

The Impact of Political Challenges in Project Success with Moderating Role of Stakeholder Engagement: A Case Study of Bus Rapid Transit Peshawar

Hanif Ahmad

Faculty of Management & Social Sciences, Abasyn University, Peshawar Campus

Email: hanifahmadkhann@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the effect of political challenges on project success and how moderating role of stakeholder engagement in the case of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in Peshawar. The main goal is to examine the role of political instability, the lack of laws and regulations and the lack of the government support in affecting project outcome, and to determine if stakeholder involvement can have an impact. A quantitative research design was used and survey data was gathered from 200 respondents comprising project managers, engineers, government officials, and administrative staff of the BRT project. Data was collected from a structured questionnaire with a five point likert scale. These data were analyzed by SPSS software, reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, multiple regression, and moderation analysis by PROCESS Macro (Model 1). The results showed that there is a great positive relationship between the government funding and the project success ($p < 0.05$) which means that a stable financial support is essential for good performance in project implementation. Political instability and legal framework are less directly related to project success. The relationship between political challenges and project success was also positively moderated by stakeholders' engagement, though not significantly. Stakeholder engagement was also found to have a significant positive effect on project performance, but not the moderating effect between political challenges and project success. This study adds to the literature by offering empirical findings related to project governance in politically sensitive contexts. In practice, it provides some ideas for policymakers and project managers on how to do a better job of planning infrastructure development, leveraging better financial considerations and the careful and thoughtful engagement of stakeholders. The results also contribute to the broader aspiration of sustainable infrastructure, which is in line with the broader aspiration of improving urban mobility and governance in the developing regions.

Keywords: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Public-Private Partnership, Political Instability, Social Integration

INTRODUCTION

Large-scale public infrastructure projects play a critical role in economic development, urban mobility, and social integration, particularly in developing

countries such as Pakistan. However, the successful implementation of these projects is often constrained by political, legal, and financial challenges that disrupt planning, execution, and long-term sustainability. Political instability, inconsistent policy direction, weak regulatory frameworks, and fluctuating government funding frequently hinder project performance and lead to cost overruns, delays, and reduced public trust.

In this context, the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Peshawar project serves as a significant example of how political dynamics influence infrastructure development outcomes. Despite its potential to improve urban transportation and environmental sustainability, the project experienced delays, budget escalations, and governance challenges, largely attributed to political interference and institutional inefficiencies.

This study aims to examine the impact of political challenges on project success, while also analyzing the moderating role of stakeholder engagement in mitigating these challenges. By focusing on BRT Peshawar, the research provides empirical insights into how political and participatory factors interact in shaping infrastructure project outcomes in developing economies.

Political Challenges in Infrastructure Projects

By definition, infrastructure projects are long-term investments which need consistent policy guidance, stable and predictable funding and effective governance. However in most of the developing countries including Pakistan, political challenges have been one of the major impediment in the successful momentum of the planning, implementation and the completion of such projects. Such issues take different forms, such as political instability and discontinuity in its policies, weak laws, and public budgets that were based on under-funding. All these dimensions can have direct effect on the project life cycle in terms of process and outcome (U. Shah et al., 2025).

Many South Asian countries are marked by frequent regime changes, policy abrupt changes, absence of political conciliatory and unrest in the society, a feature that is common in political instability in that region. Such instability, In case of (Iftikhar, 2024) significantly undermines any decision making framework, and also creates delays in budget authorizations, contract completions, and regulatory approvals. The construction of the roads, bridges, mass transit systems, and energy plants are especially at risk of being undone because of their reliance on the long-term commitment and the cooperation between the different agencies. With the BRT Peshawar project another example can be cited where one round of delays and cost overruns have been attributed to political tussles, leadership priorities and lack of a common strategic standpoint.

Weak legal structures also increase the challenges as there was ambiguity in terms of key aspects of infrastructure governance. The lack of clarity in the legislation or the outdated legislation stalls projects which need land or environmental clearance, or PPP. A combination of weak regulatory institutions and the sluggishness of the judicial system create an atmosphere in which conflicts are not settled and trust of the stakeholders erodes. As previously reported, the BRT Peshawar project was affected by delays and legal issues about the quality of the construction standards and due to the process of procurement as well, speaking to the importance of legal reform and institutional reinforcement (Sohail et al., 2025).

Another big political challenge is inadequate and irregular government concealed funding. Infrastructure development projects are not always properly financed, leaving them to lapse in the middle of the road, due to budgetary mismanagement, and politically-motivated resource allocation, as well as dependency on international donors. According to (Asghar, 2015) the BRT project was associated with a funding gap since the initial budget increased almost twofold, resulting in an outcry on the part of citizens and a media backlash. The absence of sustained financial planning initiated operating deficits, which promoted proposals to raise the passenger fares- a move that threatened to put the project at risk due to the potential loss of the public support, as well as undercutting its social-economic agenda (Turi & Sarfraz, 2023).

In addition, the continuous interference by the political in technical issues like selection of vendors, alignment of routes and hiring of consultancies may undermine efficiency and integrity. The outcomes in instances where political players make decisions basing on immediate electoral interest instead of project sustainability in the long-term are disastrous. There is a lack of alignment between the interests of elected officials and those of the implementing agencies, contributing to poor project governance with the subsequent reputational baggage such as the case with the BRT (Anwar et al., 2024)

These political pressures are not only threatening the success of the project, but is sowing the seeds of distrust amongst the population to state sponsored development. To ensure that infrastructure projects are successful in politically volatile environments, there is the need to have mechanisms of cushioning such external factors. This requires deeper circle of stakeholders, institutional capacity-building, and non-politicization of technical involved project processes. Through the analysis of the BRT Peshawar project, the present study aims to provide guidance on how political issues can be addressed, prevented, or absorbed- especially in the awareness of the interests of critical stakeholders in the decision-making and supervisory processes (Khan, S., Anwar, S., (2024).

These political challenges directly influence project outcomes by disrupting timelines, increasing financial uncertainty, and weakening institutional coordination. Frequent policy shifts delay approvals, while unstable funding structures affect procurement and construction continuity. Consequently, projects such as BRT Peshawar experience cost escalations, schedule overruns, and reduced operational efficiency. This highlights the critical need to examine how political instability translates into measurable project performance outcomes.

Overview of Stakeholder Engagement

In project management, especially on infrastructure projects in the public sector, stakeholder engagement is a key factor that determines the path and eventually the success of projects. Stakeholders are as diverse in their people and organizations, and they include project managers, governmental bodies, regulatory bodies, financiers, civil society organizations, community representation and end use. These actors have a stake in and are affected by a project and their direct involvement in decisions are now being unevenly acknowledged as a strategic advantage, particularly in highly charged political environments (Mahmood et al., 2024).

Research evidence has revealed that the prudent engagement of stakeholders helps not

only in a trouble free implementation process but also in generating a greater project resilience level. As stated by (Mahmood et al., 2024) the existence of high stakeholder involvement is linked to risk management, resource usage, and innovation in solving a problem. Furthermore, with constant stakeholder input, the project teams can make adjustments to deal with unanticipated difficulties, e.g., political upheavals or changes in policy without losing the overall objectives of the project.

The issues, however, are the quality and organization of engagement. Superficial engagement/e.g. one-session consultations devoid of follow-up can become counterproductive. Engagement with stakeholders has to be authentic, participatory, and lasting in every stage of the project life cycle. It should also be fair in that it provides space to marginal or less powerful, who are often over-represented to bear the impact of infrastructure projects. Some of the stakeholders involved in the context of BRT Peshawar are residents in the affected urban areas, modes of transport, and civil society organizations interested in socio-economic and environmental implications. (Shabbir et al., 2025)

Moreover, stakeholder participation helps in instilling institution trust, which is needed in politically divided setups. In a situation where the level of confidence is low on government capacity or intention, evident stable participation of stakeholders will renew the credibility and social license to operate. It also decreases the probability of disruptive demonstrations, lawsuits, or social resistance- factors which have in the past bedeviled infrastructure projects in Pakistan or other developing countries. Given this interaction between political hindrances and project performance, this study treats stakeholder engagement as a moderating factor-an element that mediates between political discontinuity and project performance amplification or its mitigation. The study performed in this moderating role will offer a practical insight to policymakers, planners, and project managers to bring the large-scale public projects on board in the politically sensitive environments (Rehman, 2020).

Recent studies emphasize that stakeholder engagement is not merely a procedural requirement but a strategic mechanism that enhances project resilience and performance. Empirical evidence suggests that effective stakeholder participation improves transparency, reduces conflict, and strengthens project legitimacy (Mahmood et al., 2024). In politically sensitive environments, stakeholder engagement can play a critical role in mitigating uncertainties by facilitating communication between government entities, project teams, and affected communities. Therefore, its moderating role in the relationship between political challenges and project success warrants systematic investigation.

Rationale for Selecting BRT Peshawar as a Case Study

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in Peshawar is one of the most questionable and grandiose projects on the urban development in the recent history of Pakistan. Opened in 2017 by the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the initiative was meant to solve many of the urban transportation issues, including traffic congestion that has been continuously problematic, environmental pollution, and the absence of his ominously affordable ways to commute. BRT Peshawar was projected as a roadmap to efficiency in local and inter-regional travel around a sprawling provincial capital with the help of

financial aid by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and other contributors (Gul et al., 2025).

The BRT project has been plagued with political, operational, financial, and legal issues since its inception in spite of the potential that it has. The project has experienced constant delays, massive cost blowouts, design revision and intense criticism in both public and media accounts - much of which has been blamed on political interference, administrative inefficiency and poor stakeholder coordination. Initially, it was approximated to cost the nation Rs. 49 billion but after it was launched, the project ended up being more than Rs. 66 billion with the cases of technical problems and corruption being reported. Due to these points, BRT Peshawar can be regarded as a perfect and illustrative example to carry out the further investigation of the phenomena of interaction between political issues and success of the project in such a politically hot environment like the one in Pakistan (Iftikhar & Lions, 2022). The reason that led to the selection of BRT Peshawar as a case study is because of its strategic and socioeconomic relevance. The BRT was projected to carry more than 200,000 passengers a day, lessen urban air pollution by using cross-hybrid buses as well as provide the city with workplaces by covering an integrated transport system. It has been not only projected as a method of transport but also as a method of developmental and environmental intervention to help in uplifting urban equity and sustainability. The fact that the project was not that successful in attaining these objectives, provides a rich context of the empirical research (Hussain et al., 2021). Further, the BRT project has had extreme levels of political publicity with numerous ruling parties at governing levels both at the provincial and federal cases using it to score political objectives. The succession of authorities and policy change directly affected the rate of the project and its direction, showing the importance of political stability and research commitment of the leader on a project. These developments are in line with the bigger trends of project uncertainty in politically unstable states and there is a great analytic framework to be taken out of them by the study.

In spite of the strategic importance and supposed socio-economic positive outcomes, the BRT Peshawar project still provides a good example of how political unrest, poor governance, and lack of coordinated stakeholder can negatively affect the work of massive infrastructure development efforts. The continuous delays, budget overruns, managerial wrangles, and politically directed changes in the priorities of the project point out to more far-rooted structural issues that hamper the efficient implementation of the system of public transport in Pakistan. These are some of the problems that show that the dynamics of politics and how they can affect the outcomes of a project are important and should be critically analyzed and the degree to which the stakeholders can reduce the risk. In this light, the BRT Peshawar project is utilized as a center of focus in the current study to determine the underlying mechanism by which the political factors influence the success of project- this forms the basis of the problem statement ensuing.

Given these complexities, BRT Peshawar provides a relevant and context-rich case for examining how political challenges influence project success in real-world settings. The issues observed in this project highlight the need for a structured investigation into the mechanisms through which political factors affect project outcomes. This directly leads to the formulation of the problem statement, which

seeks to address these gaps systematically.

Problem Statement

Large-scale infrastructure projects in developing countries frequently face political challenges that hinder their successful implementation. Previous studies have identified political instability, weak legal frameworks, and inconsistent government funding as key factors contributing to project delays, cost overruns, and reduced efficiency (Mahmood et al., 2024). In Pakistan, projects such as BRT Peshawar have experienced similar issues, including governance inefficiencies, financial mismanagement, and political interference, which have negatively affected project performance (Gul et al., 2025).

Despite these findings, limited empirical research has examined how political challenges directly influence project success at the project level, particularly in urban transport systems. Furthermore, the moderating role of stakeholder engagement in reducing the impact of these political challenges remains underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between political challenges and project success, and to examine whether stakeholder engagement can mitigate these effects in the context of BRT Peshawar.

Research Objectives

Below will be the research objectives.

To examine the impact of political challenges on project success.

To analyze the moderating role of stakeholder engagement in the relationship between political challenges and project success.

Research Questions

What is the impact of political challenges on project success?

Does stakeholder engagement moderate the relationship between political challenges and project success?

Significance of Study

This study contributes to both academic literature and practical policy development in the field of project management. Theoretically, it extends existing research by integrating political challenges with stakeholder engagement within a single empirical framework, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of project success in politically sensitive environments (Ayaz et al., 2024).

Practically, the study offers insights for policymakers, project managers, and development agencies by identifying how political instability, funding issues, and legal inefficiencies affect infrastructure projects. It also highlights the importance of structured stakeholder engagement in improving transparency, coordination, and project performance.

In the context of Peshawar, this research provides specific contributions by analyzing the challenges faced by the BRT system and offering evidence-based recommendations to improve future urban transport projects. The findings can support better governance, efficient resource allocation, and enhanced public trust in infrastructure development initiatives within the region.

Hypothesis

H1: Political challenges have a significant negative impact on project success.

H2: Stakeholder engagement has a significant positive effect on project success.

H3: Stakeholder engagement moderates the relationship between political challenges and project success, such that higher engagement weakens the negative impact of political challenges.

The hypotheses formulated in the present research are based on the ample evidence on political issues, project management, involvement of stakeholders, and performance of public-sector infrastructure. Empirical investigations conducted previously show that the planning and operational results of development projects are highly influenced by the political conditions, particularly when they are conducted in the developing countries where political instabilities, poor institutional frameworks, and unstable legal systems are prevalent. These barriers are reflected in a number of forms- there is continuous leadership changes, wastage of time due to bureaucratic obstacles, political nature of distribution of resources and ineffective enforcement of regulations. These aspects lead to an unpredictable environment that mostly leads to delays, cost escalation, poor coordination and quality compromises in the infrastructure projects in the public. Judging by this evidence, one can assume that political issues will have an objective impact on the success of the perceived project of the BRT Peshawar. This argument results in the first hypothesis: H1: The political issues play an important role in determining the success of the project of BRT Peshawar project. Project success is also becoming a construct with many dimensions involving user satisfaction, quality of service delivery, stakeholder trust, efficiency, safety, and long-term sustainability instead of simply following time, cost, and scope constraints. In the case of a large-scale means of transport system like BRT Peshawar, stakeholder acceptance and satisfaction would be the focal point of whether the system is probably deemed a success. The strategic value of stakeholder involvement in project ownership enhancement, resistance mitigation, communication, and long-term establishment of trust in the population is highly reiterated in the literature.

So the second hypothesis is formulated as follows: H2: Stakeholder engagement positively influences the project success of the BRT Peshawar project significantly. Alongside its direct influence, stakeholder engagement can also work as a moderating variable, having profound impacts on the nature and strength of relationship between the political challenges and the success of the project. It is hypothesized that the participatory decision-making and the resilience of the project to external pressure are promoted by the active participation of stakeholders in the theoretical and empirical research. Stakeholder engagement may also act as a buffer in politically unstable settings, serving as the means of communication between conflicting parties, enhancing accountability, early warning of political risks, and consensus formation when a disruption takes place.

By using this conceptual argument, the third hypothesis is formulated: H3: Stakeholder engagement mediates the relationship between political challenges and project success so that an increased stakeholder engagement has a negative influence on the relationship between political challenges and project success. The combination of these hypotheses constitutes the conceptual base of the research, as these

hypotheses allow a systematic exploration of the way in which political processes and the involvement of stakeholders can interact to condition the result of the projects of large-scale public infrastructure in Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Development projects can be defined as planned interventions designed to promote economic, social, or environmental progress within a specific context. These projects typically involve structured investments in sectors such as transportation, energy, healthcare, and urban infrastructure, and are considered essential for sustainable development (Mubarak et al., 2023)

Development projects also act as sand-boxes of policy, because they are places to experimenting with new forms of governance, financing systems, and technologies. They do so in a manner that helps build learning and capacity-building in the institutions. Their success is frequently put to the test by the ground realities, particularly in troubled political and legal systems where instruments of accountability are weak, resources tight and division of power complicated. In this environment, the projects are subject to inefficacy, corruption, mismanagement and even abandoning. Therefore, scholars claim that development projects are impossible to study without considering their socio-political background (Habib et al., 2021) The factors that define the extent of the government commitment of governmental actors, legal and regulatory framework and quality of stakeholder involvement are also fundamental aspects that contributes to the project outputs (Ouedraogo et al., 2025).

Also, the performance of the project is influenced by the governance of the project that captures the project planning, control of risks, communication with stakeholders and performance monitoring. The weaker the design of governance structures is, the more likely to overlook the community participation, omit the consideration of the on-site risks, and entirely follow the top-down approach that is likely to conflict with the local needs and expectations (Khattak, 2019).

Political issues have been deemed as one of the most persistent and disruptive forces in the process of planning, implementation and sustenance of infrastructure development projects especially in developing and politically volatile nations. These difficulties arise out of a multiplicity of governance-related challenges to include political instability, absence of a unified legal system, policy inconsistency, corruption and insufficient government funding. In public sector initiatives-particularly large urban enterprises such as the Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) initiative in Peshawar, political factors might be more influential in determining the fate of the initiative than the technical or financial barriers (Erfanian et al., 2024).

Political instability is also one of the greatest limitations to successful implementation of mega infrastructure and construction projects especially in developing countries where the governance structure is weak and the institutions are very sensitive to change of political systems. It includes more frequent changes of government, parliamentary gridlock, feeble coalition groupings, inter-party rivalry and larger-scale political dominance battles. This instability is unpredictable and it will erode economic confidence, weakening institutions and disrupt long-term planning efforts.

This loss of investor confidence is especially harmful to capital intensive projects like transport corridors, energy systems and urban infrastructure development where long

term funding and policy consistent is a must. In cases where governments switch or are involved in a political battle constantly, the investors are afraid of policy reversal, contract renegotiation, or a shift of priorities in regulations and consequently, the financing of the projects becomes unpredictable, postponed or even canceled. According to Jong-A-Pin (2009), this instability limits the inflows of capital and leads to an increment of extra risk premiums on financing the development further increasing the total cost of the project. Combined with the withdrawal of investors, a political instability instigates severe institutional vulnerabilities and bureaucratic disturbances which have a detrimental implication on the implementation of projects. One of the most important structural failures contributing towards the poor governance of large infrastructure projects particularly those that are being executed in complex urban settings is a weak or uncertain legal framework. An effective governance framework relies on the effectiveness and visibility of the legal tools governing land acquisition, contract enforcement, environmental laws, procurement process, inter-agency coordination, and the dispute resolution systems. In the absence of such legal foundations, conflicts with them, or ineffective development, the infrastructure projects are exposed to bureaucratic stasis, legal wrangles, legal suits, and uncertainty in regulation. Where jurisdictions are commonly confused, and the legal system is weak in enforcing the law, which is often out of date, and may be inconsistent, mega projects in developing countries are often faced with go-slows in the administration process, undermining the confidence of stakeholders. In the absence of clear and binding rules, decision making will be subjective and divided and it can easily be politicized. This does not only raise the cost and time span of projects but also makes the projects vulnerable to allegations of impropriety, corruption or procedural anomalies. A highly notable case that demonstrates how poor legal and regulatory frameworks can undermine the results of any project is the Peshawar Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. Grey areas and discrepancies in the law governing procurement, urban land usage, and safety rules presented a big challenge to the project. The procurement regulations, e.g., did not provide sufficient clarity regarding competitive bidding procedures, selection criteria of consultants, and transparency, which caused delays, re-assessment of bids, and claims of procedural misconduct. On the same note, the current land-use regulations in Peshawar did not entirely match with the requirements of a massive transit corridor project that demanded acquisition of land, road alignment reassignment, utility relocation, and system integration in high-population commercial areas. Such law loopholes have created confusion among local governments, provincial governments, transport agencies and regulatory agencies with overlapping mandates and conflicts over decision making powers. One of the weaknesses in governance was lack of a legal operational coordination structure. The BRT involved the close coordination of many agencies, such as, the Transport Department, Peshawar Development Authority (PDA), Traffic Police, city municipal units, and the contractors. Nevertheless, there was no definite legal framework which defined how the institutions would integrate, distribute responsibilities or conflict resolution. These weaknesses, in combination, display how unpredictable legal frameworks can bring about instability within a system, interfere with good governance and expose projects to social critique.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper adheres to a positivistic and empirical quantitative philosophy, which is based on the assumption that social phenomena can be quantified objectively through the use of numerical information. The connection between political issues, stakeholder involvement, and project success under this approach is tested statistically, which guarantees rigor and replication. Positivism will be suitable in this case since the research will be based on organized survey responses, quantifiable indicators, and other analytical software like SPSS to test hypotheses and produce overall findings that are based on empirical data.

This study adopts a positivist research philosophy, as it relies on objective measurement and statistical analysis of numerical data. The quantitative approach enables the testing of hypotheses and examination of relationships among variables using SPSS, ensuring empirical validation of findings.

The research design used is a quantitative, explanatory research design, suitable in testing the relationship between well-defined variables, and determining the moderating effect of stakeholder engagement on the impact of challenges in the political front, on the outcome of projects. The methodology is appropriate since it enables testing the cause-effect relationships, namely, the impact of political challenges on the success of the project. It is the deductive design which starts with the theory, then proceeds to formulate hypotheses and test them statistically with the help of numerical data. The questionnaire was structured and the data were collected by the structured questionnaire, and the hypothesis is tested using SPSS as this allows the objective measurement of data, correlation analysis, and moderation testing by regression.

A quantitative explanatory design is appropriate for this study as it allows the examination of cause-and-effect relationships between variables. Specifically, it enables testing how political challenges influence project success and whether stakeholder engagement moderates this relationship. The hypotheses are tested using statistical techniques in SPSS, ensuring objective and measurable results.

The stakeholders of the proposed study will include the stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the BRT project Peshawar such as the project managers, engineers, transport authorities, urban planners, and a few chosen members of the community. The purposive sampling was followed because of the nature of the research; it was specialized and only those people who had relevant knowledge and experience were included. This approach is the right one since it allows gathering informed and context-specific knowledge that are required to analyze both political issues and performance of a project. Non-probability method, however, reduces the external validity of results to the overall population since it is a non-probability method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic profile indicates that the majority of respondents belonged to the age group of 31–40 years, reflecting a mature and professionally experienced sample. Male respondents represented a larger proportion of the sample; however, female participation was also significant, ensuring broader representation of perspectives

regarding the BRT Peshawar project. Most respondents possessed a master's degree, indicating an educated and informed participant group capable of providing reliable responses related to infrastructure project management.

Table 1: Demographics of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	21–30	72	36.0
	31–40	96	48.0
	41–50	24	12.0
	Above 50	8	4.0
	Total	200	100.0
Gender	Male	140	70.0
	Female	60	30.0
	Total	200	100.0
Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	74	37.0
	Master's Degree	108	54.0
	PhD	18	9.0
	Total	200	100.0
Profession	Government Officials	41	20.5
	Engineers	38	19.0
	Project Managers	42	21.0
	Administrative Staff	43	21.5
	Transport Authorities	15	7.5
	Urban Planners	21	10.5
	Total	200	100.0

The initial action toward setting the quality of the measurement instrument to be used in this study was to determine the reliability of each construct using Cronbachs alpha. Reliability is a measure of how internally consistent a scale is or how much the collection of items is related to one another. The greater the Cronbachs alpha, the more the items equally measure the same construct with little error. Table 1 shows the reliability coefficient of the five primary constructs that include Political Stability, Legal Framework, Government Funding, Project Success, and Stakeholder Engagement. A value of .70 or higher is ordinarily regarded as a reasonable social

science study value whereas a value of .80 or higher is regarded as a superb reliability value.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha for Study Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Political Stability	0.826
Legal Framework	0.771
Government Funding	0.683
Project Success	0.870
Stakeholder Engagement	0.867

The findings in Table 2 reveal that the four out of 5 constructs have strong internal consistency. Political Stability ($\alpha = .826$) and Legal Framework ($\alpha = .771$) have good reliability values, which means that the respondents provided related responses to these items. Project Success ($\alpha = .870$) and Stakeholder Engagement ($\alpha = .867$), have very good reliability and indicate that the items in the scales are homogenous and the constructs were clear to the respondents. Despite the fact that the Government Funding has slightly lower reliability coefficient ($\alpha = .683$), it is rather close to the acceptable value and can be tolerated in exploratory research. By and large, the reliability results indicate that the instrument to be employed in this study is substantially strong to continue with subsequent inferential tests.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics were calculated in order to have a preliminary idea about what the respondents think about each construct. The central tendency of the mean values allows understanding whether the respondents on the whole tend to agree, disagree, or be neutral with references to the political, legal, financial, engagement-related, and outcome-related aspects of the BRT Peshawar project.

Table 3: Mean Scores of Study Constructs

Construct	Mean
Political Stability	4.03
Legal Framework	3.77
Government Funding	3.76
Project Success	3.28

Stakeholder Engagement

3.43

An analysis of the meanings in Table 3 indicates that there are a few interesting trends. Political Stability recorded the most mean ($M = 4.03$), which means that the respondents have a moderate to a high perception of the political environment of the BRT project as being relatively stable. This is notable since political instability is a frequent issue in the qualitative accounts; though the respondents might be distinguishing between long-run political instability and short-term administrative disruption.

The Legal Framework ($M = 3.77$) was also rated rather high, which implies that the respondents take notice of the existence of formal laws and legal frameworks that regulate the development of infrastructure. However, the mean does not mean that they are satisfied or not, rather, it reflects a neutral impression of the existence of regulatory structures but ineffective work.

Government Funding scored the same ($M = 3.76$) meaning that the respondents feel that the government has made some financial investment towards the BRT project but they find faults in timeliness, accuracy in allocation or sufficiency of resources. The stakeholder Engagement ($M = 3.43$) and Project Success ($M = 3.28$) are lower than the structural constructs, which means that the operational, social, and satisfaction-related project facets are still rather weak. This is in line with the difficulties mentioned in the media and governmental reviews, which tend to mention the dissatisfaction of the stakeholders and the ambivalent attitudes to the effectiveness of the project.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

It is possible to interpret the findings in the context of the Modernization Theory and Social Conflict Theory. Modernization Theory suggests that development initiatives cannot succeed without stable governance structures and effective institutions to support the implementation of development projects. This view is substantiated by the high level of government financing, which emphasizes on the need to have stable and uniform financial systems in order to make projects successful.

In the views of the Social Conflict Theory, the political issues are the underlying power struggles and institutional conflicts that may interfere with the project implementation. The weak moderating effect of stakeholder involvement indicates that participatory processes are not sufficient to completely address structural political obstacles.

Impact of Political Stability on Project Success

The findings suggest that political stability is not significant predictor of project success. This observation is contrary to the earlier studies that focus on political stability as the key factor to effective implementation of projects. As an example, (Iftikhar, 2025) contends that continuity in politics improves consistency in policies and efficiency in administration.

The results of this study however suggest that in the setting of BRT Peshawar, political instability can be seen as a more regular occurrence than a decisive hindrance. This is consistent with (Mubarak et al., 2023) who discovered that the

political risks can cause delays, however, they in no way necessarily result in the project failure in case of the financial and operational resources being adequate.

Impact of Legal Framework on Project Success

The findings also indicate that there is no substantial direct impact of the legal framework on the project success. Even though there was moderate trust in regulatory systems by respondents, regression analysis revealed that legal clarity on its own cannot be used to drive project outcomes.

This observation is in line with (Sohail et al., 2025) who note that the effectiveness of the legal frameworks in infrastructure projects is often restricted by weak enforcement mechanisms, bureaucratic overlap, and ambiguity in legal responsibilities.

Impact of Government Funding on Project Success

Government funding has been identified as an important and powerful predictor of the success of projects. The statistical findings validate that adequate and stable financial resources are essential in ensuring successful execution of infrastructure projects.

The finding is consistent with previous research like (Sohail et al., 2025), which underlines that regular funding is one of the most significant determinants of success in the metro and BRT systems in Pakistan. It supports the significance of financial governance in the mass government projects.

Impact of Stakeholder Engagement on Project Success

The stakeholder level of participation was established to positively influence the success of a project significantly. This means that active involvement, interaction and alignment of the interests of the stakeholders lead to better performance of the project. This finding is corroborated by (Sheikh, 2022), who notes that the stakeholder engagement is a critical component in improving the project legitimacy, conflict reduction and improved outcomes. The same has been seen in international BRT systems, where stakeholder engagement enhances implementation processes.

Moderating Role of Stakeholder Engagement

The moderation analysis shows that the stakeholder engagement does not play a significant role in moderating the relationship between political stability and the success of the project. This implies that despite the fact that stakeholder participation enhances the project success, it does not undermine the adverse impacts of political instability.

This observation can be traced to Social Conflict Theory, which holds that the structural political conflicts can not be effectively resolved solely through the participatory mechanisms. Equally, (Nadeem and Matsuyuki, 2025) is of the view that stakeholder engagement enhanced the public acceptance in the Lahore BRT system, but failed to prevent delays due to political factors.

Overall Interpretation of Findings

In general, the results provide a complex interpretation of the factors determining the success of a project in the case of BRT Peshawar. Although political stability and legal frameworks constitute part of the overall governance environment, they have little direct influence on project success.

Conversely, governmental financing and stakeholder involvement show great predictive values, emphasizing the role of financial capability and participatory processes. These findings highlight that adequate resource mobilization and stakeholder engagement are key contributors to the successful infrastructure development in the developing world.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that political challenges have a great impact on the performance of infrastructure projects, but they also affect performance on different dimensions. The statistical results indicate that the most influential factor on project success is the government funding, as it shows that the coefficient of regression is significant ($p < 0.05$). This implies that the successful implementation of large-scale projects like BRT Peshawar requires the provision of sufficient and regular financial support.

Conversely, it was observed that political unrest and poor legal systems had lesser direct influence on the success of the projects. Even though these aspects may pose operational challenges, their implications may not necessarily result in quantifiable performance results.

In addition, stakeholder engagement was discovered to positively affect the project success; nevertheless, it did not have significant moderating role in the relationship between political challenges and project success. It means that although the involvement of stakeholders enhances communication and legitimacy, it is not able to address the issue of structural political constraints completely.

Conclusively, the research points out that effective financial governance, institutional stability, and systematic mechanisms of stakeholder engagement are essential in the development of successful infrastructure in politically sensitive settings. The results add to the overall comprehension of the functioning of project governance in developing nations and the necessity of comprehensive policy measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the empirical results of this research, the next recommendations may be offered:

Given that regression analyses have shown that government funding has a significant impact on the success of a project, policymakers must also ensure that there is a stable and transparent financial planning of infrastructure projects to avert project delay and cost overruns.

As the indirect impacts of political instability on project performance have been observed, governments need to ensure that institutional continuity is enhanced, and that government intervention in the project implementation is minimized.

Considering that stakeholder involvement has a great positive influence on the success of the project, project authorities should institutionalize the involvement of stakeholders by providing formal engagement platforms, frequent consultations, and feedback.

Even though the engagement of the stakeholders does not substantially moderate the issues of politics, it still has the positive effect on the transparency and trust of people,

hence, it must be included in all the stages of the project planning and implementation.

The legal frameworks must be reinforced to enhance project governance, accountability, and reduce delays within the administration.

These recommendations are practical guidelines towards enhancing infrastructure project performance in politically complex environments.

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