BRITISH ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT

BAM CONFERENCE

3RD-5TH SEPTEMBER
ASTON UNIVERSITY BIRMINGHAM UNITED KINGDOM

This paper is from the BAM2019 Conference Proceedings

ETHICS IN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FOR SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT- A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Kamil Okedara (tunde.okedara@manchester.ac.uk),

School of Mechanical, Aeronautical & Civil Engineering, University of Manchester, UK

Paul Chan (p.w.c.chan@tudelft.nl),

Delft University of Technology

Bill Collinge (William.collinge@manchester.ac.uk)

Obuks Ejohwomu (obuks.ejohwomu@manchester.ac.uk)

School of Mechanical, Aeronautical & Civil Engineering, University of Manchester, UK

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Abstract

Stakeholder engagement or management (SE) has been variously discussed. Most studies tend to view the discussion on ethics and stakeholder engagement at a point in time. However, what is less reviwed and which has significantly not been studied is how ethics in stakeholder engagement changes overtime for benefits of both projects, business and organizations. This paper therefore examines how ethics is considered in studies of stakeholder engagement in the management of business, organizations and projects.

To be able to generate findings for both academics and practitioners, we have employed a systematic reviews of 57 studies across geographical locations, spanning various fields to discover the gap. This is in addition to studying the evolution of definitions and perspectives studies have come up with over the years

Keywords: Ethics, stakeholder engagement, business management

Track 1: Corporate Governance

Word count (excluding tables and references) : 5390

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1. Introduction

Successful business, organizational or project management strategies have been variously discussed and described. Strategic management success may be measured through the use of scorecard which supports the alignment and management of corporate activities to their strategic relevance (Figge *et al.*, 2002), while Figgie et.al.., (2002) highlighted the importance of strategic management aligning with corporate activities, others have also come up with various criteria that can cumulatively be necessary for envisaged success. For instance, it is averred that organizational success depends not only on how the organization makes the most of human competences, but also how it stimulates commitment to the organization (Tripathi and Agrawal, 2014). The turbulent organizational environment is not left out of the discourse, this has been attributed to why organizations seek competitive advantage through organizational learning(Namada, 2018), in line with Namada, (2018), this learning, as part of knowledge management orientations, is said to comprise of 'the personal knowledge orientation' and 'organizational knowledge orientation'(Sanchez, 2006). To further buttress the significance of business and organizational management success, process automation involving modelling processes and workflow (Zur Muehlen, 2004), this has not left out peoples' management ability of the mangers, management practitioners therefore give credence to 'good people management', this has led to the consideration and development of what managers and management consider to be skills and behaviours of an effective people manager or management (Fisher, 2011)

The issues of business or organizational success has become so huge and organizational system-wide that numerous tools, knowledge and strategies have been variously adopted. While the process and work flow is essential (Zur Muehlen, 2004), peoples' management skills of the management and managers (Fisher, 2011) has been proved to be an important success factor, the enormous cost of failure has made studies into human characteristics and competencies necessary to achieve success (Stevenson and Starkweather, 2010), organizational learning and essential training and development paths(Stainer, 2009)(Savelsbergh, Havermans and Storm, 2016) of the system, the process, people and organization to be identified and variously studies. Involvement of middle level mangers has also been studied to be a key factor in organizational success as it is associated with improved organizational performance (Floyd, 1990)

The management success requirement has led to different phase of definitions, perspectives, and development of topics by experts over the years (see Table 5)

The nature, focus and perspectives of past studies form in part the curiosity for the review research, with the following objectives:

- Review how studies of ethics in stakeholder engagement change over time;
- Identify and report on topics and terms researchers have been using in the discussion and study in and around the field of ethics in stakeholder engagement (amongst others) This has made us develop the below research questions:

  RQ1: How has researchers' interest in ethics and stakeholder engagement grown over time to be able to impact on project, business and organizational management? This may assist growth of stakeholder engagement in business organization or project management environment

Ethics and Stakeholder Engagement Definition and Perspectives

Before discussing the research methodology, we would want to have a perspective into ethics and stakeholder engagement with a view to enhancing its broad concept and understanding:

Stakeholder engagement have been variously defined over the years, let me start by examining the definition of stake. Freeman ,1984 defined stake as entailing mutually shared interest.(Nwagbara, 2016). The various definitions have been categorised. Freeman (1984) suggested that definitions of stakeholders could be described as 'narrow' or 'broad'. The narrow definitions included groups who are vital to the survival and success of the organisation The broad definition included any group or individual that can affect or is affected by the corporation (Freeman, 1984) (Freeman and John McVea, 2001; Greenwood, 2007). Growing emphasis in business practice toward engaging stakeholders to encourage creation of mutually beneficial relationships between organization and their stakeholder, Greenwood , 2007 still feels that the concept of stakeholder engagement is undertheorized (Greenwood, 2007). Sloan , 2009 is of the view that despite the wide acknowledgement of stakeholder engagement as important, there is no shared understanding of what the concept means or what its characteristics are (Sloan, 2009). With this perspective brief, Greenwood (2007) thereby highlighted that, depending on its conceptualization, stakeholder engagement can be seen as a mechanism for consent, as a mechanism for control, as a mechanism for co-operation, as a mechanism for accountability, as a form of employee involvement and participation, as a method for enhancing trust, as a substitute for true trust, as a discourse to enhance fairness, as a mechanism of corporate governance. (Greenwood, 2007). This paper adopts the freeman broad definition of stakeholder which includes any group or individual that can affect or is affected by the project, business or organization.

Ethics on the other hand, could be rightness or wrongness of behaviour (Lewis, 1985). "The definition of ethics is said to be at abstract level (Lewis, 1985) as it is difficult to have a consensus on what is morally right or wrong, good or bad, ethical or unethical". Despite the growth of ethics in business, business ethics researchers are yet to agree upon ethical perspective for the discipline (Robin, 2009). (Ian Stewart, Francis Fenn, 2017), in their paper on human research ethics while quoting OED definition define ethics as "The codes of conduct or moral principles recognized in a particular profession, sphere of activity, relationship, or other context or aspect of human life. Attempting a definition for the purpose of this research, which I hope may transcend project and business, ethics can be a way of doing things or as a process culmination or path to an engagement outcome. This process culmination or path, when tested over time, can become norm in business or project, it can also translate to culture or governance. When ethics is measured, sometimes in projects, to have given expected outcome or surpass expectation, the approach becomes adopted and becomes an ethical approach for such projects or business. This sometimes can become organizational norms or best practices, deviation from or adherence to those approaches at that point in time, may become an indication of good or bad practices etc.

With the perspective definitions of stakeholder and ethics, we move to establishing the linkage between stakeholder engagement and successful project and organisational management.

Various problems have been encountered on public private partnership (PPP) initiatives around the world that have eventually led to project failure. Stakeholder opposition has been reported as the main reason for failure in several instances. As such, capturing and addressing of stakeholder inputs is crucial to the success of PPP projects. Stakeholder involvement (SI) is an interdisciplinary domain that spans many disciplines (engineering, sociology, psychology, marketing, etc.). The fragmented nature of knowledge in this domain is impeding project managers from leading successful SI programmes. (International journal of project management, 2006),

Stakeholder Engagement and Successful Project and organizational Management
Stakeholder engagement has been considered vital in successful business and organizational management, though success itself has been variously defined, Freeman et al. (2007) say, 'Business, indeed any business, just is creating value for stakeholders' (emphasis added). In other words, the purpose of any business truly is and ought to be the creation of value for all

those groups and individuals who have a stake in the business. Freeman school of thought sees value creation as success in business. Success in some other clime, particularly in project, could be a measure of sustainability (Von Korff, Daniell, Moellenkamp, Bots, & Bijlsma, 2012). Success in project can be attributed to completion on time, to budget and specified quality, though meeting the triangle is often difficult (Basu, 2014). Project and indeed organizational success is known to be influenced by many individual factors: organizational, technical and psychological/social. (Serrador, Reich and Gemino, 2018). Alqaisi, 2018 aver that managing stakeholders' expectations and interests is key to a project's success. So, identifying stakeholders at the beginning of the projects, recognizing and managing their needs and expectations will contribute to the creation of a suitable environment and be catalyst for success. (Alqaisi, 2018), to drive home the dependability of project and business management success on stakeholder engagement, Zwikael et.al., 2012 brought out the criticality of this dependability stating that "Stakeholder management is an important and common practice in any project, as it allows managers to better manage process, performance and risk. In virtual projects, collaboration and engagement with stakeholders is relatively more complex, challenging, and critical for project success(Zwikael, Elias and Ahn, 2012)" Alladi et.al., sums it up while citing from "The Stakeholder Engagement Manual: Volume 2: The Practioners Handbook on Stakeholder Engagement" October, 2005 and the " AA1000 SES (2005) and AA 1000 Accountability Principles standard 2008 HTTP://www. accountability.org" that "Stakeholder engagement is rapidly emerging as a vital tool to develop an understanding of what sustainability means for companies and how it can contribute to value creation and the viability of their operations"

Nate Solberg PMP "Stakeholder management is critical to the success or failure of a project. The core team process is an important tool for ensuring buy-in and fostering collaboration throughout the business. It is also a means for collecting ongoing input for the team, which will reduce your level of project risk. Most importantly, it will allow you to manage your stakeholders effectively by actively including them in the project life cycle" (Alladi and Vadari, 2011). The summary of the statements from these authors is the linkage between stakeholder engagement and organizational and project success

To assist this research review, we have organised this paper as follows: The next section outlines the methodology adopted for the systematic literature review, followed by a section where the review result are reported. The fourth section discusses the findings, again followed by the section on conclusion which also has the statement on the future research direction

2. Methodology

To answer the research questions in the introduction above, the literatures on ethics and stakeholder engagement was systematically reviewed and synthesised. Literatures on organizational management, business management, change management, management skills etc. were studied. These additional studies gives credibility to the 57 systematically reviewed literatures on ethics and stakeholder engagement in management. Systematic reviews , which originated from the medical and health sciences, are a thorough and transparent way of mapping and assessing the evidence in a particular topic area (Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, 2003). The adoption was after a thorough review of other methods such as bibliometric analysis (Pollack and Adler, 2015) and analysis of meta – narratives in the literature (Padalkar and Gopinath, 2016). These other methods have been stated to rely "on quantitative methods to identify keyword frequencies and the changing trends of keyword associations." (Chan and Ejohwomu, 2018). To further justify our choice of review, aside from systematic review being known for its transparency and being an evidence-based approaches that identifies key scientific contributions to a field and differ from narrative reviews by adopting a replicable, scientific and transparent process (Tranfield et al., 2003), it also allow researchers to study the strength of the published evidence while still attempting to remain as natural and unbiased as possible. This is possible because of the inherent evidences in the review analysis and synthesis. When facts are presented, scientific conclusions becomes easier. Though the process may be cumbersome and detailed, systematic review, according to Tranfield et.al.., (2003), is still acknowledged as the most efficient for identifying and evaluating literatures. In addition, systematic reviews, aside from not only being important for advancing the field of study, it is also a veritable tool for advancing and informing management practice (Cummings and Daellenbach, 2009).

2.1 Systematic literature review approach

In the process of reviewing the empirical evidences in the existing literature, systematic review was considered as best and comprehensive option for identifying the gaps in ethic in

stakeholder engagement, this was also buttressed by Transfield et al and Booth et al (Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, 2003)(Booth, Papaioannou and Sutton, 2013). This review was done with the protocol in**Error! Reference source not found.**

Stage I−Planning the review

Phase 0 - Identification for the need for a review

Phase 1 - Preparation of a proposal for a review

Phase 2 - Development of a review protocol

Stage II−Conducting a review

Phase 3 - Identification of research

Phase 4 - Selection of studies

Phase 5 - Study quality assessment

Phase 6 - Data extraction and monitoring progress

Phase 7 - Data synthesis

Stage III−Reporting and dissemination

Phase 8 - The report and recommendations

Phase 9 - Getting evidence into practice

Figure 1: Stages of a Systematic Review [Source: Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003)]

For the purpose of this paper, **Error! Reference source not found.** has been collapsed to the five steps below, which the review is subjected to:

➢ Identification of research;
➢ selection of studies;
➢ Study quality assessment;
➢ data extraction and monitoring progress; and
➢ data synthesis

The process of arriving at the 57 document for final review is analytically captured in the flowchart Figure 2: Flow chart showing search and analytical process. This makes the process

transparent and it confirms the rigour and reliability of the systematic review(Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, 2003)

The coding structure for the systematic review follows the Tranfield protocols. The basis for the coding, amongst others, is to ensure that all vital information are well captured in the coding system and hence in the analysis. Microsoft excel was utilized for the coding step of the systematic review

The 57 papers were subjected to the coding structure (as in *Table 1: Coding Structure for Systematic Review*) utilization of Microsoft excel made the coding easy as well as the analysis. The coding uses the bibliometric details such as year of publication, details of authors, journal and article title. In addition, further categorization in terms of the study sector, author's nationality and in some cases, sample size of the research. This sometimes makes it easy to observe saturation trend across research articles. The 57 studies that scaled through to full analysis and synthesis also scaled through the inclusion and exclusion, as shown in criteria when subjected it

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Keyword search:

Search databases: Web of science, Scopus and Google scholar yielding

197,640 results (October 2018)

↓

Removal by elimination of duplicates, in title elimination in Google scholar and unwanted results in

186 studies

↓

Review of abstracts, keywords and titles using criteria results in

112 studies

↓

Analysis of full articles:

Full paper analysis and synthesis including a medical paper that was considered relevant to the review
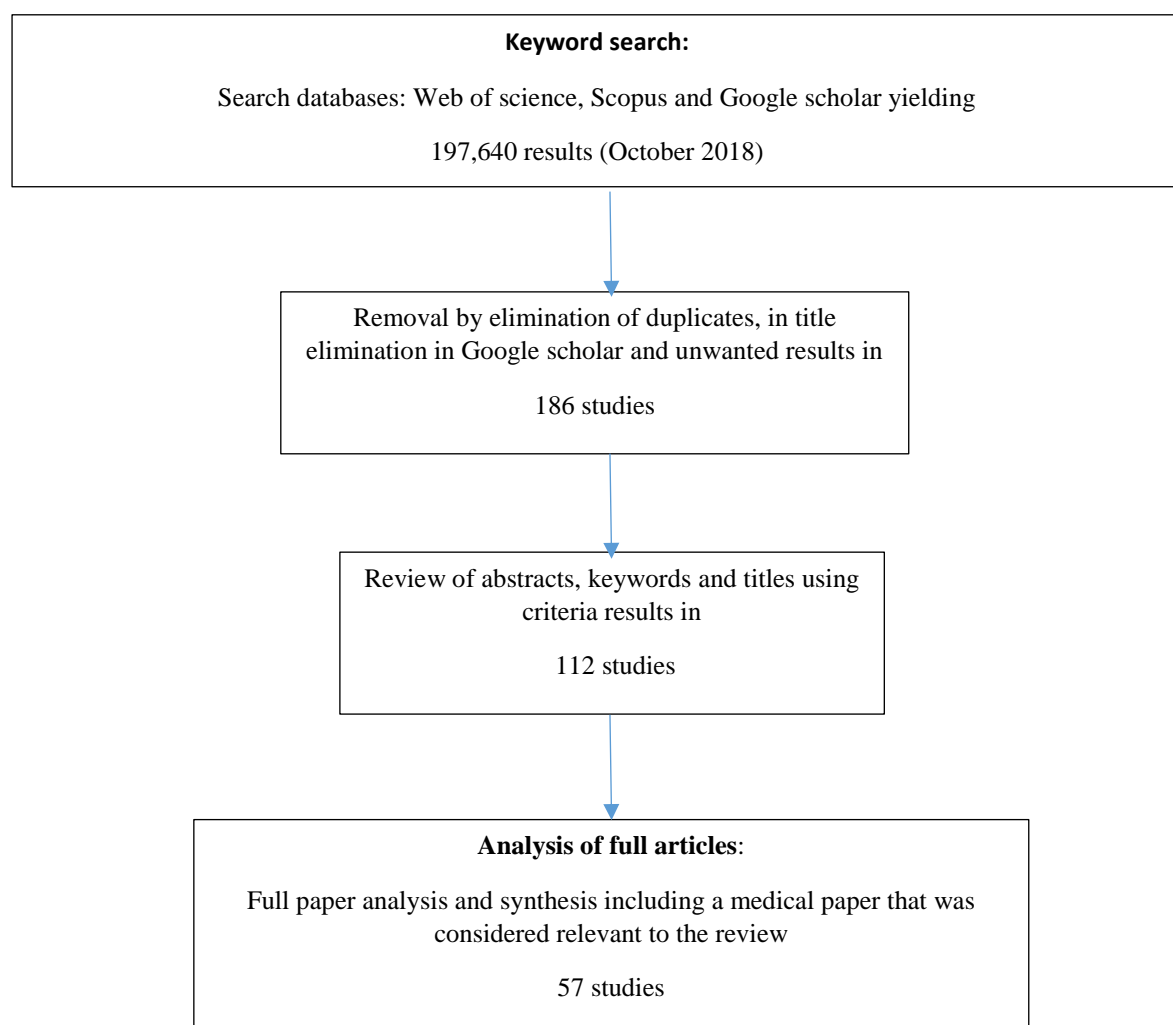
57 studies

Figure 2: Flow chart showing search and analytical process

The first step in this review was the identification of research. In order to identify the literature and increase the review horizon, our search was made to cover review papers, conference papers, books, book section, short survey and articles in press but published in English, mostly in international journal and by international publishers. This is a standard practice in review studies , since these sources are considered 'certified knowledge' and enhance the results' reliability (Saggese, Sarto and Cuccurullo, 2016). The following combination of search string was finally used during our search: "Ethics" AND "Stakeholder Engagement". We applied the search string to the titles, keywords and abstracts of publications in academic databases. In particular, we used Scopus, Web of Science and Google scholar databases to search for all publications whose topics cover at least one keyword from the selected sets of search string. These databases were chosen for their known broad and multidisciplinary scope, their popularity in academia and are reputed for being the most commonly used sources for review studies (Tachizawa and Wong, 2014; Beske-Janssen, Johnson and Schaltegger, 2015)

Table 1: Coding Structure for Systematic Review

Code	Description
Citation	In-text citation of the article in Harvard citation format
Year	year of publication
Authors	Surnames and abbreviated forenames of authors
Journal	Journal Title
Title	Title of Article
Volume	Volume number (Where applicable)
Issue	Issue number (where applicable
Page	page range (where applicable)
Scope	Ethics, Stakeholder engagement, stakeholder management
Empirical approach	Research Method used
Type	Empirical, Conceptual, short survey or Review papers

Activity	unit of analysis
Method	Short summary of research Method
Sector	Public & Private
Quality	Numerical rating of the strength of evidence
Question	what question he research is asking
Finding	key finding from the article

While a large number of articles were found not to be relevant to the topic in focus and discarded, a document was found to be a reference document listing various references on the topic, as useful as the document is, it was discarded for inconsistency with the inclusion criteria. In addition, this research was further strengthened with the inclusion of review papers as well as book and book sections

The search was not limited or restricted to any time frame but uses the earliest years the search engines could produce for the searched keywords

Table 2: Hierarchy of Evidence for the Systematic Review

Hierarchy In ascending order	Evidence Type
1	Very weak evidence based on personal experiences and/or opinions
2	Weak evidence based on expert opinions (what constitutes as an 'expert' is not fully explained)
3	Neither strong nor weak evidence, often based on a mixture of personal opinions supported by data collected. It is not always clear how the data was collected in these examples
4	Strong evidence based on systematic case study research
5	Very strong evidence based on randomised experiments

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To arrive at the final 57 documents for review, inclusion and exclusion criteria were used. These are as captured in the table below:

The summary of steps is shown in Figure 1: Stages of a Systematic Review [Source: Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003)] and further described below.

The first step in this review was the identification of research. In order to identify the literature and increase the review horizon, our search was limited review papers, conference papers, books, book section, short survey and articles in press but published in English, mostly in international journal and by international publishers. This is a standard practice in review studies , since these sources are considered 'certified knowledge' and enhance the results' reliability (Saggese, Sarto and Cuccurullo, 2016). The following combination of search string was finally used during our search: "Ethics" AND "Stakeholder Engagement". We applied the search string to the titles, keywords and abstracts of publications in academic databases. In particular, we used Scopus, Web of Science and Google scholar databases to search for all publications whose topics cover at least one keyword from the selected sets of search string. These databases were chosen for their known broad and multidisciplinary scope, their popularity in academia and are reputed for being the most commonly used sources for review studies (Tachizawa and Wong, 2014; Beske-Janssen, Johnson and Schaltegger, 2015)

Table 3: Table Showing Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Articles that discuss ethics and stakeholder engagement	Erratum
Books and Book Sections on ethics and stakeholder engagement	Reference materials
Review papers	Clinical trials which are not project focused
Conference papers	Medicine that are not project focused
Short survey	Editorials
Articles in press	Articles that are not ethics and stakeholder engagement focused
	Articles that can't be accessed probably because our institution did not subscribe for it

When the first search was done with the search string "ethics" and "stakeholder", a total 414,986 hits resulted with Google scholar having the highest hit of 409,000. Reading the abstracts showed a lot of irrelevant studies to our interest, the search string was finally modified to "ethics" and "stakeholder engagement", the total search result was 197,640 again with Google scholar returning highest result of 197,000. The focus of the review was on project as

unit of analysis, therefore erratum, reference materials, clinical trials which are not project focused, medicine that are not project focused, editorials, articles that are not ethics and stakeholder engagement focused, and articles that can't be accessed were omitted. To strengthen the coverage and quality of our review, we have included articles that discuss ethics and stakeholder engagement, books and Book Sections on ethics and stakeholder engagement, review papers, conference papers, short survey and articles in press while maintaining our language and the international outlook of both publishers and journals, this ensures utilization of broad experts opinion(Shea *et al.*, 2007). The search however did also produced some duplications and overlaps, this was cross-checked firstly from each database and finally using Mendeley software to remove duplication. The search was performed in October 2018 and articles published up to October 2018 that were already captured in the databases were considered in the review study (first step- "identification of review study"). To avoid search bias and missing any literature, we did not constraint our search to any time limitation, the overview of inclusion and exclusion criteria is as shown in *Table 3: Table Showing Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria* . Our application of inclusion and exclusion criteria takes to the second step in the review study ("selection of studies"), this narrows down the literatures as advocated by (Beske-Janssen, Johnson and Schaltegger, 2015). Independent examination of the selected papers by the authors ensure that the papers are in sync with the focus of the review and also addresses the topic under study. This is in line with (Kitchenham, Pearl Brereton, *et al.*, 2009) who advocated independent examination of literatures. The first stage generated a hit result of 112 studies, which were subjected to full abstract and targeted reading. The second stage generated 57 studies for full reading and analysis. This Systematic Literature review (SLR) employs a broad search procedure (Kitchenham, Brereton, *et al.*, 2009) to improve coverage and reliability of outcomes. Though the inclusion and exclusion is relatively subjective(Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, 2003), which is why it is well encouraged for all the authors to be included have inputs into the decision to include or exclude. Shortage of relevant studies (Meline, 2006) may also result, which is one of the limitations systematic reviewers sometimes face. The titles, keywords and abstracts of the 112 studies were examined, and instance where the title, keywords and abstracts did not provide a clear focus of a study, the entire article was reviewed. The title and abstract outside the scope and focus of our review were removed. After first review and checking, a total of 57 studies published in 37 journals was selected for systematic review as shown in *Table 4: Distribution of Articles per Journal*

Table 4: Distribution of Articles per Journal

	Journal Type	Frequency
	Core Journal	
1	Journal of Business Ethics	11
2	Corporate Social Responsibility & Environmental Management	6
3	Business Ethics Quarterly	3
4	International Journal of Management Reviews	2
5	STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: CLINICAL RESEARCH CASES	2
6	Sustainability (Switzerland)	2
	Total number of papers in Core Journal	**26**
	Next Related journals	
1	Accounting, Organization & society	1
2	Business and Society	1
3	Business Strategy and the Environment	1
4	Communicatio	1
5	Construction Management & Economics	1
6	Corporate Social Responsibility in Sub Sahara Africa: Sustainable Development in its Embryonic form - Book	1
7	Environmental Science and Pollution Research	1
8	Environmental Values	1
9	Ethics & Information Technology	1
10	European Business Review	1
11	European Journal of Operational Research	1
12	European Research Studies	1
13	Global Environmental Change	1
14	Industrial Management	1
15	Innovating in Practice: Perspectives and Experiences	1
16	International Business Review	1
17	International Journal of Construction Management	1
18	International Journal of Greenhouse Gas Control	1
19	Journal of agriculture and Environmental Ethics	1
20	Journal of Dairy science	1
21	Journal of Marketing Management	1
22	Journal of Public Relations Research	1
23	Journal of Responsible Innovation	1
24	Journal of Sustainable Finance and Investment	1
25	Life Sciences, Society and Policy	1

26	Ocean and Coastal Management	1
27	Public Relations Review	1
28	Regional Environmental Change	1
29	Science	1
30	Social Capital and Sustainability Strategies	1
31	Social Science and Medicine	1
	Total number of papers in journals with 1 relevant paper each	*31*

The analysis and synthesis of the selected literature review to identifying any emerging categories and trends forms the fourth and fifth steps of this systematic review. These categories also cover the full paper analysis. For the full analysis of selected studies. In line with recommendation by Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, (2003) and leaning on the process and protocols of Meline, (2006), we created a data extraction form. The data extraction forms has headings which include general information about the paper, such as author name(s), year of publication, title, source of publication (journal) and other aspects including research questions, methods and findings. We were also guided in these stages by the AMSTAR's methodological quality assessment (Shea *et al.*, 2007). Our analysis of the papers was based on the criteria shown in *Table 3: Table Showing Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria*.
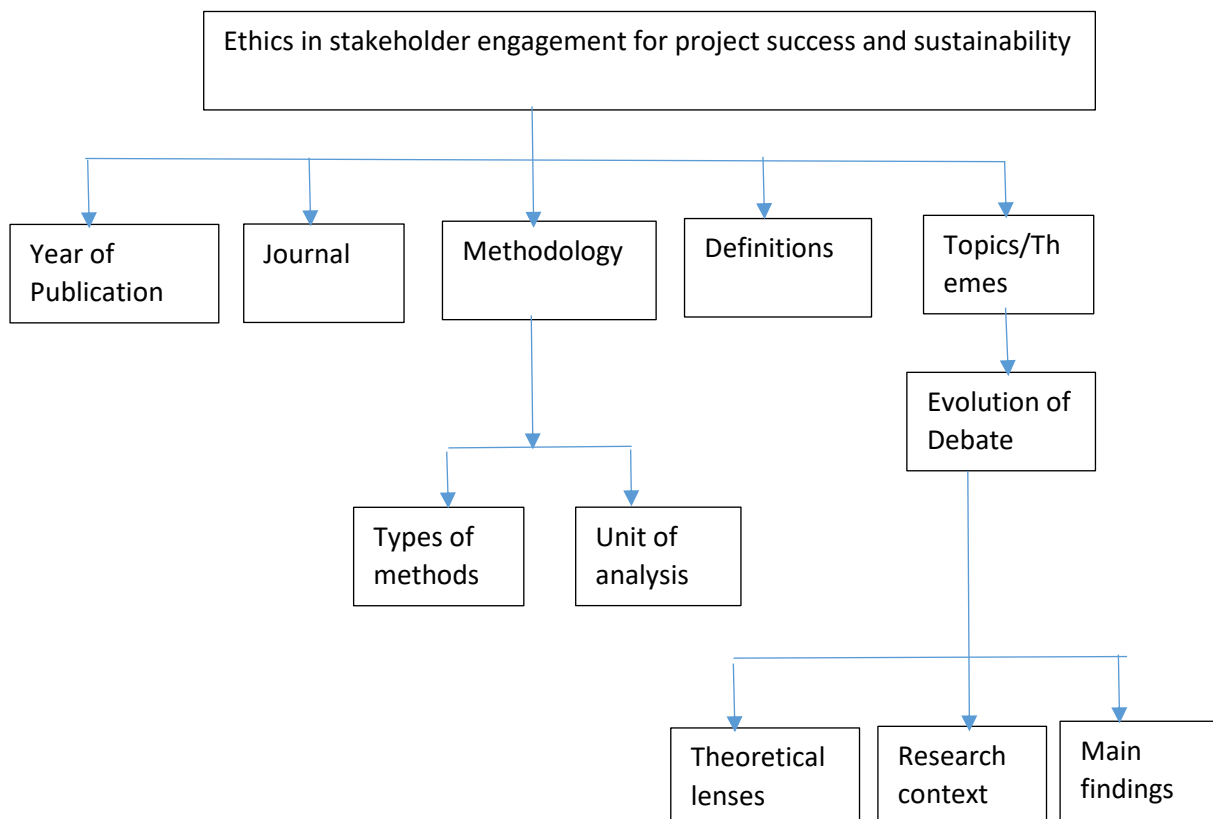
Based on the classification in Figure 3: Classification of literature framework **Error! Reference source not found.** above and using data from our data extraction form, we first carried out a frequency analysis which seek to analyse the articles according to distribution of papers across journals, time of publication and the research methods, and next, in line with our research questions as set out in this study, we carried out a qualitative analysis of the selected studies with focus on the following areas:

- Definitions and perspectives of ethics and stakeholder engagement;
- Main topics/themes
- The evolution of debate including research setting, theoretical frameworks and major findings.

These results, frequency and qualitative analyses, are presented in Section 3.

3. Results, Findings and Discussion

The review, as previously suggested, brought out series of analytical outputs that would not just determine the future direction of this research, it also brings to the fore, relational and deductive researches that will extensively contribute to both practice and academics. I would start my findings with a frequency analysis in order to discover the level of interest in my research field

3.1 Frequency Analysis

The frequency analysis is a veritable tool to projecting, descriptively and graphically, the pattern of the review over the past years. This can be an indication of either growing or declining interest in the discourse of ethics in stakeholder engagement

Figure 4: Review frequency analysis – Linear, shows the 57 reviewed papers trend line, which is an indication of publication performance over the years. Analysis of journal publication frequency resulted in 6 core journals with 26 of the 57 publications resident within them, which is 45.61% of the entire review publication. Of the 46 journals identified in this review, 6 of them has the 45.61% of the publications while the remaining 40 shares the 31. This is an indication of a rich density within the core journals. *Table 4: Distribution of Articles per Journal*. further indicates, with the computation of statistical R-squared value, 65.57% of the publications trend with the years or

linearly change with increase in years. With the linear confirmation and the nature of the data, particularly, in the last 5 years, there is the need to perform another test in order to vividly capture the pattern of development on interest in the research field. This need informs our exponential test as below:
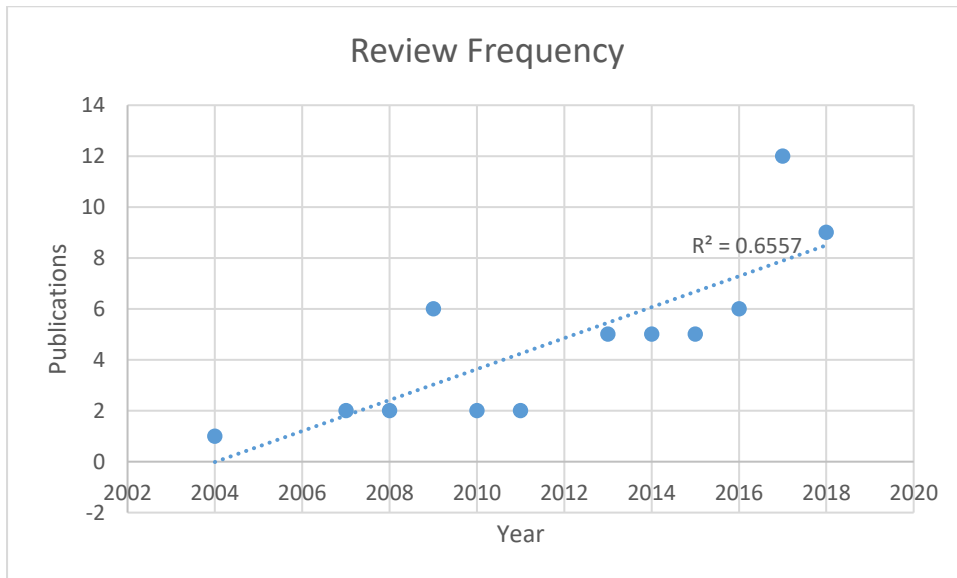

Figure 4: Review frequency analysis – Linear

If we compare Figure 4: Review frequency analysis – Linear with Figure 5: Review frequency – Exponential, a functional analysis can be inferred, 1. By comparing the R-squared values and
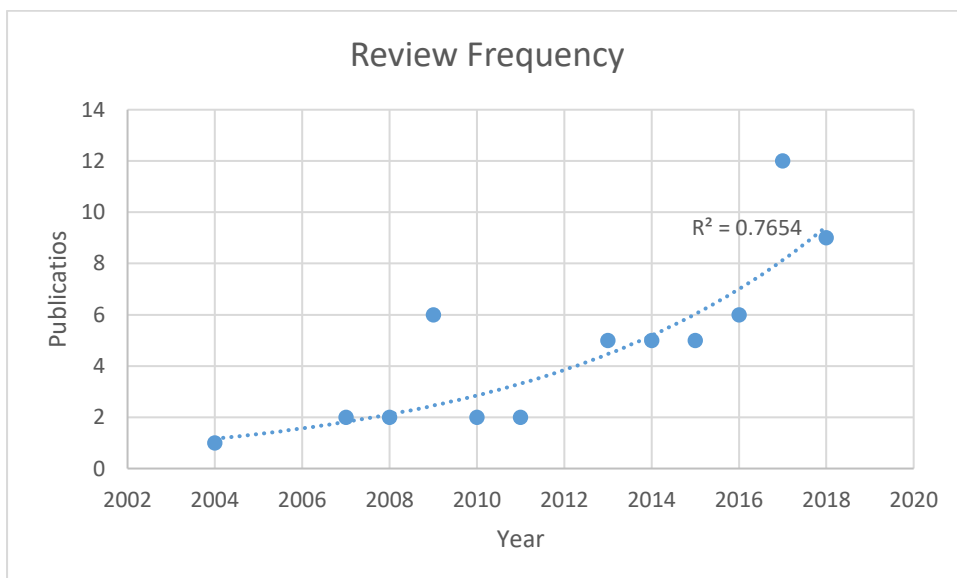

Figure 5: Review frequency – Exponential

2. By carrying out trend analysis. Figure 5: Review frequency – Exponential reveals that the trend of academic discourse in the ethics and stakeholder engagement is rather more exponential than linear. The R-squared in the exponential case is higher 76.54%. This is an indication that 76.54% of the publication are correlated by the years. The review can therefore infer that frequency analysis is exponential rather than linear. This interest notwithstanding, there has been little interest in looking at ethics in stakeholder engagement with the lens of projects. From the 57 review papers, only 7 can be considered to have project as unit of analysis, which are either CSR or marketing. There has been a dearth of literature using project as unit of analysis aside from CSR and marketing. The only publication in the construction management field is also from the CSR perspective. It can therefore be safely deduced that there is an extremely low interest in studying ethics in stakeholder engagement from the project perspective, from technical perspective.

If the R-squared is defined as the proportionate reduction in uncertainty (C and G, 1997) or subjected to further conditions regarding the conditional mean function, (Collin Cameron et al, 1997) further interpreted it to mean the fraction of uncertainty explained by the fitted model, this can be interpreted as an emerging academic certainty interest in addressing the area of research . Similarly if the 16 year period is divided into 8 year each viz 2002 – 2010 and 2011 – 2018. It reveals a total publications of 13 in the first sub-period and 35 publications in the second sub-period, this is almost a three-fold increase in the literature between the first and second sub-periods. In relation to the development of literature over time, an area of research receives acknowledgement when the number of publication in the scientific community doubles in 10-20 years(Beske-Janssen, Johnson and Schaltegger, 2015; Southwestern and Science, 2019). Both two fold and the R-squared analysis indicate an emerging research interest in the field of research. With the discovery of the exponential growth in the field in the last 5 years, it will therefore be of interest, in line with the research question, to look at the evolution of terms and the pattern of growth of researchers' interest in the field of review

Table 5: The evolution of discussion on ethics and stakeholder engagement

Key Aspects	Sub - Period 2004-2008	Sub-Period 2009 - 2013	Sub Period 2014 - 2018
Main Topics	Corporate Accountability; corporate responsibility; responsible leadership, Social Capital, moral discourse, CSR reporting, Conceptualizing SE in Sustainability Context,	Transparency, ICT driven ethics, CSR in business start-ups, Role of Ngo in CSR, Values inversion and trends in developing countries, ethical matrix in radioactive waste, energy justice,, cause-Related marketing (CRM), Analysis of theories, scientific and socio-ethical challenges of diary production, Sustainable innovation & orientations, socially	Integrated sustainability & financial reporting, farm animal welfare, Responsible innovation & interdisciplinary research, labour & commercial laws, Communicating engagement in CSR, Ethics in climate change & adaptation, internal corporate image (PR), Corporate environmental sustainability reporting, Contemporary CSR notion, engagement strategy, Ethics analysis of SE view, human research,

		responsible behaviour of companies, development of proactive chemical management, CSR in forest industry , Kant's virtue ethics, Ethics of Co2 storage, Bank ethics,	mutual responsive ness & private sector R&D, Sustainable development, operations research, Typology & coastal environment, SE in organisational practice, Social capital, CSR in Resource sector, CSR in developing countries, CSR in construction, CSR 7activism, Customer value, Environmental reporting, Responsible leadership, mimetic isomorphism & sustainable development, CSR in banks,
Theoretical Framework	Corporate Social, Environmental, sustainability and Accountability theory , stakeholder theory, CSR theory, social learning,	Corporate environmental & social reporting, CSR theory, Ethical philosophy, cause - related marketing, Environmental impact and	Responsible research and innovation, stakeholder theory, climate change, CSR theory, social shareholder engagement, corporate accountability, corporate

		sustainability, social network analysis,	environmental and sustainability reporting, ethical philosophy, Responsible research & innovation, Neo institutional theory
Analysis of emerging discussion/concentration	Use of internet, moral & ethical discourse, stakeholder dialogue & sustainability	Transparency, CSR application in diverse fields and areas fields, particularly in technical fields such as radioactive waste, diary production, energy,	Discussion focused more on countries and fields such as Malawi mining industry, Niger delta in Nigeria ,F.lli Tonassa in Italy, Irish coastal community, Climate change , Europe telecom, Australian, Ethical banks, Climate change resilience in Peru, Cooperative advantage in Scandinavian, jewellery business in Italy, Peaceful stakeholder strategy in Nigeria, Marketing world heritage sites in UK, Over researched community in South Africa, human research in US, social accountability in

			Italy, stakeholder integration using unit in Zurich (organizational Practice), Construction industry, effect of firm CSR on NGOs, Integrative responsible leadership

Table 5: The evolution of discussion on ethics and stakeholder engagement, the table shows a pattern from each sub-period. The first sub – period of 2004 – 2008 shows predominantly generation of topics such as corporate accountability , corporate responsibility, CSR reporting etc., this pattern may not be necessarily out of sync for a newly emerging field in its infantry. This is similar to finding its bearing. The second sub- period of 2009 – 2013 shows studies going more into different subject fields such as ICT, business start-ups, radioactive waste management, climate change, sustainable innovation, diary production, cause-related marketing, CRM, forest industry etc. this can be seen as after establishment of topics, studies dealt more into applications. The last sub – period of 2014 – 2018 shows a pattern of both fields and geographical locations. This implies that studies focus more on looking at the emerging subject areas in different geographical locations. This is evident in the last row where studies were linking both country and subject field, such as, Malawi mining industry, Niger – delta in Nigeria, f.lli Tonassa in Italy, Irish coastal community, Europe Telecom, Ethical Banks in UK, Climate change resilience in Peru, Cooperative advantage in Scandinavian etc. The discovery of this pattern from the research leads to further question into the future: what will likely be the future pattern of discourse. And in which direction will the study focus?

The pattern of discourse shown in Table 5: The evolution of discussion on ethics and stakeholder engagement, does not reveal an evolutionary pattern in a continuous sense. This may be as a result of the fact that researches sometimes are based on issues at hand or probably because businesses often emphasise shareholder interests (Goodman and Arenas, 2015) and in pursuit

of profit (Camilleri, 2017) or probably because stakeholder engagement occurs within the context of power (Dawkins, 2015). This is not to say that authors treatment of ethics as a monolithic code of practice, rather than one that evolves over time is an indication that researchers were not building on knowledge of earlier papers, but these tend to be historical analysis of ethics (generally at societal level) , as shown in Table 5: The evolution of discussion on ethics and stakeholder engagement, rather than one that considers changing ethics over the time of the project or organization. Studying the trend of discourse, pattern of debate on the topic with a view to bringing out the sustainability elements over time and linking to management success and sustainability in the future could generate a process of evolution that practitioners and academics will benefit immensely from.

3.2 Future Research

With the fact above and as shown in Table 5 starring us in the face, it is obvious that the growing research interest in the field of ethics and stakeholder engagement has not started analysing ethics and stakeholder engagement with the lens of its impacts and how it can influence successful business, projects and organizational management

3.3 Limitations

This review paper has is limited in some ways, these may also affect the implications of the conclusions below:

- The review only looked at three search engines, which means there may probably be other papers in other search engines that covers some of the topics not in the review papers
- As with systematic review using Tranfield et.al. (2003) protocols, the elimination using keywords, title and abstract may generate omission of certain papers that could probably reshape our conclusions, which probably might discuss the topic in other sections of the papers. Although strength of method bias varies (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003), a quantitative approach could be deployed to determine the variance of bias and give credence to the conclusion. This though is not the focus of the paper, the approach is said to eliminate type1 and type II errors (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003)

4   Conclusion

The authors have painstakingly looked at the analysis and synthesis of ethics in stakeholder engagement in business, projects and organizational management using the systematic

literature review method with its inherent transparency and un-biasness, we can deduce from the analysis, discussions, tables and figures above that:

1. The discussion of ethics and stakeholder engagement has been studied more as an entity rather than as an evolving continuous process. This may not facilitate knowledge , growth and expansion in the field

2. The ethics and stakeholder engagement field is an emerging field of discourse and with the growth in the last 4 years growing exponentially,(Figure 4 and Figure 5), if this growth rate is maintained, we may likely record an increase interest in the field of study, this may also bring about a perspective change in the field from an entity and localised to a point in time to an evolving process whose growth and sustainability pattern can be studied in the future

3. With the exponential growth rate recorded, particularly in the last four years, and no noticeable evolving process in the pattern of discourse, academics and practitioner alike may need to stimulate the discussion in the field to enhance the evolutionary trend and process growth in order to stimulate success and sustainability

As managers, academics and practitioners, the second conclusion above should be of major concerns to us. This is because stakeholder engagement, communication, dialogue is been spoken as a veritable management success tool by numerous social, public speakers , and management speakers but research have not been able to show sufficient interest in empirically confirming the claims

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