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## **Role of Participation and Consensus on Projects' Performance in Public Sector Health Care in Peshawar**

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### **Abstract**

*This exploratory research examines how good governance practices, specifically participation and consensus, affect the performance of projects in the public health sector hospitals of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The current study represents a crucial addition to a series of research focused on the healthcare sector that aims to highlight the influence of good governance on the performance of healthcare projects. This study analyzes three essential health programs in the KP province: Sehat Card, Insulin D-Talk, and RBC. A sample of 121 staff members from projects was obtained through simple random sampling, including representatives from project planning, monitoring bodies, and implementation agencies, such as administrators, project leaders, hospital department heads, doctors, and various project personnel. Quantitative data regarding the prevalence, frequency, and perceived effectiveness of the governance practices under consideration were gathered through standardized questionnaires. Findings indicate that participation and a consensus-driven approach significantly shape project results, demonstrating strong performance across the examined initiatives. Importantly, this research is the first to employ an international evaluation standard to measure the effectiveness of healthcare projects in Pakistan. The principles of good governance set forth by the UNDP were applied to investigate their impact on the performance of these healthcare initiatives. The study's recommendations were directed at policymakers, healthcare managers, and project directors to enhance governance practices and project efficacy. To enhance stakeholder involvement throughout the entire process, especially in decision-making, it is essential to establish advisory panels that include patients, staff, and community members to gather their insights. Expanding this study to cover additional provinces and urban and rural areas would help identify regional healthcare challenges and governance practices. A longitudinal approach could track governance model evolution and long-term healthcare impacts while including private sector insights that would enhance understanding of governance efficiency and care standards.*

### **Keywords**

Good Governance, Project Performance, Participation, and Consensus

### **Introduction**

This study investigates the influence of good governance principles, specifically participation and consensus orientation, on project performance within public health sector hospitals in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Utilizing quantitative research methods, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these principles affect project outcomes. It identifies the critical governance factors of participation and consensus as key contributors to successful project implementation and offers recommendations for improving project governance in the health sector. The public health initiatives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in Peshawar's hospitals, require enhancement due to governance issues. Despite sufficient efforts in healthcare provision, numerous

projects fail to achieve their established goals and objectives because of ineffective resource management, insufficient policy communication to stakeholders, minimal stakeholder engagement, and poor enforcement of laws and transparency practices. These governance shortcomings can lead to inefficiencies, reduced quality of care, and ultimately, negative health results for the community.

Good governance is one of the key components of delivering the output of public sector projects efficiently, and the concept becomes much more critical when it comes to the health sector. The main reason is that efficient project delivery here is synonymous with a large-scale impact on public well-being. It is recorded in the works of Andrews et al. (2010) and Marmot et al. (2008). Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a province located in Pakistan, comprising diverse urban and rural populations with different spectrums of health needs. Peshawar being the capital of KP acts as the central healthcare services hub for the region. This research focuses its work on public health sector hospitals in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, underlining directly the influence of governance principles of participation and consensus orientation on project performance.

### **Research Objectives**

Focusing on research questions, the study had the following objectives:

- i. To evaluate the impact of good governance practices, participation, and consensus on the outcomes of public health projects.
- ii. To propose strategies and recommendations for improving governance in health sector projects relating to participation and consensus.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Good Governance and Project Performance**

Turner (2004) emphasized that stakeholders play a crucial role in determining and agreeing upon the criteria for measuring a project's success. The necessity for on-going input from all stakeholders during execution highlights their participation and perspectives on what constitutes success for the project. As a result, professionals and researchers now recognize that project performance is a complex concept that should not be limited to the traditional iron triangle. Bryde and Brown (2004) proposed the idea of incorporating input from all stakeholders to assess the various stages of the project life cycle.

According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, governance refers to the decision-making process and the implementation (or lack thereof) of those decisions (UNESCAP, 2009, p. 1). Turner (2009) suggests that project governance encompasses the relationship between the project sponsor, project management, and stakeholders. It establishes a framework for setting project objectives, identifying methods to achieve them, and monitoring performance. Nearly all researchers emphasize the significance of stakeholder satisfaction, including clients, customers, contractors, and managers, as a critical factor for project success (Wang et al., 2023). According to Harding and Preker (2003) studies on the health sector view governance in terms of the interactions of various players and how those interactions influence the actions of specific institutions, such as hospitals.

#### **Participation and Consensus Orientation (Good Governance Principles) in the Public Health Sector:**

UNDP gave five principles of Good Governance based on its good governance definition in *UNDP Governance and Sustainable Human Development (UNDP, 1997, 2005)*. One of which is Legitimacy and Voice, which further comprises participation and consensus.

**Participation:** Decision-making should be ensured to involve men and women directly or via intermediary legal organizations.

**Consensus Orientation:** There are several actors and perspectives in society. For good governance to be practiced, arbitration must be done between various societal interests that result in a broad consensus regarding what is in the best interests of the group.

According to the UNDP's definition of good governance, it is marked by the participation of the public to ensure that priorities in the social, economic, and political realms are determined through a broad agreement within society. It also encourages allowing the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society to influence directly the making of political choices, especially when it relates to the allocation of resources for progress (UNESCAP, 2007).

In the realm of governance, it is crucial to address the perspectives of various stakeholders within a society and to reconcile their differing interests in pursuit of a clear consensus that serves the

community as a whole. To this end, sustainable human development should be considered comprehensively and planned well in advance, taking into account the community's enlightened history, culture, and social context (UNESCAP, 2009). As noted by Gavriliuță and Lotos (2018), consensus is defined as a process that balances the diverse interests within society to reach an agreement that benefits the community overall.

H1: There is a significant relationship between participation, consensus-orientation, and project performance.

This study operationalized three theories: agency, stakeholder, and transaction cost economic theory (TCE). Muller (2011) addressed the importance of agency theory and TCE in studying governance systems and project governance. TCE refers to the decision-making process around whether to produce internally or procure externally, focusing on minimizing organizational transaction costs. According to stakeholder theory, involving stakeholders in management decision-making can enhance public healthcare services' quality and productivity. Stakeholder relationships are defined by Power, Legitimacy, Urgency, and Salience (Amis et al., 2020; Savedoff, 2011; Magness, 2008).

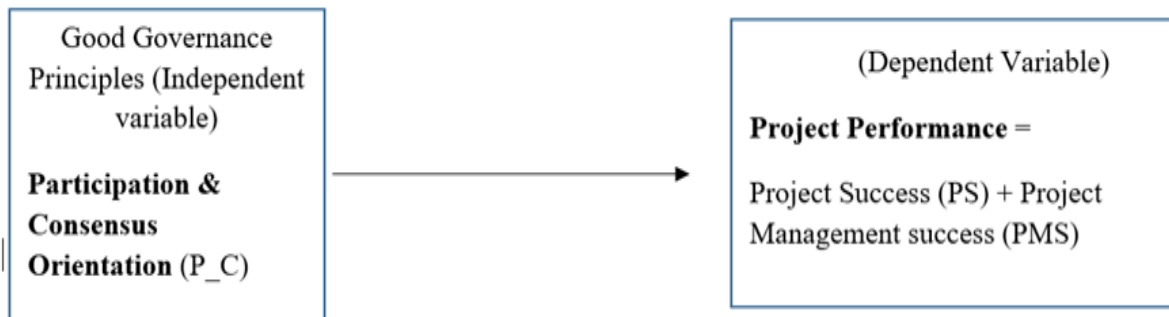
**The Theoretical Framework of the Study:**

The framework outlined for this study is grounded in established literature concerning project performance, governance in the public sector, and the principles of good governance.

This foundation ensures that the framework is relevant and robust, drawing upon best practices and theoretical insights to enhance the understanding of effective project management in public contexts.

**Figure 1**

*Theoretical Framework of the study*



The present study undertakes a comprehensive investigation into three pivotal healthcare initiatives currently being implemented within the public-sector hospitals of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP): the Sehat Insaf Card initiative, the Regional Blood Centre (RBC) system, and the Insulin D Talk program. These initiatives have been carefully selected due to their progression through multiple phases of implementation, which aligns systematically with the overarching objectives of this research.

The Sehat Insaf Card initiative represents a groundbreaking step in providing accessible healthcare, offering free medical services to the entire population of KP. This initiative covers a broad spectrum of medical needs, including secondary and tertiary care for various health conditions. By removing financial barriers, it aims to significantly enhance the health outcomes of the region's residents.

In addition, the "Extension of D-TALK & Insulin for Life Program" has been launched to address the pressing needs of individuals suffering from diabetes. This program focuses on ensuring that those in need have uninterrupted access to essential diabetes medications and insulin injections, thereby improving management of the condition and overall patient care.

Moreover, the National Blood Transfusion Project, now known as the Safe Blood Transfusion Project, plays a critical role in the region's healthcare framework. It operates via a centralized model of Regional Blood Centers (RBCs) that serve to guarantee the provision of safe and reliable blood transfusions. Currently, this initiative supports six public hospitals within Peshawar, ensuring that patients receive critical blood supplies promptly.

By concentrating on initiatives that are situated at an intermediate stage of implementation, this study aims to collect vital data that reveals early operational challenges as well as the experiences

of both providers and patients involved. This methodological approach is geared towards yielding rich insights into the real-time impact of these healthcare projects during their developmental phases, which is essential for ongoing improvements and future replication of successful practices (Patton, 2014; Rossi et al., 2003).

**Methodology**

**Sampling:**

The study employed a simple random sampling technique to select 121 project planning, monitoring, and implementing authorities, including administrators, project heads, and hospital staff. With a target of 100 samples and an acceptable size of 30 (Sekran, 2008), the sample consisted of project managers and team members involved in planning and execution.

The “Sehat Card” project had 45 members (37% of the sample), “Insulin D Talk” had 41 members (34%), and “RBC” had 35 members (29%). Thus, the total was 100%. Regarding gender distribution, out of 121 respondents, 107 were male (88%), while 14 were female (12%), with the cumulative percentage reaching 100%.

**Table 1**

**Detail of the project team sample for each project**

<b>Name of Project</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Sehat card	45	37.2
Insulin D Talk	41	33.9
RBC	35	28.9
Total	121	100.0

**Data Collection Method and Instrument**

Quantitative research methodology employs numerical data and mathematical approaches to analyze theories and examine relationships between variables (Taherdoost,2022; Leavy, 2018). A study highlighted using questionnaires to gather data from various stakeholders in public healthcare, enabling insights into governance practices and project performance (Kabir, 2016).

The project staff survey consisted of two sections: the first gathered demographic and project-related information, while the second assessed participants' evaluation of governance principles and project management success using a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire included 45 items, focusing on areas such as Project Management Success (18 items), Project Success (13 items), and Participation and Consensus (14 items).

**Results and Analysis**

The results were analyzed using quantitative data to evaluate their credibility and validity. Various statistical and analytical tools were employed, with SPSS software as the primary data analysis and interpretation platform. Within the SPSS framework, the Cronbach's Alpha test was performed to establish the validity and reliability of the project staff questionnaires utilized in this research. Regression analysis and Pearson correlation were applied to enrich the findings. The study determined a significance level of 0.05, corresponding to a 95% confidence interval. Statistically significant results were characterized by the condition that the P-value in hypothesis testing was less than the established significance level, thereby allowing for excluding the null hypothesis value from the confidence interval in this study.

**Econometrics Model**

**Y (PP) = α+β<sub>1</sub> (P\_C) +e (regression econometric model) ..... equation 1**

- In this equation, **PP** represents Project Performance, which is a dependent variable
- **(P\_C)** denotes participation and consensus as a measure of good governance practices (independent variable).

**Reliability**

As in Table 2, The reliability statistics output indicates that the Cronbach alpha coefficient value is 0.893 (89%) based on standardized items.

**Table 2**

**Reliability study of the project performance from the project team perspective**

<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	<b>Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
0.891	0.893	45	121

It indicates that the questionnaire used to assess project performance in public sector hospitals in Peshawar shows good internal consistency among its 45 items. The reliability was calculated for a sample size of 121.

**Correlational analysis**

Pearson correlation coefficients (r) are used to investigate the bivariate correlation.

**Table 3**

**Correlation Coefficient for Dimensions of the projects' performance from the project team perspective**

Correlation Matrix		PMS	PS	P_C
Project Management Success (PMS)	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Project Success (PS)	Pearson Correlation	0.545*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
Participation & Consensus (P_C)	Pearson Correlation	0.551	0.388	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	

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

Table 3 explains the correlation analysis and provides Pearson correlation coefficients "r" between pairs of variables in the instrument for Projects' Performance used in this study. The "r" values help determine the direction of the relationship. As Table 3 illustrates, the correlation between the two dependent variables of Project Management Success (PMS) and Project Success (P.S.) was found to be highly and positively correlated( r= 0.545, p=.000). This explains the significance of the link between the PMS and P.S. in the same direction. The correlation between the Independent variable Participation and Consensus (P\_C) and the dependent variable Project Management Success (PMS) was found to be positively correlated as r =.551,p=.000. Thus, the correlation between Participation and Consensus, and another dependent variable, Project Success (P.S.), was moderately and positively correlated as r= 0.388,p=.000.

**Conducting regression analysis on project performance factors: assessing variance and model fit.**

This study conducted regression analysis using the domains of Projects' Performance Instrument to check the degree of variation in 'Projects' Performance' as dependent on other domains, including Participation and Consensus. The R-square value (R<sup>2</sup>= 0.693) indicates that the model as a whole (which includes both dependent and independent variables) is statistically fit and significant (F=33.552, p=.000], as the p-value is less than .005.

**Table 4**

**Sum Up Results of Multiple Regression Analysis**

Independent Variables	Dependant Variable Project Performance ()			F	Sig.	R <sup>2</sup>	Std Error
	B	T	Sig				
(Constant)	1.386	2.480	.015	33.552	0.000	0.693	.559
(P_C)	.100	1.019	.000				.098

**Econometric Model of the Study:**

Y = α+ β<sub>1</sub> (X<sub>1</sub>) .....eq.1

Project Performance= α + β<sub>1</sub> (Participation & Consensus) -----eq.2a

PP = α+β<sub>1</sub> (P\_C) -----eq.2b

PP== 1.386+0.100(P\_C) -----eq3

- The results (from eq. 3) show that a 1-unit change in Participation and consensus (P.C.) will change 0.100 units in Project Performance. Similarly, a 100% change in Participation and consensus will result in a 10% change in Project Performance. The value of β<sub>1</sub>=.100, (t=1.019, p=.000), as the p-value is less than 0.05, so the null hypothesis of 'No Variation' is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that variation (improvement) in Participation and consensus can result in change (improvement) in Project Performance.

**Conclusion**

The study underscores the importance of good governance, particularly participation and consensus, in enhancing the effectiveness of healthcare projects in public hospitals in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Applying global standards to evaluate local projects offers valuable insights for improving healthcare management and delivery in Pakistan. It found that these practices had a

significant positive impact on project outcomes. The projects were successful in terms of effective project management, staying within budget and timeline, achieving high patient satisfaction, and ensuring equitable access to healthcare services. Overall, the projects performed well, reflecting strong project management and successful outcomes. Notably, this study is the first in Pakistan to apply an international evaluation standard, using the UNDP's principles of good governance to assess healthcare project performance. These principles proved to be essential in improving healthcare service delivery. The findings highlighted the critical role of stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process and emphasized the need for continuous improvements in governance and project outcomes. The study's recommendations were directed at policymakers, healthcare managers, and project directors to enhance governance practices and project efficacy. To enhance stakeholder involvement throughout the entire process, especially in decision-making, it is essential to establish advisory panels that include patients, staff, and community members to gather their insights. Regularly inviting relevant stakeholders to participate in meetings will ensure on-going engagement. This approach promotes transparency by addressing stakeholder concerns and informing them about decision-making. Participating in meetings ensures on-going engagement. This approach fosters transparency by addressing stakeholder concerns and informing them about decision-making. Additionally, it stressed the importance of effective governance training to boost the Health Management Team's capabilities, thereby benefiting the healthcare system and patient care within the country. Future research will explore how effective governance principles impact healthcare projects' performance. This will involve expanding the study to additional districts and provinces in Pakistan to comprehensively understand the similarities and differences in governance methods and their effects. Furthermore, conducting research with a cross-sectional approach in healthcare systems of neighboring countries may reveal insights into how governance frameworks influence the implementation of healthcare projects.

### **Discussion**

The quantitative analysis revealed a strong correlation between effective Good governance practices and improved healthcare project performance. The correlation between the two dependent variables of Project Management Success (PMS) and Project Success (P.S.) was found to be highly and positively correlated. This explained the significance of the link between the PMS and P.S. in the same direction. The correlation between the Independent variable Participation and Consensus (P\_C) and the dependent variable Project Management Success (PMS) was found to be large and positively correlated. The correlation between Participation and Consensus and another dependent variable, Project Success (P.S.), was moderate and positively correlated. Further, the results from regression showed that variation (improvement) in Participation and Consensus can result in a change (improvement) in project performance.

Research shows that healthcare projects emphasize Participation and Consensus in governance practices. The application of Stakeholder Theory in public health research provides valuable insights into stakeholder involvement in healthcare programs (Freeman, 1984). The analysis revealed that stakeholders actively participated in decision-making processes, with most respondents expressing satisfaction regarding alignment and consensus before project implementation. However, initial challenges were noted, and constructive feedback indicated areas for improvement. Although project team members generally felt their input was valued, experiences related to the inclusivity and transparency of decision-making varied. The study underscored a strong emphasis on patient satisfaction and alignment of stakeholder interests toward meeting community healthcare needs. Consensus existed regarding the presence of systems for collecting and addressing patient feedback and complaints. Nonetheless, findings indicated a need for more consistent communication and transparency within project teams. Inconsistent information sharing may have led to team members feeling disconnected from decision-making processes, emphasizing the importance of improved communication strategies. Enhancing transparency and inclusivity is crucial for ensuring team members remain well-informed and engaged, ultimately fostering confidence in the project's direction.

Stakeholder Engagement, a foundational element of Stakeholder Theory, plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of healthcare initiatives. This principle emphasizes the necessity of incorporating all pertinent stakeholders throughout the design, implementation, and evaluation stages of health

programs. Such an inclusive methodology ensures that diverse perspectives are represented, leading to more comprehensive and effective solutions (Mitchell et al., 1997).

In their 2009 analysis of health system governance in developing countries, Siddiqi et al. observed a notable increase in participation and consensus orientation among stakeholders, particularly in Pakistan. This finding underscores the importance of collaborative engagement among various actors within the health sector. Correspondingly, Jafari et al. (2019) articulated that stakeholder involvement constitutes a vital component of good governance in health systems. Furthermore, these initiatives' decision-making processes should involve both men and women, either directly or through intermediary legal organizations (Meuleman, 2021). Acknowledging the multitude of actors and perspectives present in any society, achieving a broad consensus on the collective best interests is imperative through the careful arbitration of diverse societal interests (Gavriliuță & Lotos, 2018). This approach not only fosters inclusion but also enhances the legitimacy and sustainability of health initiatives.

### **Future Directions**

This study can be improved on a larger geographical scale, including hospitals located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other provinces like Punjab, Sindh, and Baluchistan. It may also allow the assessment of regional challenges and governance practices impinging on the delivery of healthcare services in urban and rural localities. Longitudinal research design could be followed so that changes over time become more apparent to show how different models of governance evolve regarding their long-run impact on healthcare outcomes.

The integration of private sector research in health care would bring a far richer understanding of governance for efficiency and care standards. It will then potentially help bring public-private partnerships. Researching governance in other sectors than health, such as education and technology, might find mechanisms that would be applicable. Collaboration with scholars from political science, economics, and sociology disciplines will hence link the governance practice with the social determinants of health on a broader platform. This holistic process would therefore provide very useful information to healthcare reforms and further be used in discussions about governance of developing nations.

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