



Factors Influencing Governance Practices in Rural Public Infrastructure Projects: A Case Study of Rural Road Project in Malaysia

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Abstract: Rural public infrastructure projects are essential as a catalyst for balanced development between urban and rural as well as tools for enhancing the living standard of rural poor. This study focuses on the identification of factors that influence the governance practices in a rural road project in Malaysia. A single case study was conducted from the perspective of a stewardship theoretical lens on a rural road project in East Malaysia, and multiple sources of evidence were used for data collection. The study discovered four main factors, namely intrinsic motivation, altruistic empathy, effective leadership, and shared vision that influence project governance practices in this project. Thus, this article contributes to the understanding of interdependencies of these factors, which drives public officials in different project actors for effective delivery in this project context. The study findings are limited concerning the utilization of a single case study related to the rural road project and its contexts.

Keywords: Project governance, stewardship, rural road, rural poverty, Malaysia

1. Introduction

The adoption of a project governance framework is crucial to achieving project success in the public sector infrastructure development (Khan et al., 2019), but less rigorous arrangements and stewardship-driven governance could be appropriate in smaller-scale projects. Rural roads projects are one of the essential public sector infrastructure development specifically to provide a highly needed communication system in rural areas. Parked under the purview of Ministry of Rural Development (KPLB), the government has managed to achieve 51,262 km of rural road coverage as of 2015 (EPU, 2015) and committed to build and upgrade another 3,000 km of the rural road during the 11th Malaysia Plan (2016 – 2020) (MEA, 2018). Apart from connecting the people, the broad coverage of rural roads could raise more rural poor beyond the poverty line as compared to other types of roads (Fan & Chan-Kang, 2008).

As one of the key initiatives to alleviate poverty, a high budget has been allocated in each development plan, and this reflects a clear vision of the government to enhance the quality of life among the rural folks. According to DOSM (2017), the percentage of households who have to travel more than nine km from home to the nearest public health centers

in Sabah and Sarawak is 32.8% and 43.6%, respectively, although the national average is only 14.2%. The statistics show that a broader coverage of rural roads is indeed necessary, and the failure in delivering the projects to the people is not an option for the government.

The risk of construction projects failure in China could be minimized through the adoption of project governance practices (Zhang, Zhang, Gao, & Ding, 2016). Project governance is the process of decision making and the process in which that particular decision is executed (Abednego and Ogunlana, 2006). It also could be viewed in terms of managing the relationship between project actors to maximize project outcomes (Chen and Manley, 2014). A good relationship between project actors will promote trust among themselves, thus will allow works to be done efficiently. Currently, there is a lack of knowledge about the factors that influence the project governance practices among public officials who involve in public projects, mainly in the rural road projects. Considering the rural poor are frail and vulnerable, public funds might be improperly utilized, and the target group could be placed at risk when governance and accountability failed to be adequately addressed (Dicke, 2002). Besides, the government has to utilize public investment resources efficiently since the interests of other sectors also need to be considered (Fan, Zhang, & Zhang, 2002).

The current study seeks to address the questions on what are the factors that influence project governance practices and how they are practiced in real project settings. The following sections present the literature review and theoretical notion, the methodological approach, the findings, and discussion, as well as conclusions, recommendations, and limitations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Project Governance

Project governance provides a platform for decision-making including structures, processes, rules, and method to support and complement the functional goals of project management (Xiang, Li, & Shou, 2013) as well as ensuring the practices of mechanisms and aligning the goals of project actors (Kujala, Aaltonen, Gotcheva, & Pekuri, 2016). Much of the current literature on project governance pays particular attention to the development of project governance frameworks and its translation process into practices in major projects (Brunet and Aubry, 2018; Volden and Andersen, 2018). However, little attention is given on the governance practices of public projects, which has specific outcomes, particularly in alleviating poverty among the targeted groups of people. Several related past studies touch on project governance issues in regional public infrastructure projects (Khan et al., 2019) while Kivilä, Martinsuo, & Vuorinen (2017) looked into the utilization of project control for sustainable project management in public infrastructure projects.

Project governance influenced by many factors according to the type, size, complexities, and location of the project. Trust and control are two project governance elements that always interchanged among project actors and driven by several factors such as project failure and top management intervention (Toivonen and Toivonen, 2014). Usually, the balance share of control and trust is the one that always exists in the project-based organization, while which one is dominating will be determined in the context of the project's environment itself. Hence, trust and control are not mutually exclusive but complement each other even though the relationship is complex and non-linear (Pinto, Slevin, & English, 2009; Poppo and Zenger, 2002). Trust that has mushroomed in a project environment within the project actors will create economic value by lowering transaction cost in a project (Müller et al., 2013) and, at the same time enhance the impact of governance on project performance (Puranam and Vanneste, 2009).

On the other hand, trust is closely related to effective leadership in a project-based organization, which plays an essential role in driving the project governance practices. Apart from emotional intelligence, Clarke (2012) found that empathy, teamwork, attentiveness, and ability to solve conflict are among the leadership characteristics that need to be possessed by the project manager. The ability of project managers or public officials in the context of public projects to get the trust from other project actors is crucial to carry out works on the project. However, factors that motivate public officials to have such a moral position and behavior are yet to be understood.

2.2 Rural Road Projects as Tools for Enhancing Living Standard of Rural Poor

Infrastructure development is crucial in progressing the economy and enhance the living standards of the poor. Early studies found a positive relationship between infrastructure development and economic development (Antle, 1983; Owusu-Manu, Jehuri, Boateng, & Asumadu, 2019), while Ng, Law, Jakarni, & Kulanthayan (2019) discovered the growth in road length per thousand population contributed positively to the economic growth of a country. Sustainable economic growth is positive towards enhancing the living standard of rural poor since many programs and projects could be implemented, including widening rural road coverage, which often needs high budget allocation. According to Lucas, Mattioli, Verlinghieri, & Guzman (2016), transport poverty, which is due to poor connectivity and unsafe travel conditions, is still affecting the rural poor particularly in order to satisfy their daily basic activities.

In Malaysia, a specific budget for the construction of rural roads has been allocated in every five-years Malaysia Plan, and between 2010 and 2017, it has benefited 3.7 million villagers through the construction and upgrading works of 6868 km of roads (CSDU, 2017). Although higher rural road coverage with other rural-based investments helped to

reduce rural poverty, it is crucial for the agencies that provide public goods or services to improve efficiency and delivery effectiveness (Fan and Chan-Kang, 2008). Effective project governance practices driven by a proper framework could subdue the management deficiencies related to the public sector infrastructural development projects in Pakistan (Khan, Hussain, Waris, & Ilyas, 2018).

Overall, the literature review highlights the importance of rural road projects effective delivery and how the practices of project governance could contribute to the achievement of the outcomes of the project. The identification of factors that influence project governance practices in this type of project will provide a better understanding prior to the development of project governance frameworks. However, ethical values and motivation need to be in place as the public officials who are the backbone of effective project delivery are accountable for each action and decision making throughout the project cycle.

2.3 Theoretical Notion

Governance could be described through many theoretical notions that support the contextual perspectives of the circumstances. Transaction cost economics theory offers several governance mechanisms that best suit specific economical transactions, while agency theory promotes the delegation of decision making and authority to the agent to execute services on behalf of the principal. On the contrary, stewardship theory inspired the organization to conduct activities for the benefit of the stakeholders and communities (Contrafatto, 2014) and also beneficial to the principals and various stakeholders cooperatively as well as maximize social welfare and long-term economic benefit to the society (Caldwell and Karri, 2005).

In line with the spirit, this study utilized stewardship theory as the theoretical notion to better explained the factors that influence governance practices in this type of project. Principally, stewardship theory provides moral commitment needed by team members where they feel obliged to act in specific ways, which is mainly conducted for the benefits of others involved in the structure of relationships (Hernandez, 2012). Therefore, by adopting these contexts within the parameter of this study, public officials who are involved in the planning and implementation of the project are expected to be motivated by showing stewardship behavior towards the project's successful outcomes as well as provides room for stewards and project team members to drive the project forward without facing accountability and integrity issues. However, caution shall be exercised as the roles of stewards could be potentially abused without any control measures. Besides, the opportunistic behavior and wrong moral compass among the project actors could hamper the efficiency of project execution.

3. Research Methodology

This section explains how the study was conducted, and the researcher's stands about validity and reliability.

3.1 Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative method through the use of a case study. A case study research is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident and in which multiple sources of evidence or techniques are used (Yin, 2018).

As the current study involved several project actors in undertaking activities to ensure the deliverables of the project benefits to the primary target group of the projects, case study research strategy is deemed suitable since it focuses on detailed descriptions, interpretations and explanations as well as involves actors who participate in the social process (Swanborn, 2010). Moreover, the identification of factors that influence the project governance practices and how it works in real-life contexts are better explained through the case study, which permits a micro-perspective look on the subject matter.

3.2 Selection of Case

In order to explain the phenomenon in the project's context through the theoretical notion perspective, as explained in Section 2.3, a single case study is used, which also served as a common case. This is in line with Yin (2018) since the rural road projects have similar implementation set up and machinery systems nationwide; hence, it might provide about the social processes related to the stewardship theory of governance.

A rural road Project XYZ (a pseudonym) in East Malaysia is selected as a case study because it fulfills two main requirements, as the project is just completed within one year from this study, and the project is located at the remote area to represent the rural road which is used mainly by the rural poor in the area. Besides, the project is funded by the federal government through KPLB, and the state Public Works Department (PWD) is the implementing agency. Consistent with project-as-practice orientation as recommended by Blomquist, Hällgren, Nilsson, & Söderholm (2010), it permits the exploration of public officials' actions from different project actors during project planning and implementation to achieve the project objectives.

3.3 Selection of Informants

The current study has interviewed five (5) public officials who involved in the planning and implementation of the project, and this is line with suggestions by Yin (2018) to have targeted and insightful informants who can provide explanations and their personal view of the research topic. It certainly reflects the phenomenon and the context of the study in order to answer the research questions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Table 1 shows the informants' basic information.

Table 1 - Basic information of the informants

Informant	Designation	Agency	Working Experience
Informant 1	Senior Assistant Secretary	Infrastructure Division, KPLB	14
Informant 2	Assistant Secretary	Infrastructure Division, KPLB	3
Informant 3	Project Manager (Civil Engineer)	Works Department (Regional Office)	18
Informant 4	Civil Engineer	Works Department (HQ)	8
Informant 5	Quantity Surveyor	Works Department (Regional Office)	18

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

A case study protocol was developed to guide the researcher during data collection, and it is a significant way of enhancing the case study reliability (Yin, 2018). Multiple sources of evidence have been used for data collection, such as semi-structured interviews, document analysis, direct observations, and field visits, as suggested by Yin (2018). On top of that, the researcher utilized the memo and reflection notes throughout the research process, and it helps during data analysis and interpretation (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

All interviews were conducted in the native language (Bahasa Melayu) and were transcribed in the language. As proposed by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the analysis was conducted through NVivo 12 software with findings, supporting evidence, and selected quotes were translated into English. The current study also utilized an abductive analysis strategy, which is also guided by the theoretical framework, while the researcher opened to any new ideas that emerged during the analysis with the primary aim to answer the research questions.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

In terms of validity and reliability, operational measures of the theoretical constructs were based on the theoretical framework developed for this study. Therefore, this study used multiple sources of evidence to enhance the construct validity of the study (Yin, 2018). Next, early findings of the case study were sent through email to three key informants, and the feedbacks and critical comments by them functioned as a validation process to increase the credibility of the study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

With regards to the external validity or the generalizability of the results, this study used theory in a single case study (Yin, 2018) and maximized the variation of the samples which includes selected officials involved in the projects throughout the project cycle as well as tried to present adequate evidence from different data sources as suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). Besides, the application of case study protocol is consistent with Yin (2018) to enhance the reliability of the case study while the researcher keeps all the evidence in accordance to the sequence of the data collected to boost the confidence and reliability of the study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018).

4. Findings

This section provides a brief explanation about the project selected for the case study and followed by the findings, which are project governance practices according to the project cycle.

4.1 Brief Description of the Case

Project XYZ is a road upgrading project located in a remote area in the state of East Malaysia where it takes 2 ½ hours or 138 km traveling by four-wheel drive to get there from the nearest city, and it also takes 14 hours or 780 km traveling by four-wheel drive to get there from the state capital city. Previously, the road is logging gravel road with a length of 3.7 km begin at the existing oil palm road and end at a village, which is a remote area in the northern area of the state.

The project scopes include the upgrading of the 3.7 km gravel road to tar sealed surface up to the PWD R1 Road Standard with 5 m carriageway width as well as 1.5 m shoulder both sides on the existing gravel road alignment. Other works including the installation of 60 m HDPE culverts at three locations along the road alignment as well as the installation of road furniture such as traffic signs, road line marking, and other associated works. The Superintending Officer (SO) of this project is the Regional Manager of Northern Office PWD. The cost of the project is RM 8.2 million,

with a contract period of twelve months. The project was awarded to a local-based contractor after the internal design and procurement process conducted by the department. The project objectives are to facilitate the road connection of the villagers from and to the main junction and enhancing villagers' socio-economic activities who mostly consist of poor people. The project was completed in September 2019 after two series of extension of time (EOT) given to the contractor.

4.2 Factors Influencing Project Governance Practices

The findings of the factors that influence the project governance practices for the case are shown in Table 2. Each factor is represented by theme and consists of elements (categories), which shows how they influence the project governance practices.

Table 2 - Factors that influence project governance practices

No.	Factor (Theme)	Element (Category)
1.	Intrinsic motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Collaboration
2.	Effective leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making • Empowerment • Knowledgeable
3.	Altruistic empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy as motivation • Sense of belonging
4.	Shared vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared objectives

i. Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is characterized by self-efficacy and doing something with clear feelings of purpose (Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997), where it motivates a person to take personal responsibility for their actions (Hernandez, 2008). Analysis has found that trust and collaboration are elements of intrinsic motivation. Trust is needed at every single activity conducted in the project, and it involved every project actor. At the beginning of the project, the ministry needs preliminary details abstract (PDA) about the project, which is prepared by the PWD. Since the PDA explains the estimated cost and design abstract of the project, the ministry places trust for PWD to do it following the industry standards.

Trust is also actively exchanged throughout the project implementation. The main project actors, namely the ministry, PWD, and the contractor, exchanged trust with the help of the project contract, which tied them together in the project. The project's remote location makes the trust even more potent, especially from the ministry to the PWD and from the PWD to the contractor. Due to the remote location of the project, the ministry officials rely heavily on the reports submitted to them, and sometimes, they visited the project together with the PWD officials. Informant 2 admits:

“For most of the time, it is PWD; their officials and also the SO who monitor and visit this project. We received reports from them and sometimes visited the project, but we completely put the element of trust to the PWD to do the best.”

From the perspective of PWD, they believe they can implement the project accordingly since they have the ministry's full trust, and subsequently, they also have high trust in the contractor. An informant from the PWD, Informant 3 explains:

“The level of trust is good, or else they cannot entrust us to do the project. As a KPLB client, they entrust us to do this project. So, on our part, we also entrust our contractor to do the project with good quality... I believe...they entrust us.... good...they trust as an implementor. There is not much interference from them, just a few site visits, a few comments which we are comfortable with.”

Collaboration in this project is driven by the need to solve problems related to the project. As road infrastructure projects are always involved in the relocation of utilities located on the project site, collaboration with the utility and service providers is crucial to avoid delay and any potential disruption to the project. Mutual understanding and collaboration between government, PWD, and the providers specifically in terms of the relocation cost could save government spending. Informant 1 explains:

“For your information, utility relocation cost, which involved telecommunication and electrical is borne by the respective companies, and the ministry will only pay for water relocation cost. There was no resistance from them as it was agreed upon. The companies will reimburse the ministry after six months project completed since we have already made the payment as the cost was included in the overall cost of the project.”

Through observation during the field visit, it is found that the contractor and the PWD have an excellent working relationship, and it portrays strong collaboration among them. The contractor expressed their commitment to helping the ministry complete the road until the junction. The contractor mentioned that they would help to finish the works even though it is not in their project scope just because of the PWD’s kindness and for the interests of the people in the village. However, the contractor cautions the officials that they need reasonable EOT period, and hope the officials understand the accessibility is an issue to the site.

ii. Effective Leadership

Analysis has found that effective leadership, which consists of elements of decision making, empowerment, and knowledge, could influence the project governance practices. Mainly, the project setting is divided into two main functions, namely the project control at organizational (ministry) level and project implementation at the project level. From both functions’ perspective, decision making is a crucial aspect to support effective leadership. Informants from both the ministry (Informant 2) and PWD (Informant 3) agree that:

“Decision making is important in leadership, especially in this project where project implementation and rural population will be affected if we make the wrong decision. That is why, for me, an important element of leadership is decision making since it involves a right and fast decision.”

“Of course, leadership is essential. As SO, you must be aware and must be wise to make a decision. We also have to be professional too... that is leadership, right? In any construction, the most important thing is decision making, the most important... yes... decision making.”

Empowerment is exercised when project actors have placed trust among themselves and enable the decision to make cross the actors’ boundary. It is found that there are excellent empowerment practices among the project actors in this project. The ministry empowered the PWD, especially at the headquarters, to conduct in-house project design and procurement while the headquarters empowered the regional officer of PWD to implement and monitor the project until it is completed. It is an excellent empowerment practice since it involves the exchange of trust and the roles of decision making.

The findings also identified leaders with knowledge on the subject matters contribute to the effective leadership which is needed in managing this project. The project leader has to acquire technical skills as well as knowledge in project management. At every level of the project, the understanding of project management and technical issues will automatically help in terms of problem-solving and decision making. Informant 1 opines:

“Knowledgeable is one of the leadership qualities. For example, we must know about project management even though we do not acquire it in-depth; the basic knowledge is still important. In fact, when it comes to technicality, we have the experts involved, geo technique, bridge, design... So, usually in terms of leadership quality for each project is the ability of the project manager or project director... to understand the issues and resolve them as soon as possible to avoid any consequences.”

iii. Altruistic Empathy

Altruistic empathy is a motivation that gives a person to concern or any other-oriented emotion to perceive the welfare of someone in need. A genuine understanding and empathy with mercy to what the rural population suffers drive the project actors in managing this project. Some of the project officials have experience in dealing with low connectivity in a rural areas during their younger days. Take it as motivation; the officials believe they can contribute to the project success by expediting the process and try to solve whatever problem arises in order to ensure the project is completed according to the schedule. Looking from a layman perspective, Informant 2 highlights:

“I am from a rural area; I choose this ministry because I want to help the rural people. Even I used to live in a longhouse that is still no access road. So, the motivation is very high because I understand how difficult it is if no access road, which means no other utilities such as electricity, which is very difficult. Sometimes, people with no access road have to use a boat through the river, where safety is the issue. There are no road lights; it is challenging, wherein in the case of an emergency, we have to take an express boat just to get to a clinic or other government buildings.”

Besides, the officials uphold a sense of belonging to the project, which could further enhance the passion and cohesion for them to manage the project properly. Informant 5 opines:

“In terms of value, first, there must be a sense of belonging to the project because if we have no sense of belonging, we are just doing works for the sake of doing works. Therefore, we need to have a sense of belonging where we feel the needs of the project so that this project can be completed. Also, integrity is essential in this type of project since lack of integrity can cause a variety of problems, such as lack of quality and quantity. So, integrity must be upheld together with a sense of belonging and a sense of urgency.”

iv. Shared Vision

The officials involved in this project are able to align their objectives to the project objectives as well as the organization's objectives. Closely related to the intrinsic motivation and altruistic empathy, shared vision enables officials in different project actors of the project to work on the common ground to achieve shared objectives. As agreed by Informant 4:

“Yes, I do. My point is... the thing that I like about my branch now is that... to give connectivity to the rural. So, yes, I share the same aspiration.”

5. Discussion

The practices of project governance in this project are influenced by four main factors, as identified in the analysis of this case study. However, there are two essential points to be raised before further discussion in this section. First, this project was not guided by any formal project governance frameworks, and second, the practices of project governance found in this case are following the practices as deliberated in the literature.

The intrinsic motivation, which consists of trust and collaboration, is the main factor that influences the practices of project governance in this project. In most situations, mutual trust drives collaboration among project actors and further improves project performance (Meng, 2015). The findings are consistent with the approach of stewardship theory which promotes two main intrinsic values explicitly trust and collaboration as the main idea which should be embraced by the principal, stewards, project managers and the whole of the project team (Bond-Barnard, Fletcher, & Steyn, 2018; Höglund, Mårtensson, & Safari, 2018). Although trust and collaboration are the pillars of intrinsic motivation, it is best to be complemented by the element of control. Several processes, such as procurement and financial management, need to be executed based on a combination of trust and control as it offers better checks and balances for project accountability.

The findings indicate that altruistic empathy influences public officials to execute works with high professionalism and competency in delivering projects to the people. The feeling of empathy for the urgent needs of the rural poor people to have better road conditions is transformed into a unique motivational character and drives the officials to make better decision making throughout the project planning and implementation. As the project was requested by the state government, the bottom-up approach in project initiation and planning stage reflects the ability of the public officials to consider the rural people's voice and translating it into effective project delivery. Hence, this is the evidence of the altruistic empathy adoption by the public officials at every level of organization, as touched by Kuppelwieser (2011). It portrays stewardship-style behavior is not limited to the executive levels; instead, applicable at every organization's level for the good of its stakeholders.

Effective leadership found in this study consists of three main elements, namely decision making, empowerment, and knowledgeable. Decision making is crucial at every level of organization and project. However, in the context of this project, the decision-making process has taken into consideration the main stakeholders of this project, namely the rural poor people; thus, it is a collective decision making that considers the interests of the people and embraces it in each decision-making process. On the other hand, there is evidence of empowerment exercised in this project. Empowerment among the project actors reflects the strength of intrinsic motivation, which is practiced in this project. This is consistent with Davis et al. (1997) stewardship theory, where the employees will develop a behavior of self-control when empowered as well as having a collectivist culture and positive attitude towards group harmony to avoid any conflict and confrontation. Apart from that, the far distance between the project location and the ministry is also the reason why empowerment is widely practiced in this project. Effective leadership is driven by the knowledge possessed, as well as the ability to translate the knowledge into action. Technical and management knowledge in project management is essential for the project manager, but in the context of this project, public officials must also understand the lifestyle and culture of the local people. Knowing the local conditions will help the public officials to make better decision making and enhance their altruistic empathy for better practice in project governance. This reflects the achieved synergies characteristic as suggested by Caldwell, Hayes, Bernal, & Karri (2008), where shared information helps to reduce risk, improve decision quality, and integrate opportunities.

This study also reveals shared vision as a factor that influences the governance practices in the project. As the understanding of project objectives is shared among the project actors, they worked together in pursuit of the achievement of project outcomes, which are to enhance socio-economic development and also to facilitate communication and

community of the rural poor. The shared vision among the project actors complements the altruistic empathy and intrinsic motivation factors that influenced the project governance practices. This sentiment is better explained through the stewardship theory which acts as a suitable model especially with regards to the poverty reduction and clients stability since element such as trust is adopted, and shared among project actors to foster the organization's goals as shared by the whole members of the organization (Van Slyke, 2007).

6. Conclusions

As this study aims to identify the factors that influence the project governance and how they are practiced in the rural road project, there is evidence that project governance is practiced even though without the formal project governance framework established by the authorities. The case study analysis of Project XYZ discovered four main factors that influence the governance practices in this project, namely intrinsic motivation, effective leadership, altruistic empathy, and shared vision. These factors are connected and interdependent in a way to drive public officials for better project execution and effective delivery. Altruistic empathy drives intrinsic motivation, effective leadership, and shared vision in pursuit of common objectives to satisfy the needs of rural poor. The case reveals the determination of public officials from different project actors to contribute significantly in uplifting the lives of poor people.

On top of that, effective leadership, which consists of elements of decision making, empowerment, and knowledgeable could influence ethical project governance practices. Although this is a common factor in a typical project setting, the interplay between effective leadership and other factors such as altruistic empathy and intrinsic motivation makes a significant difference in this project context. Collective decision making and self-control behavior, when empowered, is the evidence of such interplay among the project actors. This study contributes to research regarding the factors that influence project governance practices in an infrastructure development project that beneficial to the rural poor. The perspective of project governance from the stewardship theoretical lens led to the discovery of critical factors, namely altruistic empathy and intrinsic motivation, which is significant in development and delivery for the rural public infrastructure projects.

7. Recommendations and Limitation

There is no doubt that further understanding of this research topic will enable the development of project governance frameworks, which could be applied in similar projects setting. As this study is methodologically limited to a single case study, there is a need for further research to extend the study range by investigating other similar projects in which the cross-case analysis will enhance the depth of case study research. Besides, other theoretical notions could be explored in further research; hence, enable various interpretation and enrich the knowledge and understanding of the research topic.

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