



VILNIUS UNIVERSITY
BUSINESS SCHOOL

MASTER OF INTERNATIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Saad Mehmood

THE FINAL MASTER'S THESIS (PROJECT)

PROJEKTŲ VALDYMAS PRIVATAUS IR VIEŠOJO SEKTORIAUS ORGANIZACIJOSE: LYGINAMOJI ANALIZĖ	PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
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SUMMARY

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MASTER'S IN INTERNATIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

SAAD MEHMOOD

PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Supervisor – Dr. Andrius Valickas

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Brief description of FMTP

This study investigates the role of transformational leadership in enhancing project management effectiveness through stakeholder engagement, applying a comparative perspective across public and private sector organizations. Grounded in leadership theory and stakeholder theory, the research develops and empirically tests a mediation model in which transformational leadership is treated as the independent variable, stakeholder engagement as the mediating variable, and project management effectiveness as the dependent variable. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed. Data were collected from 70 project management professionals, equally representing public and private sector organizations. Established and validated measurement scales were used, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, linear regression, mediation analysis, and multi-group comparison techniques.

The results demonstrate that transformational leadership has a statistically significant positive impact on project management effectiveness in both sectors. Additionally, transformational leadership significantly enhances stakeholder engagement, which in turn shows a strong positive relationship with project management effectiveness. The mediation

analysis confirms that stakeholder engagement partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and project management effectiveness, indicating that leadership influences project outcomes both directly and indirectly through stakeholder-related processes. Comparative analysis reveals sectoral differences, with the effects of transformational leadership appearing stronger in public sector organizations, highlighting the importance of relational leadership and stakeholder engagement in bureaucratic and resource-constrained environments.

The study contributes to the literature on project management and leadership by empirically validating stakeholder engagement as a key explanatory mechanism linking transformational leadership to project success. From a practical perspective, the findings emphasize the importance of developing transformational leadership capabilities and implementing structured stakeholder engagement strategies to improve project performance across diverse organizational contexts.

SANTRAUKA

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SAAD MEHMOOD

PROJEKTŲ VALDYMAS PRIVATAUS IR VIEŠOJO SEKTORIAUS ORGANIZACIJOSE: LYGINAMOJI ANALIZĖ

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Trumpas FMTP aprašymas

Šiame tyrime nagrinėjamas transformacinės lyderystės vaidmuo didinant projektų valdymo efektyvumą per suinteresuotųjų šalių įtraukimą, taikant lyginamąją viešojo ir privataus sektoriaus organizacijų analizę. Remiantis lyderystės ir suinteresuotųjų šalių teorijomis, tyrime sukurtas ir empiriškai patikrintas mediacijos modelis, kuriame transformacinė lyderystė veikia kaip nepriklausomasis kintamasis, suinteresuotųjų šalių įtraukimas – kaip tarpinis kintamasis, o projektų valdymo efektyvumas – kaip priklausomasis kintamasis. Taikytas kiekybinis, skerspjūvio tyrimo dizainas. Duomenys surinkti iš 70 projektų valdymo specialistų, tolygiai atstovaujančių viešojo ir privataus sektoriaus organizacijoms. Tyrime naudotos patikrintos matavimo skalės, o duomenų analizė atlikta taikant aprašomąją statistiką, koreliacinę analizę, tiesinę regresiją, mediacijos analizę ir tarpsektorinį palyginimą.

Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad transformacinė lyderystė daro statistiškai reikšmingą teigiamą poveikį projektų valdymo efektyvumui abiejuose sektoriuose. Taip pat nustatyta, kad transformacinė lyderystė reikšmingai didina suinteresuotųjų šalių įtraukimą, o šis kintamasis pasižymi stipriu teigiamu ryšiu su projektų valdymo efektyvumu. Mediacinė analizė patvirtino, kad suinteresuotųjų šalių įtraukimas iš dalies tarpininkauja ryšiui tarp transformacinės

lyderystės ir projektų valdymo efektyvumo. Lyginamoji analizė atskleidė, kad transformacinės lyderystės poveikis yra stipresnis viešojo sektoriaus organizacijose, pabrėžiant santykinės lyderystės ir įtraukimo praktikų svarbą biurokratinėje aplinkoje.

Tyrimas prisideda prie projektų valdymo ir lyderystės literatūros, pabrėždamas suinteresuotųjų šalių įtraukimą kaip svarbų projektų sėkmę paaiškinantį mechanizmą, ir pateikia praktinių įžvalgų organizacijoms, siekiančioms gerinti projektų rezultatus.

Table of Contents

SUMMARY.....	2
SANTRAUKA.....	4
List of Figures.....	8
List of Abbreviations.....	9
List of Tables.....	10
INTRODUCTION.....	11
Research Problem.....	12
Research Objectives.....	13
Research novelty and relevance.....	14
Subject matter and Tasks.....	14
Chosen Research Methods.....	14
Research Structure, and difficulties and limitations of the study.....	15
1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF THE STUDY.....	15
1.1. Project Management in Public vs. Private Sector Organizations.....	15
1.2. Transformational Leadership (TL).....	17
1.3. Stakeholder Engagement (SE).....	19
1.4. Project Management Effectiveness (PME).....	21
1.5. Research Gap.....	23
1.6. Theoretical Framework.....	24
1.7. Research Hypotheses.....	25
2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: THEORY AND METHODS APPLIED FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS.....	27
2.1 Research Philosophy and Approach.....	28
2.2 Research Design.....	29
2.3 Population and Sampling Strategy.....	29
2.4 Data Collection Method.....	30
2.5 Measurement of Variables.....	30
2.6 Data Analysis Techniques.....	31
2.1.1 Treatment of open-ended questions.....	32
2.7 Ethical Considerations.....	33
2.8 Significance of the Study.....	34

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	36
3.1 Analysis of collected data.....	36
3.1.1 Demographic analysis.....	37
3.1.2 Reliability analysis.....	41
3.1.3 Descriptive analysis of open-ended questions.....	42
3.1.4 Correlations analysis.....	44
3.1.5 Regression analysis.....	45
3.1.6 Mediation Analysis.....	46
3.2 Discussion.....	48
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	54
Conclusion.....	54
Recommendations.....	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND A LIST OF REFERENCES.....	57
ANNEXES.....	64

List of Figures

S/N	Title	Page
Figure 1	Conceptual Model	25
Figure 2	Research onion model (Saunders et al., 2007)	28
Figure 3	<i>Graphical representation of Cronbach's Alpha value</i>	41
Figure 4	<i>Descriptive analysis of open-ended questions (Public)</i>	43
Figure 5	<i>Descriptive analysis of open-ended questions (Private)</i>	43

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Form
PM	Project Management
PME	Project Management Effectiveness
TLS	Transformational Leadership Style
TL	Transformational Leadership
SE	Stakeholder Management

List of Tables

S/N	Title	Page
Table 1	Summary of items adapted	31
Table 2	Theme identification and coding of open-ended questions	32
Table 3	Summary of Demographics of respondents	37
Table 4	Organizational and Professional Profile of Respondents	39
Table 5	Reliability Statistics of Measurement Scales	41
Table 6	Descriptive Summary of Open-Ended Responses	42
Table 7	Correlation Matrix of Study Variables	44
Table 8	Results of Linear Regression Analysis	45
Table 9a	Mediation Analysis Results for Stakeholder Engagement in Public Organizations	47
Table 9b	Mediation Analysis Results for Stakeholder Engagement in Private Organizations	48

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the role of project management has shaped the success of the organisation in the rapidly changing environment, as more projects are used to create new products/services, change processes, and improve the quality of the services offered (El Khatib, 2024). This assumption, however, does not hold true or is differently applicable in public and private sectors. Public sector projects are more often than not bogged down by layers of paperwork, political manoeuvring, and the need to answer to more than one decision-maker, which results in time and resource wastage (Waris et al., 2022; Ogunbukola, 2024). The elementary concern in private sector organisations, on the other hand, is the focus on the bottom line, which makes them more aggressive in the application of flexible and low-cost strategies, achieving maximum results in the implementation of agile project management (Rakhma & Roziqin, 2025; Zeyn, 2025). The above context calls for more research to be done in the area of project management and the role of leadership and stakeholders in the management of varied contextual project management.

Several studies suggest that the outcome of a project is highly dependent on the leadership skills of the project manager. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), Zhao et al. (2021) and Nauman et al. (2022), motivated, highly committed and visionary project teams work under the influence of transformational leadership. Such leadership is most useful in the public sector to alleviate the rigid structure of an organisation and energise the teams to work towards the core aim of the project irrespective of red tape (Maolani, 2023; Okonkwo et al., 2024). On the other hand, the private sector benefits from transformational leadership by encouraging innovation and flexibility to enable competition in volatile markets (Probojakti et al. 2025; Bux et al. 2025). The sector an organisation operates in highly determines the style of leadership exercised. This calls for in-depth studies on the project outcomes of the transformational leadership style within and between different sectors.

Active concern and involvement with project stakeholders are an important determinant of project success (Silvius & Schipper, 2019; Sanyaolu et al., 2023). Stakeholder involvement is not only important but crucial to the success of any project. It is engagement that scaffolds success of the relationship between leadership and project success by cultivating trust, minimising tension, and providing unbroken support at all project stages (Blak Bernat et al., 2023; Siddiqui et al., 2024). Stakeholder engagement is regarded as one of the most significant but most difficult to achieve in the public sector. This is largely because project stakeholders in this domain have competing and often conflicting interests. This is, however, crucial for the legitimacy and long-term sustainability of the project (Agyekum et al., 2023). Engagement in the private sector is different. Although there may be

fewer stakeholders, the competing demands for project efficiency and profitability are also a dominant concern requiring engagement.

The effectiveness of implementing project management systems still remains a critical tracker of how a firm performs. This is measured using finances spent, time used, quality of completed work, and satisfaction from the stakeholders (Coelho et al., 2023; Zada et al., 2023). Both the public and private organisations work towards achieving effectiveness in the projects they handle. However, the reasons for sustaining PME differ greatly. In the case of public projects, the efficiency of implementing standardised practices is often supported by the constraint of regulatory practices, public accountability, and/or political supervision (Sir, 2011; Osifo, 2024). On the other hand, private sector projects are intrinsically linked to profits and competition in the market, thereby creating demands for quick responses and creative solutions (Zwikael & Smyrk, 2015). This is why studying transformational leadership and stakeholder involvement on PME in the different sectors helps fill a major part of the gap in the literature, thereby proving the relevance and significance of understanding the relationship project leadership and stakeholders have in varying organisations.

Research Problem

Notwithstanding the wealth of research on project management, little is known about how leadership philosophies—in particular, transformational leadership—affect project outcomes differently in public and private sector enterprises. According to Ogunbukola (2024) and Zeyn (2025), the majority of research tends to concentrate on just one sector, which restricts the findings' generalisability and makes it more difficult to create sophisticated management techniques appropriate for various organisational contexts. Political meddling, bureaucratic restrictions, and the demands of numerous stakeholders are common in public sector undertakings. These factors might lessen the efficacy of leadership techniques that work well in private sector contexts (Rind, 2024; Eyo & Onyewuchi, 2025). Due to the knowledge gap created by this lack of comparison analysis, organisations are less able to effectively customise their project management and leadership development strategies.

Stakeholder engagement as a mediating mechanism is not sufficiently explored in project management research, which is another significant obstacle. Stakeholder engagement has been identified as a critical factor in project success, but its function as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and project management efficacy has not received much empirical attention, especially in industries with different operational and regulatory contexts (Siddiqui et al., 2024). Stakeholder networks' intricacy

frequently impedes decision-making and delays project execution in public sector initiatives, while engagement tactics in private sector projects are usually centred on efficiency and profit maximisation (Waris et al., 2022; Rakhma & Roziqin, 2025). Understanding how stakeholder engagement changes under the influence of transformative leadership in various organisational contexts presents a key research challenge.

Moreover, studies continue to define and quantify project management effectiveness in different ways, which results in fragmented understandings of the factors that influence successful project outcomes in the public and private sectors. Public organisations are more accountable to policy goals, public scrutiny, and social outcomes than private organisations, which put efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and market competitiveness first. These factors can clash with standard project management success metrics (Abbey et al., 2023; Rakhma & Roziqin, 2025). Therefore, empirical research that compares different sectors in a systematic way is desperately needed to find the engagement and leadership processes that maximise project performance. Solving this issue advances academic theory while also offering project managers practical advice on how to improve performance in a variety of organisational contexts.

Research Objectives

This research examines how a transformational leadership style impacts project management within both public and private sector organizations. The specific purpose of this study is to determine whether or not there is an effect of transformational leadership on stakeholder engagement, how stakeholder engagement impacts project management effectiveness, and if stakeholder engagement serves as a mediator of how transformational leadership influences project management effectiveness. The study will also investigate the extent that these relationships differ between public and private sector contexts in order to develop a better understanding of the similarities and differences that can be utilized to further develop projects within these areas of business. Hence, the objectives are simplified into the following four objectives to be achieved in this study:

- 1 To identify the relationship between transformational leadership and project management effectiveness in public and private sector organizations
- 2 To identify the impact of transformational leadership on stakeholder management in public and private sector organizations
- 3 To identify the influence of stakeholder management on project management effectiveness in public and private sector organizations
- 4 To examine the mediating role of SE between transformational leadership and PME in public and private sector organizations

Research novelty and relevance

This research presents new findings on the relationship between transformational leadership styles, stakeholder engagement, and the overall effectiveness of project management, rather than examining these constructs separately as was done in previous studies. Prior studies have recognised that leadership is important in any environment where projects are taking place, but limited empirical evidence exists on how leaders use the relationships developed with stakeholders to drive success in their respective projects. Additionally, most existing studies only consider either public sector organisations or private sector organisations. This comparative study of both sectors allows for meaningful additions to the current body of literature and offers solutions to practical problems that result from an ever-increasing number of stakeholders, accountability issues, and pressure to perform well in the management of projects in an increasingly complex world. While theoretically significant, this research provides useful, comprehensive, evidence-based suggestions related to the leadership dynamics found in context-based studies on project management today.

Subject matter and Tasks

This research focuses primarily on both the public and private sectors, based on behavior and relational aspects of the success of project management. A transformational leadership style is proposed as the independent variable of this research. Additionally, stakeholder engagement is used as a mediator for project success (dependent variable). The study will explore a sample population of project management professionals who are responsible for the planning, coordination, and delivery of projects. Several objectives will be accomplished as part of the research, including a review of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature, development of a conceptual framework from leadership and stakeholder theories, collection of empirical data regarding project management professionals, statistical testing of proposed relationships, and comparison of results from public and private sector contexts.

Chosen Research Methods

The research approach used in the present study is a structured (as opposed to unstructured) approach to quantitative research, based on the use of a positivist philosophy and a deductive approach to data collection. The author collected data using a structured questionnaire that included the usual types of validated measurement instruments for all variables included in this research. For the purposes of this research, the author has collected data from individuals employed by either public sector or private sector

organisations (a total of 90 project professionals). In order to conduct a comparison between groups of project professionals from both public and private sector organisations, the study has conducted analytical tests based on various statistical techniques (e.g., descriptive analysis and the testing of reliability and validity, correlation and regression analysis), which are commonly used for testing hypotheses. The use of these techniques will provide assurance of the analytical integrity, objectivity, and consistency with the objectives of this research.

Research Structure, and difficulties and limitations of the study

This thesis has an organised, logical, and cohesive structure. The context and assumptions of this study are given in the Introduction part, along with the research objectives, formulation of the problem, tasks, research methods, and limitations and importance of the research. In Chapter 1, the theoretical underpinnings of the study are presented, and a number of relevant theories are reviewed, as well as findings from previous research, before finally constructing a conceptual framework for this research. The methodology for the research is provided in Chapter 2, which is followed in Chapter 3 by the presentation and discussion of the empirical findings from the research. Conclusion to the thesis is provided where key findings from the research are summarised and where theoretical and practical recommendations are made. Although this research has positive contributions towards literature and practice, the study also has some limitations, including a small sample size, heavy reliance on self-reported data, and the cross-sectional design, which limits any ability to make causal inferences. Additionally, there were challenges in accessing respondents and obtaining reliable information during the data collection process due to a lack of time. These limitations are included to give transparency to the research findings and directions for future research.

1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF THE STUDY

1.1. Project Management in Public vs. Private Sector Organizations

There are a variety of contexts where the outcomes and practices of project management can change, especially when distinguishing between private and public organised entities. Both the private and public entities have the same goals when it comes to completing a project; however, the structural, cultural, and operational environments determine how the project's management, execution, and supervision are carried out (Ershadi et al., 2021; Akram et al., 2023). As per the public organisation side, the decisions

made are, more often than not, predetermined by the framework of rules, the tiers of the organisation, the political influence, the pace of the processes and the degree of the stakeholder harmonisation (Ogunbukola, 2024). In comparison to the public entities, private entities are driven by the need, as well as the ability, to quickly gain market share whilst also being efficient and profitable. As a result, they are able to more easily adopt new, flexible methods and innovate at a rapid pace (Zwikael & Smyrk, 2015; Zeyn, 2025). In considering the effectiveness of leadership, as well as the involvement of stakeholders when attempting to engage and subsequently align the project towards success, the contextual differences outlined above are very important to remind oneself of.

High levels of bureaucracy, the engagement of numerous stakeholders, and strict adherence to regulations are characteristics of public sector initiatives (Wirick, 2011; Khan et al., 2021). These initiatives can be more difficult and limit managerial discretion since they frequently involve political or social goals rather than just financial ones (Rosenbloom et al., 2022). Furthermore, public projects must adhere to stringent reporting guidelines, transparency standards, and public and governing body accountability, all of which can impede decision-making and result in procedural rigidities (Aleksavska, 2021; Ahmed, 2024). These traits call for leadership styles that can work within institutional limitations, balance the interests of various stakeholders, and maintain project motivation over extended periods of time.

Market competitiveness, customer satisfaction, and ever-growing profitability define the implications of the analysis, implementation, and outcome evaluation of private sector initiatives (Zwikael & Smyrk, 2015). Sibya et al. (2023) explain that... organisations are relatively unconstrained bureaucratically; thus, enabling more autonomy for project managers in resource allocation, decision-making, and the choice of approaches. Project assessment in the context of cost, time, and profitability, especially on risk management and operational efficiency, is a common phenomenon (Mir & Pinnington, 2014; Akomea-Frimpong et al., 2022). Within private sector organisations, the relatively dynamic environments spurring creativity and quick adaptability necessitate that leaders encourage people to get involved in the pursuit of high-performance goals.

Analysis of projects within the public and private domains reveals marked differences in management and leadership effectiveness, as well as stakeholder engagement. For instance, in the work of Zada et al. (2023) and Fareed et al. (2023), result alignment and managerial discretion show transformational leadership positively impacts project outcomes within the organisational boundaries of private sector entities to a greater extent. Conversely, Osifo (2024) and Opoku (2025) characterise public sector projects as more prone to undue

delays and excessive expenditure as a result of political meddling and the intricate stakeholder constellations. On stakeholder engagement, cross-sector analyses show that public projects require more deliberate and controlled communication as opposed to private projects, which require more rapid decision-making and uncontrolled engagement (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2023; Pham, 2024). These findings highlight the absence of strategic and tactical sector approaches to enhance project management effectiveness.

1.2. Transformational Leadership (TL)

Based on the research previously conducted on the matter, transformational leadership is equally relevant to success in particular innovative environments that require intricate motivation and teamwork (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Yobouet, 2025). Transactional leadership, on the other hand, is primarily centred on the completion of assigned tasks and the rewarding of performed duties. However, transformational leaders inspire their subordinates, and with the aid of the leaders, the entire organisation works towards achieving goals and objectives (Eduzor, 2024). This particular type of leadership in managing projects promotes a culture of collaboration, high levels of devotion and proactive new thinking towards problem-solving in order to achieve the objectives of the project (Yobouet, 2025). More and more of the scholarly works point out that transformational leadership does not only improve the performance of the entire team but also strengthens the organisational capacity to foster long-term trust and commitment from other stakeholders.

Bass and Riggio (2006) state that transformational leadership is when leaders inspire their followers to accomplish more than what they thought they could by engaging them on multiple levels. There are four dimensions of transformational leadership: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006). A transformational leader is able to demonstrate idealised influence when they articulate and guide their followers to accomplish a vision (Kreyenberg & Seriki, 2023). Creativity and innovative problem-solving are enhanced through intellectual stimulation, while individualised consideration values the growth and nurturing of the team and showcases their unique potential. Together, these elements of transformational leadership greatly increase motivation, organisational commitment, and needed flexibility for a given project, which are all vital for the success of the organisation, especially when dealing with complex and ever-changing conditions of the organisation.

Transformational leadership and project effectiveness

Research has shown that transformational leadership affects the performance of projects by influencing the behaviour of the teams as well as the organisational processes (Nauman et al., 2022). Private sector projects under the leadership of transformational leaders streamline the alignment of project execution with strategic goals through innovation, rapid decision-making and increased efficiency (Zwikael & Smyrk, 2015). In the public sector, transformational leadership tends to break the barriers of red tape, political meddling, and large complex stakeholders by building teamwork, stakeholder alignment, and flexible strategies for complex problems (Maolani, 2023). In addition, the active disengagement of project stakeholders greatly contributes toward the negative performance of the project, and thus the performance of the projects with the interrelatedness of leadership and stakeholder engagement shows the effectiveness of project management, which is the primary relevance of transformational leaders.

The role of transformational leadership in project success has been recognized as an essential element in the effectiveness of projects. This is mainly because leaders who exhibit inspirational motivation and idealized influence will create a common project vision that brings together the individual efforts of the team towards achieving a broader project vision. As a result of this alignment, transformational leaders improve the overall coordination of team members, their commitment, and the project's effectiveness (Chai et al., 2017). The body of literature on transformational leadership has demonstrated that these leaders foster trust, empower their team members to solve problems proactively, and hold team members accountable for their actions (Nauman et al., 2022; Wagude, 2025). Additionally, the intellectual stimulation that transformational leaders provide to their team members facilitates adaptive decision-making by team members; the ability to make these types of decisions is often critical in projects that operate in a complex and uncertain environment, where traditional methods of control typically fail to yield the desired outcomes.

Additionally, empirical studies suggest that the positive relationship between transformational leadership and core aspects of project success (time and cost goals met, quality, and stakeholder satisfaction) has been established. While Nauman et al. (2022) found that transformational leadership positively impacts performance through increased team cohesion and reduced resistance to change, Maolani (2023) found that empowering employees through leadership is a strong predictor of project success in both the public and private sectors. Eduzor (2024) also reported that transformational leadership creates superior rates of project success by fostering greater employee engagement with their work and aligning operational execution with an organization's strategic intent. Collectively, this

body of evidence demonstrates that transformational leadership is a unique strategic competency that directly or indirectly contributes to the success of projects in many different types of organizations.

Transformational leadership and stakeholder engagement

Transformational leadership is critical to creating successful stakeholder engagement due to the establishment of trust, open dialogue, and mutual commitment to achieving success by providing a framework for collaborative relationships among the various project stakeholders. Transformational leaders who create idealized influence and offer inspiration through motivating others engage stakeholders in project planning and delivery at a deeper relational level. When transformational leaders provide their stakeholders with a clear and compelling vision while conducting themselves in an ethical and transparent manner, they can significantly reduce the uncertainty and resistance towards stakeholder engagement, particularly during the execution of complex projects (Paul, 2024; Metwaly, 2024). Through transformational leadership, stakeholders can see themselves not only as outsiders to the project but also as integral to the successful delivery of the project, resulting in greater collaboration and accountability.

The connection between transformational leadership and stakeholder engagement is further substantiated through empirical evidence in various organizational environments. According to Blak Bernat et al. (2023), transformational leadership increases stakeholder engagement by encouraging engagement through the use of inclusive and participatory processes and by facilitating ongoing discussions throughout the life of any project. In a similar vein, Eyeyien et al. (2024) conclude that leaders who emphasize individualized consideration and foster intellectual growth are more successful in aligning stakeholders' expectations while also managing competing demands upon their attention. The findings from these studies indicate that transformational leadership facilitates increased stakeholder engagement in both structural/formal processes and relationship-building methods. Therefore, transformational leadership has emerged as a major enabler of meaningful stakeholder engagements, which are critical to maintaining the legitimacy, support, and effectiveness of projects over time.

1.3. Stakeholder Engagement (SE)

As noted by Sanyaolu et al. (2023), stakeholder engagement has integrated the interests of all concerned parties and influences project outcomes. Involves advocating, identifying, analysing, and actively managing relationships within and beyond defined boundaries with project stakeholders. It aims to achieve integration of expectations and outcomes in project planning and execution. Activities involving stakeholder networks such

as clients, regulatory authorities, team members, suppliers, and the public or community members in any project, whether in the public domain or private domain, become complex (Blak Bernat et al. 2023). Stakeholder engagement, as noted by Eyieyien et al. (2024), goes beyond minimised conflict. It enhances the likelihood of trust and commitment lending toward project momentum.

According to stakeholder theory—which Kujala et al. (2022) and Zwikael et al. (2023) detail as the foundation for understanding involvement—an organisation must consider the needs, expectations, and consequences of every party affected by a project. Based on the influence, power, and interest of each stakeholder group, engagement strategies include consultation, participative decision-making, communication, and conflict resolution (Ison et al., 2021). Public sector projects have a variety of stakeholders and are subject to regulatory scrutiny. The engagement mechanisms required for such projects are more prescribed than for the private sector, which would have more flexible and efficiency-based engagement mechanisms (Braun & Busuioc, 2020; Olson, 2025). Stakeholder engagement can reduce opposition and increase cooperation, which thereby improves the results of the project.

Stakeholder engagement and project effectiveness

As per the studies conducted so far, the role of stakeholders in a project has been shown to influence the relationship between leadership and project success, which, in turn, allows transformational leadership to be expressed in the favourable results of the project in a more tangible way (Mok et al., 2015; Siddiqui et al., 2024). Stakeholder transformational leaders. Trust and participation. Political and managerial interference. Bureaucratic stagnation is seen in public sector projects (Ershadi et al., 2021; Uddin, 2025). It is, therefore, essential to understand the mediating role of stakeholders to design leadership strategies that frame project management performance across different types of organisations.

The involvement of stakeholders plays a crucial role in determining the success of a project by helping to shape decision-making and risk management and providing feedback on project results. By including stakeholders at every stage of the project, the project team gains a better understanding of stakeholder expectations, has the ability to identify potential sources of conflict, and has access to diverse viewpoints when developing and executing the project activities. According to research, projects that have higher levels of engagement with their stakeholders have a greater chance of being successful than those with lower levels, because these types of projects receive input from their stakeholders at an early stage in the project, thereby reducing both uncertainty and costs related to changes that occur later in the implementation stage (Sethi et al., 2024; Dugbartey & Kehinde, 2025). Stakeholder

engagement provides a continuous opportunity to enhance the project's success throughout its lifecycle.

Numerous studies have documented how increased stakeholder engagement enhances project effectiveness through increased legitimacy, commitment, and sustainability of project outcomes after completion (Ali et al., 2025). Additionally, Ali et al. (2025) pointed out that when stakeholders are actively engaged, they typically act in coordination with one another and thereby improve stakeholder productivity while also providing a higher level of satisfaction to stakeholders. According to Abolghasemi et al. (2024), stakeholder engagement has a direct positive correlation with project success using knowledge-sharing and collective problem-solving approaches by internal and external stakeholders. Likewise, Ishola et al. (2024) also determined that when stakeholders are engaged in meaningful ways, they feel a sense of ownership in their projects. This leads to increased levels of support and decreased levels of resistance to the implementation of projects. Collectively, these research findings suggest that stakeholder engagement is not simply a supporting factor of project success but rather an essential component of the overall strategic direction and successful functioning of both private and public sector projects.

1.4. Project Management Effectiveness (PME)

PME is an attribute that assesses if the objectives of a project have been achieved in a timely manner, within budget, have met the necessary quality standards and satisfied all stakeholders (Mir & Pinnington, 2014; Zwikael & Smyrk, 2015). PME is an important parameter of business achievement in an organisation, shedding light on both efficiency and strategic alignment of its use in operations. Effectiveness is contextually bounded, and public and private distinctions in project governance, accountability, and stakeholder expectations have a bearing on contextually relevant considerations (Ershadi et al., 2021; Zada et al., 2023).

PME concerns how a project meets its objectives, fulfils stakeholder expectations, and achieves higher-level organisational purposes (Mir & Pinnington, 2014; Zidane & Olsson, 2017). Beyond obtaining deliverables, it involves organisational strategy and project process integration, resource expenditure economy, and result sustainability. For public sector projects, effectiveness emphasises compliance and social and public value accountability. For private sector projects, it concerns profit, innovation, and competitive market engagement (Zwikael & Smyrk, 2015; Latupeirissa et al., 2024; Abbey et al., 2023).

Mir and Pinnington (2014) point out and consider the evaluation of project management to come with four dimensions: time, cost, quality, and stakeholder satisfaction. Time assesses the schedule and on-time submission, cost assesses the budget and its

financial effectiveness, quality is the degree of meeting the defined deliverable technical and performance standards, and satisfaction is the perception of stakeholders regarding the success of the project. These measures foster comparative analysis of project performance in the private and public contexts, which helps in understanding the role of leadership and stakeholder management in accomplishing project goals (Zwikael & Smyrk, 2015; Scheepers et al., 2022).

Transformational leadership, stakeholder engagement and project effectiveness

Stakeholder engagement plays an important role in illustrating how transformational leaders can positively influence the outcome of projects by enhancing their effectiveness. Once transformational leadership has provided a project's team with a clear vision, motivators to reach that vision, and an ethical framework on which to make decisions, stakeholder engagement is what converts those qualities of transformational leadership into actual results on projects. In addition to providing a vision for a given project, transformational leaders support the participation and collaboration among the project's stakeholders, thereby building a commitment and an alignment between those stakeholders and the project goals. According to some prior research studies, it is believed that having strong leadership alone does not guarantee that a project will be successful. Effective stakeholder engagement creates a common understanding, fosters trust between the stakeholders and the project leaders, and helps create coordinated efforts between the project leaders and the stakeholders (Siddiqui et al., 2024; Ssenyange, 2023). Stakeholder engagement is therefore a link between the behaviours exhibited by a transformational leader (as they relate to the overall performance of a project) and project performance metrics such as efficiency, quality, and stakeholder satisfaction.

According to research findings (Ershadi et al., 2021), there has been an increase in research supporting the role of stakeholders in mediating the relationship between leadership and project success. Transformational leaders enable project teams to achieve success through improved stakeholder communications and expanded participation. By doing this, they reduce resistance from the stakeholders and thereby conflict within the project team. In another study (Siddiqui et al., 2024), researchers concluded that stakeholder engagement is a partial mediator of the leadership style and project success, reinforcing the idea that the influence of leadership will be maximized when stakeholders actively participate in the decision-making process. In addition, Uddin (2025) reaffirmed that stakeholder engagement provides a means whereby transformational leaders can translate their inspirational influence into action. These leaders align the various interests of stakeholders in both public and private sector projects and sustain a stable level of support throughout the

life cycle of the project. Taken together, these studies provide both theoretical and empirical evidence for the continued importance of stakeholder engagement in mediating the relationship between transformational leadership and project success.

1.5. Research Gap

Advanced analyses on project management, transformational leadership, and stakeholder engagement still have unaddressed issues and gaps, especially in the comparison between public and private domains. Most of the available studies are single-sector analyses. Most attention in the private sector is due to the relatively higher metric-quantitative focus and low-hanging fruit accessibility in research (Zwikael & Smyrk, 2015; Ogunbukola, 2024; Zeyn, 2025). Public sector studies are solo investigations or case studies in regard to regulatory compliance and social outcome achievement, not leadership compliance effectiveness. This unaddressed sector split creates a block in understanding transformational leadership gaps, which creates an absence in theory and the practical application of project management and leadership simultaneously.

Additionally, many studies show that transformational leadership is a key element in the success of any undertaking. The role of stakeholder engagement, however, is still a 'black box' in comparative sector studies (Siddiqui et al. 2024). Earlier studies tend to analyse leadership and engagement in isolation, failing to notice the 'black box' of how leadership engagement is cultivated and how, in turn, leadership engagement encourages project management success. In the case of public sector projects, stakeholder engagement is 'masked' by the need to comply with bureaucratic and political control, as well as a plethora of accountability frameworks, whereas in private sector projects, compliance with engagement practices is primarily driven by the need to achieve speed and profit. The absence of studies that examine these sector differences is a glaring gap in the foothold of a sector-specific mediation model in the literature.

Another interesting gap concerns measuring and operationalising project management effectiveness (PME). Although time, cost, quality, and stakeholder satisfaction are typical indicators, the contextual application of these measures to private and public sector projects has been under-researched (Mir & Pinnington, 2014; Abbey et al., 2023). Public sector projects seek social value, compliance with policies, and openness, while private sector projects focus on profit, operational efficiency, and competitive standing in the market. Consequently, the current body of literature still falls short in offering a comprehensive, contrasted paradigm that links effectiveness, engagement, and leadership in those many circumstances (Rakhma & Roziqin, 2025). This discrepancy significantly limits theory and practice.

Project management concerns such as increasing complexity, stakeholder diaspora, and digital transformation are being considered in the majority of recent research (Eyieyien et al., 2021).

A great deal of existing research dates back to several decades ago, using only industry data analyses, and thus, the transformational leadership and stakeholder phenomenon's intricacies remain unattended to in cross-sectoral studies. The purpose of this research is to address this issue. It develops a cross-cutting, evidence-based examination of the role of transformational leadership in the effectiveness of project management through stakeholder engagement. It does so by focusing on both the public and the private sectors. The increasing body of knowledge for the sake of theory, education and practice, and policy activism in project management is further complemented by this research.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

The underpinning theory provides a public and private context for the impact of transformational leadership, stakeholder participation, and effectiveness in project management. It serves to explain the involvement of leadership practices and the project results where stakeholder participation is a moderator of these effects, thus justifying the strong underpinning for systematically resolving the research problem. It synthesises the theories in leadership and project management to enable robust investigation into the impact of a configured context in which peculiarities of the organisational structure, governance, and stakeholder relations in the industry are considered (Zada et al., 2023; Abbey et al., 2023).

Theoretical Foundation

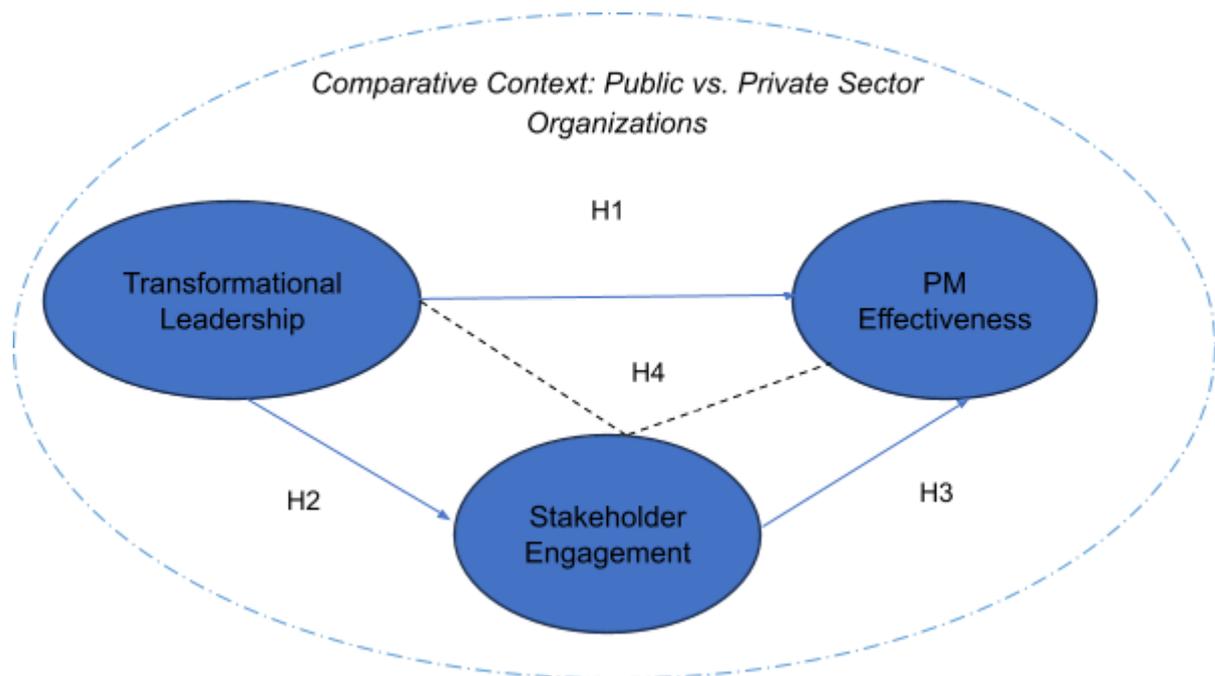
This dissertation rests on Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass and Riggio, 2006), which posits that leaders who inspire, motivate and intellectually stimulate a team are more likely to obtain performance outcomes. Transformational leaders cultivate members' commitment, and through their influences on members' problem-solving, they enhance attitudes and behaviours that promote creativity, proactivity and critical thinking, which are essential in project complexity (Yobouet, 2025). Moreover, stakeholder theory focuses on the mediating role of stakeholder engagement and argues that for a project to be successful, it has to be framed in such a way to identify, analyse, and actively engage all pertinent stakeholders (Siddiqui et al. 2024). Bringing these together, the study highlights leadership as the first point of engagement, which then amplifies the effectiveness of project management with the understanding that such context, for example, cross-sector differences, may moderate the relationships.

Conceptual Framework

Drawing from the theory, the conceptual framework shows the expected interrelation of the variables of the study. Transformational leadership is the independent variable (IV) and directly and indirectly affects project management effectiveness (DV) through stakeholder engagement (the mediator). The framework is used in a comparative context, analysing public and private sector organisations as separate units to assess how these relationships may differ in varying organisational settings. Public sector projects, bounded by bureaucracy and a greater plurality of stakeholder interests, may differ in engagement dynamics from private sector projects in which efficiency, flexibility, and market pressure prevail (Zwikael & Smyrk, 2015). This framework helps in providing the specific roadmap needed to assess the mediation effect of stakeholder engagement on the relationship and transformational leadership on cross-sector project outcomes.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model



Source: Compiled by the author based on TAM Model

1.7. Research Hypotheses

- **H1a (Public):** TL positively influences PME in public sector organizations.
- **H1b (Private):** TL positively effects PME in private sector organizations.
- **H2a (Public):** TL positively influences SE in public sector organizations.

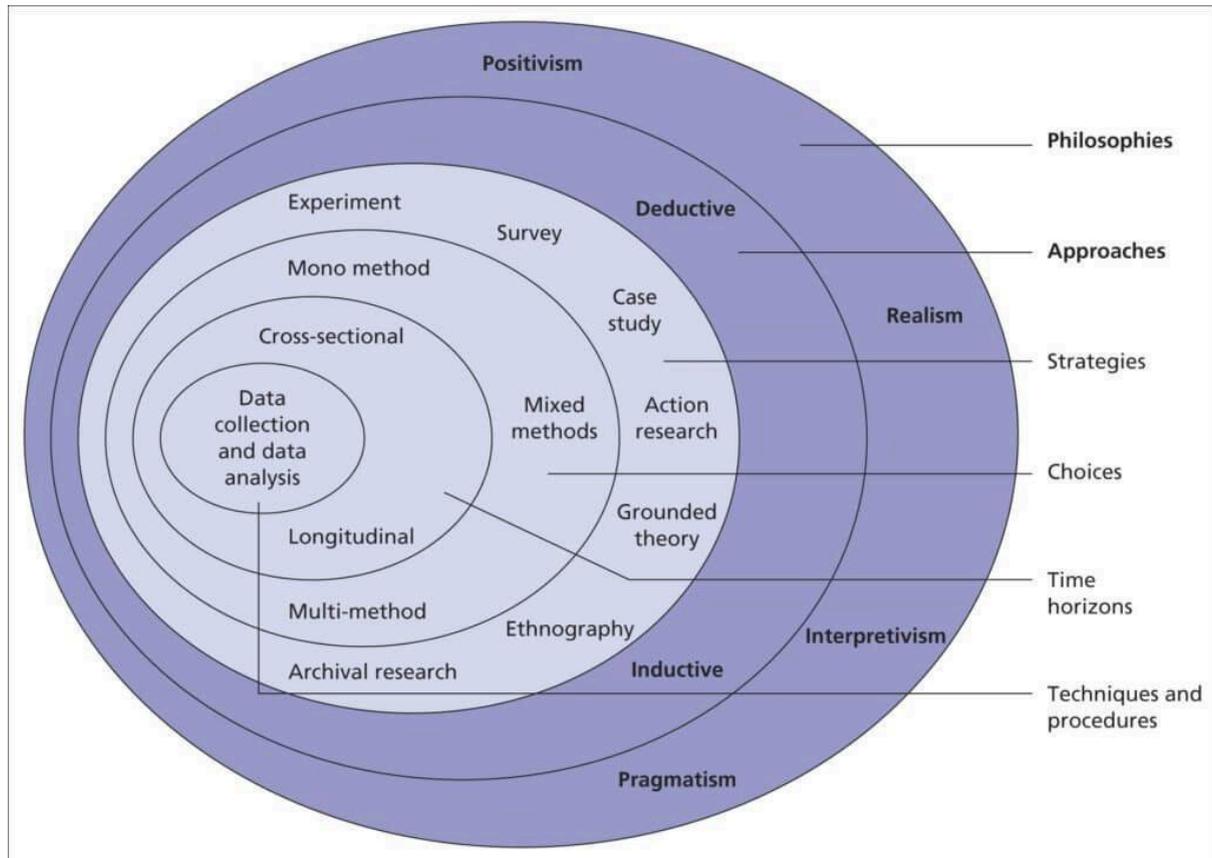
- **H2b (Private):** TL positively impacts SE in private sector organizations.
- **H3a (Public):** SE positively influences PME in public sector organizations.
- **H3b (Private):** SE positively impacts PME in private sector organizations.
- **H4a (Public):** SE mediates the relationship between TL and PME in public sector organizations.
- **H4b (Private):** SE mediates the relationship between TL and PME in private sector organizations.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: THEORY AND METHODS APPLIED FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The methodology used in the present research follows the "onion" approach developed by Saunders et al. (2007) to ensure transparency and consistency across all stages of the research process. A positivist research approach is adopted for this study, using logical reasoning to develop hypotheses from established theory regarding transformational leadership, stakeholder engagement, and efficient project execution. This research employs a quantitative methodology, using a cross-sectional research design to meet its objectives through a single data gathering from both public and private sector practitioners. Cross-sectional research is particularly advantageous for assessing relationships between dependent and independent variables, while facilitating the comparison of the two sectors being analysed.

The inner layers of the research onion outline a process of data collection via a structured questionnaire, using reliable and valid measurement scales to maintain reliability and consistency. The convenience sampling method was used because the study wanted to survey people who had experience in project management (relevant respondents) and who are easily accessible. The study has also used descriptive statistics, reliability/validity testing, and correlation, regression, and group comparisons for the analysis of the data. Through the methodology outlined above, the study is following the principles of the Saunders et al. research onion and achieving the rigor, internal consistency, and internal alignment that are required in the research objectives.

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Figure 2*Research onion model (Saunders et al., 2007)***Source:** *Saunders et al., 2007*

2.1 Research Philosophy and Approach

This study uses an interpretivist research philosophy, which focusses on using people's perceptions and experiences within their organisational environment to investigate social phenomena (Saunders et al., 2019). Given that project management effectiveness is inherently influenced by human behaviors, leadership styles, and stakeholder interactions, an interpretivist approach is appropriate for capturing the nuanced dynamics of transformational leadership and stakeholder engagement in both public and private sector organizations (Bryman & Bell, 2021). This philosophy enables a rich understanding of the mechanisms influencing project results by facilitating a thorough investigation of how project managers apply leadership tactics and how stakeholders view and react to these practices.

Aligned with this philosophy, the study employs a qualitative research approach, focusing on subjective interpretations, organizational culture, and sector-specific contextual factors. While quantitative measures of project success (e.g., time, cost, quality) are available, the qualitative perspective allows for capturing the underlying processes, interactions, and perceptions that mediate these outcomes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This

strategy is especially warranted in a cross-sector comparison study, when public and private organisations differ significantly in terms of the operational environment, regulatory restrictions, and stakeholder complexity.

2.2 Research Design

The study uses a cross-sectional research approach, which makes it possible to gather information from several organisations at one time in order to investigate the connections among stakeholder involvement, transformational leadership, and project management efficacy. A cross-sectional design is appropriate for this study as it allows for a comparative analysis between public and private sector organizations without requiring long-term observation or longitudinal tracking (Saunders et al., 2019). This approach is effective, realistic, and supports the goal of evaluating the ways in which engagement and leadership practices affect project success in various organisational contexts.

The design incorporates comparative group analysis; wherein public and private sector projects are treated as distinct groups. By highlighting sector-specific differences in managerial practices, stakeholder behaviours, and operational constraints, this allows a direct comparison of the impact of transformational leadership on stakeholder engagement and project outcomes (Ershadi et al, 2021; Blak Bernat et al., 2023; Yobouet, 2025). By structuring the research in this way, the study can empirically investigate the theoretical framework proposed in Chapter 2 and provide actionable insights for project managers in both sectors.

2.3 Population and Sampling Strategy

The population for this study comprises project managers and key stakeholders involved in projects across selected public and private sector organizations. Public sector organizations are included to represent bureaucratically structured projects with multiple stakeholder layers, whereas private sector organizations are included to capture efficiency-driven and profit-oriented project environments (Waris et al., 2022; Zeyn, 2025). Because it comprises people who work directly in stakeholder management and leadership, this demographic is suitable for offering insights into the study's independent and mediating variables.

To ensure the relevance and depth of the data, individuals with firsthand experience in project management and stakeholder involvement are chosen using a purposive sample technique (Palinkas et al., 2015). The sample includes a balanced representation from both sectors to allow for meaningful comparative analysis. Within the limitations of a qualitative, cross-sectional design, organisational size, project complexity, and managerial experience are also taken into account as inclusion criteria in order to capture a variety of viewpoints

and guarantee the generalisability of findings. This sampling strategy provides a rigorous foundation for examining the relationships between transformational leadership, stakeholder engagement, and project management effectiveness across different organizational contexts.

The questionnaire was shared with around 100 people in the target group working in project management. The survey (made on Google Forms) was shared using different social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter and received only 50 responses. After 5 days the reminder was given to them, and as a result, a total of 73 responses were generated. Out of them, 38 responses were from private organization employees and 35 from employees in public organizations. As it was proposed that the comparative analysis will be done between public and private organizations, the 3 responses of private employees were removed so that 35 responses from each group will be processed into SPSS for data analysis.

2.4 Data Collection Method

The study uses a survey-based approach to collect data, asking stakeholders and project managers in both public and private sector organisations to complete standardised questionnaires. Surveys are particularly suitable for this study as they allow for standardized measurement of perceptions and experiences related to transformational leadership, stakeholder engagement, and project management effectiveness (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This systematic approach helps to preserve consistency in responses to the different organisational settings when comparing the public and private sectors.

The closed-ended questionnaire will be shared with the targeted population using Google Forms, and some copies may also be printed so that responses from easily accessible participants can be collected personally. The targeted respondents will be contacted through LinkedIn, Facebook and WhatsApp so that a diversity in responses can be achieved and responses from the maximum number of respondents can be collected. The author has already identified the sources from which the desired data can be collected using a closed-ended questionnaire.

2.5 Measurement of Variables

The study assesses the constructs through measurement scales that originated from previous works so that their accuracy, dependability, and comparability can be sustained. Each scale follows the conceptual framework and is designed to measure participants' impressions exactly.

- **Transformational Leadership:** The author has used the scale adopted from Bass and Avolio (1995)'s the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure transformational leadership.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Bourne and Walker's (2005) Stakeholder Circle technique is used to measure the stakeholder engagement in the current research work.
- **Project Management Effectiveness:** PME is measured using the scale adopted from the research work of two different studies (Mir & Pinnington, 2014; Zwikael & Smyrk, 2015).

Table 1*Summary of items adapted*

Scale	No of items adapted
Transformational leadership	12
Stakeholder management	6
Project management effectiveness	8

Source: Compiled by the author.

2.6 Data Analysis Techniques

This study has used a multi-step and structured data analysis method to broadly examine the associations among transformational leadership, project management effectiveness and stakeholder engagement across private and public sector firms. Both inferential and descriptive analysis approaches are applied to ensure a thorough examination of relationships and patterns (Hair et al., 2021). The demographic features of the sample, such as age group, gender, income, years of experience, managerial experience, organisational type, and project complexity, are clearly known through descriptive analysis. By providing a sample profile, this stage estimates any biases and shows that the population is representative (Bryman & Bell, 2021). Before conducting hypothesis testing, the study conducted an assessment on the reliability of the scales employed for the measurement of the different variables. According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), a measurement of alpha greater than 0.70 is deemed sufficient for reliability estimates, which take into account the internal consistency of the Transformational Leadership, Stakeholder Engagement, and Project Management Effectiveness scales. Moreover, descriptive statistics have been employed to uncover early patterns and trends in

the data, particularly the leadership behaviours, engagement practices, and project effectiveness perceived in the different sectors (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This study seeks to assess the correlation between transformational leadership, stakeholder engagement, and project management effectiveness, and their respective strengths and directions. Specifically, Cohen's Kappa will be used as a measure of the strength of the correlation between two variables and assess their preliminary relationships for further regression and mediation analyses. Linear regression will be used to assess the direct effect of transformational leadership on the effectiveness of project management. The study calculates the effect to examine the amount of transformational leadership behaviour that is statistically significant and worth controlling for when estimating a predictive model of PME outcomes, alongside several demographic and situational variables. Other than mediation, this study employs the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2018) to assess the direct and indirect effect of transformational leadership on project management effectiveness for stakeholder engagement, the alleged policies and procedures moderator of the relationship, and if the moderator acts as a significant public-private sector bridge.

2.1.1 Treatment of open-ended questions

The quantitative analysis of the majority of the study was performed using a series of closed-ended questions. However, in order to obtain additional context and understanding from participants, each participant was also asked three open-ended questions. The answers received to these three open-ended questions were then analysed using a quantitative method, specifically quantitative content analysis. All responses were systematically examined, and categories were created based on the most prevalent item(s) in the responses received. Numerical codes were assigned to these categories. Each response was coded to one category to maintain mutually exclusive and consistent coding practices. The coded data were entered into SPSS for further descriptive statistical purposes as nominal variables.

Table 2

Theme identification and coding of open-ended questions

Code	Category Description		
	PM_Effectiveness_Factors	Leadership_Stakeholder_Impact	Project_Success_Challenges
1	Communication (clarity, information flow, coordination)	Communication and transparency	Resource, time, or budget constraints

2	Planning, scope definition, and scheduling	Motivation and inspiration	Communication-related issues
3	Leadership quality and managerial competence	Trust building and relationship management	Stakeholder-related challenges
4	Resource availability (time, budget, manpower)	Decision-making authority and control	Leadership or management problems
5	Team skills, experience, and competencies	Stakeholder participation and involvement	Risk, uncertainty, and environmental factors
6	Use of technology, tools, and systems	Leadership style type (transformational, democratic, etc.)	Technology or system limitations
7	Stakeholder management and involvement	No clear impact or vague response	Regulatory, policy, or bureaucratic constraints
8	Other / unclear responses		Other / unclear responses

Source: Compiled by the author.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The primary ethical concern of the study revolves around safeguarding the subjects' safety, anonymity, and confidentiality (Weng, 2020). All participants in the study were informed to the extent that they were made aware of the aim of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the withdrawal option available in the study, as well as the changes that would occur as a result of that withdrawal. Protection of confidentiality is obtained through secured electronic storage and guaranteed anonymisation of the responses. Addressing any other forms of bias is part of the study. The open restriction is driven by the need to be ethical and work with integrity to offer non-manipulated data. More emphasis is given to the organisational setting, and no details of the specific study that would endanger the subjects and the organisation they work for are made public. These ethical considerations are all designed to ensure that the study is comprehensively investigated, both professionally and institutionally, in order to maintain the integrity focus of the work at hand.

The study is ethically responsible in order to protect the safety, well-being, and freedom from coercion of participants. Data will be solely used for the purposes of this research and will only be available for access by the researcher and the research supervisor's team (Ajuwon, 2020). The research design also ensures that no deceptive

practices are employed and that all measurement instruments are utilized fairly and without discrimination among both public and private sector respondents. The researcher will adhere to the guidelines for ethical approval established by their institution prior to commencing the research; therefore, it complies with all applicable data protection legislation. Thus, the trustworthiness, accountability, and consideration for the professionals' and institutional affiliations of participants are reinforced.

2.8 Significance of the Study

This study is significant both theoretically and practically, as it addresses a critical gap in the comparative understanding of project management effectiveness across public and private sector organizations. From a theoretical perspective, the research contributes to the literature on transformational leadership by examining its differential impact on project outcomes in distinct organizational contexts, which has been underexplored in previous studies (Osifo, 2024; Rakhma & Roziqin, 2025). Also, the research further develops the understanding of the impact of leadership on the actual performance of projects through the use of stakeholder engagement as an intervening variable, thereby providing evidence to strengthen the relationship of leadership and stakeholder theories to the practice of project management (Kilonzi et al., 2023; Siddiqui et al., 2024).

Practically, the outcome is anticipated to provide useful information for project managers and organisational decision-makers. Managers in the public sector face bureaucratic, political, and complex stakeholder issues, while private managers face performance and market competition (Zwikael & Smyrk, 2015; Onah, 2024). This research is designed to provide evidence from both sectors to show how transformational leadership and stakeholder engagement can improve project management in both sectors. With the knowledge gathered from this study, stakeholders can receive project management training, leadership and stakeholder engagement activities can be enhanced, and the organization's performance in a variety of sectors can be raised.

Other public sector companies can improve the effectiveness of their project deliveries while satisfying accountability and stakeholder satisfaction standards by being aware of the possible ramifications of this research. A comprehensive comprehension of the connections among leadership styles, engagement, and project success supports evidence-based decision-making, resource distribution, and governance reform (Mir & Pinnington, 2014; Syafriani & Yuliani, 2025). In the case of the private sector, the research demonstrates empirical support for a 'best practice' approach to the interrelationship between efficiency, innovation, and stakeholders for enhanced project competitiveness and sustainability. The research also fills an important gap in the existing literature and the

practical side of project management. It offers a solid premise for undertaking future comparative studies.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The third section of this research work presents the empirical foundation of the study and demonstrates the connection between the qualitative and quantitative data, with each section building towards the final recommendations. The first section of the chapter focuses on the analysis of the data collected through survey responses from the project management effectiveness and transformational leadership scales, as well as the stakeholders' engagement scale, using reliability, descriptive statistics, and regression analysis to establish relationships between transformational leadership, stakeholder participation, and project effectiveness in both the public and private sectors.

Following this analysis is a discussion of the findings of the empirical phase in relation to the purpose of the study and existing literature. Furthermore, additional attention is paid to the similarities and differences between public and private sector organisations, as well as the impact of the corresponding dynamics of the organisations and institutional structures that produce these outcomes. The conclusions presented at the end of this chapter highlight the importance of transformational leadership and stakeholder engagement in the promotion of effective project management processes.

Finally, specific recommendations are provided for project managers, public policy makers, and scholars, detailing how both leadership practices and stakeholder-focused approaches could be developed to better occur in different organisational contexts, along with suggestions for future research opportunities.

3.1 Analysis of collected data

This section starts with a demographic analysis of respondents and their working profile, followed by a reliability analysis to confirm the reliability and validity of the scale used in this study (separately for public and private organizations). After them, correlation analysis is performed to identify the direction and strength of the relationship between variables for public as well as private organizations. Later, descriptive analysis for public and private firms is done on open-ended questions to compare respondents' personal views with close-ended responses. Later, regression analysis (linear regression for first three hypotheses) and mediation analysis (for fourth hypothesis) for public and private organizations are conducted to verify the hypotheses, whether they are accepted or rejected.

3.1.1 Demographic analysis

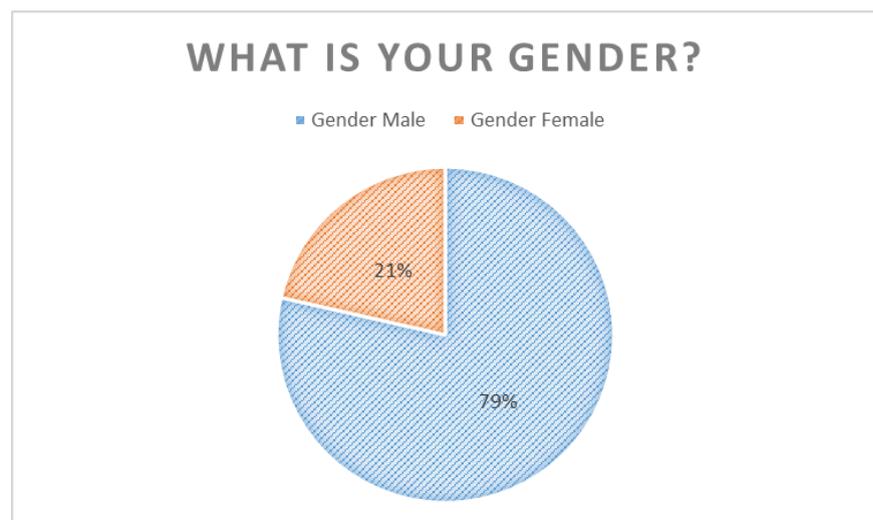
Table 3

Summary of Demographics of respondents

Variables	Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	55	78.6
	Female	15	21.4
	Total	70	100.0
Age	18-24 Years	5	7.1
	25-34 Years	52	74.3
	35-44 Years	12	17.1
	45-54 Years	1	1.4
	Total	70	100.0
Education	Secondary School	1	1.4
	Bachelor's	24	34.3
	Master's	40	57.1
	Doctorate	5	7.1
	Total	70	100.0

Source: Compiled by the author.

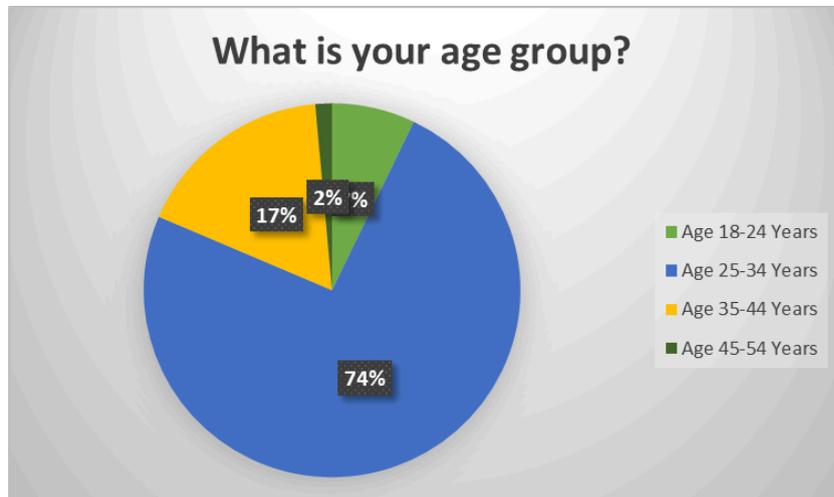
The demographic information provided by the participants serves as an important contextual foundation for understanding the nature of the data collected and demonstrating the validity of the later analysis. Based on Table 1, males made up the vast majority (78.6%), and females made up 21.4%. While



this gender ratio does reflect a disparity in gender representation, it reflects the nature of gender representation typically seen in project-based employment across both public and private sectors, particularly within leadership and technical roles. Additionally, this data

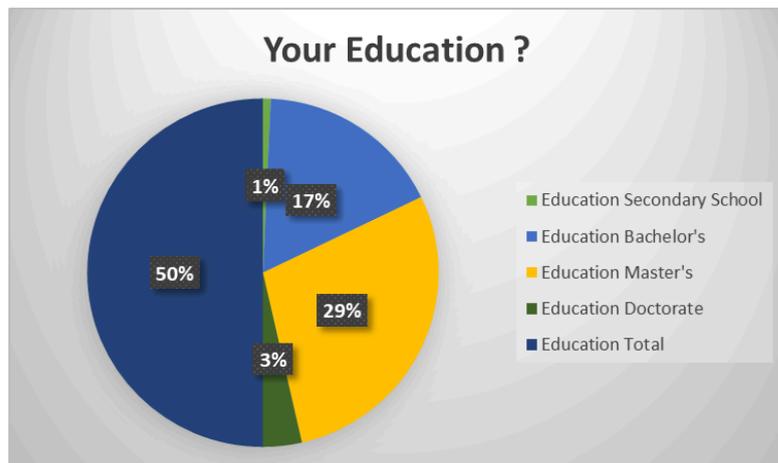
provides sufficient opportunities for adequate understanding of leadership and project management practices as influenced by the organisational context in which they were conducted.

The majority of the participants (74.3%) were between the ages of 25 and 34, and 17.1% were between the ages of 35 and 44. The participants who were 18 to 24 years of age accounted for 7.1%, while the participants who were between the ages of 45 and 54 comprised 1.4% of the survey population. This indicates that most participants have had adequate professional experience in a project environment, but still have



an active role in their current management or operational activities. It also indicates that this age group will be able to provide perception-based feedback on leadership behaviour, stakeholder involvement, and project management effectiveness.

In terms of the level of education attained by the sample group, most respondents were highly educated, with 57.1% having completed master's degrees, followed by 34.3% with bachelor's degrees. Only 7.1% of respondents had doctorate degrees, while 1.4% indicated they had completed a secondary level of education (i.e., high school). The above qualifications suggest that the respondents are well-qualified to provide informed and considered evaluations of both



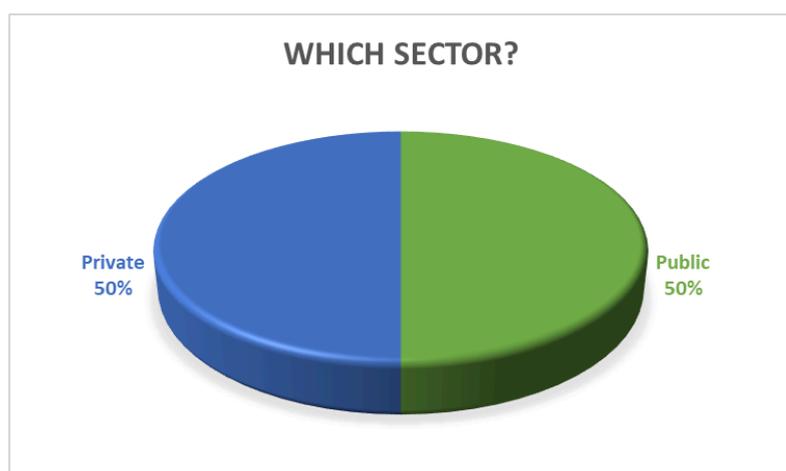
project management practice and leadership dynamics, contributing to the overall reliability of this study and supporting the validity of the comparative analysis between public and private sector organisations.

Table 4*Organizational and Professional Profile of Respondents*

	Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Working Sector	Public	35	50.0
	Private	35	50.2
	Total	70	100.0
Job Title	Project Manager	18	25.7
	Assistant Project Manager	29	41.4
	Department Head	16	22.9
	Technical Lead	1	1.4
	Program / Portfolio Manager	6	8.6
	Total	70	100.0
Education	1-3 Years	27	38.6
	4-6 Years	14	20.0
	7-9 Years	21	30.0
	Above 12 Years	8	11.4
	Total	70	100.0

Source: Compiled by the author.

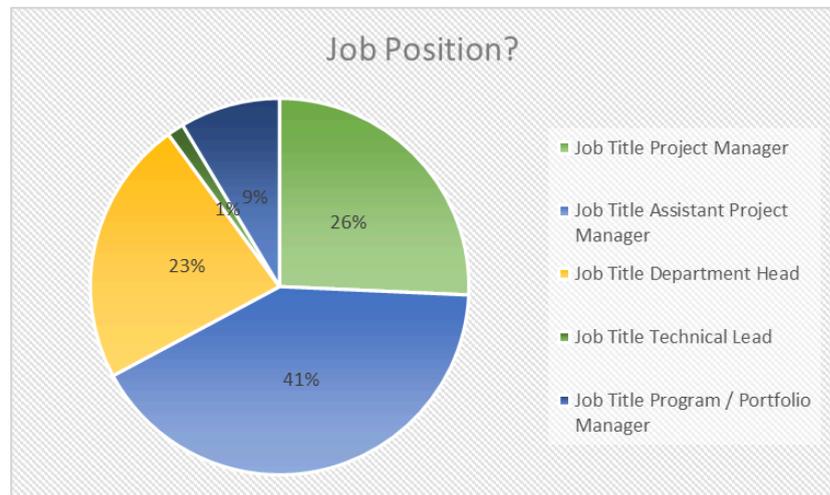
The organisation that the respondents are affiliated with and the professional roles that they hold are provided in Table 2, as this also contributes to the overall understanding of the characteristics of the sample, which will inform the overall focus of the research. An equal number of responses have been received for both the public and private sectors



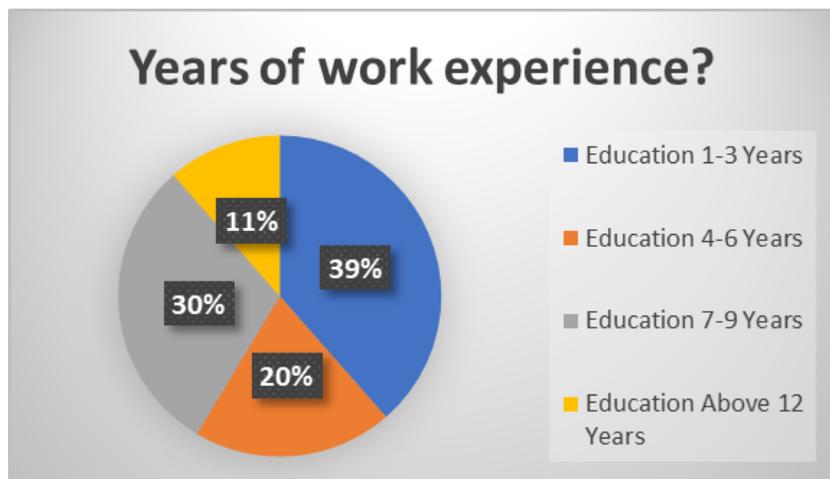
(35 responses each, representing approximately 50.0% of total responses). Therefore, this equal distribution will enhance the comparative aspect of the research and will help to mitigate the risk that the results pertaining to the following variables (leadership, stakeholder

engagement, and the effectiveness of project management) are unduly impacted by either the public or the private sectors.

Respondents' job titles generally fall into two categories: operational and mid-level project management. The largest percentage of respondents worked in Assistant Project Manager roles (41.4%), followed by Project Manager (25.7%). The next highest percentage of respondents worked in department head positions (22.9%). Additionally, a smaller number of respondents worked as a programme/portfolio manager (8.6%) and technical lead (1.4%). Therefore, they have an ideal opportunity to assess the transformational leadership behaviours exhibited by their company's leaders, as well as how well they engage with stakeholders in the organisation.



A majority of participants (38.6%) fall within the one- to three-year experience range, while 30.0% have experience in the seven- to nine-year range. A substantial number of participants are in the four-to-six-year range (20.0%), and only a small number of participants fall in the greater-than-twelve-year range (11.4%). The varying levels of experience provide a mixture of novice and experienced project



managers, which allows for obtaining a variety of perspectives related to project management success or failure by both the public and private sectors. Table 2 contains both the organisational and professional characteristics of the participants, which further validate that the sample is adequate for answering the comparative objectives of the study.

3.1.2 Reliability analysis

Internal consistency of the measurement scales used in the study was evaluated using reliability analysis in order to determine whether or not the items within each construct consistently represent the underlying concept. Cronbach's alpha was used as the primary measure of reliability due to its widespread acceptance within the social sciences and project management fields; the reliability analysis results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Reliability Statistics of Measurement Scales

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	No of items
Transformational Leadership	0.967	12
Stakeholder Engagement	0.928	6
Project Effectiveness	0.946	8

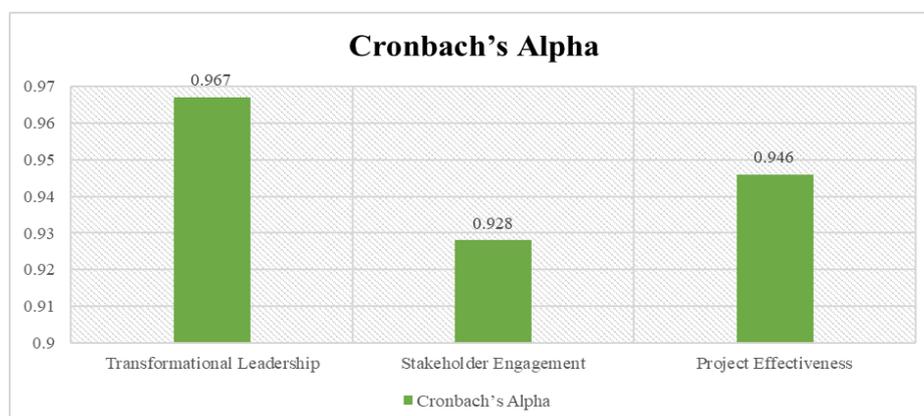
N = 70

Source: Compiled by the author.

According to Table 5, the Transformational Leadership scale has displayed a very high level of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.967 for 12 items). This indicates that there is an extremely high degree of homogeneity between the items within the transformational leadership scale, and therefore this scale will measure transformational leadership behaviour as perceived by each respondent consistently. Likewise, the Stakeholder Engagement scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.928 for six items, which demonstrates an equally high level of internal reliability and reaffirms the consistency among the items used for measuring stakeholder engagement activities.

Figure 3

Graphical representation of Cronbach's Alpha value



Source: Compiled by the author.

The Project Management Effectiveness Scale has sufficient measurement reliability based on the 8 items. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.946 indicates that the scale has a strong internal consistency across items and is able to adequately measure project effectiveness (time, cost, quality, and satisfaction with the project). All three scales met the generally accepted criterion of 0.70 or greater, supporting their demonstrated reliability and viability for predicting and measuring regression and mediation effects. The reliability findings from the exploratory and comparative studies to date were based on N = 70, which is considered an adequate sample size for determining internal consistency reliability.

3.1.3 Descriptive analysis of open-ended questions

Under this heading the descriptive analysis of open-ended questions (three in number) is carried out in order to compare the results of close-ended and open-ended questions. Besides, the study will also get a personal view of respondents beyond the predefined or verified scale on variables under study in this research. Responses against each question are grouped in one major theme, and therefore overall responses are numbered into seven groups.

Table 6

Descriptive Summary of Open-Ended Responses

Sector	Questions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	PM Effectiveness Factors	35	4.286	2.906
Public	Leadership Stakeholder Impact	35	5.000	2.601
	Project Success Challenges	35	4.229	3.264
	PM Effectiveness Factors	35	5.000	3.049
Private	Leadership Stakeholder Impact	35	4.971	2.728
	Project Success Challenges	35	5.486	3.355

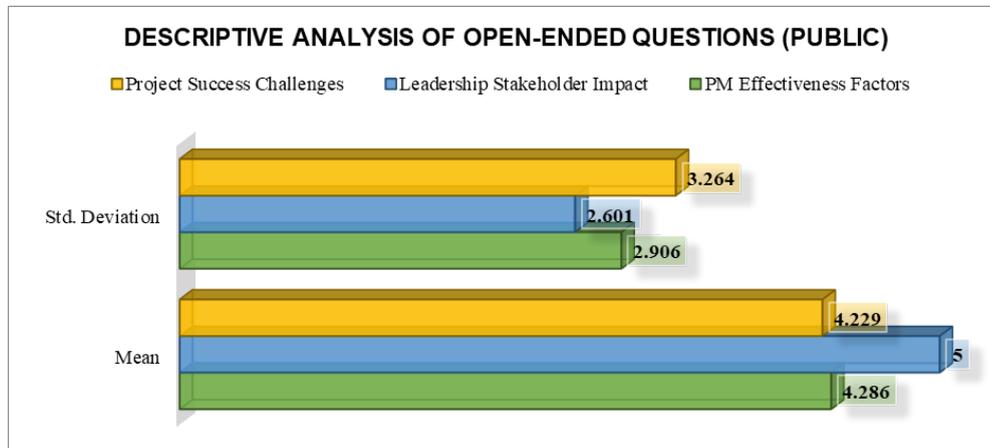
Source: Compiled by the author.

The coded open-ended responses are summarised in Table 6, with their breakdown by public sector organisation and private sector organisation. The item categories shown in the table are qualitative and were assigned through a predefined content coding process based on themes found to recur frequently within the data, using a systematic approach to analysis. The numbers shown in the table demonstrate which themes were dominant in

relation to organisations within each of the sectors indicated. Mean scores indicate the types of responses that predominated within each sector; however, the standard deviation indicates the range of variation of the responses across all assigned categories.

Figure 4

Descriptive analysis of open-ended questions (Public)

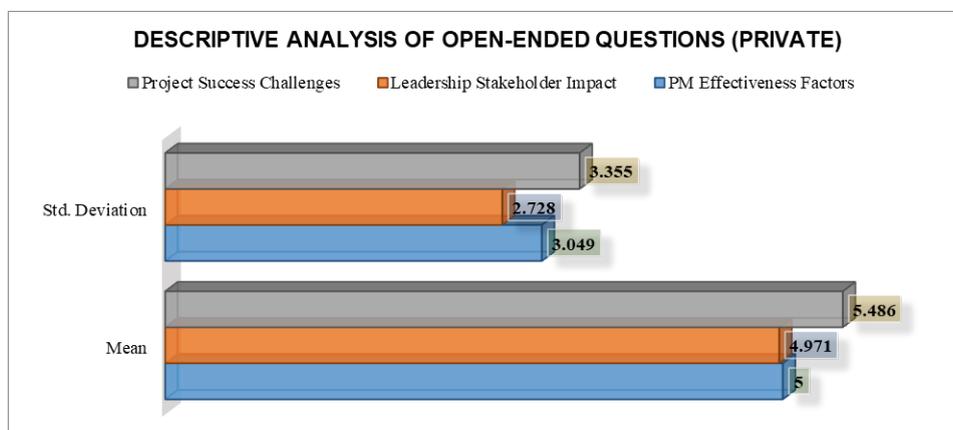


Source: Compiled by the author.

The public sector's focus on planning, leadership quality, and stakeholder management as factors influencing project management effectiveness is reflected in the mean average of all answers (mean value = 4.286). The mean value for responses related to leadership impacting stakeholder engagement (mean = 5.000) suggests a strong emphasis on how leadership style affects stakeholder engagement, involvement, and participation. Public sector project success challenges have more variation among the respondents than those experienced by the private sector, with a standard deviation of SD = 3.264, resulting from resource limitations, bureaucratic processes, and the regulatory environment.

Figure 5

Descriptive analysis of open-ended questions (Private)



Source: Compiled by the author.

The private sector's descriptive data shows that operational and performance-based factors are given slightly more weight than those of the public sector. Project management effectiveness is measured by an average score of 5 on a 7-point scale, with similar results for leaders and stakeholders, who have an average score of 4. Additionally, survey participants indicated broad agreement with many items associated with the success of projects in the private sector but identified that the top challenges faced by projects in the private sector have the highest level of diversity, which can include risk/uncertainty, technology limitations, and competition. Furthermore, qualitative descriptions of respondents help to better inform the quantitative data by providing further understanding of their perceptions regarding leadership, stakeholder involvement, and success within the various sectors.

3.1.4 Correlations analysis

Table 7

Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

Sector	Pearson Correlation	TLS	SE	PME
Public	TLS	1	.849**	.976**
	SE		1	.795**
	PME			1
Private	TLS	1	.713**	.657**
	SE		1	.869**
	PME			1

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

Public (N=35), Private (N=35), Sig. (2-tailed) =<0.001

Source: Compiled by the author.

The Pearson correlation coefficient values can be found both for transformational leadership style (TLS) and stakeholder engagement (SE) and project management effectiveness (PME) in Table 7. A separate analysis has been performed on both sectors to determine the relationship between the variables of interest in each branch, as well as provide evidence for the similarity in the research's comparative structure.

Transformational leaders in the public sector are highly correlated (positively) with the following: stakeholder engagement ($r = 0.849$; $p < 0.001$) and project management effectiveness ($r = 0.976$; $p < 0.001$). Therefore, greater levels of transformational leadership are closely associated with greater levels of successful stakeholder engagement and enhanced project management effectiveness in the public sector. Furthermore, successful stakeholder engagement is highly correlated (positively) with project manager effectiveness ($r = 0.795$, $p < 0.001$); therefore, engaging stakeholders is crucial to achieving successful project results in the public sector environment.

In the private sector, all correlations among the variables were also positive and statistically significant, although relatively weaker than those found in the public sector. There was a large positive correlation ($r = 0.713$, $p < 0.001$) between transformational leadership styles and stakeholder engagement and a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.657$, $p < 0.001$) between stakeholder engagement and project management effectiveness. Stakeholder engagement displayed a large positive correlation ($r = 0.869$, $p < 0.001$) with project management effectiveness. Therefore, the correlation results for the private and public sectors validate the directional relationship hypothesised among the variables but also indicate that these relationships have different magnitudes within each sector, thereby allowing for regression and mediation analysis to be conducted.

3.1.5 Regression analysis

Table 8

Results of Linear Regression Analysis

S/N	Sector	IV	DV	Coefficient (β)	R ²	t-value	p-value
H1	Public	TLS	PME	0.876	0.767	10.416	< 0.001
	Private			0.557	0.432	5.007	< 0.001
H2	Public	TLS	SE	0.846	0.729	9.222	< 0.001
	Private			0.712	0.508	5.837	< 0.001
H3	Public	SE	PME	0.800	0.634	7.534	< 0.001
	Private			0.738	0.756	10.111	< 0.001

Source: Compiled by the author.

The results of the linear regression analysis for the direct relationships explored in the study between both public and private sector organisations can be found in table 8. To maintain the integrity of the comparative design and to identify any sector-specific variations in the strength of the relationships between transformational leadership, stakeholder engagement and project management effectiveness, the regression models were developed separately for each sector.

The findings of H1a and H1b demonstrate that TLS has a strong and significantly positive effect on PME in both sectors. With regard to the public sector, TLS explains the majority of the variance seen in PME ($\beta=0.876$, $R^2=0.767$, $p<.001$), indicating the importance of leadership behaviour to the project outcomes of public organisations. Although the same relationship exists in the private sector, it is significantly less effective ($\beta=0.557$, $R^2=0.432$, $p<.001$), suggesting that there are additional performance-based, market-driven influences that are relevant to the effectiveness of project management, and TLS remains a contributing factor to project management effectiveness within private sector organisations.

According to H2a and H2b, transformational leadership significantly predicts stakeholder engagement in both sectors, although the influence is greater in public than in private. Specifically, transformational leadership appears to explain 72% of stakeholder engagement variance in public organisations ($\beta = 0.846$, $R^2 = 0.729$, $p < 0.001$) compared to 51% for private organisations ($\beta = 0.712$, $R^2 = 0.508$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, public leadership practices may be more closely linked with enhancing stakeholder engagement than those found in private organisations due to the level of external scrutiny, accountability, and complexity associated with public sector organisations.

The findings related to H3a and H3b provide evidence that there is a strong relationship between SE and PME for both public and private sector organisations. For example, in the public sector, SE accounted for 63.4% of the variation observed in PME ($\beta = 0.800$, $R^2 = 0.634$, $p < 0.001$), while in the private sector, this relationship was even greater ($\beta = 0.738$, $R^2 = 0.756$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, these findings underline how engagement with stakeholders through SE is a critical component of successful project delivery across different types of organisations and further validate the notion that engagement provides a pathway through which leadership behaviours are realised into positive project performance.

3.1.6 Mediation Analysis

The findings of the mediation analyses regarding the effects of stakeholder engagement on the relationships between transformational leadership style and project management effectiveness, as presented in Tables 9a and 9b for public and private sector organisations, respectively, were based on a bootstrapping method of estimating confidence

intervals for both the bootstrapped sample means and the bias-corrected/accelerated bootstrap distribution of the sample means, thus providing robust estimates of the direct and indirect effects of TLS on PME while reducing issues related to non-normal distributions of the bootstrapped samples.

Table 9a

Mediation Analysis Results for Stakeholder Engagement in Public Organizations

Effect Type	Path	Effect	SE / BootSE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect	TLS → PME	0.724	0.073	9.904	0.578	0.870
Direct Effect	TLS → PME	0.301	0.096	3.128	0.109	0.492
Indirect Effect	TLS → SE → PME	0.424	0.103	—	0.214	0.616

Source: Compiled by the author.

According to the results shown in Table 9a for public sector organisations, transformational leadership was found to have a positive and statistically significant overall influence (Effect = 0.724, $t = 9.904$) on the effectiveness of project management. In addition, since the lower limit (LLCI = 0.578) and upper limit (ULCI = 0.870) of the confidence intervals for this effect do not cross through zero ($p < 0.001$), we can affirm that the enhancement of project management effectiveness due to transformational leadership is significant and has an indirect effect measured through stakeholder engagement. The addition of stakeholder engagement to our model resulted in an overall significant reduction in the direct effect of transformational leadership on project management effectiveness to 0.301 (Effect = 0.301, $t = 3.128$). However, when we included stakeholder engagement, we also found that it had a significant indirect effect on the enhancement of project management effectiveness through transformational leadership (Effect = 0.424, Bootstrapped CI LLCI = 0.214, Bootstrapped CI ULCI = 0.616). Based on these findings, we conclude that stakeholder engagement partially mediates the positive relationship between transformational leadership and enhanced project management effectiveness within the public sector.

Table 9b*Mediation Analysis Results for Stakeholder Engagement in Private Organizations*

Effect Type	Path	Effect	SE / BootSE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect	TLS → PME	0.671	0.065	7.305	0.473	0.752
Direct Effect	TLS → PME	0.251	0.071	2.625	0.102	0.378
Indirect Effect	TLS → SE → PME	0.381	0.091	—	0.188	0.499

Source: Compiled by the author.

In accordance with the findings from Table 9b, the influence of TLS on effective project management in private sector organisations has a substantial effect (Effect Size = 0.671, $t = 7.305$), with a 95% confidence that the effect will be between 0.473 and 0.752. As with public sector organisations, once stakeholder engagement has been controlled for, the direct effect of TLS on effective project management is still significant; however, this relationship has decreased in strength (Effect Size = 0.251, $t = 2.625$). The indirect impact of TLS on effective project management through stakeholder engagement is also found to be significant (Effect Size = 0.381), as evidenced by the fact that bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals do not cross zero (LLCI = 0.188, ULCI = 0.499). Therefore, there is again support for complete mediation, and it shows how TLS directly shapes project outcomes, but through successful stakeholder engagement, the impact of TLS on project outcomes is greatly increased in the private sector.

The overall findings from the study's mediation analyses illustrate the study's central hypothesis that stakeholder engagement is a critical means by which transformational leaders increase the effectiveness of their projects through improved management capabilities. Furthermore, due to the greater magnitude of this study's indirect effects in both public and private sector environments, this reinforces the theory of the study by further highlighting the necessity of developing stakeholder-oriented leadership practices as a means of improving the long-term success of projects.

3.2 Discussion

Based on the results from the data collected through this research, there is a substantial body of evidence to explain how transformational leadership, stakeholder engagement, and project management effectiveness are related in both the public and private sectors. Overall summary statistics show that respondents perceive the essence of

leadership (transformational) practices as highly valued by respondents in both sectors, as well as their perceived understanding of how stakeholder engagement works and what contributes to the success of project delivery. While the data from both sectors displays these key attributes, there appears to be some variance in how each sector weights them. The analysis done on the correlation data confirms that there is a positive correlation between transformational leadership and both stakeholder engagement and project management effectiveness, confirming that not only does transformational leadership support stakeholder engagement, but that stakeholder engagement also supports project management effectiveness. The results of the regression analyses indicate that transformational leadership is an important predictor of stakeholder engagement and project management effectiveness; however, the data suggest that the strength of this relationship is greater for the public sector than for the private sector. Stakeholder engagement partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and project management effectiveness. Therefore, it acts as a conduit for transforming leadership practices into effective project results. Overall, these findings provide confirmation for the proposed model and illustrate the sector differences that can influence leadership, project success, and stakeholder engagement.

The present study's results are consistent with the findings of prior research that supports the positive causal connection between transformational leadership and project management effectiveness across both types of organisations, regardless of whether they are a public or private organisation. For example, as illustrated by Eduzor (2024), transformational leaders promote innovative and adaptable problem-solving, which increases performance within the public sector. Likewise, Nauman et al. (2022) found that transformational leaders enhance communication, motivation, and team-building capabilities that support successful project delivery. Comparatively, while there was a statistically significant positive impact of transformational leadership on project delivery success within the private sector ($\beta = 0.557$, $R^2 = 0.432$, $p < 0.001$), the relative strength of this causal connection was much weaker than that of the public sector ($\beta = 0.876$, $R^2 = 0.767$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, there may be other factors influencing the performance of private organisations, such as competitive market pressures and incentives for efficiency and productivity, alongside transformational leadership. Overall, this study identified some of the differences in the contexts under which project leaders work within public versus private organisations by highlighting that, in public organisations, transformational leadership may mitigate challenges presented by bureaucracy.

These findings lend additional support to existing literature that identifies transformational leadership as a key factor in determining project success in a variety of

settings. Zwikael and Smyrk (2015) state that transformational leadership aligns the contributions of individual team members towards achieving the organisation's strategic objectives, resulting in favourable project performance (e.g., good costs, timeliness, quality) and project success. Similarly, Maolani (2023) indicates that transformational leaders can motivate their project team and stakeholders through individualised consideration of their needs. Through individualised consideration and motivation, transformational leaders assist in promoting project success by reducing the overall amount of resistance to change and increasing the potential for adaptability. Therefore, the findings presented in this study support the assertion that transformational leadership is an important aspect of influencing project success, while the degree to which transformational leadership can influence project outcomes may be influenced by the specific context in which an organisation operates and the contemporaneous presence of other performance factors that enhance project performance.

In this research, the results for hypothesis H2 support the hypothesis that transformational leadership positively influences the level of stakeholder engagement in both the public and private sectors, though there is a measurable difference between sectors. Transformational leadership was found to have a very strong relationship with stakeholder engagement in public organisations ($\beta = 0.846$, $R^2 = 0.729$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that the behavioural styles of leader(s) (e.g., inspirational motivation, individualised consideration) are direct determinants of the level of stakeholder engagement and commitment to the objectives of the projects being conducted. Additionally, Blak Bernat et al. (2023) find a positive relationship between the level of stakeholder engagement and the implementation of collaborative methods and communication strategies in the project environment. By emphasising the importance of participating in inclusive dialogue, leaders can bridge the divide between formal authority and the need for stakeholder buy-in. Such a need is especially true in public sector projects where multiple stakeholders' interests often collide with bureaucratic complexities.

As previously mentioned, private organisations tend to operate within market-based parameters and have a flatter structure than do their public sector counterparts. They follow a leadership style similar to transformational leaders, but they use a combination of incentives related both to leadership and performance to encourage their stakeholder involvement. Eyeyien et al. (2024) also identified the importance of using leadership practices that demonstrate to stakeholders that they are valued and including them in decision-making as an effective way of increasing stakeholder commitment to the overall goals of a given project. In this respect, it is important to note that transformational leadership can have a positive impact on stakeholder engagement in both the private and

public sectors; however, this impact will vary based on the project's particular sector and the organisational culture around stakeholder engagement.

Transformational leadership was also a strong predictor of stakeholder engagement in the private sector ($\beta = 0.712$, $R^2 = 0.508$, $p > 0.001$) but not to the same extent as in the public sector. This difference could mean that private organisations are likely to use both leadership influence and performance incentives to engage stakeholders more than using only the leadership itself. Using research conducted by Eyieyien et al. (2024), they have found that stakeholder engagement is an important factor in improving project performance, stating that if the type of leadership leads to open communication and meaningful involvement by the stakeholder(s), then it increases the likelihood that stakeholders will be committed to delivering the desired project goals. Additionally, they support the assertion that effective leadership creates an environment in which stakeholders are valued and feel like contributors to the decisions made. Therefore, while transformational leadership enhances stakeholder engagement regardless of the setting, the degree of its effect can be dependent on the industry sector's norms relating to participation and collaboration.

The results of hypothesis H3 demonstrate that stakeholder engagement is significantly and positively related to project management effectiveness across both public and private sector organizations. In the public sector, stakeholder engagement exhibited a robust effect on project outcomes ($\beta = 0.800$, $R^2 = 0.634$, $p < 0.001$), reflecting the fact that public projects typically involve complex webs of interests, accountability pressures, and institutional mandates that make effective engagement essential for aligning expectations and reducing conflict. This finding resonates with extant research, such as Mambwe et al. (2020), who highlighted that when stakeholders are actively involved in planning and decision-making, projects are more likely to meet their performance objectives. In similar fashion, Shaukat et al. (2022) found that stakeholder engagement enhances communication, reduces uncertainty, and fosters shared ownership — all of which are critical to delivering projects on time, within budget, and to acceptable quality standards.

The results of this study in the private sector showed that stakeholder engagement positively impacted project management effectiveness with $\beta = 0.738$, $R^2 = 0.756$, and $p < 0.001$. The evidence suggests that in a profit-driven organisation, there is a direct link between the alignment of stakeholder interests and expectations with the successful completion of a project. The findings are consistent with Haar's (2024) work, which suggests that when an organisation manages its projects proactively by engaging its stakeholders, it will improve their overall experience and satisfaction, as well as minimise barriers to adopting proposed changes and allow for more effective utilisation of the organisation's

resources by improving the communication channels for giving and receiving feedback. Wu et al. (2023) found that through the cooperation of the many different parties involved in completing a project, stakeholder engagement helps create a framework to address the operational uncertainty of completing a project. Overall, the inclusion of stakeholders in the process of delivering an effective final product cultivates organisational collaboration and ultimately drives project performance, regardless of the organisational context.

Tables 7a and 7b illustrate that stakeholder engagement operates as a partial mediating variable between transformational leadership and project management effectiveness in both the public and private sectors. In public sector organisations, the total effect of transformational leadership on project outcomes was significant; however, when stakeholder engagement was incorporated as a variable within the model, the direct effect significantly decreased while the indirect effect remained strong (Effect = 0.424, CI [0.214, 0.616]). The results of this analysis demonstrate that transformational leadership increases effectiveness both directly and through the facilitation of engagement processes that allow for genuine engagement and dialogue with stakeholders. As stated by Mok et al. (2015), when multiple institutions and interest groups interact with each other, the way in which leadership influences the manner in which engagement occurs is critical to obtaining an agreement and to minimising barriers to implementation.

Stakeholder engagement is also a partial mediator of project effectiveness in the private sector between transformational leadership and project effectiveness (Effect = 0.381, CI [0.188, 0.499]). Transformational leadership has an independent effect, but engagement still provides an important channel through which transformational leadership influences success. The role of stakeholder engagement, as described in the work of Siddiqui et al. (2024), is also reflected in the research conducted by Ershadi et al. (2021) and Uddin (2025). Both of these studies found that the mechanisms by which stakeholder engagement is created can be very impactful on project performance. Stakeholder engagement mechanisms can build strong relationships (mutual trust), clarify what is expected of participants, and create collaborative problem-solving environments, even in situations where the authority of the leader is strong. Accordingly, the results of this study show that stakeholder engagement is not a correlational factor; rather, it is a vital part of how transformational leadership produces improved project performance.

Comparative Insights: Public vs. Private Sector Organizations

A comparative analysis of transformational leadership and stakeholder engagement reveals both parallels and differences in how they impact project management effectiveness within the public and private sectors. There is a high degree of positive correlation between

transformational leadership, stakeholder engagement, and project effectiveness across both sectors, which implies that all three variables are important for achieving successful projects regardless of whether they occur within the public or private sector. The key difference between transformational leadership and stakeholder engagement with respect to project effectiveness lies in the amount of strength that transformational leadership has over stakeholder engagement in public organisations, while stakeholder engagement has more influence over project effectiveness in the private sector. These differences can be attributed to the nature of the organisational structure and culture. Public sector organisations typically exhibit a more hierarchical type of decision-making process (Flyvbjerg, 2014), combined with high levels of regulatory oversight and many different constituents or stakeholders involved in the decision-making process (Froufe, 2015). As such, the reliance on transformational leadership in the public sector is greater due to the complexities associated with these variables and therefore requires a greater reliance on transformational leadership to develop coalitions and address these complex issues.

On the other hand, organisations in the private sector frequently operate in a more competitive and performance-based arena, are characterised by a flatter organisational structure, and have more significant market stimuli towards innovative and efficient resource allocation. Therefore, while leadership can have an impact on stakeholder engagement in private sectors, it does not directly correlate to stakeholder engagement practices once they have been instituted and thus can produce more substantial benefits for project outcomes in the private sector than in public sectors. Instead, the organisational culture in private organisations seems to emphasise rapid decision-making, and therefore the ability to respond to consumer and investor expectations more rapidly. Consequently, the proportion of stakeholder engagement that accounts for project outcomes is greater in private than in public contexts. Additionally, these research findings support other studies demonstrating that managerial behaviour and project processes are positioned within sectoral norms and institutional logics, which suggests that transformational leaders and stakeholder engagement provide universal benefits; however, operationalisation will differ based on the structural and cultural logic associated with public versus private organisations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The goal of this research was to determine how transformational leadership affects the success of project management, with stakeholder involvement as a means by which transformational leadership impacts project management effectiveness, and also to compare the impact of transformational leadership on project management effectiveness through stakeholder engagement (as a mediating variable) across the public and private sectors. The results indicate that transformational leadership has a significant effect on the success of project management in both industries; however, it had a greater direct effect within the public sector. Stakeholder engagement is critical in helping to translate transformational leadership behaviours into successful projects, serving as a mediator of transformational leadership behaviours in both sectors. These findings illustrate the importance of both leader style and stakeholder engagement in achieving project effectiveness, particularly in complex organisations.

The differences between the public and private sectors are evident in their leadership approach. In public organisations, leadership plays a significant role due to factors such as hierarchy, bureaucracy, and various external influences. As a result, public leaders have a more significant impact on their ability to motivate and engage people, as well as the success of their projects. However, although transformational leadership is important for leaders of private organisations, the level of external stakeholder influence is of greater importance in determining how organisations, investors, and market expectations impact the overall success of private organisations' leadership activities. Therefore, these differences in organisational structure and culture will also affect the ways in which leaders of public and private organisations will be engaged in operationalising and influencing organisational activities.

This research study offers practical and theoretical insights. By creating transformational leadership and implementing structured stakeholder engagement processes contextually, practitioners will improve project-based results in engineering and construction, as well as product development. Policymakers and organisational leaders must give priority to the development of leadership programmes and stakeholder engagement frameworks that meet the unique needs of public and private organisations. Theoretically, this research has been added to project management literature by establishing empirically that stakeholder engagement serves as a mediator between leadership and project effectiveness, and that the effect of leadership on project effectiveness varies depending on an organisation's context. Future studies may expand upon our findings by identifying other

potential mediators or moderators, conducting longitudinal analysis, and conducting cross-national studies, thereby enhancing our understanding of the influence of leadership on project success in a variety of organisational settings.

Recommendations

Practical Recommendations

- **Develop Leadership Programmes** - A formal, structured approach to developing transformational leadership skills must be established in organisations, especially within the public sector, to enable leaders to better inspire, motivate, and intellectually stimulate their project teams. Communication and the ability to articulate a vision, as well as to demonstrate individualised consideration for all stakeholders, are critical elements to the success of any project and are essential for building trust and engagement between leaders and stakeholders.
- **Establish Stakeholder Engagement Frameworks** – Both public and private sector organisations must create formalised processes for engaging with stakeholders. Establishing a systematic approach to identifying key stakeholders, proactively involving them in the decision-making process, providing transparent methods of communication, and establishing feedback mechanisms will ensure that stakeholders are aligned with the goals and expectations of the project.
- **Implement Sector-Specific Strategies** - Public organisations should focus on engagement strategies that are leadership-driven, given the more bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of public organisations. In contrast, private organisations have greater flexibility to complement the leadership influence with performance-based incentives, faster decision-making processes, and more rapid responses to changing market, legal, and client demands.
- **Establish Monitoring and Evaluation Systems** – Organisations must regularly monitor their leadership practices, stakeholder participation, and project results. Obligating organisations to use structured measurement systems and providing regular feedback to leadership about their performance will enable organisations to identify gaps in stakeholder involvement, develop strategies for making timely changes, and ultimately increase the likelihood of the project's success.

Theoretical Recommendations

- To better understand how transformational leadership can be translated into desirable project results, future researchers should explore additional variables that might be mediators or moderators. A few examples of what may be examined include an organisation's culture, the rigidity it holds with its bureaucratic

decision-making, and/or the complexity of the project being undertaken by the organisation.

- Researchers are encouraged to use the ITT (presumably referring to the Integrated Theory of Transformational Leadership) to examine cross-national and cross-institutional variations in how cultural and/or institutional factors may influence the relationships between leaders, stakeholders, and the effectiveness of projects.
- Longitudinal studies can be conducted to examine the influence of transformational leadership and stakeholder engagement on project outcomes over time, thereby providing insights into sustainability, adaptability, and change management issues faced by organisations that operate in different sectors or contexts.
- The results of this study support the need for an ongoing refinement of the existing theoretical frameworks related to leadership and project management through an empirical validation of the mediating role of stakeholder engagement. Conducting additional research will serve to develop comprehensive models that will incorporate leadership theories into frameworks of stakeholder and project management that consider the contextual and sector-specific nuances of these variables.

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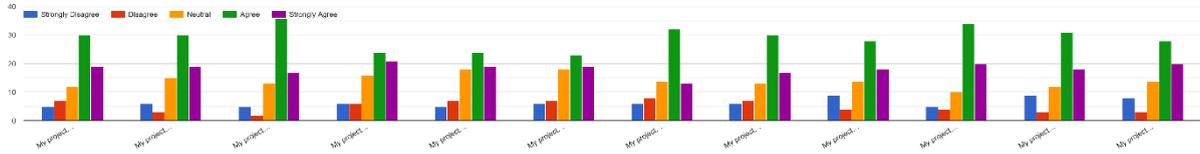
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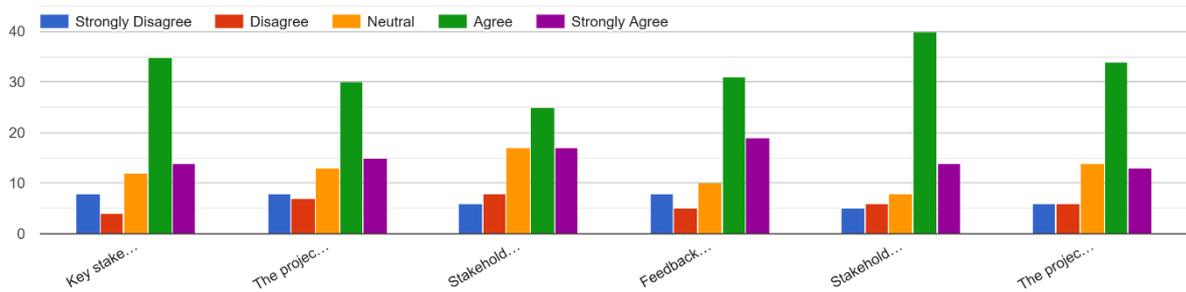
ANNEXES

Annex A. Survey Responses

Transformational Leadership Style



Stakeholder Engagement



Project Management Effectiveness

