



REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 58091

Title: From Land Acquisition Risk to Project Success: The Mediating Role of Community Consent and Grievance Redress Mechanism Effectiveness in Ugandas Linear Infrastructure Projects.

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity			✓	
Significance			✓	

Reviewer Name: **ANAPANA GOPAL**

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

General Comments

This manuscript investigates how land acquisition risk influences project success in Uganda's linear infrastructure projects through the mediating effects of community consent and grievance redress mechanism (GRM) effectiveness. The study employs Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using data from 400 respondents and presents a theoretically grounded mediation model linking social legitimacy factors with infrastructure project outcomes. The topic is relevant to project management, infrastructure governance, stakeholder engagement, and development studies. The manuscript demonstrates good methodological rigor; however, several conceptual, methodological, and presentation-related issues should be addressed before publication.

Content and Originality

Strengths

- The study addresses an important challenge faced by infrastructure projects in developing countries, particularly land acquisition disputes and stakeholder resistance.
- The integration of community consent and grievance redress mechanisms as mediating variables provides a valuable socio-institutional perspective on project success.
- The proposed conceptual framework extends traditional project success models beyond cost, time, and quality dimensions.
- The study contributes to stakeholder theory and social licence-to-operate literature in infrastructure project management.

Weaknesses

- The novelty claim requires stronger justification. Similar studies have examined stakeholder engagement, social licence, and grievance mechanisms in infrastructure and mining projects.

REVIEWER'S REPORT

- The manuscript does not clearly explain how its framework differs substantially from existing social licence-to-operate models.
- The discussion largely confirms expected relationships rather than generating new theoretical insights.
- The Uganda-specific contribution should be emphasized more clearly.

Technical Quality

Strengths

1. Strong Methodological Framework

The methodology is clearly described and follows accepted SEM procedures. The study reports:

- Reliability analysis.
- Convergent validity.
- Discriminant validity.
- Model fit indices.
- Mediation analysis using bootstrapping.

These procedures enhance methodological credibility.

2. Adequate Sample Size

The sample size of 400 respondents is sufficient for SEM analysis and exceeds commonly recommended thresholds.

3. Strong Measurement Properties

Reliability and validity statistics exceed recommended thresholds:

Construct	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
LAR	0.925	0.936	0.571
CC	0.932	0.942	0.595
GRM	0.946	0.954	0.651
PS	0.951	0.957	0.671

These values indicate excellent internal consistency and convergent validity.

4. Excellent Model Fit

The SEM model demonstrates excellent fit:

Index	Obtained Value
CFI	0.989
TLI	0.988
RMSEA	0.018

These values indicate a highly acceptable structural model.

Minor Concerns

1. Sampling Procedure Insufficiently Described

The manuscript does not adequately explain:

- Sampling technique used.
- Respondent recruitment procedure.
- Geographic coverage.
- Types of infrastructure projects included.
- Response rate.

These omissions affect reproducibility and external validity.

REVIEWER'S REPORT

2. Cross-Sectional Design Limitations

The study acknowledges the use of cross-sectional data, but causal interpretations remain strong throughout the discussion. Caution should be exercised when interpreting mediation pathways as causal relationships.

3. Common Method Bias Assessment

Although Harman's single-factor test and VIF diagnostics were reported, these approaches alone may not sufficiently address common method variance concerns in self-reported survey studies. Additional procedural remedies should be discussed.

4. Lack of Control Variables

Several contextual variables were collected:

- Political interference.
- Agency coordination.
- Compensation status.
- Project complexity.

However, these variables were not incorporated into the structural model despite their potential influence on project success.

Results and Interpretation

Strengths

- Hypotheses are clearly stated and systematically tested.
- Mediation analysis is thorough and statistically convincing.
- The finding that land acquisition risk indirectly affects project success through community consent and GRM effectiveness is theoretically meaningful.

Concerns

- The non-significant direct effect of land acquisition risk on project success deserves deeper theoretical discussion.
- Alternative explanations for project success are not sufficiently explored.
- The relatively low R^2 value for community consent (0.190) suggests additional explanatory variables may be missing.

Literature Review

Strengths

- The review incorporates project management, stakeholder theory, social licence, grievance management, and infrastructure governance literature.
- Key theoretical foundations are appropriately cited.

Weaknesses

- The literature review is largely descriptive.
- Recent studies published after 2022 are minimally represented.
- Theoretical integration between stakeholder theory, social licence theory, and grievance management theory could be strengthened.
- Critical perspectives and contradictory findings are largely absent.

Language and Presentation

Strengths

- The manuscript is generally well organized.
- Writing is clear and technically understandable.
- Tables and figures are relevant and appropriately presented.

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Areas for Improvement

- Numerous spacing inconsistencies exist throughout the manuscript.
- Reference formatting is inconsistent.
- Some citations are incorrectly formatted (e.g., missing spaces around author names and ampersands).
- Minor grammatical editing is required throughout the manuscript.

Examples include:

- "Prno&Slocombe"
- "Fornell&Larcker"
- "Tabachnick&Fidell"

These should be standardized according to journal guidelines.

References

Strengths

- The manuscript cites foundational works in:
 - Project Management.
 - Stakeholder Theory.
 - Structural Equation Modelling.
 - Social Licence to Operate.
 - Grievance Redress Systems.

Weaknesses

- Several references are relatively old and foundational rather than contemporary.
- More recent infrastructure governance literature should be included.
- Some newspaper sources may be better replaced with government reports or peer-reviewed evidence where possible.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. Clearly describe sampling procedures and respondent selection methods.
2. Provide additional details about infrastructure project types and study locations.
3. Strengthen theoretical differentiation from existing social licence-to-operate frameworks.
4. Incorporate relevant control variables into supplementary analyses.
5. Expand discussion of the non-significant direct effect of land acquisition risk.
6. Include more recent literature (2023–2026).
7. Improve reference formatting and citation consistency.
8. Undertake professional language editing.

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Overall Assessment

The manuscript addresses an important and policy-relevant issue in infrastructure project governance. The study presents a robust SEM-based analysis and offers useful insights into how community consent and grievance mechanisms shape project success. The empirical evidence is generally strong, and the findings have practical implications for infrastructure planning and stakeholder management in developing countries. However, improvements are required regarding theoretical positioning, sampling transparency, discussion depth, and presentation quality before publication.

Final Recommendation

Minor Revision