

Research Proposal

The Influence of Stakeholder Engagement on Sustainable Construction Project

Delivery in Riyadh

تأثير مشاركة أصحاب المصلحة على تسليم مشاريع البناء المستدام في الرياض

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Introduction

Background

The contemporary construction industry is significantly shaped by sustainable project deliveries and stakeholder engagement, which serve as its fundamental pillars and exert a profound impact on its practices, principles, and future trajectory. The construction industry has adopted a new paradigm that underscores the significance of ecological balance, social responsibility, and economic viability. This paradigm is a result of the intricate yet cohesive interplay between sustainability principles and stakeholder involvement (Adhi & Muslim, 2023).

The vital principle of Sustainable Construction (SC) is to reduce undesirable influences on the environment, maximize the efficient use of resources, and establish a constructed environment that is pleasant, healthful, and supportive of the inhabitants' welfare. The objective is to achieve an equilibrium between progress and conservation of the natural world by reducing the ecological impact of industrial activities across all stages of a building's existence, including its conception, design, erection, operation, dismantling, and recycling. The interdependence of SC project deliveries and stakeholder engagement is a significant aspect of modern construction management. The overarching objective of this expansive domain is to implement methodologies that promote a sustainable built environment while concurrently fulfilling project specifications and addressing the interests of all relevant stakeholders (Aghaegbuna et al., 2020).

The delivery of SC projects entails the consideration of the ecological, social, and economic dimensions throughout the entirety of the construction process. The primary aim is to mitigate the adverse environmental

effects linked to the entire lifespan of constructions and public works. The comprehensive evaluation of sustainable building practices encompasses a extensive range of aspects, including but not restricted to material sourcing and utilization, energy efficiency during the design and construction phases, waste management, and eventual decommissioning or renovation (Jonsson & Yacobucci, 2019). The integration of the built environment with the natural environment is a key objective, with the aim of achieving a state of harmonious co-existence. The tenets of sustainability in the realm of construction are founded upon the objective of mitigating waste, curbing energy usage, advocating for recycling, and harnessing renewable resources. The objective is to create edifices that exhibit resource efficiency while also ensuring the well-being and comfort of their inhabitants. The industrial sector has shifted its focus towards the adoption of eco-friendly materials and procedures, incorporating cutting-edge technologies such as sustainable energy systems, renewable resources, and waste disposal strategies (Gu et al., 2023).

The implementation of SC entails a multitude of determinations at various phases, commencing from the inception and strategizing of the project, proceeding to the blueprint and erection stages, culminating in the operation and upkeep phase, and ultimately the dismantling phase. The aforementioned decisions are geared towards attaining sustainability goals, encompassing the optimization of energy and water consumption, waste reduction, preservation of health and well-being, and augmentation of biodiversity and ecosystems (Abbas Elmualim & Doğa Alp, 2016).

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component for the achievement of favourable outcomes in construction projects. The process of engaging all relevant stakeholders in a project, including clients, end-users, local communities, authorities, suppliers, contractors, and members of the public, is commonly referred

to as stakeholder involvement. Efficient stakeholder involvement facilitates the inclusion of diverse perspectives and promotes a collective sense of accountability and ownership towards the project. The process guarantees that the requirements and anticipations of every stakeholder are taken into account and fulfilled, resulting in greater triumphs and elevated levels of contentment n (Fobbe & Hilletoft, 2021).

Furthermore, the engagement of stakeholders is of paramount importance in promoting SC practices. The involvement of stakeholders facilitates the identification of their concerns, requirements, and principles pertaining to the project (Maier & Aşchilean, 2020). The feedback received can be utilized to guide the design and construction process, thereby ensuring the incorporation of sustainability principles that align with the perspectives and interests of relevant stakeholders. Within the realm of sustainable construction, the involvement of stakeholders assumes heightened importance as it serves to facilitate the identification and implementation of sustainable solutions that effectively meet the needs and expectations of all parties involved (Li et al., 2022).

The amalgamation of SC project deliveries and stakeholder engagement is a pivotal aspect in the progression towards a sustainable built environment. The present approach, which is synergistic in nature, recognizes that the achievement of SC practices is contingent not solely upon the technical implementation of sustainable techniques but also upon the recognition and backing of these techniques by all parties involved. The facilitation of a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient built environment that meets the needs of both present and future generations can be achieved through the implementation of effective stakeholder engagement strategies throughout the project life-cycle (Mambwe et al., 2021).

The construction industry is currently placing significant emphasis on sustainability, with corresponding topics occupying a prominent position in construction management and practices. By incorporating SC project deliveries and implementing efficient stakeholder engagement strategies, the construction sector can make a substantial contribution towards achieving global sustainability objectives (Yang & Shen, 2015). This will result in the creation of a built environment that upholds and enhances the quality of life on our planet. A proficient system for delivering SC projects must take into consideration the tripartite pillars of sustainability, namely the environment, society, and economy. From an environmental standpoint, the approach involves the incorporation of cutting-edge technologies that optimize the utilization of resources, curtail the production of waste, and diminish the ecological impact. One example is the implementation of construction techniques that improve energy efficiency, promote water conservation, and facilitate waste management. Additionally, integrating renewable energy systems into building design can also be beneficial (Vasconcelos et al., 2020).

SC endeavours to enhance the health and welfare of inhabitants and societies from a social perspective. The objective is to construct edifices that not only exhibit energy efficiency and eco-friendliness but also augment the standard of living for their inhabitants and occupants (Yang & Shen, 2015). The proposed approach entails integrating features that enhance the quality of indoor air, facilitate access to natural light, regulate noise levels, and foster the creation of areas that encourage social interaction and connectivity. From an economic standpoint, SC may necessitate a greater initial investment. However, the long-term benefits of decreased energy and water consumption, reduced maintenance expenses, and increased property value render it a financially feasible alternative. Furthermore, SC presents novel market prospects, fosters ingenuity,

and has the potential to enhance regional economic growth through the utilization of local materials and labor (Wang et al., 2020).

Stakeholder engagement is a fundamental element that underpins the development of SC projects. The implementation of efficient engagement procedures plays a crucial role in the establishment of a collective vision and reciprocal comprehension among diverse stakeholders. Maximizing project efficiency and outcomes can be achieved by taking into account the interests of all parties involved, thereby minimizing conflicts and misunderstandings. Involving stakeholders in the initial stages and throughout the project's lifespan fosters effective communication and openness, resulting in improved decision-making. The early identification of potential sustainability impacts, opportunities, and risks is facilitated by this tool for project teams. Moreover, it enables the process of co-creation and shared responsibility among various stakeholders, thereby promoting collaborations that have the potential to generate novel sustainability solutions (Bal Menoka, 2014).

The swift urbanization of Riyadh has resulted in a surge of construction undertakings, thereby raising apprehensions regarding ecological sustainability, resource depletion, and the generation of waste (Maqbool et al., 2022). The employment of SC techniques is gaining recognition as a viable resolution; however, the implementation of these methods within the construction industry of Riyadh has been comparatively sluggish. The significance of stakeholder engagement in ensuring the successful delivery of SC projects has been acknowledged. However, its role in the context of Riyadh has not been extensively investigated. The various stakeholders involved in these projects, including clients, contractors, local communities, and regulatory bodies, frequently possess divergent interests and viewpoints concerning sustainability. Comprehending these dynamics is imperative in promoting SC practices. Nonetheless, a dearth of scholarly inquiry exists regarding

the impact of stakeholder engagement on the delivery of SC projects in Riyadh. The objective of this study is to address the lack of information by investigating the relationship between stakeholder engagement and SC in the swiftly evolving urban landscape of Riyadh (Maqbool et al., 2022).

Research objectives

The research objectives of this research work will be:

- ❖ To assess the current level of stakeholder engagement in Sustainable construction projects in Riyadh.
- ❖ To examine the impact of stakeholder engagement on the delivery of Sustainable construction projects in Riyadh.
- ❖ To develop recommendations for improving stakeholder engagement practices in Sustainable construction project delivery in Riyadh

Research Questions

- ❖ What is the current level of stakeholder engagement in Sustainable construction projects in Riyadh?
- ❖ What is the impact of stakeholder engagement on the delivery of Sustainable construction projects in Riyadh?
- ❖ What are the recommendations for improving stakeholder engagement practices in Sustainable construction project delivery in Riyadh?

Significance of study

The construction industry is an essential component of growth in Riyadh, a city that is experiencing rapid development. However, the urban area encounters a multitude of ecological obstacles that require a

transition towards more environmentally-friendly building methodologies. The involvement of stakeholders is a crucial aspect of the transition towards SC practices. This research aims to investigate the impact of stakeholder perspectives and participation on the execution and achievement of SC initiatives in Riyadh. The analysis will have the potential to offer significant contributions to the understanding of the interplay and discrepancies among various stakeholder concerns. This, in turn, could facilitate the development of more efficacious approaches to stakeholder engagement (Adhi & Muslim, 2023).

Furthermore, comprehending the significance of stakeholder engagement in SC will have the potential to assist project managers, policymakers, and other pertinent stakeholders in Riyadh in promoting more sustainable and comprehensive construction methodologies. The eventual outcome of this process may involve the development of a constructed environment that conforms to the tenets of sustainability while simultaneously addressing the requirements and anticipations of all parties involved. Moreover, the results of this investigation could make a valuable contribution to the wider discussion on sustainable building practices and stakeholder involvement, enhancing the existing body of knowledge and potentially serving as a point of reference for other urban areas encountering comparable obstacles. In general, this study has the potential to establish a path towards a more environmentally sustainable future not only in Riyadh but also in other regions (Shaukat et al., 2021).

Research Hypothesis

H₁: Effective stakeholder engagement practices will be positively associated with the level of implementation of Sustainable construction practices in projects in Riyadh

H₂: Higher levels of stakeholder engagement will lead to improved sustainability outcomes in construction projects in Riyadh.

H₃: There will be a positive relationship between stakeholder engagement and stakeholder satisfaction in Sustainable construction projects in Riyadh.

Literature Review

SC is a constituent element of the broader sustainable development program, which endeavours to foster resource efficiency, curtail environmental degradation, and augment the physical and mental welfare of the occupants of these edifices (Silvius & Schipper, 2014). According to Akinola (2020) SC refers to the development and conscientious administration of a wholesome constructed environment that is founded on resource-efficient and ecological principles. Mambwe et al. (2021) highlighted in their study that SC encompasses the complete lifespan of a building, which encompasses the phases of design, construction, operation, and end-of-life. The imperative to pursue sustainability in the construction industry has been acknowledged as crucial in response to rising environmental pressures and the need for optimal resource utilization (Shaukat et al., 2021). While the study by Li et al. (2022) revealed that stakeholders in Guangdong emphasized the importance of government policies and guidelines, those in Hong Kong and Macao placed greater importance on market mechanisms and public-private partnerships.

The importance of stakeholder engagement has been recognized as a crucial element for the effective execution of SC practices (Maier & Aşchilean, 2020; Shaukat et al., 2021). According to Lühr et al. (2020) stakeholders refer to any individual or group that has the potential to impact or be impacted by an organization's objectives. Within the realm of construction endeavours, stakeholders may encompass a variety

of entities such as patrons, builders, vendors, neighboring populations, and governing agencies. According to Silvius & Schipper's (2014) research, the involvement of stakeholders in construction projects has been shown to yield various advantages, including but not limited to better decision-making, decreased conflicts, and improved project results. According to Aghaegbuna et al. (2020), the effective implementation of SC projects necessitates the participation and cooperation of all parties involved, along with comprehension and synchronization of their varied concerns, requirements, and anticipations (Bahadorestani et al., 2020; Aghaegbuna et al., 2020).

The intersection between stakeholder engagement and SC is a significant topic in the field of literature. According to Yang & Shen (2015), there exists a favorable correlation between stakeholder engagement and sustainability performance in construction projects, as evidenced by various research studies. According to Tan et al. (2019) study, the involvement of stakeholders can have an impact on the implementation and efficacy of SC methods. Nonetheless, Silvius & Schipper (2014) suggest that the involvement of stakeholders in SC is a multifaceted undertaking that is subject to a range of factors, including stakeholder attributes, project setting, and engagement approaches (Tan et al., 2019; Yang & Shen, 2015).

In addition, the study by Adhi & Muslim (2023) revealed that effective stakeholder engagement strategies significantly enhance the implementation of SC centered on Lean philosophies in Indonesia. Key findings include the importance of early and continuous involvement of stakeholders during the project life-cycle, transparent communication, and collaborative decision-making processes. It was also found that training and capacity building for stakeholders improved their understanding of Lean and SC principles, leading to more

effective implementation. Furthermore, the study suggested that aligning stakeholder interests with the project's sustainability objectives could significantly increase project performance and sustainability outcomes.

Moreover, Bahadorestani et al. (2020) found that conflicts among stakeholders can hinder the success of SC projects. The assessment of conflicting interests at the early planning stages was found to be crucial for sustainable stakeholder engagement. The research identified several key conflict areas, such as disagreements over project objectives, variations in understanding sustainability, and disparities in expected project outcomes. The findings emphasized the need for a proactive approach to managing conflicting interests, which includes recognizing potential conflicts, facilitating open dialogues, and negotiating mutually beneficial solutions.

The research by Bal Menoka (2014) found a positive correlation between stakeholder engagement and sustainability-related project performance in construction. Projects with higher levels of stakeholder engagement were found to exhibit better performance in terms of sustainability indicators such as energy efficiency, water conservation, and waste reduction. The study also found that projects with a structured stakeholder engagement plan had better sustainability outcomes. The findings suggested that regular communication, inclusion of stakeholder inputs in decision-making, and respect for stakeholder interests were critical for enhancing sustainability performance. The research further underscored the importance of engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including end-users and local communities, to ensure a broader perspective on sustainability.

The study by Bal et al. (2013) found that the main benefits include better project outcomes, increased sustainability, improved reputation, and enhanced stakeholder relationships. The study also emphasized that

the integration of stakeholders' perspectives can lead to the development of more sustainable materials and building methods. However, the main challenge remains to create an open dialogue where all stakeholders are willing to compromise and align their interests towards sustainability. Likewise, Maier & Aşchilean (2020) indicated that effective stakeholder management facilitates improved communication, mitigates risks, and fosters partnerships that contribute to project success and sustainability. Furthermore, the study highlighted that a lack of adequate stakeholder management could lead to conflicts, project delays, and, ultimately, reduced sustainability. Thus, the study recommends implementing robust stakeholder management strategies for a more SC industry.

Amidst the current epoch of climate change and ecological deterioration, there exists a pressing need to embrace sustainable methodologies within the realm of construction, as noted by Nonet et al. (2022). The significance of stakeholder engagement in this process is of utmost importance. The attainment of SC project deliveries necessitates the active participation of all stakeholders. Incorporating sustainable methodologies into construction project deliveries and implementing comprehensive stakeholder engagement processes can result in the development of infrastructure that not only satisfies current demands but also exhibits flexibility and durability in the face of forthcoming obstacles (Shaukat et al., 2021). The incorporation of these methodologies denotes a change in the ethos and mentality of the construction sector towards ecological soundness, thereby establishing a field that values and amplifies the quality of our environment. Through this approach, noteworthy progress can be made in attaining the worldwide sustainability objectives and establishing a constructed environment that accommodates the requirements of both current and forthcoming generations (Nonet et al., 2022)

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for investigating the impact of stakeholder involvement on the execution of sustainable building projects in Riyadh is based on two key ideas: SC and stakeholder theory. The correlation between these two notions engenders a holistic viewpoint regarding the progression of the construction sector towards increasingly sustainable methodologies (Adhi & Muslim, 2023). The notion of SC is a complex concept that is grounded in the wider domain of sustainable development (Akinola, 2020). The aim is to achieve equilibrium among ecological, financial, and societal considerations throughout the entirety of constructed spaces' existence, encompassing their conception, erection, utilization, and eventual decommissioning. The concept of sustainability in the construction industry pertains to the mitigation of the ecological footprint of buildings and infrastructure, optimization of resource utilization, and advancement of the physical and mental health, welfare, and standard of living of their occupants (Aghaegbuna et al., 2020).

The framework integrates various SC models and principles from the relevant field. The Green Building concept prioritizes the development and construction of buildings with the aim of minimizing their ecological footprint and promoting human well-being. This may encompass various strategies aimed at enhancing energy /water efficiency, waste lessening, and indoor ecological quality (Vasconcelos et al., 2020).

The Life-Cycle Assessment (LCA) principle constitutes a fundamental component of the framework. The LCA approach is a standard practice employed to assess the environmental impacts that are linked with every stage of a product's life, starting from the abstraction of raw materials to the eventual disposal or recycling. Within the construction industry, the utilization of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) has the potential to facilitate the identification of the most noteworthy environmental ramifications and the specific phases during

which they transpire. This, in turn, can provide guidance for the formulation of effective strategies aimed at mitigating these impacts (Valdivia et al., 2021).

In contrast, stakeholder theory highlights the significance of taking into account the concerns and interests of all parties and entities that possess a vested interest in a given decision or course of action. Freeman's seminal work on stakeholder theory posits that the success of an organization is contingent upon its adeptness in managing its relationships with all of its stakeholders. The statement posits that the attainment of SC project objectives is contingent upon the efficacious involvement of stakeholders. Within the realm of construction, stakeholders may encompass a diverse range of entities, such as clients, architects, contractors, suppliers, government agencies, local communities, and environmental factors. The project's sustainability goals and outcomes may be influenced by the varying needs, interests, and expectations of different stakeholder groups (Valentinov, 2021),

The framework integrates diverse models derived from stakeholder theory. The Stakeholder Salience model, as proposed by Mitchell, Agle, and Wood, posits that the significance of stakeholders to an organization is contingent upon three key attributes, namely power, legitimacy, and urgency. Comprehending the significance of diverse stakeholders may facilitate project managers in prioritizing their engagement endeavours and devising tactics to proficiently handle varying stakeholder concerns (Jonsson & Yacobucci, 2019).

The incorporation of SC and stakeholder theory into the theoretical framework facilitates a thorough investigation of the impact of stakeholder engagement on the delivery of SC projects. Through comprehending the interdependencies among stakeholders, their concerns, and sustainability consequences, it is plausible to

formulate efficacious approaches for stakeholder involvement and sustainable building methodologies in Riyadh and analogous settings. This framework offers a sturdy basis for investigating the intricate and ever-changing characteristics of delivering SC projects in swiftly growing urban areas (Fobbe & Hilletoft, 2021),

Research Methodology

Data Collection Approach

The present study will adopt a quantitative methodology and employ a descriptive research design. The present study will utilize primary data analysis, with a survey administered online assisting as the chosen method for data collection. The target population will be surveyed using a self-constructed questionnaire, which will be developed subsequent to a comprehensive review of pertinent literature. The data collection process will involve the utilization of a Google form, whereby the participants will be obligated to submit their informed consent prior to their involvement in the study. The study will only consider individuals who provide voluntary consent to participate. An online link will be formed and disseminated to the study participants for the purpose of accessing the survey instrument through the different social media platforms.

Target Population (Sampling Technique and Sample Size)

The target population for this research will include key stakeholders involved in the construction industry within Riyadh. These stakeholders comprise project clients, contractors, architects, project managers, construction workers, suppliers, local communities, and relevant government authorities involved in the construction approval process. Considering the large number of potential participants and the necessity of obtaining a representative sample, a simple random sampling technique will be adopted. This approach

ensures that each group within the target population is adequately represented, enhancing the validity of the research findings.

The sample size will be determined based on feasibility and the need for a broad representation of stakeholder views. For this study, approximately 100 participants will be selected, proportionally distributed among the different stakeholder groups. The final sample will depend on the response rate and the willingness of potential participants to take part in the study. This approach allows the researcher to capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences, providing a comprehensive understanding of the role of stakeholder engagement in SC project delivery in Riyadh.

Data Analysis

Statistical software, such as SPSS and MS Excel, will be utilized to analyze the gathered data. The statistical software SPSS will be utilized for the purpose of data analysis, employing a variety of techniques. The software application Microsoft Excel will be employed to perform data coding and cleaning procedures, with the aim of converting the data from a qualitative format to a quantitative format. The process of data coding facilitates the transformation of subjective data into a quantifiable format that is easier to comprehend. The process of data cleaning involves the elimination of extraneous data and variances from the acquired dataset. Cronbach's alpha will be utilized to assess the internal consistency of the data, gauging the extent to which the variables align with the underlying construct. The utilization of multivariate analysis techniques will be implemented in order to decrease the magnitude and dimensions of the dataset. The application of summary statistics will facilitate the transformation of the data, whereas correlation and regression analysis will be employed to evaluate the association and influence between the independent and dependent variables.

Research Structure

The research structure for investigating the influence of stakeholder engagement on SC project delivery in Riyadh is designed to offer a comprehensive analysis of the topic, divided into several distinct sections or chapters:

1. **Introduction:** This section will present the research topic, outline the research problem, and state the research objectives. It will provide an overview and brief introduction of the study, state its significance, and present the research questions that the study purposes to answer.
2. **Literature Review:** This part will critically review the existing literature on SC and stakeholder engagement, examining key theories, models, and empirical findings. It will provide a theoretical framework for the study and identify gaps in the current literature, thus providing the rationale and need for this research.
3. **Methodology:** This section will describe the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. It will describe the research paradigm including, qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods, the sample selection process, and the methods for ensuring reliability and validity.
4. **Data Analysis:** In this part, collected data will be presented and analyzed in line with the outlined methodology. This part will include detailed descriptions of the findings, supported by tables, graphs, or other visual aids as appropriate. It will also involve an interpretation of the results in the context of the research questions and objectives.

5. **Discussion:** This section will offer the implications of the findings, contrasting them with previous studies and theoretical expectations. It will discuss the impact of stakeholder engagement on SC project delivery in Riyadh, drawing on evidence from the data analysis.
6. **Conclusion:** This final section will summarize the results, reflect on the research objectives and questions, and outline the study's contributions to knowledge. It will also discuss the limitations of the study and propose directions for future research.
7. **References and Appendices:** The research will end with a list of all referenced literature and any appendices, which might include interview transcripts, survey questions, or additional data tables that supplement the main body of the report.

Research Limitation

The research will be limited to Riyadh, and the findings will not be directly applicable to other regions due to differences in cultural, economic, and regulatory contexts. Moreover, the inferences drawn from the study are heavily contingent upon the viewpoints of the interviewed stakeholders, potentially resulting in subjective understandings of the pertinent issues. Moreover, the study will not encompass all conceivable stakeholders owing to pragmatic limitations, thereby potentially overlooking certain viewpoints. In addition, it should be noted that the ever-changing nature of SC practices and stakeholder engagement strategies necessitates a periodic reassessment of the research findings in light of the evolving industry practices.

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