

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# Optimizing organisational value: crafting a constructively aligned thematic framework for project governance enhancement

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to create a harmoniously blended thematic conceptual framework that incorporates project governance principles, built upon insights obtained from previous academic studies. This framework is positioned to offer significant benefits to the organisation by improving operational efficiency and aligning with strategic objectives. The authors adopted a qualitative research approach to analyse the key literature on the paper's theme. They carefully reviewed the theoretical underpinnings and categorised the contents to construct a step-by-step thematic conceptual framework aligned with the research's objectives. The study identifies four key elements in the suggested framework for project governance. These include maintaining the unity of functional diversity among key processes, creating value and practicing originality, maintaining a sequential governance application path through onion-shaped structure, and ensuring the availability of required project governance framework quality. The framework ensures projects achieve objectives, deliver value for money, and contribute to sustainable development through oversight, control, integration, benefits realization, stakeholder engagement, project culture, and leadership. Effective project governance requires clear goal delineation, well-structured plans, robust risk management protocols, and collaboration among stakeholders. Regular monitoring and assessment of project performance is crucial for achieving project objectives and contributing to sustainable development goals. Governance differs from management in its focus on strategic decision-making, driving investments in capabilities, and ensuring optimal resource allocation. In public sector development projects, incorporating effective project governance practices is crucial for delivering optimal value for invested resources, achieving predefined objectives, and

achieving desired outcomes cost-efficiently and impact fully. This separation underscores the importance of governance in imbuing projects with sustainable value and fostering prudent decisions. The paper presents a thematic conceptual framework for project-centric entities, derived from extensive literature analysis. This framework offers a structured blueprint aligned with project objectives, fostering the twin goals of optimizing value for invested resources and nurturing project sustainability. By embracing this framework, organisations can enhance their capacity to deliver outcomes that meet benchmarks and maximise resource utilization, enhancing the overall value proposition of initiatives. The convergence of project implementers and governance entities is crucial for driving exceptional quality outputs and adhering to robust governance principles, ensuring project success and sustained effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Project governance, thematic conceptual framework, governance perspective, project-driven organisation, project sustainability.

## INTRODUCTION

Project governance refers to the structures, processes, and policies put in place to ensure effective management, oversight, and accountability for projects. It provides a framework for decision-making, risk management, and project performance evaluation. In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on project governance as organisations seek to improve project outcomes and reduce risks. In the modern world, the acceleration

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of development through strategic perspective in the countries has been a major vacuum to accomplish the work in different sectors or industries (Kodithuwakku, 2022; Anderson, 2012). In parallel, the economies are trying to shorten the time gap to speed up their development work through projects to deliver broader packages to the society satisfying the aspirations of all stakeholders involved.

Scholars have developed various theoretical frameworks to elucidate project governance, with one notably influential framework being the “three-dimensional model” crafted by Müller & Jugdev (2012). This model delineates project governance across three dimensions: strategic, tactical, and operational. The strategic dimension prioritises aligning projects with goals, while the tactical dimension involves planning, execution, and control. The operational dimension centers on project delivery and stakeholder management. Moreover, it’s recognised that these dimensions seldom operate in isolation within an organisation, as a project-driven strategy progressively integrates into the economy (Dissanayake & Devapriya, 2022; Joslin & Muller, 2016). Within this context, optimizing limited resources within such a strategic framework becomes pivotal for effective and efficient project performance improvement. Management literature has underscored the significance of a well-structured, pre-determined framework—referred to project governance—to streamline project management processes (Hjelmbrekke *et al.*, 2014). Consequently, scholars have concentrated efforts on conceptualising the necessity of project governance through diverse frameworks (Too & Weaver, 2014). Additionally, it’s emphasised that project governance frameworks must generate value (Ismail *et al.*, 2021), exhibit flexibility, and provide robust responses to the inherent turbulence in project implementation or organisational dynamics (Sanderson, 2012). Remarkably, projects lacking senior management involvement and oversight by varied stakeholders fail to deliver effective outcomes for organisations and society (Brunet, 2019). Establishing organisational arrangements—such as rules, regulations, mechanisms, procedures, and systems—is crucial to delineate boundaries between senior management and project teams. This facilitates value addition, ensures alignment with strategic objectives, decentralises, decision-making, maps and allocates resources as per situational demands, and enables timely monitoring, evaluation, and control by stakeholders (Kodithuwakku, 2022; Gunawardane *et al.*, 2021; Sri Lanka, Department of Project Management and Monitoring, 2017). Consequently, the organisational challenge lies in harmonising project internal management with the governance framework. This alignment ensures that the

internal management of projects actively supports and aligns with the strategic objectives of the organisation (Athukorala *et al.*, 2017; Nanthagopan *et al.*, 2016).

The theoretical underpinning of project governance, as elucidated in the “governance structure model” by Bredillet *et al.* (2018), underscores the pivotal significance of the governance framework within the realm of project management. This model serves as a beacon, illuminating the criticality of establishing a well-defined governance structure that meticulously outlines roles and responsibilities. Central to this framework is the acknowledgment of the profound impact that a transparent and coherent governance structure exerts on the efficacy and success of project endeavors, emphasising the imperative need for clarity and precision in delineating individual roles and their corresponding responsibilities. Another influential framework is the “governance maturity model” developed by Crawford & Pollack (2004). This model proposes that project governance evolves over time; organisations can move from a low level of governance maturity to a high level of maturity through a series of stages. The stages include ad hoc, formalised, structured, managed, and optimised. In recent years, scholars have developed more complex and nuanced frameworks that take into account the growing complexity of projects. For example, Müller & Jugdev (2012) developed the “three-dimensional model” of project governance, which emphasises the strategic, tactical, and operational dimensions of project governance. In addition, other scholars have developed frameworks that emphasise different aspects of project governance. For example, Winter & Smith (2006) developed a framework that emphasises the role of project governance in managing complexity and uncertainty. They argue that effective project governance requires a flexible approach that can adapt to changing circumstances. Moreover, scholars have started to focus on the importance of stakeholder management in project governance. For example, Langley *et al.* (2018) developed the “stakeholder governance framework”, which emphasises the importance of identifying and managing stakeholders’ needs and expectations. Therefore, the theoretical frameworks on project governance provide a useful way to understand the complex structures, processes, and policies that underpin effective project management. These frameworks highlight the importance of aligning projects with organisational goals, managing risks, and adapting to changing circumstances. By using these frameworks, organisations can improve project outcomes and minimise unnecessary risks.

This paper critically investigates the imperative of establishing a conceptual framework harmoniously intertwined with project governance, drawing upon a

comprehensive analysis of prior literature. Central to this inquiry is the exploration of how such a project governance framework can catalyse and amplify organisational value. To unearth retrospective insights, this research addresses two pivotal inquiries: the extent of alignment evident in diverse models developed by scholars concerning project governance and the delineation of significant functions and responsibilities intrinsic to a constructively aligned project governance framework. The paper commences by delving into recent literature, conducting a comprehensive review of various models pertinent to project governance. This preliminary step aims to distill empirical evidence elucidating the nature of these frameworks and their potential integration for constructive alignment within the ambit of project governance. Through a meticulous examination of empirical findings, critical reviews, and foundational constructs, the subsequent phase involves the formulation of a conceptual framework on project governance. This proposed framework amalgamates key elements derived from disparate, yet complementary frameworks established in prior research. It aims to present a constructively aligned project governance blueprint, poised to optimise project operations while concurrently contributing to the holistic development of the country. By weaving together these diverse elements, this framework envisages facilitating the efficient execution of projects, thereby contributing tangibly to the nation's developmental objectives through a nuanced and balanced governance strategy. Concluding the discourse, this paper not only recommends pragmatic avenues for the application of the proposed framework but also underscores the potential trajectories for future research endeavors. By delineating actionable suggestions for practical implementation, it sets the stage for the realisation of the framework's potential and underscores its adaptability in diverse project landscapes while fostering an open avenue for further scholarly exploration.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of project governance

Theoretical and empirical evidence on project governance has grown significantly over the past two decades. Scholars have developed various theoretical frameworks and models to explain the nature and dynamics of project governance, while empirical studies have explored the effectiveness of different governance mechanisms and practices. Complementing the aforementioned theoretical framework regarding project governance is the governance structure model formulated by Bredillet & Tywoniak (2000). This model delineates the preparation, implementation, and monitoring phases of project governance, positing that it operates

on a dual principle standardisation and customisation. This nuanced approach enables project governors to meticulously fashion and execute role-specific, goal-driven strategies, thereby fostering effective means to accomplish project objectives. Consequently, the models on project governance underscore the paramount significance of delineating clear roles and responsibilities, establishing streamlined decision-making protocols, and fostering robust communication channels within project governance. Emphasising these aspects becomes crucial in steering projects towards successful fruition. Another influential framework is the governance maturity model developed by Crawford & Pollack (2004), which proposes that project governance evolves over time and organisations can move from a low level of governance maturity to a high level of maturity through a series of stages. More recent frameworks have emphasised the importance of stakeholder management, such as the stakeholder governance framework developed by Langley *et al.* (2018). This framework emphasises the importance of identifying and managing stakeholders' needs and expectations to ensure project success.

Empirical studies have proved that effective project governance is associated with better project outcomes, such as higher project success rates, improved stakeholder satisfaction, and reduced project risks. For example, a study by Javed & Malik (2016) found that project governance practices such as risk management, stakeholder engagement, and performance monitoring were positively associated with project success. Similarly, a study by Belout & Gauvreau (2004) found that effective project governance mechanisms, such as project charters, project management plans, and performance measurement systems, were associated with better project outcomes. Overall, the theoretical and empirical evidence suggests that effective project governance is critical for project success. Clear roles and responsibilities, effective communication, stakeholder management, and risk management are some of the key elements of effective project governance.

### Governance in an integrated context

In recent years, scholars have increasingly emphasised the need for an integrated approach to project governance which considers the complex and interrelated nature of project management. An integrated approach to project governance considers the strategic, tactical, and operational aspects of project management, as well as the interactions between project governance and other organisational systems. One theoretical framework that emphasises an integrated approach to project governance is the "three-dimensional model" developed by Müller & Jugdev (2012). This model highlights the strategic,

tactical, and operational dimensions of project governance and emphasises the need for alignment between these dimensions. The model also highlights the importance of stakeholder management and the role of organisational culture in shaping project governance. Another theoretical framework that emphasises an integrated approach to project governance is the “integrated project governance model” developed by Pemsel & Wiewiora (2013). This model emphasises the importance of integrating project governance with other organisational systems, such as strategy, performance management, and risk management. The model also emphasises the need for clear roles and responsibilities, effective communication, and stakeholder management. Empirical studies have shown that an integrated approach to project governance is associated with better project outcomes. For example, a study by Zwikael & Smyrk (2015) found that an integrated approach to project governance was positively associated with project success. The study also found that effective stakeholder management was a key driver of project success in an integrated governance context. Similarly, a study by Van der Waldt & Du Plessis (2016) found that an integrated approach to project governance, which included elements such as strategic alignment, performance measurement, and stakeholder management, was associated with better project outcomes.

Overall, the theoretical and empirical evidence suggests that an integrated approach to project governance is critical for project success. Clear roles and responsibilities, effective communication, stakeholder management, and integration with other organisational systems are

some of the key elements of effective project governance in an integrated context.

### **The relationship between project governance and financial management**

The relationship between project governance and financial management has been a topic of interest among scholars and practitioners in project management. Effective financial management is critical for project success, and project governance plays an important role in ensuring that financial resources are allocated and managed effectively. Theoretical frameworks have been developed to explain the relationship between project governance and financial management. One such framework is the “governance-performance framework” developed by Gareis & Huemann (2006), which emphasises the importance of project governance in ensuring effective financial management and ultimately project success. The framework proposes that project governance structures, processes, and practices should be aligned with project goals and objectives and should

support effective financial management. Another theoretical framework that emphasises the relationship between project governance and financial management is the “resource-based view of the firm” developed by Wernerfelt (1984). This framework proposes that effective financial management is a key resource for project success and that project governance plays an important role in allocating and managing financial resources effectively. Empirical studies have also explored the relationship between project governance and financial management. For example, a study by Pemsel & Müller (2012) found that effective project governance, including financial management practices such as budgeting and cost control, is positively associated with project success. Similarly, a study by Johansen & Gronhaug (2015) found that effective financial management, which includes project governance practices such as monitoring and controlling costs, is positively associated with project success.

Overall, the theoretical and empirical evidence suggests that project governance and financial management are closely related, and effective financial management is critical for project success. Project governance plays an important role in ensuring that financial resources are allocated and managed effectively and that financial management practices are aligned with project goals and objectives.

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## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a purely qualitative approach, leveraging secondary literature and scholarly journal articles for data analysis. A comprehensive review was undertaken specifically focusing on previous studies concerning the project governance framework with its thematic background, its key features and their governance processes with the selected key exposures in Sri Lanka and abroad. The synthesis of information followed an interpretive method, contextualising the research’s theme and underlining its significance (Ihuah *et al.*, 2014). Data analysis involved a thematic evaluation aimed at identifying and elucidating implicit or explicit patterns within the content of the studies (Ismail *et al.*, 2019; Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2013). The search for publications encompassed renowned scholarly databases such as Emerald, Elsevier, Science Direct and Springer. Papers relevant to the nexus of project governance and performance in public sector development projects were meticulously chosen for detailed scrutiny. To focus on the gaps pertinent to the Sri Lankan context, a meticulous filtering process was executed based on thematic areas, drawing from abstracts, literature contexts, and keywords like “Project Governance”, “Project Governance Framework”, “Project Performance” and “Public Sector

Development Projects". The articles selected were subjected to hard assessment. As mentioned earlier, the literature review process employed a structured three-phase strategy. Initially, articles were retrieved from databases, followed by a meticulous filtering process to eliminate irrelevant content and ensure alignment with the research aims. Subsequently, selected articles underwent further scrutiny and analysis to harmonise with the study's objectives. Ultimately, the insights gleaned from the literature were synthesized to bridge and address the empirical gaps this study was specifically designed to resolve.

## THEMATIC CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Developing a conceptual framework on project governance requires a thorough understanding of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature. Within the multifaceted and retrospective perspectives offered by the aforementioned frameworks crafted by scholars such as Bredillet *et al.* (2018), Langley *et al.* (2018), Mullar & Jugdev (2012), Winter & Smith (2006), Crawford & Pollack (2004), and the foundational work of Bredillet & Tywoniak (2000), a synthesis emerges. This synthesis paves the way for delineating key steps essential to constructing a thematic conceptual framework for project governance within this study:

**Step 1: Review the literature on project governance**  
The first step in developing a conceptual framework on project governance is to review the relevant literature. This includes both theoretical and empirical studies that address various aspects of project governance, such as governance structures, processes, practices, and outcomes. Scholars like Müller & Jugdev (2012), Pemsel & Wiewiora (2013), and Gareis & Huemann (2006) have developed theoretical frameworks that can inform the development of a conceptual framework for project governance. Empirical studies such as those by Zwikael & Smyrk (2015) and Van der Walddt & Du Plessis (2016) can provide insights into the factors that contribute to effective project governance.

**Step 2: Identify the key components of project governance**  
Based on the literature review, identify the key components of project governance that will be included in the conceptual framework. These may include governance structures, processes, practices, and outcomes, as well as factors that influence project governance, such as organisational culture and stakeholder management (Jayasundara *et al.*, 2013).

**Step 3: Determine the relationships between the key components**  
Once the key components of project governance has been identified, determine the

relationships between them. For example, how do governance structures influence governance processes and practices? How do governance outcomes relate to project success? (Samaratunge & Pillay, 2011)

**Step 4: Identify the contextual factors that influence project governance**  
Project governance is influenced by a range of contextual factors, such as the characteristics of the project, the organisational context, and the external environment. Identify these contextual factors and consider how they may impact project governance and its outcomes (Kumara *et al.* 2016).

**Step 5: Refine and test the conceptual framework**  
Refine the conceptual framework based on feedback from experts in the field and empirical testing. Empirical testing can involve qualitative or quantitative research methods, such as case studies or surveys, to validate the relationships between the key components of project governance and the contextual factors that influence it (Weerasekara *et al.*, 2021).

In conclusion, developing a conceptual framework for project governance requires a thorough understanding of the relevant literature and a systematic approach to identifying the key components, relationships, and contextual factors. The framework should be refined and tested through empirical research to ensure its validity and usefulness in practice.

## Review the literature on project governance

The literature on project governance has gained significant attention since the turn of the millennium. Scholars have proposed various conceptual frameworks for project governance, and these frameworks have been refined and developed over time. This review will summarise some of the main ideas and debates in the literature on project governance.

In the early 2000s, scholars focused on defining project governance and outlining the key components of effective project governance. According to Müller & Turner (2007), project governance is the set of processes and structures that ensure effective and efficient decision-making, communication, and control in projects. They identified three key elements of project governance: oversight, control, and integration. Subsequent research has expanded on these elements and proposed additional components of project governance. For example, Crawford *et al.* (2008) argued that project governance must also include a focus on project benefits and stakeholder engagement. Other scholars have emphasised the importance of project culture and leadership in effective project governance (Hartman & Ashrafi, 2002; Bredillet, 2008). In recent years, scholars

have also turned their attention to the role of governance in agile project management. As agile approaches have become more popular in project management, there has been a growing recognition that traditional governance structures may not be effective in agile environments (Müller & Whitty, 2020). Some scholars have proposed new frameworks for agile project governance, such as the Agile Governance Framework (AGF) proposed by Joslin & Müller (2015). One of the ongoing debates in the literature on project governance is the appropriate level of governance for different types of projects. Some scholars argue that there should be a standardised approach to project governance across all projects within an organisation (Thiry, 2010), while others propose that governance should be tailored to the specific needs of each project (Bredillet, 2008). Another area of debate is the relationship between project governance and project success. Some scholars argue that effective project governance is a key determinant of project success (Hartman & Ashrafi, 2002), others suggest that the relationship between project governance and project success is more complex (Müller & Turner, 2010). Overall, the literature on project governance has evolved significantly since 2000, with scholars proposing various conceptual frameworks and refining their understanding of the key components of effective project governance. Ongoing debates in the literature include the appropriate level of governance for different types of projects and the relationship between project governance and project success.

### Identify and determine the key components of project governance

Scholars have proposed various key components of project governance over the years. Some of the most related and cited components are as follows:

1. Oversight: According to Müller & Turner (2007), project governance involves overseeing the project to ensure it meets its objectives. Oversight includes monitoring project performance, identifying risks and issues, and making decisions to address them.
2. Control: Project governance also involves controlling the project's resources, scope, schedule, and budget. This requires establishing controls and procedures to ensure that project activities are completed efficiently and effectively (Gunawardana et al, 2021).
3. Integration: Effective project governance requires integrating project activities across all levels and functions of the organisation. This involves aligning project objectives with business goals, managing stakeholder expectations, and coordinating the efforts of the project team members (Kodithuwakku, 2022).
4. Benefits realization: Crawford et al. (2008) argue that project governance should also focus on realising project benefits. This involves defining the expected benefits of the project, measuring progress towards those benefits, and ensuring that the benefits are actually realised.
5. Stakeholder engagement: Effective project governance requires engaging stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle. This involves identifying and managing stakeholder expectations, communicating with stakeholders regularly, and involving stakeholders in decision-making processes (Ismail et al., 2021a; b).
6. Project culture: Scholars such as Hartman & Ashrafi (2002) have argued that project culture plays a critical role in project governance. A positive project culture is characterised by shared values, beliefs, and behaviors that support effective project management.
7. Leadership: Bredillet (2008) emphasises the importance of leadership in effective project governance. Leaders must establish clear project goals, communicate effectively with stakeholders, and provide guidance and direction to project team members.

These components are not exhaustive, and there may be other important elements of project governance depending on the context and nature of the project. However, these components provide a useful starting point for understanding the key factors that contribute to effective project governance. In particular, the key components of project governance are interrelated and work together to ensure effective and efficient project management. Here are some of the relationships (as integrated) between the key components as proposed by scholars as follows;

1. Oversight and Control: Oversight and control are closely related, as effective oversight requires establishing controls to ensure that project activities are completed as planned. Müller & Turner (2007) argue that oversight should involve monitoring project performance and making decisions to address risks and issues, while control involves managing project resources, scope, schedule, and budget.

2. **Integration and Benefits Realization:** Integration is essential for realising project benefits, as benefits can only be realised if all project activities are coordinated and aligned with business goals. Crawford *et al.* (2008) suggest that effective project governance requires integrating project activities across all levels and functions of the organisation, and defining and measuring progress towards project benefits.
3. **Stakeholder Engagement and Project Culture:** As Ismail *et al.* (2021a; b) emphasised, stakeholder engagement requires a positive project culture that supports open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect among all project stakeholders. Hartman & Ashrafi (2002) suggest that a positive project culture is characterised by shared values, beliefs, and behaviors that support effective project management.
4. **Leadership and Integration:** Effective project governance requires strong leadership to establish clear project goals, communicate effectively with stakeholders, and provide guidance and direction to project team members. Bredillet (2008) emphasises the importance of leadership in ensuring effective project integration and coordination across all levels and functions of the organisation.
5. **Stakeholder Engagement and Benefits Realization:** Engaging stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle is critical for ensuring that project benefits are realised. Effective stakeholder engagement involves identifying and managing stakeholder expectations, communicating with stakeholders regularly, and involving stakeholders in decision-making processes. Crawford *et al.* (2008) suggest that project governance should focus on realising project benefits by defining the expected benefits of the project, measuring progress towards those benefits, and ensuring that the benefits are realised.

These relationships are not exhaustive, and there may be other important connections between the key components of project governance depending on the specific context of the project. However, understanding these relationships can help project managers develop effective governance frameworks that consider all relevant factors and promote project success.

### **Identify the contextual factors that influence project governance**

Project governance is influenced by a wide range of contextual factors, including the industry or sector

in which the project is being carried out, the size and complexity of the project, the organisational culture and structure, the regulatory environment, and the external economic and political environment. Here are some recent views from scholars on the contextual factors that influence project governance:

1. **Industry or sector:** The industry or sector in which a project is carried out can have a significant impact on project governance. For example, projects in highly regulated industries such as healthcare or finance may require more stringent governance processes to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Conversely, projects in more creative industries such as advertising or software development may require more flexible and adaptive governance processes to foster innovation and creativity. According to Lim & Mohamed (2015), the industry or sector in which a project is carried out can significantly influence project governance, with different industries having different governance requirements based on their specific characteristics and regulatory environments.
2. **Size and complexity:** The size and complexity of a project can also influence project governance. Larger and more complex projects may require more formal governance structures and processes to manage the project effectively. This can include establishing clear roles and responsibilities, developing detailed project plans, and implementing rigorous monitoring and control mechanisms. According to Turner & Müller (2020), the size and complexity of a project can influence project governance by affecting the types of governance structures and processes that are necessary to ensure project success.
3. **Organisational culture and structure:** According to Joslin & Müller (2015), organisational culture and structure can significantly influence project governance, with organisations having different governance approaches depending on their values, beliefs, and management styles. The culture and structure of an organisation can also influence project governance. Organisations with a hierarchical culture and structure may be more likely to have formal governance processes in place, while organisations with a more collaborative culture and structure may rely more on informal governance mechanisms such as trust and communication.
4. **Regulatory environment:** The regulatory environment can have a significant impact on

project governance, particularly in industries that are heavily regulated. According to Pinto & Slevin (2019), the regulatory environment can significantly impact project governance by imposing legal and regulatory requirements that must be met to ensure project compliance and success. For example, projects in the construction industry may be subject to building codes and safety regulations, which require strict governance processes to ensure compliance.

5. Economic and political environment: According to Shenhar & Dvir (2018), the external economic and political environment can influence project governance by affecting the availability of resources, the level of competition, and the regulatory requirements that projects must meet. The external economic and political environment can also influence project governance. Economic factors such as market volatility and changing customer demands can affect project timelines, budgets, and resource availability. Political factors such as changes in government policies or regulations can also impact project governance by introducing new requirements or constraints.

Therefore, the contextual factors that influence project governance are complex and multifaceted. Effective project governance requires an understanding of these contextual factors and the ability to adapt governance processes to suit the specific needs of each project.

### **Refine and test the thematic conceptual framework**

Based on prior research, the many of theoretical and empirical findings, the project in the sense is defined as a temporary organisation (Turner & Muller, 2020). Ismail *et al.* (2021a; b) emphasised that the role of project and project management is in constructing and modifying organizational context. That shapes a clear, specific, and orderly attempt to operate and accomplish a set of predetermined goals that need to be fulfilling the development aspirations of a country. As Crawford *et al.* (2006), the any kind of projects are to do the right projects and to do those right aligning capabilities with strategy. For the project implementation, a timely, sufficient, quality resource allocation is to be performed by the project (Engwall & Jerbrant, 2003). Also, the project implementation needs a well-capable project staff having talent, ethical and clever manners (Huemann & Keegan, 2007). Also, the project implementation strategy is to be implemented concentrating on the changing paradigms of project management (Pollack, 2007). In a specific point of view, it was noted that most countries first design the projects to accelerate their development

process and these accelerations link to the programming at the long end (Maylor *et al.*, 2006). Based on the above empirical findings, the project governance as a concept is an ideal as well as the framework should be prepared with constructively aligning to project governance activities (Soderlund & Borg, 2011), and combining value and project management into an effective program management (Thiry, 2010) in a successive manner (Muller & Jugdev, 2012).

Müller (2009) suggests that a good conceptual framework for project governance should incorporate the views of all stakeholders, be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances, and provide a basis for measuring project success. Further, Aubry (2007) - emphasises the need for a conceptual framework that takes into account the different dimensions of project governance, including organisational structure, decision-making processes, and project management practices. Hobbs & Aubry (2008) argue that a good conceptual framework for project governance should be grounded in empirical research, be tested through case studies and surveys, and be validated through statistical analysis. In addition, Bredillet (2008) proposes a conceptual framework for project governance that emphasises the importance of political and social dynamics in shaping project outcomes. As Williams (2005) argued that a good conceptual framework for project governance should provide a clear and comprehensive model of project management that is grounded in theory and validated through practice. Moreover, a good conceptual framework for project governance should incorporate the principles of risk management, stakeholder management, and governance theory (Yong & Muller, 2010). These scholars provide a range of perspectives on how to refine and test a conceptual framework on project governance, highlighting the importance of empirical research, stakeholder engagement, and a comprehensive understanding of the various dimensions of project governance.

More recently, some scholars emphasised the importance and implications of good project governance framework. Bryde & Williams (2018) proposed a conceptual framework for project governance that emphasises the importance of stakeholder engagement, effective communication, and organisational learning. Also, Parellel *et al.* (2018) proposed a conceptual framework for project governance that includes the role of governance structures, leadership, and project management practices in ensuring project success. Furthermore, Hine & Arditi (2020) suggest that a good conceptual framework for project governance should incorporate the principles of adaptive governance,



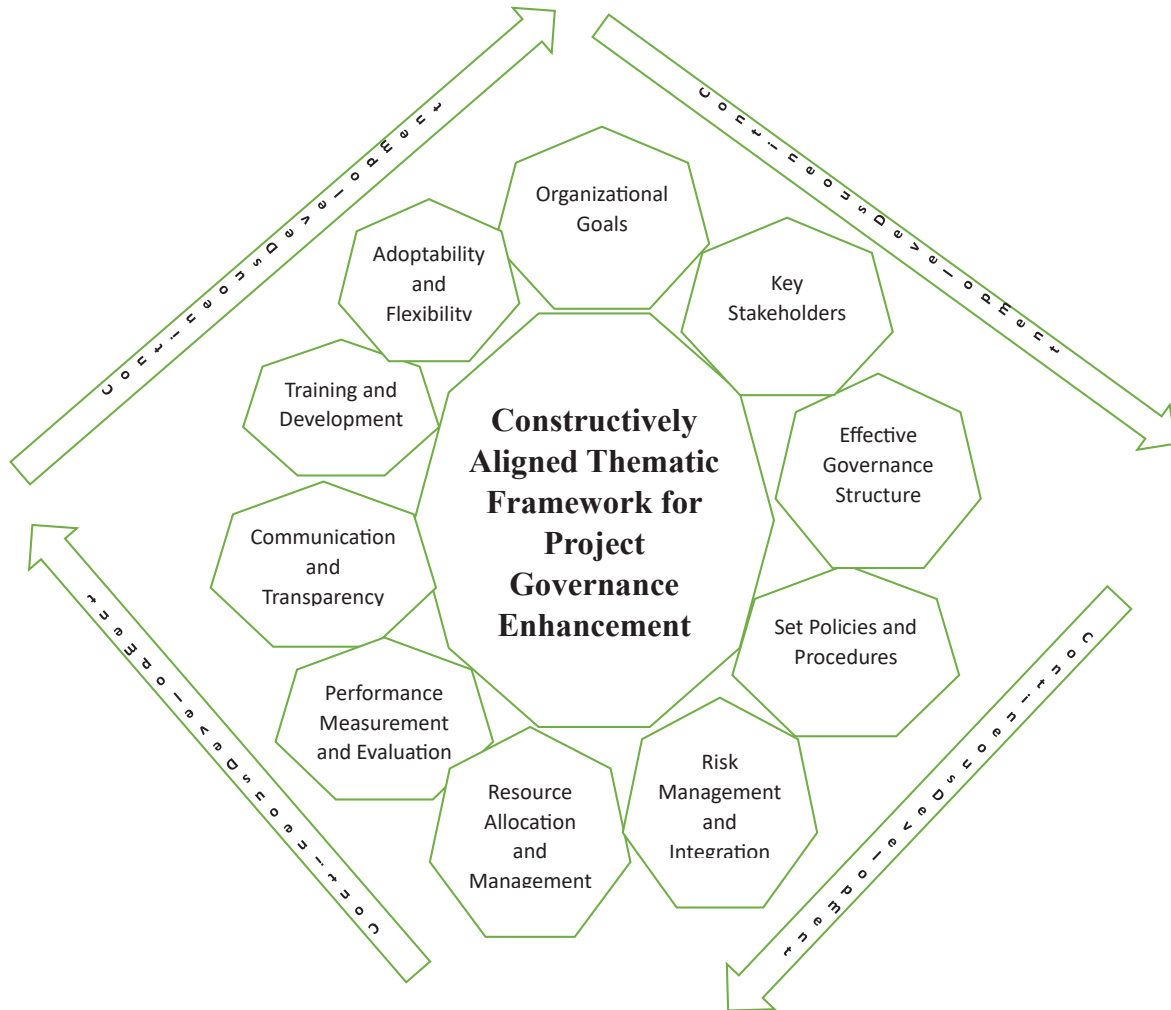


Figure 1: Constructively aligned conceptual framework developed by author (2023)

which involves continuous learning, collaboration, and innovation. Moreover, Sankaran & Pantouvakis (2019) propose a conceptual framework for project governance that emphasises the importance of ethical decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and performance measurement. However, Bredillet (2018) argued that a good conceptual framework for project governance should take into account the socio-political context of the project, including the influence of culture, power dynamics, and institutional frameworks. These recent scholars highlight the need for a conceptual framework for project governance that is grounded in the socio-political context of the project, incorporates principles of adaptive governance, and emphasises the importance of stakeholder engagement, effective communication, and organisational learning.

In light of the outcomes, the following model that constructively aligns to project governance is viewed as follows

### CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

According to the findings of this review, project governance, which is often overlooked, is critical when implementing public sector development projects. Especially, the governments of developed as well as developing countries make efforts to implement their countries' development strategies for accelerating the achievement of particular development objectives. Then, the communities are happy to obtain maximum efforts for their livelihood requirements and show their support

to the governments by showing that they are willing to contribute to the economic and social development of the country. In this circumstance, projects should implement their objectives-based strategic implementation of project activities while managing all required resources by adopting practice-based project governance to confirm the legitimacy of processes in line with the contents of a logically formulated project framework in a predetermined manner.

Project governance is a vital element that must be integrated into controlling all project processes, As stipulated in the management horizon, the controlling process is the ending function of it, ensuring that the entire process is successfully performed and the objectives of a particular journey are fulfilled. For the projects' perspective, the projects ultimately achieved their performance in terms of financial and non-financial performance by adequately surviving, monitoring, and legitimising the whole system into a significant and meaningful lesson by practicing the project governance practices. As a result, all stakeholders expect to benefit from the qualitative outcomes of good governance. In addition, this is an implicational perspective in terms of developing new discipline methodologies or knowledge, leadership positions that increase capability with a focus on research development or initiatives in that particular role, initiatives to knowledge bases and capacities, initiatives to grow project governance knowledge bases and capacities, including those that build academic or professional researchers' knowledge and understanding of their research opportunities and paradigms, fostering internal and external linkages, corporations, collaborative research and development with other departments, institutions, and organisations, supporting research and development within professional bodies and industry, and organizing or participating in departmental or institutional research forums, debates, and discussions, etc. Furthermore, the study's research findings would facilitate, network, and collaborate on items that provide indicators of contribution to the research environment for project staff, particularly through developing and supporting research networks to develop their project governance discipline or improve research capability inside and outside research academia. Moreover, these research findings would receive the invitations of researchers, professionals, and policymakers in their different project governance roles to present the research or related items as an indication of stakeholders' reputations within and outside of academia. In parallel, the research academics, professionals, policymakers, and related research parties would acquire the research and knowledge potentials to require outreach engagement opportunities that reflect the contributions they make to

the wider community in not only Sri Lankan research exposure but also in other global regions in relation to the project governance.

The study's findings serve as a guide for academic and professional contributions that will either directly or indirectly focus on the lessons that researchers will take away from it and the ways in which these research contributions have advanced project management knowledge in governance. By focusing this research contribution on a governance-based project management strategy, public sector development issues are addressed while balancing the development path that emerges from contemporary academic, research, and community engagement philosophies. This strategy helps countries to achieve their sustainable development goals adding real intrinsic value of financial resources / finding.

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## CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH OUTLINE OF FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT FOR PROJECT GOVERNANCE

### Conclusions

In the pursuit of organisational excellence, the imperative task of optimising value through a constructively aligned thematic framework for project governance enhancement emerges as a paramount endeavor. This comprehensive framework amalgamates diverse perspectives, methodologies, and strategic insights, presenting a clear pathway to elevate project governance to its pinnacle. Through a meticulous fusion of governance intricacies, role clarifications, and strategic congruence, this framework charts a transformative trajectory. It empowers organisations not merely to oversee projects but to orchestrate a symphony of success, resonating with amplified efficiency, agility, and enduring value creation. Ismail *et al.* (2021) underscore the critical assessment of project implementation, probing the fundamental question of success or failure and offering insights into avoidance strategies or avenues for enhanced success. Despite adequate resources, projects may falter, lag, or underperform, often attributed to deficient or misaligned project governance. As Too & Weaver (2014) strongly assert, robust project governance serves as the anchor, steering clear of pitfalls and guiding project implementers toward sustained growth and innovation. It acts as a pivotal negotiator, maintaining cohesive structures to avert setbacks while propelling projects toward their strategic objectives, thereby fulfilling the multifaceted expectations of stakeholders.

The objective of this paper has been to explore the imperative need for a conceptual framework that

harmonises effectively with project governance, drawing insights from existing literature and elucidating how such a framework contributes to augmenting organisational value. This study consolidates current knowledge in project governance, endeavoring to broaden the scope by synthesising scholarly findings on various project governance frameworks. Specifically, Bryde & Williams (2018) advocate perceiving project governance as a complex adaptive system, underscoring continual adaptation, learning, and stakeholder engagement for project success. Christophe Bredillet (2018) stresses the importance of crafting adaptable project governance frameworks that align with the socio-political context, acknowledging cultural nuances, power dynamics, and institutional frameworks. Moreover, Söderlund & Lundin (2018) propose an integrated perspective of project governance, encompassing governance structures, leadership, and project management practices while emphasising alignment and coordination across these dimensions. Concurrently, Hine & Arditi (2020) advocate a collaborative and iterative approach to project governance, emphasising ongoing dialogue, stakeholder engagement, and adaptive governance principles to foster continual learning and innovation. Finally, Sankaran & Pantouvakis (2019) highlight ethical decision-making as pivotal within project governance frameworks, advocating for transparency, accountability, and performance measurement to ensure responsible and sustainable project outcomes. Collectively, these findings underscore the necessity for an adaptive, integrated approach to project governance. Such an approach should consider the project's socio-political context, prioritise stakeholder engagement and collaboration, and uphold principles of transparency, accountability, and ethical decision-making, culminating in responsible and sustainable project outcomes in real-world scenarios

### **Revolutionising project governance: a modern approach**

The suggested framework outlines four pivotal elements crucial for the successful operation of projects in achieving their strategic objectives. Firstly, it emphasises the paramountcy of harmonizing diverse functions within the governance processes, spanning from project design and planning to resource allocation, people management, change governance, stakeholder fulfillment, transparency, and sustainability—ensuring a cohesive unity. Secondly, it underscores the significance of fostering value creation and fostering practical originality in project outcomes, amplifying their impact. Thirdly, it advocates for a structured governance approach, akin to an onion-shaped, nested structure—ranging from project management to strategic governance—illuminating a sequential path for effective governance applications. Finally, it stresses

the cyclicity of ensuring a requisite quality of project governance through iterative processes encompassing oversight, control, integration, benefits realisation, stakeholder engagement, nurturing a project culture, and effective leadership. Together, these elements form a comprehensive blueprint for steering projects toward success by instilling coherence, innovation, structured management, and continual enhancement within the governance framework.

### **Future-proofing projects: constructive alignment for strategic success**

The successful pursuit of organisational strategic objectives hinges on a constructively aligned project governance framework, encapsulating key elements essential for effective project administration. This framework serves as a potent tool, optimising both financial and physical project performance while enriching the socio-economic fabric with intrinsic values. Its adaptable nature allows project-driven organisations to transcend contextual boundaries, delivering predetermined outcomes while enhancing intrinsic worth. Distinguished from management, governance stands as a universal process catalyzing sustainable organisational value. It orchestrates judicious decisions, fostering systematic capabilities for optimal resource utilisation. In contemporary societies, particularly within the public sector, project-driven organisations converge efforts toward sustainable development goals, leveraging various governance mechanisms for competitive advantage. Looking ahead, future research endeavors are poised to elevate this thematic framework into a foundational governance structure, ripe for empirical validation. These studies aim to evolve extended frameworks, addressing burgeoning governance requisites and enhancing project performance and success. By integrating these frameworks, project-driven organisations are poised to augment their ethical compass, decisiveness, and comprehensiveness. This collective improvement in governance framework fitness is primed to amplify project performance through effective governance practices, fostering a more impactful organisational landscape.

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