

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GOVERNANCE PRACTICES AND STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT: A MULTINATIONAL ORGANISATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to explore the relationship of information technology (IT) governance practices and stakeholder management within global IT projects. Having IT governance in place is one thing, but practicability in the project is another challenge for project managers. While the practice of governance is still a challenge to implement, stakeholder management within the context of IT governance adds complexity to managing local and foreign stakeholders that span country borders. This article provides an understanding of how IT governance and stakeholder management are inseparable when implementing global IT projects. Interviews were used to determine the industry best practices for multinational organisations and project practitioners' experience in the implementation of global IT projects. The results highlight the link between stakeholder management and specific IT governance practices for proactively implementing global IT projects. A relationship management approach for project managers and other key project players to link both IT governance and stakeholder engagement is required. From a practical standpoint, the study explored the practitioners' experience and practices of IT governance implementation in line with stakeholder management in various global IT projects.

1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of global IT projects is prone to failure not because of technical aspects, but rather due to challenges regarding how governance is structured as well as the nature of heterogeneous stakeholders within global IT projects (Aarseth, Rolstadås, & Andersen, 2013; Alami, 2016; Lee & Baby, 2013; Stapel & Schneider, 2014). While global IT projects might have different governance structures, the way stakeholders are managed plays a major role in managing global IT projects successfully. For the purpose of this study, a global IT project is defined as an IT project which is implemented in more than one country, involving different global teams with various cultures, nationalities, knowledge and skills in order to achieve a common goal in an organisation operating in different countries. It is evident that managing global IT projects is a challenge for multinational organisations because IT governance adherence has not been consistently applied within the organisations and managing stakeholders on global IT projects has not received much attention. Furthermore, different stakeholders and IT governance frameworks at the subsidiary level add to the complexity of managing global IT projects. This introduces paradoxical thinking for project practitioners regarding what to implement as well as what to prioritise when it comes to governance adherence and the extent of stakeholder management. The aim of this research paper is to explore the relationship between IT governance and stakeholder management in the implementation of global IT projects. The focus is limited to the stakeholder management processes in relation to the three governance aspects, i.e. (i) IT governance structures, (ii) the IT steering committee and (iii) the IT project sponsor, and how they should be managed during project implementation. IT governance, as the greatest contributor to positive project performance (International Organization for Standardization, 2015), provides guidance for decision-making processes and clarifies the responsibilities among the project team (IT

Governance Institute, 2019). In turn, IT governance maximises business value by aligning IT investment with business strategy (Khther & Othman, 2013). On the other hand, stakeholders that play a role within IT governance have different levels of interest in the project. A stakeholder is an individual or group that has an interest in the positive outcome of a global IT project. Prasad, Green, and Heales (2012) note that many organisations hold the view that IT governance belongs to IT professionals. Business units, therefore, provide little or no ownership in the implementation of IT governance. Therefore, the implementation of IT governance alone without considering stakeholders' needs is likely to impact the project's performance. This paper is organised as follows: first, the literature review on IT governance and stakeholder management concepts is presented. Furthermore, stakeholder theory is discussed, followed by the stakeholder management processes that are required to manage global IT projects. The link between stakeholder management processes and different structures of IT governance is discussed. Second, the methodology section highlights the use of the qualitative approach. Third, the analysed data as well as the results are discussed. Fourth, the conclusions of the research findings are highlighted.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section the concept of IT governance, stakeholder theory and stakeholder management in managing global IT projects are introduced.

2.1 IT governance

IT governance emerged from the concept of corporate governance. Corporate governance refers to a set of mechanisms/systems for direction, rules, processes, policies, controls and procedures to govern the organisation (Baker & Anderson, 2010). Corporate governance enables organisations to align their strategic objectives through structured and organised teams to perform the required tasks. Within corporate governance, several types of governances might exist. In the context of this study, IT governance is a subset

of corporate governance (Marnewick & Labuschagne, 2011). Literature suggests various definitions of IT governance. Weill (2004) defines IT governance as the tool for decision-making and responsible IT usage. Similarly, De Haes and Van Grembergen (2015, p. 32) refer to IT governance as the "process whereby organisations institute the controls for decision-making process". In turn, these controls play an essential role in providing a system of checks and balances, and decision-making aims to have a common understanding in investing and implementing the key decisions on IT deliverables. IT governance also facilitates the decision-making process within the organisation. According to Calder (2009, p. 11), IT governance is defined as "a framework for the leadership, organisational structures and business processes, standards and compliance to these standards, which ensures that the organisation's IT supports and enables the achievement of its strategies and objectives". It can be inferred from these definitions that IT governance refers to the structures, processes, accountability and decision rights to drive IT delivery and create business value. The main components of IT governance are (i) value delivery and business alignment, (ii) responsibility and accountability, (iii) risk management and (iv) performance management (Childyal, Defence, & Chang, 2017; Héroux & Fortin, 2018).

1. IT value and business alignment: The aim of implementing IT governance is to ensure that organisations maximise any available IT opportunities. These opportunities are instituted based on the priorities through the investment in IT. The use of IT governance enables organisations to realise the business value created from IT-enabled business investments (Childyal et al., 2017). According to Lunardi, Maçada, and Becker (2014), IT value delivery and the consistent alignment of goals between IT units and other business units enable organisations to create many business values.

1. Responsibility and accountability: IT governance provides the framework of who is responsible and accountable for IT delivery. The leadership team that implements IT governance is tasked with ensuring that the responsibilities and accountabilities of IT resources are clear and well defined (Héroux & Fortin, 2018).
2. Risk management: IT governance provides the processes and controls to manage the risk. According to Gheorghe (2011), the governance practices of IT are to analyse and assess IT risks, implement the controls to minimise IT risks and put in place the control procedures that expose the significant risks related to IT initiatives.
3. Performance management: The aim of implementing IT governance is to ensure that IT initiatives are contributing to the organisation's performance. Having IT governance in the organisation provides the mechanism of measuring the performance of IT through tracking and monitoring IT strategy implementation, resource usage and service delivery (Spremić, 2012). Therefore, the impact of IT governance on an organisation's performance can be realised when there is a strategic alignment between IT strategy and business strategy.

In a multinational organisational context, the implementation of IT governance can be a challenge because each subsidiary or parent organisation might have different strategic goals and different organisational structures and operate in different environments. These differences might cause multinational organisations to have different IT governance practices in the subsidiaries and parent company, resulting in different standards and levels of IT governance. On the other hand, the multinational organisation might have standardised IT governance practices across its subsidiary offices but not fully implemented. While IT governance has been researched extensively, the implementation and practices in multinational organisations have not received much attention. Willson and Pollard (2009)

found that IT governance practices in a multinational organisation are impacted by historical context, visionary leadership, the organisation's nature and governance mechanisms. Chou and Liao (2017) also found that organisational configuration design, structural alignment and adaptive IT co-management are among the factors impacting IT governance practices in multinational organisations.

Literature suggests that there are various IT governance aspects that should be considered during IT project implementation (De Haes & Van Grembergen, 2015; Prasad et al., 2012; Tiwana, Konsynski, & Venkatraman, 2013; Weill & Ross, 2005). IT governance structures in the organisation, the formation of an IT steering committee and IT project sponsors have emerged as key aspects for the successful implementation of IT initiatives (De Haes & Van Grembergen, 2015; Kloppenborg, Manolis, & Tesch, 2009; Tiwana et al., 2013). The presence of IT governance structures provides an understanding and necessity of the adoption of IT governance in the implementation of IT projects (Alreemy, Chang, Walters, & Wills, 2016; De Haes & Van Grembergen, 2015; International Organization for Standardization, 2015; Mahy, Ouzzif, & Bouragba, 2016; Prasad et al., 2012). The IT steering committee is recommended by scholars as an important group of individuals to govern the implementation of IT projects (Cobanoglu, Ayoun, Connolly, & Nusair, 2013; Karimi, Bhattacharjee, Yash, & Somers, 2000; Prasad, Heales, & Green, 2010). During the implementation of the project, the sponsor provides not only financial support, but also an overall understanding of what is expected in the project (Breese, Couch, & Turner, 2020; Kloppenborg et al., 2009). Therefore, the IT project sponsor is the most important key stakeholder in determining project performance.

1. IT governance structures: Each organisation has different ways of organising its IT department. Therefore, how IT governance is structured differs from one organisation to another. For a multinational organisation, subsidiaries might also have implemented different IT governance structures. An IT

governance structure refers to the composition of the team from an executive level, management level and operation level. It is evident that there is no universal standard or agreed-upon IT governance structure. While there is no single right way for an organisation to adopt a specific IT governance structure (Selig, 2018), the aim of having the structure in place is to address the relevant available structures in the organisation which align with IT deliverables. An IT governance structure highlights who is part of the IT structure as well as the leadership responsible for delivering the IT initiatives within the organisation. In the implementation of IT projects, IT governance structures define the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder as well as their impact and influence on the project's performance. Project managers are required to understand who the key supporting resources from the IT governance structure are and leverage their involvement in the project. Monitoring the engagement is also key to determine what execution support is required, such as the mode of engagement, scheduled meetings and other communication channels available in the organisation.

2. IT steering committee: The IT steering committee is an executive-level committee which oversees IT initiative implementation and allocates resources to support the business requirements (De Haes & Van Grembergen, 2015). Understanding the roles and responsibilities as well as the influence during the implementation of IT initiatives informs the project manager and key project players as to what contribution the committee will add to the project's performance. Therefore, stakeholder management involvement in the IT steering committee is inevitable when planning the implementation of global IT projects.

3. IT project sponsor: The project sponsor is a key stakeholder and plays a critical role in project performance. The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBok) defines the project sponsor as a person or group who provides "resources and support of the project, program, or portfolio for enabling

success" (Project Management Institute, 2017). From an IT governance perspective, the IT project sponsor is responsible for initiating an IT decision, supporting the project financially and non-financially and ensuring the ongoing alignment of the IT project with the business strategy (IT Governance Institute, 2019). The timing of the selection of the sponsor is key and can affect the project's performance throughout the project life cycle (Breese et al., 2020). According to Kloppenborg et al. (2009), the project sponsor is a senior executive who has an influence and impact on the project key decisions. Engagement of the project sponsor should be early in the beginning of the project to understand the priorities, goals and expectations in a project.

Joshi, Huygh, De Haes, and Van Grembergen (2018) studied the implementation of IT governance and its association with organisational decision-makers. They agree with Lunardi et al. (2014) that IT governance alone cannot achieve organisational goals because it requires a combination of other functional groups such as business units and other decision-makers outside the IT department, referred to in this study as stakeholders.

2.2 Stakeholder theory

Freeman (1984, p. 6) describes stakeholders as "the group of people who support the organisation to reach its goals and objectives". Stakeholders have direct or indirect interests in the organisation (Maier, 2015), support the organisation's existence ('D'Souza & Williams, 2000), contribute to value creation (Clarkson, 1995) and influence decision-making (McGrath & Whitty, 2017). Various stakeholder theories have attracted debate among scholars concerning which is the best fit to manage stakeholders.

- Freeman's stakeholder theory argues that organisations that manage their stakeholder relationships effectively will survive longer and perform better than organisations that do not (Freeman, 1984). This theory is based on the

relationships between an organisation and others in its internal and external environment. The theory also considers how these relationships influence the organisation's performance. The interconnected relationships between a business and its customers, suppliers, employees and others who have a stake in the organisation are emphasised (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Fassin, 2009; Maier, 2015). In addition, the theory addresses the "principles of who or what really matter" (Freeman, 1984). However, scholars have cited shortcomings of Freeman's stakeholder theory. For example, there is no explanation of the specific stakeholders that require attention and those that do not (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997).

- Within the project management context, the stakeholder salience model of Mitchell et al. (1997) manages project stakeholders based on three parameters: power, legitimacy and urgency. Power is the stakeholder's ability to influence the outcome of deliverables. Legitimacy is the level of involvement or authority that a stakeholder has in the organisation. Urgency is the stakeholder requirements' call for immediate attention based on time sensitivity and criticality.
- The power-interest matrix model of Mendelow (1981) considers two attributes that stakeholders possess, i.e. power and interest. Stakeholders such as a regulator and senior executive members hold power that can influence decision-making in the organisation. The interest of each stakeholder differs and therefore stakeholders can negatively or positively influence the decision-making as well.
- The Friedman and Miles (2002) stakeholder model (2002) considers two criteria to explain the relationship between the stakeholder and the organisation, i.e., compatibility/incompatibility as well as necessity/contingency. The theory introduces these attributes to examine the relationship between the stakeholders and the organisation. Compatibility or incompatibility is based on terms of a set of ideas and material interests. Necessity or contingency is based on a set of connected ideas.

Stakeholder theory provides an understanding of who the stakeholders are and these stakeholders need to be managed.

2.1 Stakeholder management

Regardless of the debate on the various stakeholder theories, stakeholder management is key for the successful delivery of IT projects. Within the project management context, project stakeholder management is the “process required to identify the people, groups, or organizations that could impact or be impacted by the project, to analyze stakeholder expectation and their impact on the project, and develop appropriate management strategies for effectively engaging stakeholder stakeholders in project decisions and execution” (Project Management Institute, 2017, p. 503). While project stakeholder management has received considerable attention in other fields, such as construction, agriculture and health studies, studies in the IT context are limited. There are no universally agreed-upon project stakeholder management processes (Association for Project Management, 2006; International Project Management Association, 2015; Project Management Institute, 2017). However, certain generic processes are required to ensure that stakeholders are properly managed (Karlsen, 2002; Olander & Landin, 2008; Pedrini & Ferri, 2019). In this study, four quadrants in the stakeholder management circle are proposed: stakeholder identification, stakeholder analysis, stakeholder engagement and stakeholder monitoring (Association for Project Management, 2006; International Project Management Association, 2015; Project Management Institute, 2017).

1. Stakeholder identification: In quadrant 1, stakeholder identification involves the recognition of stakeholders’ presence in the organisation. Literature shows that the identification process requires an understanding of who should be involved and what roles and responsibilities are required from the identified stakeholders. Despite this, there are no rules of who should be identified. The criticality and

importance of the stakeholders that should be included in a project play a major role in the identification process (Olander & Landin, 2005; Razali & Anwar, 2011). Aapaoja and Haapasalo (2014) argue that stakeholder identification leads to easily understanding the roles as well as the requirements from stakeholders in a project. Stakeholder identification within IT governance provides an understanding of who the stakeholders are outside of the IT department as well as their contribution in implementing the global IT project. This includes who the stakeholders are from other business units and what roles and responsibilities will be required in implementing the project. Moreover, the roles and responsibilities provide the project manager with a mechanism for identifying who the key stakeholders are and what contributions are expected during the stakeholder identification process in implementing the project.

2. Stakeholder analysis: In the second quadrant, stakeholder analysis highlights the stakeholders’ attributes such as power, interest, urgency, necessity and legitimacy among and between the stakeholders (Bunn, Savage, & Holloway, 2002; Freeman, 1984; Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009; Mendelow, 1981). The identified stakeholders need to be analysed to avoid a negative impact on the project. The appropriateness of the identified stakeholders in the project is key to the project’s performance (Aragonés-Beltrán, García-Melón, & Montesinos-Valera, 2017). Therefore, selecting the right stakeholder can positively influence the project’s performance (Razali & Anwar, 2011). It is evident that stakeholders are dynamic in terms of shifting the expectations and needs throughout the project life cycle (Assudani & Kloppenborg, 2010; Bunn, Savage and Holloway, 2002; Jepsen and Eskerod, 2009). Therefore, stakeholder analysis prompts the project manager to analyse the appropriateness as well as the stakeholders’ attributes before engaging the stakeholder. The identified stakeholders from the different structures might have different interests in the project and exercise their power as well as their influence, and this can have a

detrimental effect on the project. Therefore, the IT project sponsor, the IT steering committee and other stakeholders, as part of the IT governance structure, need to be appropriately analysed. Alreemy et al. (2016) argue that the appropriateness of stakeholders within the context of IT governance is essential for a project’s success.

3. Stakeholder engagement: The analysis of the stakeholders’ attributes, impacts, interest and influence leads to an understanding of how critical the relevant stakeholder should be as part of the project team. This process provides the project manager with a strategic approach to prioritising stakeholders and engaging them. During this process, the key stakeholders are engaged through communication in order to seek their continuous participation and decision-making. The most important aspect to consider is what level of engagement is required and how frequently stakeholder engagement is required during the project life cycle (Missonier & Loufrani-Fedida, 2014; Tengan & Aigbavboa, 2017). Understanding the level of engagement and strategising the mechanism of engagement help to “address issues and foster appropriate stakeholder involvement in order to increase support and minimize resistance from the stakeholders” (Project Management Institute, 2017, p. 523). Even though global IT project deliverables are IT-related outputs, engaging key stakeholders in terms of the decision-making process within the context of IT governance as well as providing the resources to support IT initiatives are critical for the project’s performance.

4. Stakeholder monitoring: Keeping the stakeholders close as well as continuously monitoring the relationship is key to the project’s performance. Monitoring stakeholder engagement provides an opportunity for project managers to gain inputs from the key stakeholders to ensure that the envisaged project performance is attained. The aim is “to maintain or increase the efficiency and effectiveness of stakeholder engagement activities” (Project Management Institute, 2017).

IT governance cannot be successful if the management of stakeholders is not taken into account (Moraveck, 2013). The implementation of IT governance is not the sole responsibility of the IT department – it requires leadership from the various departments and subsidiaries within the organisation. Their involvement may entail an inclusive decision-making process, allowing resources from various disciplines and adherence to IT governance across the organisation. These leaders act as IT governance implementers and are referred to as stakeholders. These stakeholders need to be identified, analysed, engaged and monitored during the management of IT projects. It is therefore sufficient to say that, without stakeholder management, there is no IT governance within the organisation.

Figure 1 illustrates the four quadrants of stakeholder management within the context of IT governance.



Figure 1. Stakeholder management in IT governance

The research problem in this study was as follows: There is no clear understanding of the relationship between IT project governance and stakeholder management to improve global IT project performance within the realm of developing countries. The following section deals with the research methodology used in this study.

3 METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was used to gather information from participants’ experiences and perceptions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2019; Silverman, 2017). Twenty participants from various multinational organisations that had implemented global IT projects were interviewed. Participants were identified through convenient purposive sampling based on their experience, knowledge and skills in relation to IT governance and the implementation of global IT projects, key position in the organisation as well as accessibility and availability (Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2011; Field, 2018). The primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Prior to the interviews, the participants were fully informed of the purpose of the study as well as the confidentiality of the information they provided and their anonymity. An interview guide with leading questions was used to ensure that the information collected was aligned with the research problem. During the interviews, the participants were asked to respond freely, and any interruptions were avoided during the interviews.

No.	Demographic Information	Response	Frequency
1.	Years of experience	1-5 years	4
		6-10 years	10
		11-15 years	3
		16+ years	3
2.	Role in the organisation	CIO	2
		Directors	1
		Heads	4
		Senior Managers	11
		Managers	2
3.	Number of global IT projects implemented	1-5 projects	4
		6-10 projects	9
		10+ projects	7
4.	Nature of global IT project implemented	IT infrastructure	8
		IT systems	5
		Products & services	6
		Others	1

Table 1. Demographic information of interviewees

Flick (2013) argues that at the ninth interview, code saturation is reached and therefore, between 16 and 24 interviews are required to reach meaningful saturation. In this regard, 20 interviews were conducted, which is when saturation was reached. **Table 1** indicates the demographic information of the key interviewees who participated in the study.

The demographic information indicates that the 20 interviewees had the necessary skills and knowledge to provide meaningful insights. All interviews were recorded using relevant materials such as a notebook, pen and recorder. All interviews were transcribed and coded using Atlas.ti. Deductive coding or concept-driven coding was used from the pre-defined themes on stakeholder management as well as the IT governance structures presented in the literature review section. The predetermined themes were based on each quadrant. **Table 2** highlights the predetermined themes which are the key focus for this article.

STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT PROCESS	No.	THEME
IT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE		
Stakeholder Identification	1.	Existence of IT governance structure in the organisation
	2.	Stakeholders in the IT governance structure
	3.	Roles and responsibilities of the IT governance structure
Stakeholder Analysis	1.	Appropriateness of IT governance structure in the organisation
	2.	Impact of IT governance structure
	3.	Influence of various stakeholders within IT governance structure
Stakeholder Engagement	1.	Level of engagement with IT governance structure stakeholders
	2.	Frequency of engagement of IT governance structure stakeholders
Stakeholder Monitoring	1.	Monitoring the engagement of stakeholders in the IT governance structure
	2.	Inputs given in the IT governance structure
IT STEERING COMMITTEE		
Stakeholder Identification	1.	Existence of IT steering committee(s) in the organisation
	2.	Stakeholders on the IT steering committee(s)
	3.	Roles and responsibilities of the IT steering committee(s)
Stakeholder Analysis	1.	Appropriateness of IT steering committee(s) in the organisation
	2.	Impact of IT steering committee(s)
	3.	Influence of various stakeholders within IT steering committee(s)
Stakeholder Engagement	1.	Level of engagement with IT steering committee(s)
	2.	Specific roles and responsibilities of IT steering committee(s)
	3.	Frequency of engagement of IT steering committee(s)
Stakeholder Monitoring	1.	Monitoring the engagement of stakeholders in the IT steering committee(s)
	2.	Inputs given in the IT steering committee(s)
IT PROJECT SPONSOR		
Stakeholder Identification	1.	Existence of IT project sponsor in the organisation
	2.	Project sponsor selection
	3.	Roles and responsibilities of the IT project sponsor
Stakeholder Analysis	1.	Appropriateness of IT project sponsor in the organisation
	2.	Impact of IT project sponsor
	3.	Influence of IT project sponsor
Stakeholder Engagement	1.	Level of engagement with IT project sponsor
	2.	Frequency of engagement of IT project sponsor
Stakeholder Monitoring	1.	Monitoring the engagement of IT project sponsor
	2.	Inputs given from IT project sponsor

Table 2. Predetermined themes

The following section presents the analysis of the collected data and the discussion of the results.

4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Interviewees responded positively to how stakeholder management was performed within IT governance structures, the IT steering committee as well as for the IT project sponsor. From the interviews conducted, the following results were reported:

4.1 IT governance structure

Regarding stakeholder identification, the interviewees indicated the existence of an IT governance structure within the organisation and its alignment with the corporate governance structures to support business strategy. The interviewees reported that the key

stakeholders supported the implementation of the global IT project. An interesting observation is that the different sizes of the various IT departments as well as the size of the organisation were a reason for the different IT governance structures across the multinational organisation. Interviewee_3 mentioned: “Our organisation operates in more than 16 countries across Africa, however, the size of our subsidiary offices in terms of IT staff and entire organisation is different. So, IT governance structure in each country will differ depending on the IT structure in place”. Interviewee_11 also commented that the “IT governance structure is not the same 100%. Most of local IT structure don’t resemble at to all countries, this is due to size of staff in the department and

business environment, and therefore, some structure might differ somehow". Interviewees reported various stakeholders in the IT governance structure. Stakeholders from other business units were on various IT committees such as the IT risk committee, IT steering committee, IT compliance committee and other working groups. It was reported that during the implementation of a global IT project, stakeholder identification was more inclusive with other project teams outside the IT department and from other countries. Interviewee_8 stated: "For a country like Botswana, I find that each department has a representative from the department in the IT governance structure. Our IT governance structure is not purely IT only, rather it is inclusive with others outside our department". Interviewees understood what was expected from the stakeholders in terms of roles and responsibilities of the IT governance structure. They reported that the IT governance structure defined the following roles and responsibilities to support IT project implementation: monitor IT deliverables, define technical requirements within the IT context, define and set processes, policies and procedures, and ensure what resources are available when planning to implement the global IT project across the subsidiaries. Interviewee_3 pointed out that "IT governance structure has a lot of skilled resources across the subsidiaries, so allocation of resources from one country to another country was an added advantage".

For stakeholder analysis, regarding the appropriateness of the existing IT governance structures as well as the stakeholders required to support the global IT project, all the interviewees believed the structure was appropriate to support IT projects. They felt that the presence of business units on some of the IT-related committees was a good alignment to support the IT projects and establish a common understanding to enable decision-making. Interviewee_6 commented that the "IT governance structure is appropriate because of business presence to support and provide decisions". The appropriateness of the IT governance structure

impacts and influences the global IT project's performance. Interviewees reported that the accountability of the stakeholder, efficiency of project activities as well as the application of IT controls were factors of the IT governance structure that affected a project. Interviewees understood that having the IT governance structure in place contributed to project performance. In respect of the influence of the IT governance structure, interviewees reported that decision-making, compliance and contribution of the structure in adding to the business value were important in the implementation of the global IT project.

Interviewees reported the early engagement of the stakeholders from the IT governance structure during the implementation of the global IT project. In a global context, where the project originated from other countries, the local organisation was engaged early, depending on the IT governance structure in a particular country. Interviewee_6 observed that "Project Management Office who is responsible for project registration and CIO were notified early from the Group level to start preparation of planning for a project". However, Interviewee_3 said that not all stakeholders were engaged early: "Sometimes not all stakeholder are engaged early, there has been a tendency where a person is called in the middle of a project". The interviewees also reported that the frequency of engagement depended on the levels of the IT governance structure. The project manager and project sponsor were frequently engaged with local and foreign stakeholders. More engagement was reported to foster decision-making and avoid unnecessary delays during the project life cycle.

In the fourth quadrant of stakeholder management, stakeholder monitoring assisted with the continuous engagement of the stakeholders in the IT governance structure. Interviewees reported that communication through e-mail and meetings were key tools of monitoring the engagement of all relevant stakeholders in the project. The inputs required from the stakeholders were communicated to all other project teams. More inputs came from the IT steering

committee, the project sponsor and the executive management, which helped to improve project performance. The benefit of having subsidiary offices outside the country was the experience from other countries that had implemented similar projects which helped the local team to implement the recommended corrective actions. Interviewee_9 reported: "The engagement of other stakeholders in other countries where the similar project is being improved, helped to plan well and sometimes avoid issues that could have happen during the project".

4.2 IT steering committee

Interviewees indicated the presence of the IT steering committee in the organisation and during the implementation of the global IT project. They stated that the IT steering committee was a key stakeholder of IT governance. Interestingly, the interviewees reported different IT steering committees at each subsidiary level. This is in line with previous reported information of different IT governance structures across the subsidiary level. Interviewee_7 stated: "IT steering committee governing global IT project even if project is implemented in different, yet each subsidiary office has its own steering committee". It was reported that members of the IT steering committee included business stakeholders. To make the IT steering committee not only inclusive but also effective, members from other business units included the business executive team. Interviewee_20 elaborated: "The committee [IT steering committee] has business executive members, therefore IT department was not left alone. This enabled the committee to be effective and engaging". In the process of identifying and understanding the roles and responsibilities of the IT steering committee, the interviewees reported that the committee (i) ensured that the IT strategy was aligned with business strategy, (ii) assisted in decision-making on key IT initiatives, (iii) provided strategic leadership, (iv) ensured adherence to IT controls, policies and procedures, (iv) ensured IT system stability and (vi) recommended scope variations to the project

steering committee. Interviewee_2 briefed: "The role and responsibility of the committee [IT steering committee] were to support, guide and oversee the delivery of the IT initiatives and achievement of IT deliverables". Interestingly, most interviewees reported that the chief information officer (CIO) chaired the IT steering committee. However, several times the chief executive officer (CEO) attended and chaired the meetings. Interviewee_4 recalled that "Chair of the IT steering committee was CIO but sometimes CEO chaired the meeting if the project was complex and the investment was at Group level".

For stakeholder analysis, to determine the appropriateness of the IT steering committee, most interviewees noted that the presence of senior executive members in the committee resulted in effectiveness of the IT governance committee. They revealed that the availability of the senior executive members provided alignment between the IT professionals and business team to achieve the organisational strategy. The presence of business stakeholders on the committee allowed collective decision-making and adherence to controls and gave the project manager guidance on implementing the project. Interviewee_9 stated: "In order to have an effective IT steering committee, senior members from other departments are part of the committee". Interviewees mentioned that because of senior executive representation on the committee, the influence and impact of the committee were recognised in the way quick decisions were made. Interviewee_3 shared: "Appropriateness of our IT steering committee is based on the fact that the committee has a good representative from senior team in each department...this brings to an impact on decision making because of the inclusiveness of key stakeholders". Interviewee_11 added, "The more the involvement of senior executive, the more the positive impact on our business". Quick delivery of IT projects, commitment of senior stakeholder support, avoidance of delays for approvals and financial support when the project required an additional

budget were part of the impact and influence of having an inclusive IT steering committee with other business stakeholders.

Interviewees recognised stakeholder engagement within the IT steering committee since there was early engagement of the committee members when the project was initiated. Meetings were held monthly, which facilitated early and quicker decision-making as well as avoided delays. However, Interviewee_3 expressed the concern that “The committee is scheduled on monthly-basis, it is difficult to call a meeting on weekly-basis because the members are senior executive...so if there is a decision to be made it has to wait or see the sponsor or CIO for decision”.

The engagement of the committee members was monitored to ensure that the project was not negatively affected or delayed. Project managers reported that they frequently engaged the various committee members to ensure a close relationship between the IT steering committee and the project. Interviewee_16 stated: “IT project manager was doing a good job to ensure he build a good relationship with committee members especially where crucial issues needed member’s attention”. Members constantly attended meetings and tracking tools included an attendance register to maintain their involvement in the project.

4.3 IT project sponsor

The IT project sponsor is the key stakeholder within the context of IT governance. The findings reveal that all global IT projects implemented in a multinational organisation had a sponsor. Interestingly, the identification of who would be a project sponsor depended on the nature of the project. When the global IT project was initiated from a business unit, the sponsor was from the business executive team. Interviewee_15 mentioned that “Not necessarily that sponsor has to be from IT...no, sometimes when the IT related project has a push from business, then sponsor is from business executive”. However, it was noted that all key IT projects, either from local or subsidiary offices, were sponsored by the CIO.

Interviewees also reported that the CEO sponsored complex global IT projects which had a huge impact on the organisation at the group level. Interviewee_3 stated, “Most of IT initiatives at Group level is sponsored by CIO in respective countries, but where there is a complex IT project, for example to change the core banking of all countries, then CEO from country level was a sponsor of that particular project”. Interviewee_ 11 also stated, “We have IT project sponsor but it depends on the kind of the project...our organisation don’t have only one or specific IT project sponsor ...you will find that the sponsor will be the one based on the impact in his business (department)”. In understanding the roles and responsibilities, all interviewees mentioned the financial support required from the IT project sponsor. The IT project sponsor usually also has several roles and responsibilities beyond financial support, but all interviewees’ responses dealt mainly with financial support. For example, Interviewee_5 explained that “IT project sponsor is to first to ensure the project is financed, that is the main task, the rest are not much relevant to me”. Other roles and responsibilities reported by interviewees include providing approvals, overseeing project quality, adhering to project governance, acting as an escalation point, selecting or recommending a project manager and providing overall supervision of project performance.

In stakeholder analysis, the appropriateness of the IT project sponsor was based more on the commitment to the project, the seniority of the sponsor, ability to motivate other stakeholders and ability to link the project team with other senior executives. Besides how the sponsor showed interest in or had power to influence other senior stakeholders, Interviewee_12 added that, “The commitment in the project was required from the sponsor, whereby other project teams could be motivated to work on their assignments”. It is evident that once the sponsor is part of the executive team, unnecessary delays for approvals or conflict of resources are minimised. Interviewee_20 added that “IT project sponsor influences other senior management to ensure

resources are committed to the project and sometimes resolve conflicts where there is misunderstanding on the expected IT deliverables”.

The engagement of an IT project sponsor makes a positive contribution to project performance, and early engagement of the sponsor with the project team is key for the successful delivery of the IT project. Interviewee_7 mentioned that “We had a good engagement of the IT project sponsor in the early beginning of the project to provide his expectation from the project team”. Interviewee_14 stated, “The engagement of IT project sponsor was good, he would come and explain what actually the goals and clarify if there are issues in a project, the regular visits in the team helped us raise concerns and solutions was provided instantly”. While most interviewees reported positive engagement of the IT project sponsor, Interviewee_3 stated, “The engagement of the IT project sponsor is there, but only during the steering committee...the engagement doesn’t reflect to the lower level of project team of project team...where motivation is required to enable the project team to perform better”.

Interviewees reported that the engagement of the IT project sponsor was key for facilitating training, resolving performance issues and addressing the challenges facing the project team. Interviewees believed that in IT governance, the IT project sponsor was required to be active throughout the project life cycle. It was also reported that the IT project manager had a responsibility to engage the IT project sponsor to ensure the successful delivery of the project. Interviewees noted that IT project managers had a responsibility to ensure that the IT project sponsor was engaged by participating in project events such as project kick-off meetings, training and team-building activities. Interviewee_13 mentioned that “The invitation of IT project sponsor to various project activities developed a strong work relationship... however, IT project managers have a role in ensuring there is a good engagement of the sponsor throughout the project”.

The main findings reveal that most of the

multinational organisations had key stakeholders in IT governance and followed the stakeholder management processes in implementing a global IT project. **Table 3** highlights that IT governance contributes to managing stakeholders effectively, thus positively improving global IT project performance, that there is an alignment between IT governance and project governance and that in each process there is recognition of the importance of applying the process at early stages of the IT project.

5 DISCUSSION

The results prove that all four quadrants in the stakeholder management are executed within the three governance practices of IT governance structure, IT steering committee and IT project sponsor, and that this contributes to global IT project performance. While the stakeholder management processes are relevant to manage the stakeholders within the context of IT governance, stakeholders in each governance practice are the biggest contributor to the performance of global IT projects.

During the stakeholder identification process, each of the governance practices presented provides an understanding of who the biggest contributors are to global IT project performance. The process enables project managers and key project players to proactively identify who will be involved from each governance practice and what the expected roles and responsibilities are in relation to the global IT project performance. It is evident from the findings that the presence of well-structured governance practices leads to effective stakeholder identification, thus enabling project managers to clearly identify the stakeholders as well as their role and responsibilities to improve project performance. The proposition of this process is that IT governance in the organisation should clearly articulate the key stakeholders as well as their role and responsibilities to help project managers easily carry out the stakeholder identification process. Since stakeholders within the context of IT governance are included in business units, stakeholder identification during project

Governance level and stakeholder management process	Stakeholder management review areas in governance levels	Main findings after data analysis and alignment with original conceptual framework
IT governance and stakeholder identification (Q1.ITGSI)	IT governance structure	IT governance structure exists in the organisation.
		There is alignment between IT governance and corporate governance.
		Key stakeholders are known and identified during the project.
		Roles and responsibilities of the IT governance structure identified by most interviewees.
	IT steering committees	IT steering committee exists in global IT projects.
		Key stakeholders are identified and known in the IT steering committee.
		Roles and responsibilities of the IT steering committee identified by most interviewees.
	IT project sponsor	IT project sponsor is selected during global IT project.
		IT project sponsor is identified early during the project.
		Roles and responsibilities of IT project sponsor are known and documented.
IT governance and stakeholder analysis (Q2.ITGSA)	IT governance structure	IT governance structure is analysed and reported appropriate for the global IT project.
		Influence of stakeholders in the IT governance structure is analysed during the global IT project.
		Impact of stakeholders is analysed during the global IT project.
	IT steering committees	IT steering committee is analysed and reported as appropriate.
		Impact of stakeholders in the IT steering committee is analysed. Most interviewees reported the decision-making process and accountability to be among the impacts on global IT projects.
		Influence of stakeholders in the IT steering committee is analysed. Influences, such as being responsible, compliant and accountable, were reported.
	IT project sponsor	IT project sponsor reported to be appropriate.
		IT project sponsor has an impact on the global IT project, such as funding, resolving conflict and leadership for global IT project delivery.
		IT project sponsor has an influence on the global IT project, such as motivating and building the project team.
IT governance and managing stakeholder engagement (Q3.ITGSE)	IT governance structure	Engagement of various stakeholders in the structure is done through meetings and reporting.
		Engagement of key stakeholders is done through meetings and reporting.
		Relevant stakeholders in the structure are engaged at different levels during the project.
	IT steering committees	Most of the interviewees reported a combination of different team members (IT and non-IT team), therefore engagement of key stakeholders is key.

Table 3. Summary of four quadrants of stakeholder management processes and main research findings (continue)

		Stakeholders in the committee are engaged through meetings and reporting.
		Meetings were reported by most interviewees, where some projects have weekly and others monthly meetings.
IT governance and monitoring stakeholder engagement (Q4.ITGME)	IT project sponsor	IT project sponsor is engaged depending on the organisation's structure.
		IT project sponsor is engaged early during the project.
		IT project sponsor has frequent engagements with stakeholders, depending on the nature of the project.
	IT governance structure	Monitoring of relevant stakeholders in the structure reported and followed during project implementation.
		Monitoring of key stakeholders outside the committee was observed.
		Monitoring is done through meeting invites and reporting to several IT governance stakeholders.
		There is participation, collaboration and support for key IT initiatives.
	IT steering committees	Engagement of key stakeholder is monitored in meetings.
		Various stakeholders are monitored during engagement, including the senior team members.
		Key inputs are monitored using meeting minutes, decisions made, action log.
	IT project sponsor	Effective close monitoring of the engagement of IT project sponsor in various committees/units.
		IT project sponsor is monitored by IT project manager with frequent interactions.
		Motivation, decisions, training and funding are some of the inputs monitored during the project.

Table 3. Summary of four quadrants of stakeholder management processes and main research findings

implementation should not be limited to the IT department but extended to other business departments. In stakeholder analysis, the process of analysing the appropriateness and attributes of stakeholders revealed that all three governance practices contribute to understanding the influence of the stakeholders. It is evident that the analysed stakeholders have an influence and impact on the decision-making process. Stakeholder analysis enables the project manager and key project players to proactively understand who the stakeholders are within governance practices that will likely impact the project positively and negatively. Interviewees revealed that the presence of senior management has an influence and impact on the project's

performance. The proposition is that when the organisation formulates IT governance, the presence of senior executives from other business units is crucial for project performance. IT governance cannot be successful if the engagement of the various stakeholders is not inclusive enough to involve other business units. During the stakeholder engagement process, the project manager is expected to ensure that the involvement of stakeholders is inclusive. The more effective IT governance is, the higher the level of engagement will be during project implementation. Finally, stakeholder monitoring provides an understanding of the continuous engagement needed of all the key stakeholders within the context of IT governance. Interviewees agreed that the

identified stakeholders are required to be monitored for effective engagement. The proposition is that effective IT governance should clearly document the mechanisms of how monitoring the engagement of the stakeholders should be practiced during the implementation of the project. This should enable the project manager to focus on the key relevant stakeholders that are documented.

The results validate that the stakeholder management carried out within the context of IT governance can help the project manager and key project players to identify, analyse, engage and monitor the key stakeholders that are vital for global IT project performance.

6 CONCLUSION

IT governance and stakeholder management both contribute to the successful delivery of global IT projects. The successful delivery of a global IT project requires an understanding of how IT governance is structured, the involvement of key stakeholders as well as the practice of conducting stakeholder management in the organisation during the project life cycle.

With respect to how well the IT governance and stakeholder management is being carried out in the project, the research findings reveal how IT governance structures, the IT steering committee and the IT sponsor play a major role as key stakeholders in the implementation of the global IT project. Likewise, knowing the presence, analysing the presence, early engagement and monitoring the engagement of these key stakeholders are critical processes that project managers or key project implementers should emphasise.

The general findings conclude that stakeholders within the IT governance structure, the IT steering committee and the IT project sponsor are required to be properly identified, analysed, engaged and monitored throughout the project life cycle to improve project performance.

The study highlights areas for further research. The research focused on multinational organisations that

had implemented global IT projects. Further research can include non-government international organisations as well as international development agencies that have implemented similar projects. The key focus stakeholders in IT governance are the IT steering committee and IT sponsor. Further research can include other key stakeholders such as IT managers and other junior staff in the IT governance structure.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
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A MULTINATIONAL ORGANISATIONAL
PERSPECTIVE