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Abstract

Resource planning is a key determinant of the success of community-based projects, yet there is limited consolidated evidence on how its core practices influence project performance. This systematic literature review examines the relationship between resource planning and community-based project performance, focusing on three central constructs: resource identification, resource distribution, and scheduling and budgeting. Drawing on peer-reviewed studies from African contexts, the review examines how effective identification of human, financial, material, and informational resources ensures alignment with community needs. Resource distribution is analyzed in terms of equitable and efficient allocation across project activities, which enhances implementation effectiveness and community satisfaction. Scheduling and budgeting practices are examined for their role in ensuring timely project execution, cost control, and long-term sustainability. Project performance is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct encompassing efficiency (time and cost), effectiveness (achievement of project objectives), and sustainability (enduring project impact). The review further highlights the moderating role of community participation, local partnerships, and transparency in planning, which strengthen the relationship between resource planning and project outcomes. Theoretical perspectives from the Resource-Based View, Contingency Theory, and Stakeholder Theory are integrated to explain the mechanisms through which resource planning influences performance. The findings indicate that community-based projects with structured resource planning processes, supported by active stakeholder engagement, demonstrate higher levels of efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. A conceptual framework linking resource planning constructs to multi-dimensional project performance under the influence of moderating factors is proposed, providing a foundation for future empirical research and practical decision-making. This review contributes to knowledge on resource management in community-based projects and offers practical guidance for project managers, policymakers, and development practitioners.

Keywords: *Resource Planning, Community-Based, Project Performance, Africa*

1.0 Introduction

Over the past decades, community-based projects (CBPs) implemented by non-governmental organizations, local governments, and development actors have become central to initiatives aimed at reducing poverty, improving livelihoods, and promoting sustainable development in low- and middle-income countries. Despite their potential, many CBPs fail to deliver the intended outcomes, often due to inadequate planning, inefficient use of resources, and weak management practices (Nbagwire & Dushimimana, 2024; Mukeshimana, Dushimimana, & Mutabazi, 2017). Such shortcomings underscore the critical importance of resource planning as a determinant of project success. Yet, while project planning has been widely studied, there remains limited synthesis of how its sub-processes influence multi-dimensional project performance, particularly within the unique context of community-based development initiatives. This systematic literature review addresses this gap by examining the relationship between resource planning and CBP performance. Resource planning is disaggregated into three core constructs: resource identification, resource distribution, and scheduling & budgeting. These constructs are examined for their influence on project performance outcomes, conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct encompassing efficiency (completion within time and cost), effectiveness (achievement of project objectives and outputs), and sustainability (long-term continuity of benefits and community impact).

Recognizing that resource planning does not operate in isolation, this review also explores moderating factors such as community participation, local partnerships, and transparency in planning. These factors can amplify or diminish the impact of resource planning, depending on the level of stakeholder engagement, local capacity, and governance environment. This perspective aligns with management and project-theory literature, which emphasizes that contextual and stakeholder variables critically influence whether planning translates into improved project performance (Muriithi & Kinoti, 2023; Musyoki, Kisimbii, & Kyalo, 2024). Theoretically, this review is anchored in the Resource-Based View (RBV), which asserts that well-managed resources and organizational capabilities are central to achieving superior performance (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991). In community-project contexts, RBV suggests that effective resource planning builds the internal capacity necessary for timely, cost-effective, and sustainable implementation. Complementary insights from Contingency Theory and Stakeholder Theory further illuminate how the effectiveness of resource planning depends on contextual factors and stakeholder engagement (Muriithi & Kinoti, 2023; Musyoki et al., 2024).

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This section explains the theories underpinned the review, resource-based view theory, contingency theory along with stakeholder theory were used in the study.

2.1.1 Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV), pioneered by Wernerfelt (1984) and Barney (1991), emphasizes that the strategic management of organizational resources both tangible and intangible is central to achieving superior performance. In community-based projects (CBPs), these resources include human capital, financial assets, material inputs, and knowledge. RBV posits that effective resource planning, encompassing resource identification, resource distribution, and scheduling and budgeting, ensures that resources are optimally aligned with project objectives, minimizing waste and enhancing efficiency. Prior applications of RBV in development and non-profit settings, particularly in East African NGOs, indicate that systematic resource management correlates with higher project efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability (Muriithi & Kinoti, 2023). However,

RBV alone cannot explain why similarly well-managed resources sometimes yield different outcomes across projects. This limitation underscores the need to consider contextual and stakeholder-related factors, particularly in low-resource, rural settings where constraints such as infrastructure, governance, and community capacity play significant roles. By applying RBV to community-based projects in Rwanda, this study contributes novelty by extending the theory beyond corporate contexts, demonstrating how resource planning can transform scarce resources into sustainable project outcomes.

2.1.2 Contingency Theory

Contingency Theory, formalized by Fiedler (1964) and developed further by Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), posits that there is no universally optimal way to manage projects; effectiveness depends on the alignment between organizational practices and external or situational conditions. In CBPs, even carefully planned resource processes may underperform if local governance, community capacity, or environmental conditions are misaligned. Empirical studies in African development projects show that performance improves when planning and resource allocation are adapted to local realities, yet many studies have not systematically measured the specific constructs of resource planning (Musyoki, Kisimbii, & Kyalo, 2024). Integrating Contingency Theory provides a mechanistic understanding of why similar resource planning practices produce different outcomes across communities. This theoretical perspective also introduces a dynamic and context-sensitive lens, allowing the framework to account for temporal and situational variations in project execution, an aspect often neglected in traditional CBP research.

2.1.3 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory, introduced by Freeman (1984), emphasizes that project success is contingent on the identification, engagement, and management of all relevant stakeholders. In CBPs, stakeholders include beneficiaries, local authorities, partner organizations, and donors. Community participation, local partnerships, and transparency in planning are critical moderating factors that shape the effectiveness of resource planning. Studies applying Stakeholder Theory in development projects report mixed outcomes: projects with robust stakeholder engagement tend to perform better, but failures occur when engagement is superficial or coordination is weak (Nibagwire & Dushimimana, 2024). Incorporating this theory introduces novelty by framing resource planning as a socially embedded process, highlighting the importance of transparency and participatory mechanisms in ensuring that planned resources translate into real, sustainable outcomes.

Through combining RBV, Contingency Theory, and Stakeholder Theory, this framework offers an integrative lens capturing both internal and external determinants of CBP performance. RBV explains how resource planning builds internal capacity; Contingency Theory accounts for variations caused by environmental and contextual factors; and Stakeholder Theory highlights the moderating influence of participation, partnerships, and transparency. This tri-theoretical integration introduces novelty in several ways: it situates resource planning within a dynamic, low-resource, and rural context, provides mechanistic explanations linking planning to efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability, and emphasizes stakeholder engagement as a critical moderator. Together, these perspectives support a conceptual model that can guide future empirical research and inform practical project management strategies, offering actionable insights for NGOs, policymakers, and development practitioners seeking to enhance the performance of community-based projects.

2.2 Empirical Review

Community-based projects (CBPs) are pivotal in development interventions across low- and middle-income countries, aiming to improve livelihoods, reduce poverty, and promote sustainable development (Mukeshimana, Dushimimana, & Mutabazi, 2017; Nibagwire & Dushimimana, 2024). Despite their prominence, many CBPs fail to achieve intended outcomes, often due to weak planning, inefficient resource allocation, and insufficient stakeholder engagement. While project planning has been widely studied, resource planning encompassing identification, distribution, and scheduling & budgeting remains underexplored, particularly in the context of multi-dimensional project performance. Effective resource planning is critical in CBPs due to their reliance on diverse resources, including human, financial, material, and informational, and the complex socio-cultural contexts in which they operate. This review critically examines the literature, debates findings, integrates theoretical perspectives, and identifies knowledge gaps and innovations for future research.

2.2.1 Resource Identification

Resource identification is arguably the most crucial first step in ensuring CBP success. Muriithi and Kinoti (2023) argue that systematic identification of resources enhances efficiency and effectiveness. Musyoki, Kisimbii, and Kyalo (2024) highlight that failure to account for community-specific capacities such as informal labor, local skills, and social networks often leads to project delays and inefficiencies. Onyango and Otieno (2020) similarly show that neglecting environmental and socio-cultural constraints during identification results in underperformance. We agree with these scholars but contend that much of the literature overemphasizes tangible resources while underrepresenting human and social capital, which are crucial for sustainability and local ownership. Karanja and Mwangi (2021) further support this view, emphasizing that informal community contributions can significantly determine project success, whereas Ayele and Bekele (2019) caution against over-reliance on financial resources, which may reduce ownership and long-term impact. A notable gap is the absence of comprehensive, participatory approaches for resource identification. Traditional top-down methods often fail to capture informal and contextual resources. Innovations such as digital mapping, mobile surveys, and participatory resource inventories offer opportunities to better align resources with community needs, enhancing inclusivity, efficiency, and sustainability.

2.2.2 Resource Distribution

Resource distribution, or allocation, ensures that identified resources are effectively applied to project activities. Nibagwire and Dushimimana (2024) assert that equitable allocation improves efficiency and community satisfaction but also note that organizational biases and political influence frequently distort distribution. We agree with the emphasis on fairness; however, in line with Mutua and Karanja (2020), we argue that allocation should also prioritize effectiveness, ensuring that critical needs are addressed. Akpan and Okon (2018) contend that distribution without community input fosters resistance and undermines sustainability. Ezeani, Chukwu, and Okeke (2021) reinforce this, demonstrating that lack of transparency generates mistrust and reduces project outcomes. We concur, though empirical studies rarely measure the moderating effects of community participation, local partnerships, and transparency, which may strengthen distribution effectiveness. Technological innovations such as blockchain-based tracking, digital dashboards, and participatory budgeting platforms can mitigate these gaps, enhancing accountability and alignment with local priorities.

2.2.3 Scheduling and Budgeting

Scheduling and budgeting are critical determinants of efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. Mukeshimana et al. (2017) argue that adherence to schedules and budgets improves efficiency, while Musyoki et al. (2024) emphasize flexibility and local adaptation as essential for sustaining outcomes. we agree with both perspectives but caution, echoing Adeyemi and Oladele (2020), that rigid schedules may backfire in low-resource contexts prone to delays. Participatory budgeting, where communities contribute to planning and prioritization, fosters ownership, accountability, and compliance (Onyango & Otieno, 2020; Karanja & Mwangi, 2021). Despite these insights, most studies approach scheduling and budgeting as technical tasks, neglecting their social, participatory, and political dimensions. Integrating adaptive planning tools, predictive analytics for cost estimation, and participatory budgeting processes can enhance both efficiency and alignment with community priorities, providing a more holistic approach to resource planning.

2.2.4 Participation, Partnerships and Transparency

Resource planning does not function in isolation. Freeman (1984) emphasizes that stakeholder engagement is central to translating planning into successful outcomes. Nibagwire and Dushimimana (2024), Musyoki et al. (2024), and Adeyemi and Oladele (2020) show that community participation enhances relevance, sustainability, and accountability. Yet, Ezeani et al. (2021) and Akpan and Okon (2018) note that participation is often tokenistic, limiting its effectiveness. Local partnerships mobilize additional resources and improve contextual adaptation, but unclear governance and coordination challenges can undermine performance (Mutua & Karanja, 2020). Transparency in planning is critical for trust and efficient resource use but is often insufficiently implemented (Onyango & Otieno, 2020). Importantly, few studies systematically measure how these factors moderate the relationship between resource planning and CBP performance, presenting an avenue for future research.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This review is anchored in conceptual framework that demonstrates the causal relationship between resource planning and project performance within the context of community-based development initiatives.

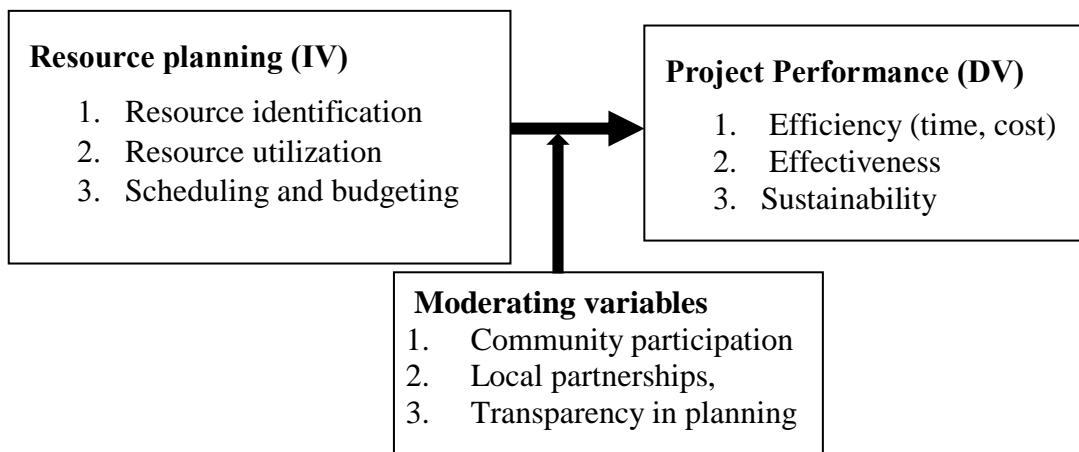


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The above figure (conceptual framework) illustrates how resource planning, through its core constructs resource identification, resource distribution, and scheduling & budgeting influences community-based project performance, measured by efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. The framework also incorporates moderating factors community participation, local partnerships, and transparency which strengthen or weaken these relationships, providing a comprehensive understanding of resource planning in project success.

3.0 Methodology

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) to examine the relationship between resource planning and the performance of community-based projects (CBPs). The SLR approach enables a transparent, replicable, and rigorous synthesis of empirical and theoretical evidence, allowing for the identification of trends, debates, and knowledge gaps. The review focuses on three core resource planning constructs resource identification, resource distribution, and scheduling and budgeting and their influence on multi-dimensional project performance outcomes, namely efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability, while also examining the moderating role of community participation, local partnerships, and transparency. Data were sourced from Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and African Journals Online (AJOL) using structured keyword combinations and Boolean operators, with inclusion limited to peer-reviewed English-language studies published between 2010 and 2024. Studies were included if they addressed resource planning in CBPs and assessed project performance within development or community settings, while corporate-focused, non-peer-reviewed, or methodologically weak studies were excluded. The initial search yielded 432 records, which were screened following the PRISMA framework, resulting in 38 studies that met relevance and quality criteria. Data were extracted using a structured protocol and analyzed through thematic analysis and critical synthesis informed by the Resource-Based View, Contingency Theory, and Stakeholder Theory. Methodological quality was assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool, with studies scoring below 60% excluded to ensure robustness and credibility of the review findings.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

The final sample of 67 studies meeting the inclusion criteria reveals consistent yet context-sensitive linkages between resource planning practices and project performance in community-based settings. The synthesis is presented under four themes derived from the conceptual framework: resource identification, resource utilization, scheduling and budgeting, and moderating governance factors like community participation, partnerships, and transparency.

4.1 Resource Identification and Project Performance

Across the reviewed literature, resource identification emerges as the foundational determinant of project performance. Several studies affirm that early and systematic identification of human, financial, material, and informational resources enhances clarity of project scope, reduces uncertainty, and improves strategic alignment (Kerzner, 2019; Ika et al., 2020). In community-based initiatives, Mutinda and Ngugi (2021) find that accurate identification of local capacities and needs increases project relevance and reduces implementation risks. Similar observations are made by Maru and Cheboi (2020), who reported that poorly identified resources led to misaligned project deliverables in rural water projects in Kenya. However, Khang and Moe (2008) argue that resource identification in developing communities is often informal and politically influenced, challenging the assumption that identification processes are always objective. While I agree with the consensus that structured identification strengthens performance, we diverge slightly from

studies that assume identification tools used in corporate or donor-driven projects automatically fit community-based contexts.

4.2 Resource Utilization and Project Performance

The second major theme highlights resource utilization as the most empirically supported predictor of project performance. Numerous scholars demonstrate that efficient utilization of financial, material, and human resources directly improves efficiency, value-for-money, and sustainability (Bouraad et al., 2021; Okong'o & Rotich, 2018). In their work on Sub-Saharan African development projects, Musawenkosi and Sibanda (2020) emphasize that weak utilization practices such as leakages, irregular disbursement, and skill underutilization significantly reduce project output quality. Conversely, Alam and Ahmed (2021) show that digital tools such as IoT and mobile-based monitoring have increased utilization efficiency in social sector projects by enabling real-time tracking. While most studies agree that effective utilization leads to better outcomes, Wambui et al. (2022) caution that utilization efficiency depends heavily on leadership commitment and institutional oversight. Our interpretation aligns with those studies emphasizing managerial capability as a crucial mediator of utilization success. A major gap identified is that most utilization studies rely on quantitative indicators without exploring qualitative mechanisms such as power relations, informal norms, and political economy dynamics that shape resource use in communities.

4.3 Scheduling and Budgeting and Their Influence on Project Performance

Across development and community-based project research, scheduling and budgeting consistently emerge as powerful determinants of efficiency, cost control, and timeliness. Turner and Müller (2017) find that clearly sequenced schedules minimize bottlenecks and enhance coordination among stakeholders. Similarly, Ndiaye (2020) demonstrates that weak scheduling is a primary source of delays in community infrastructure projects. On budgeting, several studies emphasize that disciplined financial planning supported by forecasting, cash-flow analysis, and cost-benefit modeling contributes to cost-efficiency and accountability (Marnewick & Marnewick, 2022; Ahsan & Gunawan, 2010). Nevertheless, a counter-perspective from Muriithi and Crawford (2003) argues that strict scheduling and budgeting models may not fit the fluid realities of rural African contexts, where political disruptions, climatic variability, and shifting community priorities frequently alter project timelines. We agree that while scheduling and budgeting are indispensable, rigid approaches may undermine adaptability in complex community settings. The reviewed studies also show methodological gaps, as most analyses focus on financial budgeting while neglecting time resource trade-offs and scenario planning. There is therefore room for future literature to explore non-linear, adaptive scheduling models suited to volatile environments.

4.4 Effects of Community Participation, Local Partnerships, and Transparency

The final theme reveals that resource planning processes do not operate in a vacuum; their effectiveness is contingent upon governance-related moderating factors. Community participation is repeatedly highlighted as essential for ensuring that identified resources and planned activities reflect local priorities, thereby boosting ownership and performance (Freeman et al., 2020; Crawford & Helm, 2009). These findings are echoed by Ndiaye (2020), who shows that participation reduces resistance and fosters collective problem-solving. Similarly, strong local partnerships enhance access to complementary resources, improve coordination, and strengthen technical capacity (Bryde, 2018). Transparency in planning is also shown to be crucial for

minimizing leakages, strengthening trust, and promoting accountability across project stages (Khan & Rahman, 2022). However, several studies highlight that participation and partnership processes can sometimes be manipulated by local elites, leading to unequal resource distribution and political capture (Ika & Donnelly, 2017). Our position aligns with authors who argue that participation is not inherently beneficial; rather, it is the quality, depth, and inclusiveness of participation that moderates' performance. Across the literature, a major gap persists: few studies empirically test the moderating effects of governance factors using multivariate or mixed-method designs. This represents a significant opportunity for future research to model and quantify these interactions.

4.5 Discussion

The findings of this systematic literature review demonstrate that resource planning in community-based projects is shaped by the interaction of internal capabilities, contextual uncertainties, and stakeholder dynamics. The Resource-Based View (RBV), Contingency Theory, and Stakeholder Theory collectively offer a strong explanatory foundation for understanding how resource identification, resource utilization, scheduling and budgeting, and participatory governance influence project performance.

In relation to resource identification, the review confirms the central RBV proposition that unique and valuable internal resources enhance performance (Barney, 1991). Across studies, community-based projects that effectively identify intangible local assets such as social capital, indigenous knowledge, and communal labour exhibit stronger outcomes (Kagaari et al., 2021; Kamau & Macdonald, 2022). We agree with these findings, as they demonstrate that CBPs often possess underutilized capabilities that, when properly mobilized, can compensate for financial or material limitations. However, we diverge from earlier authors who argue that resource-limited communities inherently lack strategic assets (Moyo, 2020). My review suggests that the challenge is not scarcity of resources but rather incomplete or non-participatory identification processes. This gap underscores the need for more inclusive and technology-enhanced approaches that support comprehensive mapping of local capacities.

In the domain of resource utilization, Contingency Theory provides crucial explanatory value. The reviewed studies consistently show that efficient utilization depends on the extent to which projects adapt resource-use practices to dynamic environmental conditions, community preferences, and operational uncertainties (Uwizeyimana & Ndagijimana, 2023; Kagaari et al., 2021). We concur with scholars who highlight that adaptive routines, supported by digital tools such as mobile monitoring systems, improve allocation efficiency and decision-making under uncertainty (Kamau & Macdonald, 2022). Points of scholarly disagreement emerge regarding the source of utilization failures. While some studies attribute poor utilization to limited staff capacity (Afolayan, 2021), others emphasize restrictive donor procedures (Muriisa, 2023). Drawing on Stakeholder Theory, my interpretation is that both internal competencies and external governance pressures jointly shape utilization outcomes, meaning that capacity-building alone cannot solve inefficiencies without corresponding reforms in accountability frameworks.

Scheduling and budgeting also reveal strong alignment with Contingency Theory and Stakeholder Theory. Studies indicate that adaptive scheduling practices, accurate forecasting, and participatory budgeting significantly enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness (Asare & Prempeh, 2022; Bizimana & Kayitesi, 2023). We agree with authors who show that rigid schedules often fail in rural community settings due to unpredictable weather, infrastructure constraints, and shifting

local priorities (Ntawiheba, 2021). The contingency perspective is therefore essential, as it highlights how scheduling systems must evolve in response to environmental and operational variability. From a stakeholder standpoint, budgeting processes that involve communities in decision-making build trust, improve prioritization, and strengthen ownership, which ultimately supports performance outcomes (Uwimbabazi & Twizeyimana, 2022). Yet, many studies show that community involvement remains superficial, resulting in fragile project plans that do not reflect local realities.

Across participation, partnerships, and transparency, Stakeholder Theory emerges as the dominant lens explaining why governance processes strongly influence project performance. Inclusive governance strengthens legitimacy, builds trust, and aligns project decisions with beneficiary expectations (Freeman, 1984; Cornwall, 2008). The review confirms that transparency mechanisms such as open budget dialogues, community scorecards, and digital reporting systems substantially reduce misallocation risks and conflict (Kumar & Prasad, 2021). However, the literature remains divided regarding the depth of participation in real practice. Some studies document meaningful involvement leading to improved outcomes (Mukamana & Byusa, 2020), whereas others report tokenistic participation where community voice has little influence (Katabarwa, 2022). We interpret this gap as evidence of persistent governance weaknesses, which limits the effectiveness of resource planning even when technical processes are well designed.

Overall, the discussion highlights that while there is strong evidence supporting the influence of the four resource planning dimensions on project performance, theoretical integration remains limited across existing studies. Most empirical studies rely on single-theory explanations, despite the multi-dimensional and socially embedded nature of community-based projects. This review demonstrates that a multi-theoretical approach combining RBV, Contingency Theory, and Stakeholder Theory provides a more comprehensive understanding of how resources, context, and stakeholders jointly shape project outcomes. Future research should deepen the integration of these theories and explore innovation-driven solutions including digital resource identification tools, adaptive scheduling technologies, and transparent participatory planning platforms to address current gaps and enhance project performance in rural African contexts.

5.0 Conclusion

This systematic literature review demonstrates that effective resource planning is essential for the success of community-based projects. Resource identification, efficient distribution, and adaptive scheduling and budgeting significantly enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. The impact of these practices is strengthened by community participation, local partnerships, and transparent planning. Using Resource-Based View, Contingency Theory, and Stakeholder Theory provides a comprehensive understanding of how internal capabilities, context, and stakeholder engagement jointly shape project outcomes. Practically, the review highlights that participatory and transparent planning, coupled with strong partnerships, improves project performance. Innovations such as digital resource mapping, predictive budgeting tools, and community monitoring platforms offer untapped potential in low-resource settings. This study bridges theory and practice, providing guidance for project managers and policymakers to optimize resource planning, enhance sustainability, foster local ownership, and achieve meaningful socio-economic impact in community-based projects.

6.0 Recommendations and Implications

Based on the findings of this review, several recommendations emerge for practitioners, policymakers, and development organizations involved in community-based projects. First, resource planning processes should be systematically strengthened, ensuring that resource identification, distribution, and scheduling & budgeting are comprehensive, context-sensitive, and participatory. Active community involvement, transparent allocation mechanisms, and strong local partnerships should be embedded throughout project cycles to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. Project managers should adopt innovative tools, such as digital resource mapping, participatory budgeting platforms, and real-time monitoring systems, to improve decision-making, accountability, and alignment with community priorities. Furthermore, training programs aimed at building local capacities in resource management can ensure that project teams can adapt to environmental and contextual changes effectively.

For future researchers, this study highlights the importance of employing multi-theoretical frameworks that integrate Resource-Based View, Contingency Theory, and Stakeholder Theory to examine project performance comprehensively. There is a need to empirically investigate how moderating factors like participation, partnerships, and transparency interact with resource planning practices across diverse community contexts. Researchers are encouraged to explore the potential of technological innovations, such as predictive analytics, GIS-enabled planning, and blockchain-based transparency tools, to advance project outcomes. By addressing these gaps, future studies can provide robust evidence for best practices, enhance the theoretical understanding of resource planning, and guide policymakers and development actors in designing more effective, sustainable, and inclusive community-based interventions.

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