



## East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences

[ejass.eanso.org](http://ejass.eanso.org)

Volume 8, Issue 2, 2025

Print ISSN: 2707-4277 | Online ISSN: 2707-4285

Title DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/2707-4285>

**EANSO**

EAST AFRICAN  
NATURE &  
SCIENCE  
ORGANIZATION

Original Article

### Inclusive Management Decision-Making for the Effective Governance of Urban Central Markets: A Case Study of Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets – Southwestern Uganda

Naris Ninsiima<sup>1\*</sup>, Assoc. Prof. Mesharch Walto Katusiimeh, PhD<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Godfrey Barigye, PhD<sup>1</sup> & Dr. Chrisostom Oketch, PhD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kabale University, P. O. Box 317, Kabale, Uganda.

\* Author's Email: [nninsiima@kab.ac.ug](mailto:nninsiima@kab.ac.ug)

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajass.8.2.3034>

Date Published: **ABSTRACT**

23 May 2025

**Keywords:**

Stakeholder,  
Participation,  
Management  
Decision-Making,  
Effective  
Governance,  
Urban Central  
Markets.

This study investigates the levels of stakeholder participation in management decision-making for the effective management of Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets in Uganda. Management decision-making is crucial for effective governance. Involving stakeholders ensures reliable, inclusive decisions. Structured decision management is essential for urban markets, vital for socio-economic development in towns, especially in developing countries like Uganda. Despite the benefits of participatory management, clear and transparent guidelines between vendors and market authorities are often lacking. Authorities frequently made unilateral decisions on market sales, redevelopment, and operations without involving key stakeholders. Using a descriptive case study design, data were collected through interviews and questionnaires. Results indicated that while stakeholder participation was more consolidated in implementation activities, problem rationalization and ensuring fair representation in boundary condition settings still had wide gaps. Although some collaborative initiatives were seen, the decision-making process was primarily top-down and resulted in frustration and resistance from stakeholders where inappropriate. This exclusionary strategy diminishes confidence between market authorities and vendors, hence compromising the efficacy of governance frameworks. Transitioning to a more participatory decision-making paradigm is essential for enhancing transparency, mitigating disputes, and ensuring that policies address the requirements of all market stakeholders. These findings highlight an urgent call for stakeholder inclusion in market governance to foster transparency, equity, and sustainable innovation. Tackling these challenges is key to the successful integration of vendors in management and requires structured vendor representation in decision-making forums and participatory policy frameworks to improve market governance effectiveness and boost stakeholder satisfaction. The study enhances participatory urban governance

literature and provides insights for policymakers and planners to improve stakeholder engagement in urban market management.

#### APA CITATION

Ninsiima, N., Katusiimeh, M. W., Barigye, G. & Oketch, C. (2025). Inclusive Management Decision-Making for the Effective Governance of Urban Central Markets: A Case Study of Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets – Southwestern Uganda. *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 8(2), 145-159. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajass.8.2.3034>

#### CHICAGO CITATION

Ninsiima, Naris, Mesharch Walto Katusiimeh, Godfrey Barigye and Chrisostom Oketch. 2025. "Inclusive Management Decision-Making for the Effective Governance of Urban Central Markets: A Case Study of Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets – Southwestern Uganda". *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* 8 (2), 145-159. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajass.8.2.3034>

#### HARVARD CITATION

Ninsiima, N., Katusiimeh, M. W., Barigye, G. & Oketch, C. (2025) "Inclusive Management Decision-Making for the Effective Governance of Urban Central Markets: A Case Study of Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets – Southwestern Uganda". *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 8(2), pp. 145-159. doi: 10.37284/eajass.8.2.3034

#### IEEE CITATION

N., Ninsiima, M. W., Katusiimeh, G., Barigye & C., Oketch "Inclusive Management Decision-Making for the Effective Governance of Urban Central Markets: A Case Study of Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets – Southwestern Uganda". *EAJASS*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 145-159, May. 2025.

#### MLA CITATION

Ninsiima, Naris, Mesharch Walto Katusiimeh, Godfrey Barigye & Chrisostom Oketch. "Inclusive Management Decision-Making for the Effective Governance of Urban Central Markets: A Case Study of Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets – Southwestern Uganda". *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, Vol. 8, no. 2, May. 2025, pp. 145-159, doi:10.37284/eajass.8.1.3034

## INTRODUCTION

Decision-making in management is a key stage for effective governance. Involving stakeholders in the process is vital to make dependable and inclusive decisions. Well-structured decision management is paramount for entities like urban central markets, which play a crucial socio-economic role in towns and cities, particularly in developing countries such as Uganda. Considering their essential governance role in fulfilling functions as key hubs for trade and urban services, these markets provide numerous opportunities as sources of food security, income, and employment to a broad range of stakeholders, both internal and external (United Nations, 2011). However, effectively managing these markets remains a persistent challenge, often due to the limited or ineffective participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes.

The management decision-making process for urban market management typically involves interconnected processes such as problem rationalization, boundary conditions, and action (Drucker, 2007). He affirms that problem

rationalization, defining boundary conditions, and momentum are the core of management decision-making. Diagnosis of core problems is done by facing up to the question, what are the crux issues, together with their root causes? From this diagnosis come actionable proposals (Kabeyi, 2019).

Despite the recognized benefits of participatory management decision-making, often, there was often a lack of clear and transparent guidelines in the decision-making between vendors and market authorities. Some documents have claimed that authorities frequently made unilateral decisions regarding market sales, redevelopment projects, and operational management without involving key stakeholders, including the vendors themselves (Uganda Law Reform Commission & Ministry of Local Government, 2013). This exclusion can diminish effective market governance, as vendors might feel alienated from decisions that affect their daily work. Additionally, the political and economic environment in Uganda, characterized by market management policies and the dominance of local

government authorities, may obstruct comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

This has significant implications for market functionality, vendor satisfaction, and long-term sustainability. While literature points to the theoretical value of stakeholder participation, there is a notable lack of empirical studies exploring how participation plays out in real-world management decision-making processes in Ugandan markets.

By assessing the degrees of stakeholder involvement in the management decision phase of market governance at Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets, this study aims to address this gap. The focus is on assessing participation in key management decision-making, specifically problem rationalization, boundary conditions, and action, and understanding the implications for sustainable governance in inclusive urban central markets. The study contributes to the growing discourse on participatory urban governance by drawing on stakeholder experiences and practices in these two urban centres and offers practical recommendations for improving stakeholder engagement in the market decision-making process across Uganda.

The rest of the paper is structured in this way: the upcoming section reviews pertinent literature, then outlines the methodology, presents the findings, and concludes with key insights and policy suggestions.

## LITERATURE

Legewie and Böhm (2015) analyze how terrorist acts influence public opinion towards native and immigrant populations. Their research shows that such incidents can significantly increase prejudice and societal divisions. This underscores the complex relationship between facts and opinions in decision-making. Public perception is often swayed by emotions and biases, despite available key information about attackers and contexts. Consequently, decisions may reflect societal opinions rather than factual realities. The study indicates that emotive events, like terrorist attacks, amplify public anxieties and biases, leading to

choices that prioritize perceived security over accurate risk assessments. Moreover, they argue that media coverage shapes public views by emphasizing specific narratives and often neglecting factual data, resulting in opinion-driven decision-making. The tension between democratic responsiveness and evidence-based policy complicates the dialogue over new public programs amid diverse opinions. Though the study focuses on terrorism, it enhances understanding of conflict by considering opinions alongside facts. This suggests that exploring strategies for fact-based decision-making in emotional situations can provide valuable insights for pressured legislators.

Legewie and Böhm (2015) show that the timing of public opinion, especially after traumatic events like terrorist attacks, significantly impacts decision-making. Their research emphasizes how opinions can overshadow factual knowledge, leading to decisions lacking factual grounding. Our study aims to improve comprehension of these dynamics and contribute to developing more equitable decision-making methods, addressing a gap in existing literature.

Conde, Lonsdale, Nyong, and Aguilar (2005) highlighted in their study, *Engaging Stakeholders in the Adaptation Process* while looking at Climate Change, that establishing a shared understanding of terminology among stakeholders is crucial. They provided an example of achieving consensus on definitions like "vulnerability," "adaptation," "coping range," and "climatic hazard." Addressing power imbalances among the project team and stakeholders requires effective information dissemination and access. Although their study focused on adaptation policy frameworks for climate change, businesses in public markets also need continuous adaptation. Additionally, principles for discussing facts and realities are vital for market management.

In their study "Trade-offs in Stakeholder Theory," Pies and Valentinov (2024) contend that rather than being disregarded or avoided, stakeholder interests'

trade-offs should be embraced and welcomed as a chance to realize stakeholders' shared interest in improving the business environment. They point out that through the institutional management of social problems, stakeholders are demonstrated to be accountable for resolving the perceived trade-offs. They recommend that attention be paid to the potential for turning trade-off situations into win-win ones. They used an example:

*"A case in point, consider the problem of environmental pollution, which typically takes the form of a social dilemma among competing corporations. Suppose that corporate managers seek to meet the customers' interest in ensuring that the products are safely packaged and are confronted at the same time with environmental activists' demands to minimize packaging waste. This situation may be thought of as a conflict between profit orientation and environmental protection. Managers may perceive themselves as choosing a legitimate corner solution within a given trade-off between the interests of consumers (and by implication shareholders) on the one hand and environmental concerns on the other hand."*

Though they were looking at general business companies, this directly affects the market entity since its operations and objectives relate to those of business companies.

In their study on boundary conditions (BC), Busse, Kach, and Wagner (2017) examined BC's significance in organizational studies, particularly in strategic management and entrepreneurship. They viewed theory as an empirical model simplifying reality, noting that different theories align with empirical reality based on prediction deviation. Correctness is contingent on the empirical environment rather than being absolute. Focusing on one theory, the study connects to market management, where the theory guides decision-making within legal frameworks. Effective market management requires considering empirical contexts and vendor status; a narrow view of BC can

undermine decision validity. For instance, in rent collection, authorities needing monthly payments must consider BC concerning defaulters and grace periods. When confiscating merchandise to recover rent, the market master should ensure only items worth the owed rent are taken, allowing vendors to survive poor seasons before recovery.

Setting clear criteria for effective decision-making is crucial in complex systems like urban public markets, where conflicting interests and many actors exist. Establishing benchmarks is vital for policy implementation. Hummel (2017) states that "precise standards will decrease the uncertainty for the policy targets and help coordinate stakeholders' actions with policy goals more efficiently." In urban public markets, benchmarks may include sustainability goals, financial performance measures, and inclusion efforts, which serve as a basis for evaluating progress and adapting strategies. Collaboration among all parties is necessary for creating inclusive, actionable benchmarks. Demediuk (2008) emphasizes the necessity of engaging diverse stakeholders in defining "what good looks like" to reflect shared interests and values, integrating feedback from consumers, vendors, and local authorities to balance social, economic, and environmental objectives in urban markets.

It is not well studied, but "what good looks like" varies from urban public markets to health care to education, among other sectors. Sector-specific research may enhance the relevance of benchmarks in specific contexts. Often, benchmarks are seen as fixed points of reference. But when conditions change, such as when the market or legislation changes, a more adaptable approach to setting and adjusting benchmarks is needed.

"Setting what good looks like" is one methodical way to guide decisions and ensure accountability. The body of extant literature places importance on this, however, more studies, not only for the literature across sectors but also for specific sectors, of the decision-making models should justify their

applicability through empirical research, which this study aims to address. Defining accurate criteria that balance objectives across the social, economic, and environmental dimensions will lead to better governance models and more effective policy implementation in the context of urban public markets.

Minimum decision standards establish baseline criteria that all options must meet to be viable, ensuring alignment with stakeholder values, organizational objectives, and constraints. This concept is crucial in dynamic environments like urban public markets, where competing interests and limited resources necessitate different decision thresholds. Minimum standards serve as guidelines in decision-making criteria, helping to ensure options are not only practical but aligned with ultimate goals (Drucker, 1954). Decision-makers can streamline processes by dismissing options that fail to meet these basic thresholds.

Minimum requirements guide policy by balancing regulatory compliance, stakeholder interests, and resource constraints. Terho et al. (2022) stress aligning options with strategic objectives and operational readiness for resource-intensive initiatives like digital content marketing. Similar guidance applies to urban public entities regarding environmental sustainability, social inclusion, or financial viability. Effective criteria arise from stakeholder collaboration. Demediuk (2008) highlights the importance of including stakeholders in defining thresholds to align with priorities like market infrastructure standards, community benefit, or vendor representation in urban public markets.

Reading the discussion in the large, there is widespread understanding of what minimum criteria are, but much less is known about the literature on their application in policy implementation or decision-making: While it is widely acknowledged as something that makes sense what should be minimum criteria the literature currently in publication does not connect sufficiently to adaptive thresholds, i.e., the reality

that minima must shift as contexts change, such as stakeholder expectations or market dynamics. The question of how minimum criteria vary across policy sectors (e.g., public health, education, urban planning) is underexplored in the literature.

The minimum the decision needs to satisfy empirical research, application of sectoral analysis, and dynamic criteria adjustment are all ways that the theoretical concept of the decision ladder can be translated into practical application, along with integration with decision-making models. Defining exact minimum criteria — on goods to be traded, structure, operations of the market, etc., in the context of urban public markets ensures that the decisions are aligned with economic, social, and environmental objectives and consequently, adaptable and equitable policy usage.

McDonald and Gao's 2019 study, "Pivoting isn't enough?" Explores how startups manage major strategic changes to adapt to market conditions, underlining the need to evaluate company status. They differentiate between minor adjustments (pivots) and significant strategic reorientations that require substantial shifts, often discarding prior strategies. They stress the importance of clear communication when reversing decisions and recommend three key aspects: Incorporating slack into value propositions for pivoting, aligning new strategies with original goals to maintain stakeholder goodwill, and implementing a bold strategy with soft communication to lessen backlash. Managing stakeholder perception during decision reversals is vital for support and legitimacy. The study does not link choice abandonment with decision-making models and primarily uses qualitative methods. Future research should combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore the impacts of choice abandonment and address these gaps.

Insch & Stuart (2015) identified disapproval of local government acts and scepticism about engaging with the city brand as reasons for residents' lack of involvement. They emphasize the need for a



participatory, co-creative approach between local governments and citizens to build a successful city brand. When stakeholders feel excluded from decision-making during implementation, they may lose interest. Although their study focused on general residents, the same applies to market vendors, who must identify with the market brand for mutual benefit. Vendors face similar barriers to participation and commitment as city residents.

Hrabal, & Tuček (2018), in their study about what it means to own a process, observed that process ownership is one of the primary pillars and defining elements of process-oriented organization. They mentioned that picking a process owner should be based on which competencies he/she requires to properly manage their processes. Despite the fact that their study focused on the implementation of business process management, when it comes to identifying the Right Owners for Actions in market management, the findings apply. Similarly, in market management, and after deciding on how to implement the decision, it may be beneficial to distribute tasks according to competencies and abilities to accomplish the action.

In their study on policy failure, Hudson, Hunter, & Peckham (2019) found that governments focus on improving the implementation process to prevent failures. They propose evaluating a policy support program based on its legitimacy, stakeholder support, clarity of purpose, understanding of complexity, political backing, and achievement of goals. Assessing current delivery capacity is crucial for identifying strengths and areas for improvement before seeking assistance. They recommend involving implementation entrepreneurs and finding intermediaries to connect local and national narratives. While focused on government policy, the decentralization analogy shows that market management also suffers from failure and requires vendor support for implementation.

Management decisions in public markets are vital, but a lack of stakeholder input can create conflict. Zhuang et al. (2019) identified knowledge

interactions, power, and interest as key to stakeholder engagement in decision-making for urban renewal in China. Waris et al. (2022) emphasized that crucial components of stakeholder engagement are risk management, benefit realization, and reducing the administrative burden of development plans. Though these studies focused on developed countries, their findings may apply to Uganda's public markets. This study addresses this contextual gap.

Also, stakeholder engagement promotes inclusivity and transparency, resulting in market regulations that are more closely aligned with the needs of the market players and consumers (Nguyen & Pojani, 2021). Research shows that when stakeholders, in particular vendors and community representatives, are included in the management process, they provide valuable perspective on operational hurdles, which allows for better decision-making (Lindell, Ampaire, & Byerley, 2019). Participation has been associated with increased adherence to rules and regulations and finding better ways to resolve conflicts in African marketplaces, minimizing conflicts between traders and market authorities (Brown & Lyons, 2010).

Nothing will cover the very big debate; weak stakeholder involvement in decision-making will lead to ineffective market management policy implementation, leading to poverty without market realities. Such a dynamic has previously been demonstrated, for instance, in a study by Mitullah (2021), which showed that a market policy had been implemented without consulting vendors first, resulting in unexpected outcomes, such as greater resistance to fees and operational inefficiencies. Moreover, Kamunyori (2007) reported that participatory governance in the case of Nairobi's markets tremendously improved the maintenance of infrastructure, as vendors regarded themselves as owners of market facilities.

Recent research highlights the importance of digital engagement for increasing participation in market management decisions as well. As explained by

Guenduez, Mettler, & Schedler (2020), e-governance platforms improve communication between stakeholders and market authorities and ensure that decisions are an item of collective interest. Such is the case in Uganda, where urban market management is seeing slow but crucial digital transformation, which can address some of the existing gaps in participatory governance today. This notwithstanding, little research has been undertaken to ascertain the effects of stakeholder participation in public market management decisions on market efficiency and vendor satisfaction in Uganda. Such a gap exists, and this study seeks to fill this gap by assessing the degree of stakeholder participation in decision-making and the effect this has on governance outcomes in Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets.

This literature review highlights research gaps. While studies like Zhuang et al. (2019) and Waris et al. (2022) examine stakeholder engagement in urban renewal, evidence on stakeholder participation in Ugandan public market management is scarce. This study addresses this gap, focusing on Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets. Limited research exists on participatory decision-making on market efficiency and vendor satisfaction. Although Brown & Lyons (2010) discuss participation in conflict resolution, few studies investigate stakeholder input's impact on operational efficiency, service delivery, and satisfaction in Ugandan markets. Guenduez, Mettler, & Schedler (2020) explore e-governance and stakeholder engagement, yet literature on digital platforms for enhancing participatory decision-making in Uganda's public markets is lacking. Most studies use qualitative case studies or quantitative surveys; a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative insights and statistics could provide a comprehensive understanding of how stakeholder participation influences decision-making and governance outcomes.

There is little context-specific discourse, however, around governance challenges in Uganda that are

for market purposes. While certain studies, such as Nguyen *et al.* (2021), investigate participatory governance in broader urban contexts, there is a scarcity of research focusing on decision-making challenges within the unique dynamics of public markets that encompass informal traders, regulatory bodies, and municipal authorities. As a consequence of their research gaps, the effects of stakeholder participation on decision-making in public markets will be a helpful insight. Thus, this study will add to knowledge through filling empirical, methodological, and contextual gaps, which hopefully will enhance governance practices more broadly in Ugandan public markets.

## METHODOLOGY

The research used quantitative and qualitative methods within a case study framework to explore complex real-life issues (Yin, 2018). The quantitative method collected data from vendors at Mbarara and Kabale Markets, while the qualitative method provided insights from market leaders and local government officials.

Purposefully selecting informants, the research examined Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets. This group included two Division Mayors, Town Clerks, Commercial Officers, Market Masters, and Vendor Leaders from each market. Vendors were chosen through proportional stratified random sampling using Slovin's formula, ensuring representation from diverse market areas. A sample of 288 vendors came from Kabale and 308 from Mbarara. This sample size was representative of the study population, including key stakeholders like vendors, market leaders, and local authorities.

A stratified sampling approach segmented the target population into categories like agro-inputs, butcheries, and electronics. This allowed for consistent comparisons within groups based on survey criteria. The varying vendor numbers in each category enhanced the sample's fairness and representativeness. Additionally, purposive sampling identified key participants, such as

political and technical leaders and vendor association heads, due to their expertise in public market management. This combination of methods created a diverse and informed respondent pool, enriching the study's findings. Ten research assistants with experience in ethics and methodology were recruited for questionnaire distribution, guidance, and response collection. Researchers conducted interviews directly. Questionnaires were pre-tested with 30 participants at Owino Market in Kabale to verify validity and reliability.

Using SPSS, frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations were generated for the quantitative analysis. The qualitative analysis started by reviewing interview transcripts to understand participant responses, followed by thematic coding on the study's core themes:

communication, engagement strategies, capacity building, and market management. Patterns across themes were explored to reveal insights and variations. Research integrity was maintained by strictly applying ethical considerations to protect participants. All participants gave informed consent after being briefed on the study's aims, roles, and voluntary nature. Confidentiality was ensured by anonymizing responses.

## RESULTS

This study evaluates stakeholder participation in decision-making at Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets. Respondents used Likert's Five Point Scale to indicate their agreement with questionnaire statements, from 1-5: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). Responses are in Tables 1 to 3 below:

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Showing the Level of Stakeholder Participation in Problem Rationalization in Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets (n=586)**

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	M	SD
I participate in considering opinions over the facts while decisions are being made in this market	10.8	17.9	23.9	31.2	16.2	3.24	1.23
I participate in testing opinions over reality while decisions are being made in this market	10.8	17.1	23.7	32.6	15.9	3.25	1.22
I participate in making trade-offs on opinions and actions while decisions are being made in this market	11.3	18.9	24.7	28.5	16.6	3.20	1.24

**Source:** *Primary Data (2024).*

Table 1 presents findings on the level of stakeholder participation in Problem Rationalization in Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets. Concerning problem rationalization, respondents remained neutral on all the items. For example, they revealed limited participation in considering opinions over the facts while decisions are being made in their markets (Mean = 3.24); limited participation in testing opinions over reality while decisions are being

made in their markets (Mean = 3.25) and limited participation in making trade-offs on opinions and actions while decisions are being made in their markets (Mean = 3.20). All these findings give the implication that vendors' input on zeroing out genuine problems that need action is not sought by market authorities in the process of making decisions regarding market operations.



**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics Showing the Level of Stakeholder Participation in Boundary Conditions in Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets (n=586)**

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	M	SD
I participate in setting what is good while decisions are being made in this market	7.3	13.3	23.5	39.9	15.9	3.43	1.12
I participate in discussing the market needs while making decisions in this market	6.7	13.0	27.1	35.5	17.7	3.44	1.12
I participate in discussing which decisions to abandon in this market	7.2	11.8	24.4	39.4	17.2	3.47	1.12

**Source:** *Primary Data (2024).*

Table 2 presents findings on the level of stakeholder participation in boundary conditions in Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets. Concerning boundary conditions, respondents agreed to participate in setting what is good while decisions are being made in their markets (Mean = 3.43); participation in discussing the market needs while making decisions in their markets (Mean = 3.44) and participation in discussing which decisions to abandon in their markets (Mean = 3.47). These findings implicate that vendors in the two markets are involved in

determining boundary conditions line what good is composed of/looks like for their markets, given the chance to discuss the needs of their markets and have the platform to decide which decisions to abandon if they are not good for the conducive running of the markets. Note that these issues directly affect their routine operations in the market and suggest that it could be a push factor for them to ensure they participate in them to keep in business.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics Showing the Level of Stakeholder Participation in Action in Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets (n=586)**

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	M	SD
I participate in turning decisions into action in this market	6.3	10.2	24.9	43.2	15.4	3.51	1.06
I participate in identifying the right options while decisions are being made in this market	6.0	15.7	35.0	29.2	14.2	3.29	1.08
I support the action taken while making decisions in this market	6.0	9.0	15.5	44.2	25.3	3.73	1.11

**Source:** *Primary Data (2024).*

Table 3 presents findings on stakeholder participation in Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets. Respondents agreed to engage in decision-making actions (Mean = 3.51), indicating vendors can participate in acting on market decisions. Additionally, respondents were neutral about identifying options during decision-making (Mean = 3.29), suggesting limited opportunities for vendors to influence choices. Consequently, market leadership primarily determines effective actions.

Lastly, Table 3 shows that vendors support decision-making actions in their markets (Mean = 3.73), indicating their involvement in enforcement and adherence to decisions made.

The analysis of this further suggests that vendors endeavour to participate in issues that directly affect their business, but not in the initiation of the decision. That is why, despite the fact that they are largely not involved in problem rationalization, they largely come in on boundary conditions and action

since these determine their belonging in the market or not, and how their business can operate.

### **Qualitative Data Presentation on Stakeholder Participation in Management Decision-making in Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets**

Respondents from the interviews combine aspects for all the sub-construction of management decision-making, which are problem rationalization, boundary conditions, and action. They noted that there is a good level of vendor involvement while making management decisions. They indicated that there are instances where section heads of the market leadership would be involved at this level. Vendors usually communicate through their section head or directly to authorities through telephone calls. For example, one of them from Kabale confirmed by saying:

*“They report to us their suggestion. We take responsibility for adopting what works or call a committee if it is necessary to deliberate on the suggestions.”* (A2, 28th March 2024)

Another one from Mbarara indicated that they get shrewd in such instances that affect them directly, so that they can even call the minister directly. As we noted from the quantitative data, vendors endeavour to participate in issues that directly affect their business, but not in the initiation of the decision. The authorities themselves seemed to leave issues that affect them for them to handle. For example, one stated that:

*“Obviously some things are their own creation. Someone blocks a trench, and when it rained, water damages another person’s stock. Recently, someone left a tap open, and by the time they came in the morning, many shops were soaked, and they had to manage themselves. Because if it is you who has caused the damage, then it is you to make good of what you have spoiled.”* (B1, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2024)

Of course, such an issue had affected vendors’ merchandise directly and it would call for their

involvement urgently without waiting for authorities, in case the authorities would not act in favour of those who had lost their merchandise.

### **DISCUSSION**

Research on stakeholder participation in Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets shows moderate engagement in boundary-setting, but limited involvement in problem identification and decision alternatives. This contradicts participatory governance principles advocating for participation at all decision-making stages (Arnstein, 1969). Vendors can identify market needs but lack control over problem identification, contrary to studies promoting grassroots participation in urban governance (Da Cruz, Rode & McQuarrie, 2019). Limited vendor involvement stems from hierarchical structures favouring centralized authority, undermining effective governance, and alienating vendors from decisions affecting them. Additionally, Uganda's political and economic climate, with its market management policies and local government dominance, hinders comprehensive engagement. Addressing these gaps with structured vendor representation and participatory frameworks could enhance governance and increase satisfaction.

Limited capacity building hinders stakeholder participation in decision-making. Zhuang et al. (2019) assert that knowledge, power, and interest are vital for engagement. Earlier planning and capacity building would have empowered vendors for smoother participation. Qualitative results support Waris et al. (2022), emphasizing that risk control, benefits realization, and reduced administrative pressure are crucial for involvement. Some respondents believe vendors should resolve issues independently to let authorities focus elsewhere. They warned against vendors seeking compensation for damages if authorities control decisions. Below is an exploration of concepts related to this objective.

### Problem Rationalization

Problem rationalization would be one of the most essential elements of stakeholder interactions in the management decision-making process. It means diagnosing problems, weighing a range of views against the facts, and balancing competing priorities to advise practical rules or principles. Logically setting out the problem facing accountability actors and stakeholders in the context of Central Markets in Kabale and Mbarara as variables, the fact that stakeholders were only moderately involved indicates room for improvement in their rationalization.

This aspect of the problem rationalization process involves collecting and evaluating stakeholder perspectives. Results indicate stakeholders feel their views are not respected, as participation had a poor score (mean = 3.24). Vendors dismiss decisions made from above or are biased toward authoritative views, which may lead to disengagement or rejection of policies. Hold meetings and forums that include stakeholders such as line workers, managers, and consultants to voice their opinions. Moderators must ensure all perspectives, especially from marginalized groups, are considered in the problem-definition process (Legewie & Böhm, 2015).

To test stakeholder opinions against market processes is to evaluate their viability and applicability. This activity had a mean score of 3.25, showing a low level of involvement. If stakeholders lack access to trustworthy data or methods of analysis for testing the viability of their recommendations (Conde *et al.*, 2005), they will be less confident when engaging in talks. Unrealistic stakeholder expectations can also arise when there is little communication about operational challenges and the demands of the market. Vendors should obtain relevant market data from authorities, including sales trends, customer feedback, and operational performance indicators. Train those vendors on how to evaluate data and use decision-

making frameworks to enable them to make successful contributions.

The ability to make trade-offs - to reconcile competing priorities and perspectives received the lowest rating (mean = 3.20). To offer feasible solutions, this process does a balancing act between stakeholder and market objectives, as well as resource constraints (Pies & Valentinov, 2024). When trade-offs are made, conflicts between short-term demands from stakeholders and long-term objectives typify the market. Insufficient stakeholder engagement in these conversations can result in policies that are impractical or unpalatable to the public. Facilitated negotiation and conflict resolution sessions can be used for stakeholders to collaboratively negotiate trade-offs. Activities like participatory budgeting can highlight resource constraints while also engaging stakeholders in joint investment choices.

### Boundary Conditions

Boundary conditions are the rules and restrictions that shape accommodation processes and ensure that their outputs are palatable, practical, and consistent with organizational goals (Busse, Kach, & Wagner, 2017). Overall stakeholder participation in boundary conditions for Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets was moderate (mean scores 3.43–3.47), indicating both achievements made and those needing improvement. In this section, we analyze boundary conditions focusing on establishing criteria, discussing market demands, and making decisions, as well as their implications for market management.

The mean score of stakeholder engagement in defining what is "good" was 3.43. This involves establishing measurable criteria, or benchmarks, that guide operational and policy decisions. Some possible criteria are fairness, cost-effectiveness, or alignment with stakeholder priorities. Perhaps the little engagement here stems from a lack of clarity on the criteria establishment, or poor communication at the decision-making framework

level. Stakeholders may feel excluded from these conversations, resulting in policies with limited buy-in (Busse *et al.*, 2017). Stakeholders should be included through organized processes such as workshops or interactive brainstorming sessions to co-create decision-making standards. Providing stakeholders with specific instructions, and parameters to be used to create their criteria can enhance relevance and inclusivity.

Average score of 3.44 for Stakeholder participation in defining market needs and priorities: accountability, but not undertaken in full. As stated by Terho *et al.* (2022) and ensures that decision processes consider the spoken and unspoken needs of customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. A moderate score indicates that stakeholders do have a platform through which they can raise the needs of the market, but that their sentiment is not necessarily reflected in the decisions that are ultimately made. This may make them dissatisfied and less likely to respect the policy. Stakeholders also might have the chance to voice their needs through routine consultations, such as town halls or vendor association meetings. To cultivate accountability and trust, authorities should also document and articulate how stakeholder input informs policy and policy decisions.

This dimension received the highest score (3.47), indicating strong stakeholder involvement in abandoning unfeasible or undesirable decisions. It involves assessing risks, costs, and benefits, and knowing when to pivot or cease initiatives (McDonald & Gao, 2019). Engagement is robust, but unequal influence among stakeholders may pose problems. Larger, organized actors like vendor associations can dominate these decisions, sidelining smaller voices. We must ensure discrimination is applied fairly, preventing arbitrary decision-making. Conflicted facilitation meetings balance competing interests, ensuring all stakeholders have a say in the solution process.

## Action

The phase of decision-making that involves implementation, where decisions are put into action, where actions are delegated, and where resources are mobilized to achieve goals, is simply referred to as action. The person doing the action involves stakeholder engagement to ensure that decisions made will be implemented effectively and that whoever is in action aligns with the expectations and interests of all stakeholders. These action-oriented activities attracted more stakeholder engagement in Kabale and Mbarara Central Markets and had higher means (3.29–3.73) than other decision-making aspects. This section delves deeper into the building blocks of action: how decisions are translated into commitments to actions, how appropriate owners of those actions are determined, and how actions are supported in executing the decisions.

Stakeholder engagement in converting decisions into commitments for action was rated moderately good (mean = 3.51). This dimension involves developing specific plans, timelines, and accountability systems to execute decisions. Underwhelming engagement might indicate weaknesses in translating stakeholder feedback into action. If stakeholders feel that their involvement in earlier stages of decision-making is not adequately represented at the implementation stage, for example, they may feel disgruntled or lose interest (Insch & Stuart, 2015). Market authorities should provide a guarantee for transparency on the translation of decisions into actions. Shared ownership and accountability can be spurred by participative planning instruments like Gantt charts or action plans created collaboratively with stakeholders.

The action assignment to the right owner also got a moderate score (mean = 3.29). This process involves determining who (or what group) has the most experience, or resources or is in a position of authority to potentially oversee individual actions (Hrabal & Tuček, 2018). Stakeholders (particularly



underrepresented groups) may not understand their responsibilities or may not have the same opportunities to be leaders. This could preclude the participation of smaller and less structured parties and overly rely on certain aggregated categories, for example, market managers or vendor associations. Roles and responsibilities should be allocated by the authorities through fair processes. Such services could include capacity-building programs or shared leadership positions to help underrepresented groups participate more fully in decision-making processes.

Stakeholder support for decision-making showed strong collaboration in the execution phase, with a mean score of 3.73. This indicates that stakeholders support decisions they view as inclusive and equitable. However, sustained engagement needs systems for addressing concerns during implementation (Hudson, Hunter, & Peckham, 2019). Additionally, vendors may need extra resources or technical assistance for effective execution. Authorities can introduce mechanisms, like assistance programs, workshops, or resource-sharing platforms, to equip stakeholders for action. Regular updates on developments can help maintain stakeholder motivation and trust.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings showed that stakeholders were poorly included in decision-making, while vendors had negligible involvement in management-level policies. Although some collaborative initiatives were seen, the decision-making process was primarily top-down and resulted in frustration and resistance from stakeholders where inappropriate. This exclusionary strategy diminishes confidence between market authorities and vendors, hence compromising the efficacy of governance frameworks. Transitioning to a more participatory decision-making paradigm is essential for enhancing transparency, mitigating disputes, and ensuring that policies address the requirements of all market stakeholders.

## Encourage Stakeholder Representation in Decision-Making Bodies

The selected section heads should be composed into or assigned tasks of the Market Management Committee by market authorities and as a management procedure. The Committee should be composed of vendor section heads, local government heads, and market administrators. It ought to be tasked with making essential decisions covering market regulations, fee structure, dispute resolution, as well as other day-to-day management details. In order to diversify representation in decision-making processes, the election of market vendors' section heads must rotate their representatives. All the members of the committee (composed of public and private sectors) should meet bi-monthly to discuss important issues concerning market management, and the decisions taken in the respective meetings should be open to the public.

## Encourage Consensus-Based Decision Making

Market authorities should adopt a participatory voting system. Market vendors and stakeholders can be engaged in a structured voting process, in a physical or digital setting, before adopting drastic management decisions. The above are just some of the strategies you could employ using mediation and conflict resolution strategies. In disputes, an unbiased arbitration panel of vendor leaders, market officials, and impartial mediators should decide. Bottom-up decision processes should be encouraged by the authorities. Working with the market, rather than issuing prescriptive guidance, to solicit and allow for market innovation through structured engagement opportunities. This guarantees that decisions represent the interests of the impacted.

## Strengthening Accountability Systems

Vendor committees should demand a system of public accountability reporting. In addition to this, there is also a requirement for market authorities to provide a quarterly report on the content of key



decisions taken, what actions have been taken, and to justify those actions. The vendors should subsequently disseminate these findings broadly on their noticeboards and internet platforms. The online portal must provide market stakeholders with the ability to monitor decisions, concerns, and updates on current management discussions.

## REFERENCES:

- Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216-224.
- Brown, A., Lyons, M., & Dankoco, I. (2010). Street traders and the emerging spaces for urban voice and citizenship in African cities. *Urban Studies*, 47(3), 666-683.
- Busse, C., Kach, A. P., & Wagner, S. M. (2017). Boundary conditions: What they are, how to explore them, why we need them, and when to consider them. *Organizational Research Methods*, 20(4), 574-609.
- Conde, C., Lonsdale, K., Nyong, A., & Aguilar, I. (2005). Engaging stakeholders in the adaptation process. *Adaptation policy frameworks for climate change: Developing strategies, policies and measures*, 47-66.
- Da Cruz, N. F., Rode, P., & McQuarrie, M. (2019). New urban governance: A review of current themes and future priorities. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 41(1), 1-19.
- Demediuk, P. (2008). The role of citizens in local government decision-making. *Global Business & Economics Anthology*, 2, 119-129.
- Drucker, P.F. (1954), *The Practice of Management*, Harper & Row, New York, NY.
- Drucker, P.F. (2007). The Essential Drucker (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429347979>
- Guenduez, A. A., Mettler, T., & Schedler, K. (2020). Citizen participation in smart government: A conceptual model and two IoT case studies. *Beyond smart and connected governments: Sensors and the internet of things in the public sector*, 189-209.
- Hrabal, M., & Tuček, D. (2018). What does it mean to own a process: Defining the process owner's competencies. *Fme Transactions*.
- Hudson, B., Hunter, D., & Peckham, S. (2019). Policy failure and the policy-implementation gap: Can policy support programs help? *Policy design and practice*, 2(1), 1-14.
- Hummel, C. (2017). Disobedient markets: Street vendors, enforcement, and state intervention in collective action. *Comparative Political Studies*, 50(11), 1524-1555.
- Insch, A., & Stuart, M. (2015). Understanding resident city brand disengagement. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 8(3), 172-186.
- Kabeyi, M. (2019). Organizational strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation with analysis of challenges and benefits. *International Journal of Applied Research and Studies*, 5(6), 27-32.
- Kamunyori, S. W. (2007). *A Growing Space for Dialogue: The Case of Street Vending in Nairobi's Central Business District*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Legewie, H., & Böhm, B. (2015). Moderation of Teamwork: Basics and Techniques\*.
- Lindell, I., Ampaire, C., & Byerley, A. (2019). Governing urban informality: re-working spaces and subjects in Kampala, Uganda. *International Development Planning Review*, 41(1), 63-84.
- McDonald, R., & Gao, C. (2019). Pivoting isn't enough? Managing strategic reorientation in new ventures. *Organization Science*, 30(6), 1289-1318.

- Mitullah, W. V. (2021). The Powers of Agenda-Setting: The Role of Politicians and Experts. *Governing Kenya: Public Policy in Theory and Practice*, 47-64.
- Nguyen, T. D., Shih, M. H., Srivastava, D., Tirthapura, S., & Xu, B. (2021). Stratified random sampling from streaming and stored data. *Distributed and Parallel Databases*, 39(3), 665–710. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10619-020-07315-w>
- Pies, I., & Valentinov, V. (2024). Trade-offs in stakeholder theory: an ordonomic perspective. *Social Responsibility Journal*, 20(5), 975-997.
- Reed, M. S., Vella, S., Challies, E., De Vente, J., Frewer, L., Hohenwallner-Ries, D., ... & Van Delden, H. (2018). A theory of participation: what makes stakeholder and public engagement in environmental management work? *Restoration ecology*, 26, S7-S17.
- Terho, H., Mero, J., Siutla, L., & Jaakkola, E. (2022). Digital content marketing in business markets: Activities, consequences, and contingencies along the customer journey. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 105, 294-310.
- Uganda Law Reform Commission and Ministry of Local Government (2013). Annual Report. Uganda Law Reform Commission, Kampala, Uganda.
- United Nations. (2011). *Country Programme Document 2016 – 2021*.
- Waris, M., Khan, A., Abideen, A. Z., Sorooshian, S., & Ullah, M. (2022). Stakeholder Management in Public Sector Infrastructure Projects. *Journal of Engineering, Project & Production Management*, 12(3).
- Yin, R. K. (2018). Case study research and applications.
- Zhuang, T., Qian, Q. K., Visscher, H. J., Elsinga, M. G., & Wu, W. (2019). The role of stakeholders and their participation network in decision-making of urban renewal in China: The case of Chongqing. *Cities*, 92, 47-58.