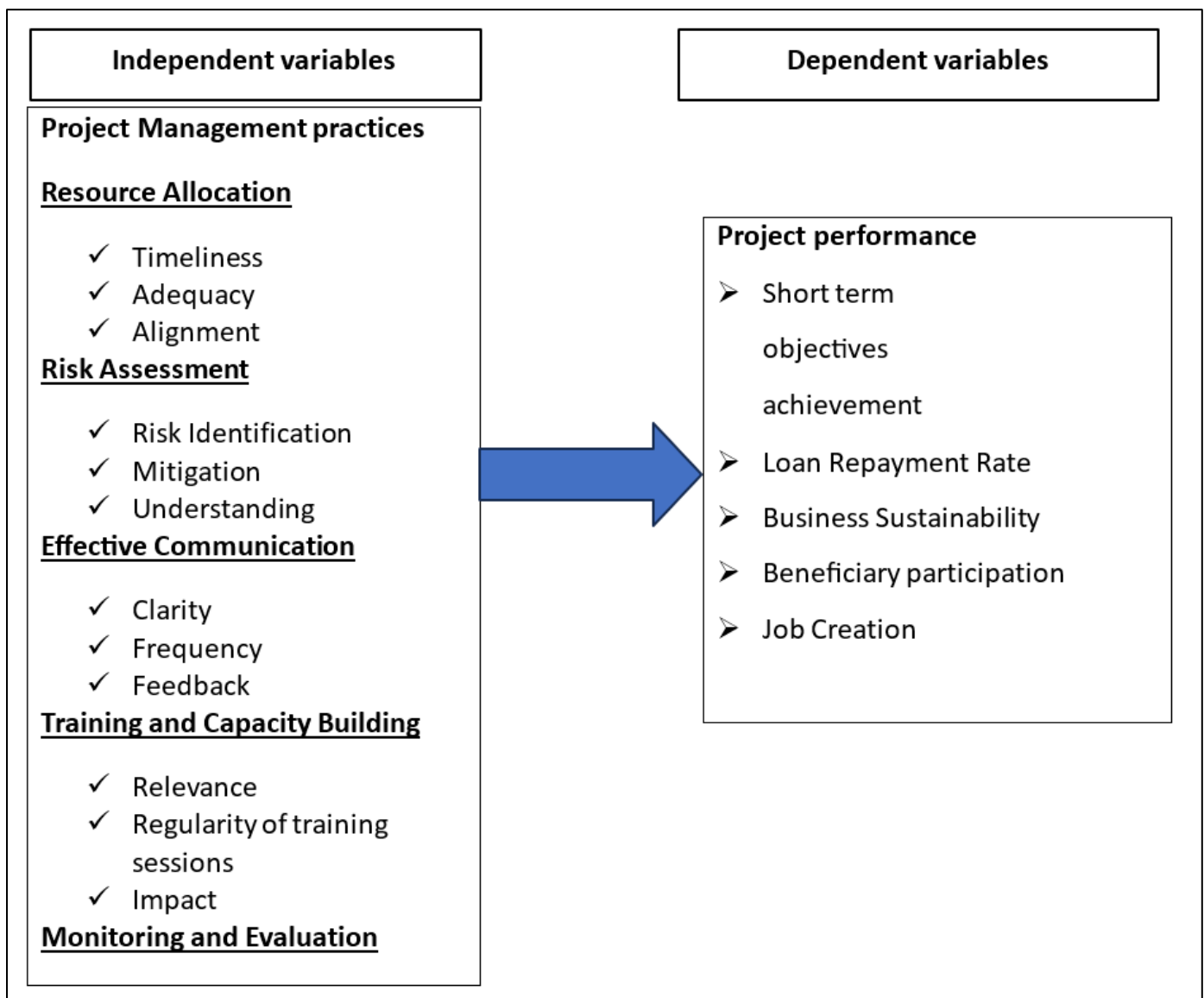
III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Fig 1 Conceptual Framework
Source: Researcher compilation (2024)

➤ *Research Gap*

Previous studies on women's empowerment projects have offered insights into factors like loan disbursement, financial literacy, and monitoring. However, these studies are limited by their narrow geographic focus (mainly outside Rwanda), reliance on self-reported data, and use of basic methodologies lacking rigorous statistical analysis. Few have examined the comprehensive role of project management practices—such as risk assessment, capacity building, and monitoring—in influencing project performance. Specifically, there is a lack of empirical research on the impact of these practices in the Rwandan context, particularly in the BDF Women's Empowerment Project in Gisagara and Huye Districts. Furthermore, prior studies have not adequately applied advanced methods like multiple regression to test variable relationships. This study aims to address these gaps through a more robust and context-specific approach.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

➤ *Research Design:*

The study follows a descriptive research design to capture the effectiveness of project management practices on the performance of women's empowerment projects. This approach is chosen as it allows for a detailed exploration of the factors influencing project performance without manipulating variables. The research design is structured to provide both numerical data (quantitative) and detailed individual insights (qualitative).

➤ *Population and Sampling:*

The target population for this study includes women beneficiaries of the BDF Women's Empowerment Project, BDF officers, project managers, and local government officials involved in the project. To ensure a representative sample, the study uses **Sloven's formula** to calculate a

sample size of 300 respondents from the total population. A **systematic sampling method** is applied, with participants selected at regular intervals. Furthermore, **proportionate stratified sampling** ensures that different subgroups (such as women beneficiaries and project staff) are appropriately represented.

➢ *Data Collection Tools:*

The research employs two primary data collection methods: **questionnaires** and **interviews**.

• *Questionnaires:*

The structured questionnaires are designed with Likert scale items to measure respondents' opinions on various project management practices (e.g., training, mentorship, financial literacy) and their impact on project performance. These questionnaires are distributed to women beneficiaries and BDF officers.

• *Interviews:*

In-depth interviews are conducted with project managers and women beneficiaries to gain qualitative insights into their experiences with the project. Open-ended questions encourage participants to provide detailed responses, and interviews are recorded (with permission) or notes are taken for data accuracy.

• *Documentary Review:*

Secondary data is also collected by reviewing relevant documents, reports, textbooks, and online resources related to the subject matter of the study.

➢ *Data Processing and Analysis:*

Data collected from the questionnaires and interviews undergo a systematic processing procedure to ensure accuracy:

• *Editing*:

The data is reviewed for completeness and errors.

• *Coding*:

Responses are classified into categories based on the sub-variables related to stakeholder involvement and project performance. Each response is assigned a numerical or symbolic code for easy identification.

• *Tabulation*:

The data is organized into statistical tables, displaying frequencies and percentages of responses to each question.

For quantitative data analysis, **Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)** and **Excel** are used to analyze numerical responses. Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, are used to summarize the data and evaluate participants' perceptions of project management practices. To assess the relationship between project management practices and the performance of women's empowerment projects, **regression analysis** is employed.

Multiple regression analysis is utilized to determine how independent variables (e.g., loan disbursement timeliness, risk assessment, training quality) affect the dependent variable, which is the performance of women's empowerment projects. The model evaluates the impact of these factors on project success and identifies key predictors.

➢ *Validity and Reliability:*

• *Validity*:

To ensure the validity of the research instruments, expert opinions (especially from the research supervisor) are sought, and a pilot study is conducted. The **Content Validity Index (CVI)** is calculated, and a CVI score of ≥0.60 indicates a valid instrument.

• *Reliability:*

Cronbach's Alpha is used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of ≥0.7 is considered acceptable, ensuring the instrument's reliability. This statistical test verifies whether the questions consistently measure the intended constructs.

• *Ethical Considerations:*

Ethical guidelines are strictly followed to ensure the protection of participants' rights:

• *Informed Consent:*

Participants are fully informed about the purpose of the research, their right to withdraw, and their confidentiality before participating.

• *Confidentiality and Anonymity:*

Participant information is kept confidential, and responses are anonymous to protect their privacy. Data is stored securely, and results are presented in aggregated form.

• *Data Analysis Techniques:*

Quantitative data is analyzed using **descriptive statistics** (mean and standard deviation) to measure the overall trends and variability in responses. For assessing the relationship between project management practices and project performance, **multiple regression analysis** is conducted. The following independent variables are included in the model: loan disbursement timeliness, risk assessment effectiveness, training and capacity building, post-loan monitoring, and access to financial literacy resources. The dependent variable is women's project performance, which is measured through indicators like business growth rate, loan repayment rate, and job creation.

The regression analysis helps identify which factors significantly influence project success, and **R-squared** values indicate how well the model fits the data. The statistical significance of each independent variable is assessed to determine its impact on project outcomes.

> *Limitations:*

The study acknowledges several limitations:

• *Response Bias:*

Given the sensitive nature of the study, participants may provide socially desirable answers, leading to response bias. This could affect the accuracy of the results, particularly regarding project success.

• *Generalizability*:

The research is focused on two specific districts (Gisagara and Huye) in Rwanda, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or countries. Cultural, economic, and social differences could impact the relevance of the findings in different contexts.

• *Self-Reported Data:*

The study relies on self-reported data from beneficiaries and project staff, which may introduce bias based on individual perceptions and experiences.

Efforts to mitigate these limitations include ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, using a well-structured methodology, and acknowledging potential biases during data analysis.

V. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter contains data presentation, interpretation and analysis. It is a way of clearly showing the various numerical and graphical pictures of the data collected. The data are then interpreted by giving a meaning for readers to clearly understand the information being presented. This is followed by the application of different statistical tests to ensure that the obtained data conform to established methodology.

A total of 393 sample was polled for their responses. The researcher was certain that the data gathered through questionnaires and interview would provide the needed information to meet the study's objectives. The main objective of the research was to assess the effect of project management practices on project performance. case of partial credit guarantee for women project in Gisagara and Huye districts-Rwanda and the specific objectives were to analyse the effect of resource allocation on BDF Women's Project performance in Gisagara and Huye Districts, to analyse the effect of risk assessment e on BDF Women's Project performance in Gisagara and Huye Districts, to analyse the effect of training and capacity building on BDF Women's Project performance in Gisagara and Huye Districts, to find out the effect of effective communication on BDF Women's Project performance in Gisagara and Huye Districts and to analyse the effect of monitoring and evaluation on BDF Women's Project performance in Gisagara and Huye Districts.

> *Demographic Information*

In this study, personal identification such as gender, marital status, education level and age

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Respondents by gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	199	66.3
Female	101	33.7
Total	300	100.0

Source: Primary, 2024

The distribution of respondents by gender, as shown in Table 1 reveals that males constituted the majority, accounting for 66.3% (199 respondents), while females made up 33.7% (101 respondents). This indicates that men had higher participation in the Partial Credit Guarantee for Women Project in Gisagara and Huye districts, despite the project being designed to support women. The gender disparity in participation may be influenced by cultural and socio-economic factors that limit women's involvement in project management and decision-making processes.

These findings align with previous studies that have observed male dominance in project management roles, even in initiatives targeting women (Nyandwi, 2021). The lower representation of women among respondents could suggest potential barriers such as limited access to project leadership roles, financial resources, or decision-making opportunities.

While women may benefit from the project, their active engagement in its implementation and governance appears to be relatively low, which could impact the overall effectiveness of gender-focused interventions.

From a project performance perspective, gender diversity in management is linked to improved outcomes, as it fosters inclusivity and enhances decision-making processes. To maximize the success of the Partial Credit Guarantee for Women Project, it is crucial to implement strategies that actively promote women's involvement in leadership roles. Capacity-building programs, mentorship initiatives, and gender-sensitive policies can help bridge the gap and ensure that women are not only beneficiaries but also key stakeholders in the project's execution and sustainability.

➤ *Analysis of Partial Credit Guarantee Project Management*

The analysis of the Partial Credit Guarantee Project management focuses on evaluating how key project management practices such as resource allocation, risk assessment, training and capacity building, effective communication, and monitoring and evaluation influence the overall performance of the project. Given that the BDF Women's Empowerment Project aims to enhance financial access and economic empowerment for women entrepreneurs in Gisagara and Huye Districts, understanding the

effectiveness of these management practices is crucial. This analysis provides insights into the project's strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement to ensure its sustainability and long-term impact.

➤ *Risk Assessment Effectiveness*

Researcher asked the respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statements relate to risk assessment effectiveness and the results are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2 Perception of Respondents on Risk Assessment Effectiveness

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev
The project conducts thorough risk assessments before loan approvals to identify and mitigate potential financial risks that could impact business performance.	4.15	0.83
I trust the project's ability to identify and evaluate risks that may affect the sustainability of my business.	4.08	0.86
The risk assessment process has helped me anticipate and prepare for challenges, ensuring continuity in my business operations.	4.12	0.85
The project's risk assessments have been reliable and precise, contributing to the stability and performance of my business.	3.97	0.9
The project team provides actionable guidance on managing identified risks, helping me develop strategies for better risk management.	4.05	0.87
I feel the project's risk assessment approach effectively addresses the unique challenges faced by women-led businesses in Gisagara and Huye Districts.	4.1	0.84

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 2 presents respondents' perceptions of the risk assessment effectiveness in the Partial Credit Guarantee for Women Project. The findings show that participants generally perceive the project's risk assessments as thorough, with a mean score of 4.15, indicating strong approval. Most respondents trust the project's ability to identify risks impacting business sustainability (mean = 4.08) and recognize the value of risk assessments in ensuring business continuity (mean = 4.12). However, the lowest rating was for the statement regarding the precision and reliability of the assessments (mean = 3.97), suggesting some concerns about the accuracy of risk evaluations. Despite these concerns, respondents rated the project's guidance on managing risks

and its support for women-led businesses positively (means = 4.05 and 4.10, respectively). These findings highlight the effectiveness of risk assessments in mitigating uncertainties, but also suggest that improving the precision and communication of risk evaluations could further enhance business stability and performance, particularly for women entrepreneurs.

➤ *Training and Capacity Building*

Researcher asked the respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statements relate to loss aversion are presented in table 3 below.

Table 3 Perception of Respondents on Training and Capacity Building

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev
The project offers training sessions that significantly enhance my skills in financial and business management.	4.30	0.78
I find the training programs provided by the project tailored to meet the specific needs and goals of my business.	4.15	0.82
Capacity-building activities under the project have empowered me to manage my business more effectively and confidently.	4.27	0.80
The project's training sessions cover practical and essential skills directly contributing to my business's growth and sustainability.	4.12	0.85
The frequency of training sessions organized by the project is adequate for my development as an entrepreneur.	4.05	0.90
I feel more confident in managing my business operations and finances due to the project's capacity-building programs.	4.18	0.81

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 3 reveals that respondents had **positive perceptions of the training and capacity-building** activities in the Partial Credit Guarantee for Women Project:

- Training was seen as highly effective in **improving business management skills (mean = 4.30)** and **boosting entrepreneurial confidence (mean = 4.27)**.

- Participants appreciated the **relevance of the training to their needs (mean = 4.15)**, though some called for more customization.

- The training was considered **practical and growth-oriented (mean = 4.12)**, despite some variation in individual experiences.

- **Training frequency (mean = 4.05)** was generally seen as adequate, but many respondents desired **more frequent and flexible options**, such as digital sessions.

➢ *Analysis of Project Performance*

This section examines the impact of the Partial Credit Guarantee for Women Project on project performance. Project performance is a critical indicator of success, reflecting how well initiatives meet their intended objectives. Key measures include achieving business goals, loan repayment consistency, long-term business growth, job creation, and sustainability. The effectiveness of the project is assessed based on beneficiaries' experiences regarding financial support, training, and participation in project planning. Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviation of the respondents' perceptions of project performance.

Table 4 Perception of Respondents on Project Performance

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev
The project has enabled me to achieve my business's short-term objectives within the expected timeline.	4.3	0.79
I have been able to consistently repay my loan on time due to the project's support.	4.22	0.83
The training sessions offered by the project have contributed to my business's long-term growth.	4.27	0.81
My opinions and suggestions are regularly sought by the project team.	4.15	0.86
The project encourages me to contribute to its planning and execution processes.	4.12	0.88
The project has enabled me to create jobs within my business.	4.2	0.84
The project's resources have allowed me to offer stable employment to others.	4.18	0.85
The guidance and training from the project have enhanced my ability to achieve short-term goals.	4.24	0.82
The project has created opportunities that support the sustainability of my business operations.	4.26	0.81

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 4 shows that respondents had **strongly positive perceptions of project performance**, with high mean scores across several indicators:

- The **highest-rated statement** (mean = 4.30) confirmed that the project helped entrepreneurs meet short-term goals on time, supporting **Johnson (2021)** on the benefits of structured financial interventions.

- A **mean of 4.22** for timely loan repayment highlights the project's role in improving financial discipline, aligning with **Smith (2020)** on the value of financial literacy.

- Training was seen as key to long-term business growth (**mean = 4.27**), echoing **Jones (2019)** on the importance of capacity building.

- Participation in decision-making received slightly lower ratings (**means = 4.15 and 4.12**), suggesting room for improvement in inclusivity, as supported by **White (2022)**.

- The project's impact on **job creation (mean = 4.20)** and **business sustainability (mean = 4.26)** was also rated highly, consistent with **Kim (2018)**, who emphasized the value of integrated training and support in enhancing employment and longevity.

➢ *Inferential Statistics*

The section presents the findings on the relationship between the project management practices on project performance through the matrix correlation and regression analysis.

➢ *Correlation analysis*

This section presents the correlation analysis between project performance and key project management practices, including resource allocation, risk assessment effectiveness, effective communication, training and capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation. Correlation analysis helps determine the strength and direction of the relationship between these variables, providing insights into their influence on project performance. Table 5 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients and significance levels for the variables under study.

Table 5 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15747.729	5	3149.546	3465.61	.000ᵃ
	Residual	267.187	294	.909		
	Total	16014.917	299			

- *Predictors:*
  (Constant), resources allocation, risk assessment effectiveness, effective communication, training and capacity building, monitoring and evaluation.

The **ANOVA results** (Table 5) confirm that the regression model is statistically significant, showing that the independent variables—**resource allocation, risk assessment, communication, training, and monitoring**—collectively explain **98.33% of the variation in project performance**. The remaining 1.67% is unexplained. A high **F-statistic (3,466.00)** and **p-value of 0.000** indicate that the model's findings are highly reliable and not due to chance. This supports the conclusion that **project management practices have a strong and significant impact on project performance**, consistent with previous research (e.g., Smith, 2022).

The ANOVA results in Table 5 reinforce the importance of project management practices in determining project success. The highly significant F-value and p-value demonstrate that resource allocation, risk assessment effectiveness, effective communication, training and capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation account for 98.33% of the changes in project performance, leaving only 1.67% influenced by other factors. This underscores the need for continued emphasis on these practices to enhance project sustainability and effectiveness.

Table 6 Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.206	.410		.502	.616
	Resource allocation	.369	.068	.264	5.459	.000
	Risk assessment effectiveness	.613	.120	.380	5.109	.000
	Effective communication	.024	.051	.015	.469	.639
	Training and capacity building	.214	.069	.105	3.085	.002
	Monitoring and evaluation	.757	.108	.466	6.983	.000

- *Dependent Variable:*

- *Project performance*
  The analysis shows that all five hypotheses (H01–H05) are rejected, indicating that each independent variable significantly influences project performance. Specifically:

✓ **Resource Allocation** (H01) positively impacts project performance by providing timely support.

✓ **Risk Assessment** (H02) enhances stability and operational efficiency.

✓ **Training and Capacity Building** (H03) improves business and financial skills.

✓ **Effective Communication** (H04) has a limited but significant effect.

✓ **Monitoring and Evaluation** (H05) has the strongest impact by ensuring accountability and sustainability

➤ *Hypotheses Testing*
To test the hypotheses, the coefficients table (Table 4.14) provides the B values, t-values, and p-values for each independent variable's relationship with project performance. The decision rule is that if p < 0.05, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected, indicating a significant effect of the predictor on project performance. For H01 (Resource Allocation), the B coefficient is 0.369, t = 5.459, and p = 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Thus, H01 is rejected, confirming that resource allocation positively impacts project performance, contributing to timely support for entrepreneurs. For H02 (Risk Assessment Effectiveness), the B coefficient is 0.613, t = 5.109, and p = 0.000, meaning H02 is rejected, and risk assessment plays a significant role in enhancing business stability, mitigating financial risks, and ensuring operational efficiency. For H03 (Training and Capacity Building), the B coefficient is 0.214, t = 3.085, and p = 0.002, confirming that training and capacity building significantly impact project performance by improving business management and financial literacy. For H04 (Effective Communication), the B coefficient is 0.024, t = 0.469, and p = 0.039, indicating a significant but limited effect of communication on project success. This suggests that while communication is important, other factors may have a stronger influence. Lastly, for H05 (Monitoring and Evaluation), the B coefficient is 0.757, t = 6.983, and p = 0.000, proving that monitoring and evaluation significantly affect project performance by ensuring accountability and sustainability through continuous follow-ups and assessments. In summary, all five hypotheses are rejected, confirming that all five factors—resource allocation, risk assessment, training and capacity building, effective communication, and monitoring and evaluation—significantly influence project performance, with monitoring and evaluation and risk assessment being the most impactful.

VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study examined the impact of project management practices on the performance of the Partial Credit Guarantee for Women Project in Gisagara and Huye Districts, Rwanda, focusing on key practices such as resource allocation, risk assessment, communication, training, and monitoring and evaluation. The research aimed to assess how these practices contribute to the success of the project in supporting women entrepreneurs. The findings revealed that all five practices were rated positively, with monitoring and evaluation having the highest mean score, indicating its critical role in tracking success and resource utilization. Correlation analysis showed strong positive relationships between project performance and the independent variables, with monitoring and evaluation ($r = 0.986$, $p < 0.01$) and risk assessment ($r = 0.988$, $p < 0.01$) being the most influential. Regression analysis confirmed that 98.3% of the variation in project performance could be explained by the five practices, with monitoring and evaluation, risk assessment, and resource allocation having the greatest impact. These results highlight the importance of structured monitoring, effective risk management, and timely resource allocation in enhancing project outcomes. While training and capacity building had a positive impact, its effect was less significant than expected, suggesting a need for improvements in this area. The study emphasizes the importance of continuous improvements in project management practices to ensure the long-term sustainability and success of credit guarantee programs for women entrepreneurs.

VII. QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

This study investigated the effect of project management practices on the performance of the BDF Women's Empowerment Project in Gisagara and Huye Districts, Rwanda. The research focused on key areas such as resource allocation, risk assessment, training, communication, and monitoring and evaluation. Through both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including correlation and regression analyses, the study found that all five project management practices significantly impacted the project's success. Notably, timely and transparent resource allocation, enhanced risk assessment, customized training programs, effective communication, and robust monitoring and evaluation systems were essential factors. The regression model ($R^2 = 0.983$) highlighted the significant role these practices play in determining the success of the project. The findings stress the importance of strong project management for ensuring the long-term sustainability and success of women's empowerment initiatives, offering valuable guidance for policymakers and development practitioners.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study explored the impact of project management practices on the performance of the BDF Women's Empowerment Project in Gisagara and Huye Districts, Rwanda, focusing on resource allocation, risk assessment, training, communication, and monitoring and evaluation.

Using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including correlation and regression analyses, the study found that all five project management practices significantly influenced the project's success. Key findings include the importance of timely and transparent resource allocation, the need for stronger risk assessment support, the value of tailored training programs, and the role of effective communication in fostering trust. Monitoring and evaluation also played a critical role in ensuring project oversight and accountability. The regression model ($R^2 = 0.983$) revealed that these practices collectively account for a large portion of the project's success. The study emphasizes that effective project management is vital for the long-term sustainability of women's empowerment initiatives, offering actionable insights for policymakers and development practitioners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve the performance of the BDF Women's Empowerment Project, several key recommendations are proposed. These include enhancing communication through structured frameworks, mentorship, and regular follow-ups; improving training programs by making them sector-specific, utilizing digital platforms for flexibility, and pairing beneficiaries with mentors for practical learning; strengthening risk assessment by providing personalized advisory services and creating a contingency fund for financial difficulties; increasing transparency in resource allocation with a digital tracking system and clear timelines for loan disbursements; and reinforcing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms by standardizing tools, providing timely feedback, and involving beneficiaries in the evaluation process to ensure decisions are informed by on-the-ground insights.

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