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Sustaining Development Projects within the Local Government System in Ghana: Exploring the Views of Local Authorities and Other Stakeholders in Shama District

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Abstract:

Development helps to empower people and promote important changes in their lives. However, for development to occur there is the need for an educated population, physical and financial resources. Within this framework, governments and development partners, all over the world, initiate several approaches aimed at improving the wellbeing of their citizens. Despite the efforts made to improve the lives of people, there is a wide recognition that development projects provided at the local level sometimes fail to meet desired expectations for several reasons. This study sought to explore the views of local authorities and other key stakeholders of Shama District on the sustainability of development projects provided at the local level in order to suggest measures for improvement in a concurrent-dependence mixed method approach. The design of this study was descriptive and exploratory and a total of 79 respondents were selected for the study using purposive, convenience and census data collection techniques. Research instruments used are interview schedule and interview guide. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation were used for the quantitative analysis whilst thematic analysis was done for the qualitative data. The study found that even though there was a structure in place for the management of development projects in the District participation of key members was very low. It was also found that several factors such as political, economic, ethical, cultural and environmental affected the management of projects in the District. A number of factors were identified as affecting the sustainability of the development projects in the District. They include local participation in project planning, local ownership of projects, inclusion of local initiatives and knowledge in the planning of projects, transparency in the implementation of projects, accountability in the implementation of development projects, empowerment of the local people, and commitment among the local people. It is recommended that the District Assembly should provide more platforms to ensure active participation of all stakeholders in local decision making in relation to development projects.

Keywords: Sustainability, development projects, decentralization, district assemblies

1. Introduction

Development seeks to bring about quality improvement in the lives of the citizenry. The aim of every development policy is to improve the well-being of the people and that the outcome of development is not simply growth in the economic sense but is strongly related to the notion of quality of life (Odoom, 2017; Ruttan, 2001). According to UNDP Report, as cited in Opoku, Kyeremah and Odoom (2014) development is a dynamic process which empowers people and promotes important changes in their lives. For development to occur, it requires an educated population, physical and financial resources. In pursuance of this, governments, all over the world, have initiated several approaches aimed at improving the wellbeing of its people. One such approach is the adoption of centralisation which focuses all political power and government responsibility into the hands of a single authority (Falleti, 2005; Opoku, 2014; Opoku, Kyeremah and Odoom, 2014).

The centralised form of authority exercises all governmental power and any localised units of government, such as cities and counties, are subject to it (Kim, 2006; UNDP, 2000). Kim adds that centralised governments lead to a uniform, "one-size-fits-all" approach to government policies and programmes. Besides, the national interest takes precedence over local interests in centralised government. Kim states that the deficiencies of centralised delivery system which include waste of resource, low productivity as well as conflict over manpower and budget necessitated the need to look for other approach to development. In this regard, the need for bringing governance to the level of the local people as has been the

core issue of decentralisation became compelling (Government of Tanzania, 2009; Opoku, 2014). As an approach, decentralisation devolves administrative, political, and financial responsibilities to sub-national governments to deliver improved public services to the people in an efficient and accountable manner (Stigler, 1957). According to Gibson (2005), the principle of subsidiarity underlies decentralisation. The principle, as Gibson submits, advocates that when governance is brought to the lowest units of government undertakings, people better participate in the very process that ought to enhance their own wellbeing. Subsidiarity in governance gains more prominence in an era of globalisation which keeps increasing the gap between the very rich and the very poor within nations as material and human resources continue to flow from the poor to the rich (Pablong, 2006).

Following Ghana's transition into democracy in 1992, Article 240 of the 1992 Constitution enjoined the DAs to apply all legal means to ensure the development of their areas. The demands of Article 240 led to the establishment of the LG systems, provided legal backing for their sound financial base, and also mandated DAs to mobilise revenues for development through levies, taxes, rates, fees and fines (Opoku 2014). In essence, the DAs have the onerous responsibility of generating revenues to embark on development projects. In conformity to the duty charged on them, the DAs across the country embark on the provision of development projects aimed at improving the lives of the local people. The Assemblies are enjoined to provide various projects in the areas of education, health, transports, agriculture and other socio-economic services for the betterment of the people using diverse revenue generation mechanisms (Ahwoi, 2006; Asibuo, 2006; Atakora, 2006).

One such Assembly has been the Shama District Assembly. The District was carved out of the former Shama Ahanta East Metropolis (SAEM). It was established in 2007 by Legislative Instrument (LI 1882). However, it was formally inaugurated in March, 2008 with its District Capital at Shama (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS] 2014). The District Assembly (DA) is the highest political authority in the District in line with Section 10 of the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462). The Assembly is mandated to ensure the overall development of the District as stated in Section 2 of the National Development Planning Systems Act (Act 480). The District Chief Executive is the political and administrative head of the Assembly (GSS, 2014). There are 25 Assembly members. Out of these 17 are elected members whilst the rest are appointed by the President of Ghana in consultation with the traditional authorities and other stakeholders within the District (GSS, 2014). Over the past years, the District Assembly has undertaken several development projects including construction of schools, construction of roads, pipe-borne water, health centres and many other interventions. These development projects are aimed at improving upon the socio economic conditions of the citizenry in compliance with the expectations of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. The management of these projects is crucial in ensuring that their aims are achieved.

In spite of the efforts made by many District Assemblies to ensure local level development, there is a wide recognition of the fact development projects provided at the district level sometimes fail to meet desired expectations (Damian, 2012). It is believed that issues such as delays in completion of projects, lapses in the quality of execution, cost hikes in the execution, as well as inappropriate design and location of projects have hampered the effective planning and management of development projects at the local level (Damian, 2012). Damian explains further that shortfalls in development project implementation at the local level could be traced to poor planning and control of processes, and the poor nature of project execution. Harrison, as cited in Damian (2012), believes that effective planning and control are critical to the success or failure of the development projects. However, Damian (2012) maintains that many development projects at the local level have suffered delays and over-expenditure because of inadequate planning and control. Again, many of the development projects have been done without the active involvement of the beneficiaries. This has led to a situation where some development projects have been abandoned by the supposed beneficiaries, thus derailing efforts towards local level development. This situation presents a huge challenge to the continuing relevance of planning, implementation and management of development projects. It is against this background that this study sought to explore the views of local authorities and other key stakeholders of Shama District Assembly on the management of development projects at the local level with the view to suggesting measures for improvement.

1.1. Research Objectives

- To ascertain the existing structures for the management of development projects in the District;
- To explore the factors affecting management of development projects in the District;
- To examine the factors that affect sustainability of development projects in the District;

2. Overview of Literature

2.1. Conceptualizing Decentralization

As a concept, decentralization defies a single definition owing to the different schools of thought and angles from which scholars tend to look at the concept. Mawhood (1983), as cited in Opoku (2014) sees decentralization as the sharing of part of governmental power by a central ruling group with other groups, each having authority within a specific area of the state. Fundamental areas in the decentralization process, as Mawhood opines, are power, authority and responsibility, which start from the center and are then diffused to the periphery. Cheema (1983), as cited in Scott (2009) supports the views of Mawhood when he argues that decentralization is the transfer of authority for decision making, planning, management or resource allocation from the central government to the local government. However, Cheema extends the discussion by listing field units, districts administrative units, local government, regional or functional authorities, and other semi-autonomous public and private authorities as part of the periphery.

In the views of Rondinelli, as cited in Odoom (2017), decentralization refers to the transfer of authority to plan, make decisions, as well as manage public functions from a higher level of government to any individual, organization or an agency at a lower level. The difficulty in appreciating Rondinelli's viewpoint lies in his failure to clearly indicate what constitutes transfer and to what extent it is. On their part, Agrawal and Ribot (1999) define decentralization as an action through which central governments officially cede power to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy. What is of importance in Agrawal and Ribot's (1999) position lies in their belief that actions require the creation of a realm of decision-making in which a variety of lower-level actors exercise some level of autonomy. Nonetheless, it should be added that despite the benefits of decentralization, as envisaged by Agrawal and Ribot (1999), its usefulness may not receive a universal recognition across nations. For instance, in their review of decentralization within the education sector in Chile, Winkler and Rounds as cited by Odoom (2017) found that although there was an improvement in efficiency of educational provision, the country experienced a decline in score on cognitive tests.

According to Smith (1985), decentralisation is usually defined as any act by which central government formally cedes powers to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political, administrative and territorial hierarchy. This has been supported by Hommes (1995). However, Hommes sees decentralization as a political problem that represents, in Latin America for example, a stark departure from centuries of centralism. The success of decentralization may depend upon the existence at the local level of a civic cultural tradition and informal civic institutions such as solidarity, cooperatives, etc. Ribot (2002) and Gibson (2005) see decentralization as a political problem that represents, in Latin America for example, a stark departure from centuries of centralism but which does not appear to have brought sufficient hope to the people. Ribot (2002, 2004) further identifies some objectives of decentralization policy which include consolidating national unity, and central power by shedding risks and burdens. The strength of Ribot's appreciation of decentralization, as Odoom (2017) argues, lies in his admission that the concept helps in increasing local participation and local democracy as well as improved efficiency and equity of local service delivery.

Decentralisation refers to the systematic and harmonious interrelationship resulting from the balancing of power and responsibilities between central governments and other levels of government and non-governmental actors, and the capacity of local bodies to carry out their decentralised responsibilities using participatory mechanisms (UNDP 2005). Decentralisation can serve as a means for providing more open, responsive, and effective local government for ensuring community development (UNDP 2005). According to Ahwoi (2006), decentralisation is the transfer of functions, powers, means, resources, skills and competence to lower levels of governance, usually structures of local government. Ahwoi adds that the functions transferred ought to be accompanied by relevant skills and competencies and the needed autonomy. Ahwoi (2006) and Gyabaah (2006) see autonomy as a critical ingredient in any effective decentralisation. Gyabaah adds that the effectiveness of decentralisation must be appreciated in terms of the response it has to people's needs and priorities; thereby meeting a variety of social, economic and political needs and expectations.

Koranteng (2006) defines decentralisation as the spread of power away from the centre to local branches of the central government. He goes on to indicate that in decentralisation, planning and decision-making process moves from the control by powerful bureaucrats and decision-makers at the centre to ordinary people at the local level. However, the success of the powers and functions that are spread to local branches of government, in the views of Tetteh (2006), depends on the capacity of the local authorities. Tetteh indicates further that if LGs and private organisations are to carry out decentralised functions effectively, they must have an adequate level of revenues—either raised locally or transferred from the central government—as well as the authority to make decisions about expenditures. Decentralisation has become the critical foundation on which the democratic structures of government are built in Ghana. To ensure effectiveness of Ghana's decentralisation, there is the need for financial adequacy through clearly established inter-governmental financial arrangements (Ayee, 2000; Bird, Ebel and Wallich, 1995). The Nordic Consulting Group (NCG) and Dege Consult (2007) state that a successful fiscally decentralised system must ensure that all core stakeholders are informed, involved, have ownership and support for a common course

2.2. Understanding the Concepts of Project and Project Management

A project is defined as a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result. It has definite start and end. Its end is defined by attainment of objectives or termination of the project. Indeed, the temporary nature of project does not necessarily mean short in duration. Munns and Bjeirmi, as cited Damian (2012) defined a project as the attainment of specific activities and tasks through the use of resources. A project needs to be completed within a set specification having definite start and end dates. In support, according to Johnson, as cited in Damian (2012) a project involves a well-planned complex of actions and investments, at a selected location, that are designed to meet output, capacity or transform goals in a given period of time using specified techniques. Also, the British Standard Institute defined a project as "An enterprise (activity or set of interrelated activities) that has a definable start and a definable completion (Damian, 2012). From the above, a project can be defined as a set of well-designed activities in a specific location upon which resources are expended in order to produce desired results within a specific period of time.

Indeed, projects are very much different from the other operations of organizations in the following ways (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2010):

- They have clearly defined objectives to deliver new benefits to, the taxpayer, companies, the general public, government, the sponsoring organization, stakeholders and/or delivery partners;
- They may present significant changes to the way the business operates;
- Projects create new outputs/deliverables that will enable benefits to be achieved;

- They have specific, temporary management organization and governance arrangements designed for the duration of the project;
- Projects are susceptible to risks not typically encountered in the day to day operations of the organization;
- They entail a wide range of stakeholders from different aspects of the organization and beyond;
- They may use methods and approaches that are new or unfamiliar (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2010).

Project management refers to the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements and objectives. It involves identifying what is needed or to be achieved (requirements), and also addressing needs, concerns, and expectations of all stakeholders. It also requires balancing competing constraints such as the scope, quality, schedule, budget, resources, and risks in order to maximize gains (Scott, 2009). In citing Oisen, Damian (2012) defined project management as the application of a collection of tools and techniques including the Critical Path Method (CPM) and matrix organization to direct the use of diverse resources towards the accomplishment of a unique, complex, one - time task within time, cost and quality constraints. Each task of project management requires a particular mix of these tools and techniques structured to fit the task's environment and life cycle. Thus, from conception to completion of the task, appropriate tools and techniques are used to achieve the desired results.

According Atkinson (1999), project management refers to the planning, monitoring and control of all aspects of a project and the motivation of all personnel involved in order to achieve the project objectives on time and to the specified cost, quality and performance. Also, Atkinson (1999) through the UK Body of Knowledge (Bok) explained project management as the planning, organization, monitoring and control of all aspects of a project and the motivation of all actors involved to achieve the project objectives safely and within agreed time, cost and performance criteria. In support, the Project Management Institute (PMI, 2004) describes project management as "the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements". A key aspect of the above definitions is that project management entails planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating and directing the activities and resources in project execution towards achieving project objectives in the most effective and efficient manner.

2.3. Factors Affecting the Management of Development Projects

A number of factors have been identified as affecting project management. Cusworth and Frank, as cited in Damian (2012) have identified institutional, environmental, political, infrastructural, cultural, ethical, educational, A whole set of factors including people, things and institutions surrounds the project and interact with it (Cusworth and Frank, 1993:20). Firstly, institutional factors constitute one major factor which affects project management. It is believed that institutional issues in the form of legal and policy frameworks within which projects operate affect the functioning of project management. Again, issues regarding the land tenure and property ownership systems affect project management (Cusworth and Frank: cited in Damian, 2012). Secondly, political factors play a major role in the success or otherwise of project management. Political factors are the policies of governments and activities of politicians which often determine the execution and management of projects. Indeed, projects are usually conceived, developed and designed within the context of governmental and political frameworks and guidelines. As such, in instances where a particular project's lifecycle is not compatible with government policies, its execution and management could be obstructed. Also, sometimes politicians may use their influence to alter project location, management and execution proceedings to score their parochial political points to the detriment of agreed upon work schemes (Cusworth and Frank: cited in Damian, 2012).

Besides, economic factors are perceived to have a critical role in project management. Economic factors determine the cost and value of the project. For instance, economic forces such as inflation, exchange rates and supply of raw materials which are not constant cause uncertainty in the process of the project design, development and implementation. Such changes within the economic milieu lead to constant review of projects in the light of the changes (Cusworth and Frank: cited in Damian, 2012).

Additionally, cultural factors affect project management. The reason is that sometimes the ethnic composition of people in the project catchment area affects the execution and management of projects. For instance, when there exists a sharp diversity in the ethnicity it can bring about intermittent outbreaks of conflicts which will disrupt the unity and cohesion needed to effectively manage the project (Cusworth and Frank: cited in Damian, 2012). In some instances, project implementation has to be postponed in the wake of conflict and violence. Sometimes the cultural diversity may manifest itself in the values and beliefs of people. In other words, the beliefs, perceptions, norms and interest held by workers, beneficiaries and other stakeholders of the project may affect commitments and co-operation in the execution and management of projects (Cusworth and Frank: cited in Damian, 2012).

Moreover, environmental factors have been found to influence project management. Environmental factors refer to the natural phenomena including climatic, vegetation and topographical forces that exert influences on the project execution and management process. For example, favorable environmental factors such as moderate weather and temperatures, flat landscape and positive vegetative cover will enhance cheaper and speedy execution and management of building projects. However, unfavorable factors including excessive rainfall, draught, extreme temperature, sharp undulating landscape and less endowed vegetative cover will cause high cost and slow pace of progress in the project execution and management (Cusworth and Frank: cited in Damian, 2012).

Furthermore, infrastructural factors pose an influence on project management. For example, infrastructural factors such as technology, energy, transportation and commercial infrastructure affect project execution and management. In essence, the existence of requisite and efficient technology, reliable transportation system, reliable flow of energy (including electricity, gas or fuel) and effective commercial machinery will promote quick and effective conduct of

project execution and management. However, deficiencies in the supply of these ingredients potentially slow down progress in the project execution and management (Cusworth, 1994; Cusworth and Frank: cited in Damian, 2012).

Finally, other factors such as educational and ethical factors also affect project management. For instance, the level of education and expertise of workers affects project execution and management. Indeed, a person with high expertise in a given field will perform creditably in project execution or management whereas an untrained person will perform poorly, all things being equal (Cusworth and Frank: cited in Damian, 2012). Also, the attitudes of the workers handling the project may affect its execution and management process. Positive work ethics including commitment, honesty, tolerance, hardworking, creativity and unity displayed by workers will positively affect project execution and management. On the other hand, corrupt practices, nepotism, lateness and laziness, apathy, and many others will hinder effective and efficient delivery of projects (Cusworth, 1994; Cusworth and Frank: cited in Damian, 2012).

2.4. The Concept of Sustainability

From sustainable development viewpoint, sustainability is defined as our common future. Thus, sustainable development is seen as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability for future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland, as cited in Nalubiri, 2010). Here, the focus is on environment and natural science (Heston and Fernando, as cited in Nalubiri, 2010). Sustainability in community development entails measures that improve human well-being while the lessons, impacts and benefits from these interventions continue to be disseminated and diffused in community for longer years (Stockmann as cited in Michael, 2004, Pezzy and Toman, 2002). In order to ensure sustainability of development projects, there is the need to consider a number of factors. One vital factor is the level of community participation. If the local people understand the benefits of the interventions, and it meets their needs, they will most probably pursue it for a long period of time (Fowler 2000). Participation of local communities can be a means to empower the local people to do their own analysis, take command, and gain confidence to make their own decisions (Chambers, 1997; Gaventa, 2005).

Another point is local ownership. According to Donais et al. as cited in Nalubiri (2010), local ownership is the extent to which local actors control, implement and manage the process of political, social and economic development. It is believed that when local people own the development process, they often support it. Again, involvement of local initiatives and expertise, and coordination among development actors are crucial to the sustainability of development projects. According to Friedmann (1992), local initiatives and expertise are vital in ensuring sustainability of development projects. Additionally, Nalubiri (2010) argues that coordination among development actors is critical in bringing about sustainability. Moreover, power and empowerment are elements of sustainability. Poor sustainability may be associated with lack of power of the local people (Michael, 2004). Power at all levels should evoke ability to set own priority, define own agenda, and exert influence on national, and international development community even in the face of opposition. When the local people feel powerless in the development process, they tend to frustrate the efforts towards their own development (Donais, 2009; Michael, 2004). Other factors vital in sustainability include accountability, transparency and effective communication (Lekorwe, 1999).

3. Methodological Framework

There are basically three research approaches, namely the quantitative and qualitative approaches, and a combination of the two. Each of approach has its philosophical orientations, paradigms and underpinnings. For the purpose of this study, the concurrent-dependence mixed method approach was adopted. Mixed method research approach seeks to address the inherent weaknesses in applying either quantitative or qualitative approach alone. It also enables researchers to obtain in-depth knowledge and insights from the respondents. The study was descriptive and exploratory. The target population for this study was made up of the Planning Officer, Budget Analyst, Coordinating Director, Deputy Directors, Engineer, and the Head of Works Department. Other are the Assembly members, Unit Committee members, PTA Executives, SMC Executives, representatives of traditional authority, and members from the Executive Committee. The purposive, convenience sampling and census data collection techniques were used to select 79 respondents for the study. Interview guide and interview schedule were the research instruments used in this study. Given the fact that this study is a mixed method research, the researcher employed analytical procedures that are suitable for both quantitative and qualitative studies. For the quantitative aspect of the study, the researcher used frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation for analysis, whilst for the qualitative data thematic and content analyses were used. Relevant quotes were used to enrich the results from the quantitative data.

4. Results and Discussion

In presenting and discussing the results of the study, the researchers took cognizance of two issues, namely the background of respondents and the research objectives. Concerning the sex distribution of respondents, the study found that 67.1 percent of them were males whilst 32.9 percent were females as observed in Table 1.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	53	67.1
Female	26	32.9
Total	79	100.0

Table 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents
Source: Fieldwork (2018)

This implies that the majority of the respondents for this study were males. Blau and Kahn (2007), as cited by Odoom, Kyeremeh and Opoku (2014) indicate that issues of sex are critical development finance especially regarding taxation. It is believed that in public financing, women should be taxed less than men due to higher labor supply elasticities of the former (Opoku, Kyeremeh and Odoom, 2014).

With regard to the educational qualifications of the respondents, the study showed that the majority (51.8%) had qualifications not beyond SSSCE. Again, from Table 2 it is clear that 22.8 percent of the respondents had first degree and the same percentage of respondents had Diploma/HND. Essentially, it is obvious from Table 2 that the majority (51.6%) of the respondents had educational qualifications not beyond the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination level. This situation appears problematic in the face of the human capital theory. The human capital theory advocates for investments in education as critical in nations' development.

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
BECE/MSLC	15	18.9
SSSCE	26	32.9
Diploma/HND	18	22.8
1 st Degree	18	22.8
2 nd Degree	2	2.5
Total	79	100%

Table 2: Educational Qualifications of Respondents

Source: Fieldwork (2018)

The first research sought to examine the existing structures for the management of development projects in the District. To achieve this objective, the researchers considered four main things. First, the researchers identified some of the development projects the Assembly had provided to communities in the District over the last seven years. Several projects were found to have been undertaken by the Assembly during the period under review. They include construction of educational facilities, water and toilet facilities, community health immunization projects (CHIP Compound), and roads. Others were renovation of market centers and lorry parks, construction of offices for key departments and some area councils, football parks, among others.

Again, the study discovered that there was a clearly defined structure for the management of development projects in the District. For instance, there were Area councilors, Assembly members, Unit Committees, and SMCs who were all part of the existing structure for the management of projects. Others were who part of the structure include PTAs, WATSAN committee, Traditional Authority, and Executive Committees. These key officers all had an active role to play in the design, planning, execution and the maintenance of development projects in the District. These individuals and entities were expected to contribute meaningful ideas and experiences to ensure the successful management of development projects in the locality. When asked whether or not there was role confusion within the structure, the respondents in unanimity indicated that there was not. They contended that persons and entities within the structure had a full understanding of their individual roles were and what their expectations were. However, the respondents could not state whether each individual or entity in the local structure had executed his or her role satisfactorily.

Also, as part of the first objective, the researchers explored the avenues that are available for community members to participate in taking decisions about development projects delivery in the District. It was discovered that platforms such as community durbar (83%), site meetings (48%), board meetings (33%), suggestion boxes (27%), community information service hearing (89%), among others were available to enhance community participation in the management of development projects. Community information service hearing (89%) was the most utilized platform in the District, followed by community durbar (83%), with suggestion box (27%) as the least utilized.

Beyond the avenues the researchers looked at the perception of respondents on the participation of stakeholders and local authorities on the planning of development projects at the Assembly. It was revealed that 48.8 percent indicated that their participation in planning development projects in the District was generally adequate whilst 52.2 percent believed it was inadequate, with the rest of the respondents taking a neutral position. In essence, the majority (52.2%) of respondents believed their participation in the planning of development projects was inadequate. This indeed presents a huge challenge to the compelling relevance of participation in the whole essence of development project management agenda. This finding confirms that of Fischer, as cited by Odoom, Yeboah, Opoku and Osei-Wusu (2018), who observed that true participation is difficult to achieve. In his appreciation of the difficult nature of true participation, Fischer (2000) as cited by Odoom et al. (2018), adds that to many social scientists and politicians, participation is a dilemma between impossibility and inevitability. Chambers (2005) argues that there is a wide gap between the senses in which participation is used and the reality on the ground. Cook and Kothari (2001), as cited by Odoom et al. (2018), assert that participatory development does not have a refined existence in real life but is constructed by a cadre of development professionals whose ability to create and sustain this discourse is indicative of the power they possess. Odoom et al. (2018) further call for the need for development facilitators to cooperate with local people, and also use local knowledge for benefit of especially the local people.

The second objective of the study explored the factors affecting the sustainable management of projects in the District. The results are shown in Table 3. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the quantitative data whilst content analysis was conducted for the transcribed data. A number of factors including political, economic, cultural, environmental, educational, and infrastructural were found to be affecting project management. For instance, 56.6 percent of the respondents agreed that political consideration was one factor affecting project management in the District whilst

36.4 percent disagreed. By inference, most of the respondents identified politics as having a toll on the success of project management in the District.

Also, 66.2 percent of the respondents believed economic factors were affecting the management of development projects in the District as against 27.4 percent who disagreed. The results from the interview guide showed that political and economic factors affected the success of project management in the District. In the words of one interviewee, "There is too much politics in Ghana which affects almost everything that we do. It is very bad." Another interviewee remarked, "Government has so many responsibilities to perform so getting funds for projects is very difficult. Sometimes we wait for very long time before we get the District Assembly Common Funds." The findings on political and economic factors in this study agree with that of Cusworth and Frank, as cited in Damian (2012). For example, according to the authors, economic forces including exchange rates, inflation, and supply of raw materials are not constant. These factors as such create uncertainty in the process of the project design, development and implementation which trigger constant review of project budgets. Resources are limited in supply as against the demand for them in project execution. In order to forestall unwanted shortfalls of resources supply in the project execution, it is important to take thorough material and manpower planning. In simple terms, this implies ensuring that the right people are in the right place at the right time (Burke: cited in Damian, 2012)

Factor	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Political factors	56.6	8	36.4
Economic factors	66.2	7.4	27.4
Cultural factors	57	11	32
Environmental factors	68.5	6.4	26.1
Infrastructural factors	56.1	8.5	36.4
Educational factors	71.4	8	21.6
Ethical factors	66.0	16.6	18.4

Table 3: Views of Respondents on the Factors Affecting the Management of Development Projects in the District
Source: Fieldwork (2018)

Additionally, from Table 3, it is lucid that 57 percent and 68.5 percent of the respondents respectively listed cultural and environmental factors as crucial in the management of projects in the District. This indicates that most of the respondents saw cultural and environmental factors as commanding an influence on the success of project management. The results of the interview guide generally agreed with the above position. The key informants contended that cultural and environmental factors play a vital role in the management of development projects in the District. One interviewee commented, "Sometimes the beliefs of the residents make it very difficult for the Assembly to effectively manage its projects. People tend to depend so much on the Assembly for everything." Again, one key informant stated, "These factors have found expression in the writings of scholars such as Cusworth and Frank, as cited in Damian (2012). It is widely conceived that the beliefs, norms, perceptions and interest of project workers, beneficiaries and other stakeholders largely affect their commitments and co-operation during the planning, implementation and management of projects (Cusworth and Frank: cited in Damian, 2012).

Other factors identified as affecting the management of development projects are infrastructural, educational and ethical factors as shown in Table 3. For instance, 71.4 percent of the respondents commented that educational level in the District affects the management of development projects. The respondents contended that where there is higher education among the citizens, they (citizens) tend to cooperate with local authorities and other stakeholders in the management of development projects. These factors have been supported by the results from the interview guide. For instance, the interviewees listed infrastructural factors including technology, and transportation and energy as affecting the quick and effective execution and management of development projects. Thus, these factors should not be ignored in the management of development projects. Resources are limited in supply as against the demand for them in project execution. In order to forestall unwanted shortfalls of resources supply in the project execution, it is important to take thorough material and manpower planning. In simple terms, this implies ensuring that the right people are in the right place at the right time (Burke: cited in Damian, 2012).

The third objective dealt with Views of respondents on the factors affecting the sustainability of development projects in the District as shown in Table 4. For this objective, percentages were used in analyzing the quantitative data by the researchers. However, in the case of the qualitative data, thematic analysis was done. Several factors were identified as affecting the sustainability of development projects as presented in Table 4. They include local participation in the project planning, local ownership of the projects, local initiatives and knowledge are included in the planning of the projects, transparency in the implementation of the project, accountability in the implementation of the project, empowerment of the local people, and commitment among the local people.

Statement to Consider	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
a. Local participation in the project planning	60	8	32
b. Local ownership of the projects	62	9.6	29.4
c. Local initiatives and knowledge are included in the planning of the Projects	59	10	31
d. Transparency in the implementation of the project	68.5	6.4	26.1
e. Accountability in the implementation of the project	56.1	8.5	36.4
f. Empowerment of the local people	61.4	8.6	31
g. Flexibility exists in the project execution	66.0	16.6	18.4
h. Commitment among the local people	59.0	12.0	31

Table 4: Views of Respondents on the Factors Affecting the Sustainability of Development Projects in the District
Source: Fieldwork (2018)

From Table 4, it is succinct that 60 percent of the respondents identified local participation in the project planning as a factor which the Assembly can consider in ensuring the sustainability of development projects. However, 32 percent of the respondents disagreed to the above position. Interviews with the key informants also confirmed that local participation in the project planning is an important measure that can help in sustaining development projects in the Assembly. One interviewee commented, "I believe that with effective local participation in the project planning the Assembly can sustain its development projects." The findings of this study are consistent with Chambers (1997), and Gaventa(2005) who found that local participation is vital in projects sustainability. They added that participation of local communities is an important way to empower the local people to do their own analysis, take command, and gain confidence to make their own decisions. Chowdhury, as cited by Odoo et al. (2018) argues that the ideal conditions contributing towards meaningful participation can be classified into three aspects. They are: the kind of participation under consideration; who are to participate in it; and the process of participation occur. Meaning participation involves sensitizing people and to increase their ability to respond to development programs. It also involves encouraging local initiatives and people's involvement in decision-making process in implementing programs and sharing (Odoo et al., 2018; World Bank's Learning Group on Participatory Development; 1995).

Again, the study revealed that local ownership of the projects was considered as vital in project sustainability in the District. The position of the respondents was supported by the 62 percent who agreed with the issue of local ownership. Additionally, the respondents believed that if local initiatives and knowledge are included in the planning of projects there will be sustainability of such projects. Indeed, 59 percent of the respondents held this view as against 31 percent who disagreed to the assertion. The results from the interview guide proved that local ownership and local initiatives are fundamental to project sustainability. In the words of one interviewee, "In fact, if the local people can own the development projects we undertake there will be sustainability. But sometimes the local people themselves do not see the need for them to own the projects." Another informant said, "Local initiative is significant in ensuring project sustainability. Some of the local people sometimes can offer some brilliant ideas during the execution of the projects." From the above, it is clear that local ownership and local initiatives are crucial for project sustainability. The present study confirms the findings of Donais et al. as cited in Nalubiri (2010) which depict that local ownership and local initiatives vital in sustainability of development projects. The extent to which local actors control, implement and manage the process of political, social and economic development is influenced by local ownership and local expertise.

Another factor identified as affecting the sustainability of development projects is transparency in the implementation of the project. From Table 4, it can be seen that 68.5 percent agreed that transparency in the implementation of the project can be responsible for project sustainability, whilst 26.1 percent had a contrary view. Also, the results from the interview guide showed that transparency in the implementation of development projects is critical in sustaining the projects. The respondents were of the view that if all stakeholders decided to be transparent in their duties there will be project sustainability.

More so, the study identified accountability as relevant in the management of development projects sustainability. With 56.1 percent, the respondents generally believed that accountability in the implementation of projects is a key factor in the sustainability of development projects, whereas 34.6 percent of the respondents thought otherwise. The views from the key informants generally confirmed the majority views expressed above that accountability in the implementation of development projects is important. The respondents were of a firm conviction that when local authorities are accountable to all its stakeholders especially the citizens, they tend to get their cooperation in executing and financing development projects. According to Donais (2009), and Michael (2004) factors vital in sustainability include accountability, transparency and effective communication (Lekorwe, 1999).

Other factors identified as affecting the sustainability of development projects are commitment among the local people, and flexibility in the execution of the projects as displayed in Table 4. Similar views were expressed by the key informants involved in this study. Institutional factors constitute one major factor which affects project management. It is believed that institutional issues in the form of legal and policy frameworks within which projects operate affect the functioning of project management. Again, issues regarding the land tenure and property ownership systems affect project management (Cusworth and Frank: cited in Damian, 2012).

Again, political factors play a major role in the success or otherwise of project management. Political factors are the policies of governments and activities of politicians which often determine the execution and management of projects. Indeed, projects are usually conceived, developed and designed within the context of governmental and political frameworks and guidelines. As such, in instances where a particular project's lifecycle is not compatible with government policies, its execution and management could be obstructed. Also, sometimes politicians may use their influence to alter project location, management and execution proceedings to score their parochial political points to the detriment of agreed upon work schemes (Cusworth and Frank: cited in Damian, 2012). Additionally, the conceptual framework depicts that development projects are meaningless if there are no concerted efforts to sustain them.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study discovered that there was a clearly defined structure for the management of development projects in the District and that, avenues available for community members to participate in taking decisions about project delivery in the District included community durbar, site meetings, board meetings, suggestion boxes, and community information service hearing. Of these avenues, community information service hearing was the most utilized, while suggestion box was seen as the least utilized. However, the level of local participation in decision making related to development projects was inadequate. A number of factors such as political consideration, economic, cultural and environmental factors were discovered to be crucial in the management of projects in the District. Other issues including infrastructural, educational and ethical factors were also identified. Besides, a number of factors were identified as affecting the sustainability of the projects including local participation in the project planning, local ownership of the projects, local initiatives and knowledge are included in the planning of the projects, transparency in the implementation of the project, accountability in the implementation of the project, empowerment of the local people, and commitment among the local people. The District Assembly should provide more platforms to ensure active participation of all stakeholders in local decision making in relation to development projects. The National Commission for Civic Education should collaborate with civil society organizations in the District to provide more advocacy programs about the need to curb political influence concerning decision making about development projects. To ensure commitment among the local people, the District Assembly should team up with the NCCE to provide public education about the need for the citizens to own development projects in the District and also offer their initiatives and knowledge. The District Assembly should ensure there is transparency and accountability in the implementation of the development projects.

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