



Analysis of Monitoring and Evaluation Practices on Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations' Project in Kiambu County, Kenya

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Abstract

Monitoring and evaluation is an essential practice in project management as it helps the project's scope to be defined, interventions to be established, and project managers to have an understanding of how project interventions would affect the project's implementation and objectives. The purpose for this study was to analyze monitoring and evaluation practices on the performance of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Kiambu County in Kenya. The three main research objectives of this research are; the monitoring and evaluation planning practice; the monitoring and evaluation technical skills practice, and the participatory monitoring and evaluation practice on the performance of NGO's in Kiambu County. This study utilized a descriptive investigative approach, with a sample size of 210 being non-governmental employees drawn from; Monitoring and evaluation officers, Project managers, and Stakeholder representatives out of a target population of 441. The tool for data analysis was the statistical package for social science version 26 and the results obtained were presented using tables and figures. The results of regression evaluation of monitoring and evaluation depicted a very strong connection between monitoring and evaluation planning practice and non-governmental organizations' project performance. The results of monitoring and evaluation of technical skill illustrated a positive connection between monitoring and evaluation of technical skill practice and non-governmental organizations' project performance. Further, the findings on Participatory monitoring and evaluation represented a confident connection between Participatory monitoring and evaluation practice and non-governmental organizations' project performance. Regression analysis results indicated that monitoring and evaluation planning practice; the monitoring and evaluation technical skills practice, and the participatory monitoring and evaluation practice positively and significantly impact the project performance of non-governmental organizational In Kiambu County, Kenya. This study therefore concluded that monitoring and evaluation planning practice; the monitoring and evaluation technical skills practice, and the participatory monitoring and evaluation practice

Analysis of Monitoring and Evaluation Practices on Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations' Project in Kiambu County, Kenya

positively and significantly impact the project performance of non-governmental organizational In Kiambu County, Kenya. This study recommends non-governmental organizational In Kiambu County, Kenya to pay particular attention to participatory monitoring and evaluation practice by focusing on those strategies that embrace participatory approaches, to create more inclusive and impactful M&E processes that contribute to sustainable development and positive change within communities. The findings in this research study will benefit, scholars, M&E practitioners, programme managers, government institutions, project stakeholders, and donor community in proper integration of the monitoring and evaluation practices for project performance.

Keywords: Monitoring, Evaluation, Practices, Performance, Non-Governmental Organizations, Kiambu, Kenya

Introduction

In the international development domains, globally, monitoring and evaluation is practiced in international platforms that its history can be traced back to the early 20th century, when the field of program evaluation began to develop in the United States with the earliest example of monitoring and evaluation practice, was the evaluation of the new deal programs implemented during the great depression (Richard & Christina,2022). Organizations like the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) started using monitoring and evaluation practices to assess their projects performance. In the 1980's monitoring and evaluation took a shift towards the use of results-based management (RBM) and the use of performance indicators to measure program outcomes (Richard 2022).

In the western part of Africa, there is an increase in the number of projects being implemented at exorbitant expenses, which later results in sustainability difficulties. Further, these projects tend not to utilize proper monitoring and evaluation systems and techniques which makes major funders like the Asian Development Bank, and the World Bank, raise their eyebrows and voice their worries over enormous project expenses that aren't fulfilling their sustainability goals. In Ghana, the nature of project funding costs is creating considerable problems for both non-government organizations and the government as well. The country's major projects are donor funded but the expenses are so high that they are now referred to as development partners, a reflection of Ghana's reliance on foreign funding for national development programs. (Abubakari, Asamoah, & Agyemang, 2018).

When it comes to the local application of monitoring and evaluation practice in project management; monitoring and evaluation is an essential practice that elicits and grounds a project on a path to its performance. In a country like Kenya, monitoring and evaluation is often used by government agencies, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. The government of Kenya has put in place several monitoring and evaluation systems to support the implementation of its development plans such as the Kenya Vision 2030 and government development plans such as the Big Four Agenda. The Ministry of Planning, National

Development, and Vision 2030 is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of government programs (Fahmi, 2022). However, like in many other African countries, the use of monitoring and evaluation in Kenya is facing major challenges. One of the main challenges is a lack of capacity and resources to effectively implement monitoring and evaluation practices. This includes a shortage of trained personnel, a lack of funding for monitoring and evaluation activities, and a lack of infrastructure and technology to support monitoring and evaluation. Another challenge is the cultural context of monitoring and evaluation in Kenya, where traditional knowledge and practices are often overlooked and not included in the evaluation process. In response, participatory monitoring and evaluation methods have been developed, which involve stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process and incorporate traditional knowledge and practices.

Statement of the Problem

Primarily monitoring and evaluation should be employed as a decision-making tool effective for project performance rather than being viewed as a donor need. The local NGOs in developing and underdeveloped countries suffer a number of monitoring and evaluation obstacles, from finding difficulty in properly planning for monitoring and evaluation practices, learning the correct monitoring and evaluation skillset, participatory monitoring and evaluation, including donor demands for proper inclusion of a working monitoring and evaluation system. In Kenya, Non-governmental projects are ineffective when it comes to monitoring and evaluation. Information relating to monitoring and evaluation is not published, shared, or made public (The Kenya Social Protection Sector, 2015). Instead, strict, bureaucratic management systems monitor and supervise their operations which deflates monitoring and evaluation purposes (Tessio, 2015). Hilhorst & Guijt, 2015 notes that, although certain major stakeholders and project beneficiaries are involved in project planning, they are frequently absent throughout the development and design of a monitoring and evaluation system. This is well captured when Kimweli (2014) demonstrated that M&E was entirely unknown to the community as a result of a lack of involvement at any level of the development and participation of monitoring and evaluation. This confirms that when a project or programme is being implemented the livelihoods of the beneficiaries appear to improve, but once the initiative is finished, communities appear to be left suffering and returning to extreme vulnerability (Micah & Loketero 2017). Monitoring and evaluation being a contributing factor to project performance, in Kiambu County, Yusuf, (2018) notes that while the implementation of monitoring and evaluation practices is still a goal for roughly 65 percent of NGO projects, only 35 percent of NGO projects have monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

It is worrying to question whether the project monitoring and evaluation staff have been equipped with technical monitoring and evaluation skills to implement a monitoring and evaluation system. This raises the question of whether NGO staffs are aware of the value of monitoring and evaluation and its requirements and whether are they able to execute monitoring and evaluation practices. Jamaal (2018) concluded research on the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute's (KMFRRI) on participatory monitoring and assessment; noted the lack of proper training on participatory monitoring and evaluation practice in its institution. This echoes the inappropriate utilization of monitoring and evaluation tools, inhibiting proper

Analysis of Monitoring and Evaluation Practices on Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations' Project in Kiambu County, Kenya

execution of monitoring and evaluation procedures, and lacking sufficient financial means to monitor and assess projects. Causing a ripple effect on the NGO project's performance. Yusuf (2018) recorded that over 60% of projects fail to reach their objectives owing to insufficient monitoring and evaluation.

General Objective of the study

The overall goal of this research is to study the relationship the monitoring and evaluation practices have on the performance of NGO projects in Kenya's Kiambu County.

Theoretical Review

Theory of Change

This theory suggests that by understanding a project plan or an monitoring and evaluation plan; By comparing the results to the initial plan advised by the theory of change, project employees, managers, and the intended outcomes can be monitored and measured by evaluators (Alcock, 2015). The road map for where to go and what to do is improved with the help of a monitoring and evaluation strategy, while communications aids in the achievement of the goal by assisting in the implementation of change. However, this approach falls short since project success is far more complicated than planning (Babbie & Mouton, 2015). It is important to understand project or programme success goes beyond just knowing the laid plan of what works. If we are to go by experience, blindly duplicating or scaling a strategy or intervention hampers success. (Mackay, 2017). Gathering sufficient knowledge and understanding is a key responsibility for monitoring and evaluation in order to forecast project success (Jones, 2016). This theory will be applied to ascertain how planning for monitoring and evaluation affects the performance of NGO projects.

The Three-Skill Theory of Leadership

In the Skills theory contribution, Katz (1955), argued that effective leadership or management is dependent on three core personal skills: technical, conceptual, and human. At various levels of management, these skills are required to varying degrees. The mastery of a particular skill or activity is referred to as technical ability. The ability to work with people is referred to as a human skill, and conceptual competence is the intellectual capacity to cope with broad concepts and ideas. However Mcneal (2017), strongly sheds Criticism on this theory that it is insufficiently predictive of value, and they cannot be generalized to different leadership scenarios. In terms of technical, conceptual, and human skills, one must first assess his or her own strengths and deficiencies. This theory will be utilized to determine the influence of technical skill monitoring and evaluation on the performance of non-governmental organization (NGO) initiatives.

Stakeholders Theory

Ignacio (2014) noted that, according to the "Friedman doctrine," a shareholder of a company have no meaningful social obligation to the public since its primary objective is to

maximize profits for its owners, who would then privately assume any social duty. A monitoring and evaluation manager, together with local authorities may be considering evaluating the performance and service delivery output of a project that is projected to provide certain outcomes. However, this theory seems to have a major source of an absence of a resilient guarantee from project stakeholders who would be the key beneficiary of the projects. This theory will be used to look into the impact of participatory monitoring and evaluation involvement of the identified participants on NGO project performance.

Complexity Theory

According to Stanford (2015), even the tiniest changes in a project's activity can result in significant variances in the project's performance, the so-called butterfly effect; a tornado in Texas might be caused by the flapping of a butterfly's wings in Argentina. This theory alerts us to expect the unexpected. When it comes to project management, complexity theory recognizes that there will always be unknowns, and the best way to deal with them is to use a flexible method rather than a strict contingency plan (Weiss, 2015). Complexity theory will form a firm base of this study since it offers to assess more than one objective that will be analyzed and measured to establish their effects as well as assessing the project performance based on available literature. This theory will be used after the thesis to analyze three objectives and their variables on the performance in relation to NGO project performance.

Literature Review

Monitoring and Evaluation Planning Practices

According to the majority of project monitoring and evaluation academics, M&E planning should begin immediately at the start of the project. (Kohli & Chitkara, 2008) While some argue that it should be developed during a project's planning phase but before its design phase, Nyenje, (2012) argues that M&E planning should be generated after the planning phase. Paying no attention to the researchers' diverse points of view, it is evident that all academicians agree to the importance of an M&E plan being included in project planning (Cleland & Ireland, 2007). According to the research conducted, the monitoring and evaluation plan contains the fundamental assumptions on which M&E goals are based on. As well as the expected links between actions, outputs, and outcomes in the M&E logical framework. This demonstrates how monitoring and evaluation planning takes into account all requirements for early detection of monitoring and evaluation progress. (Nuguti, 2011).

Monitoring and Evaluation of Technical Skill Practices

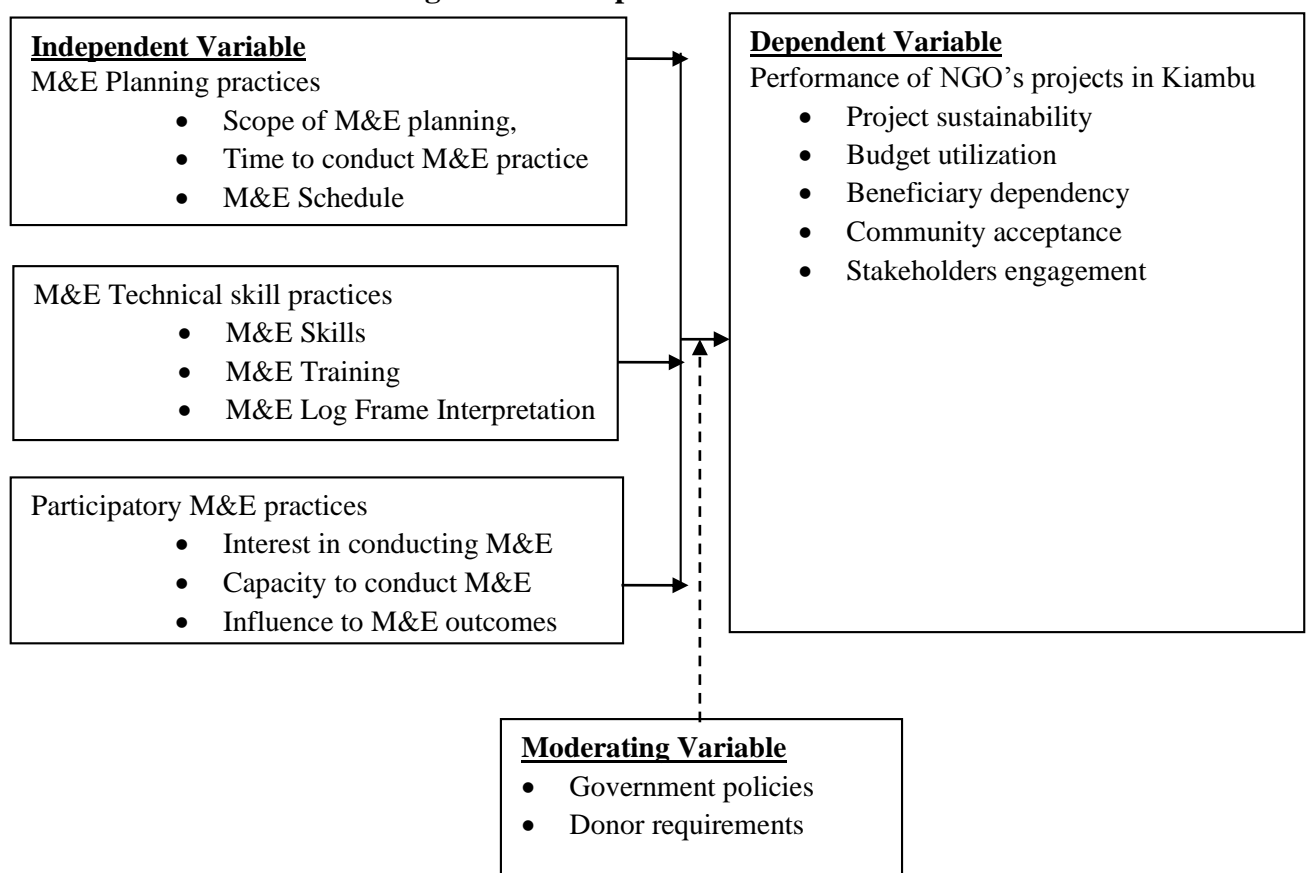
Jaszczoltetal, 2015 recommends the need for NGOs monitoring and evaluation staff to be trained in monitoring and evaluation practices through enrolling to professional institution that offers monitoring and evaluation skillset to raise the bar for organizational monitoring and evaluation outcomes; as well for the organization to learn from prior experiences of project performance by building a widely accessible depositor for project performance reports.

Analysis of Monitoring and Evaluation Practices on Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations' Project in Kiambu County, Kenya

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Practices

Participatory monitoring and evaluation is the project stakeholder involvement as an approach to identify relevant groups' demands and ensures that project requirements are satisfied (Jenna, 2021). The performance of NGO projects is potent in intensifying the satisfaction of the people. This would ensure that a project's activities and implementation have greater clarity with a shared vision amongst its key beneficiaries. Participatory monitoring and evaluation provide valuable insights and solutions to project objectives and activities, as their participation brings value to a project by providing an internal and external view of project operations; highlighting internal and external risk levels that are associated with the project environment and certain project activities (Crowe, 2017).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher (2023)

Research Methodology and Design

A descriptive research design will be used in this research study to explore and investigate elements that occur within Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on project performance. The target population is selected from the 147 registered NGOs in Kiambu County. The study will select purposively the monitoring and evaluation officers, the project manager, and stakeholders' representatives from each NGO purposively because these officers are mandated to monitor projects success as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Population to be targeted

| Category | Number of NGO staff | Population to be targeted |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Monitoring and evaluation officers | 147 | 147 |
| Project managers | 147 | 147 |
| Stakeholder representatives | 147 | 147 |
| Total | 441 | 441 |

Source: NGO Board (2012)

This research will utilize Yamane's (1967) sample size equations to determine the sample size from a target population of 441. Where;

n= Sample size

N=Population Size

e=Level of precision, (0.05)².

The Formulae is;

$$\eta = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

“n = 210”

A sample size of 210 will be used consisting of M&E Officers, project managers, and stakeholder representatives from 147 NGOs that have been operational in the last five years.

From the sample size 210, we shall equally divide the sample size into three strata to get 70 sample slots. The responders will be chosen proportionally from each stratum randomly using a simple random sampling technique.

Construction of Research Instruments

Primary data will be collected for this study using one semi-structured questionnaire for the three strata. Primary data will be collected from respondents who are believed to have appropriate literacy levels to answer the semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire questions will be open and closed-ended. Closed-ended questions will be used to collect quantitative data, while qualitative data will be obtained using open-ended questions. The questions will be based on the research objectives and framed on a Likert scale of 5.

Research Finding and Discussions

The study as per the obtained sample from a population of 441 non-governmental organization staff, distributed 210 questionnaires to different non-governmental organizations of which 198 respondents responded and surrendered the tool, offering a 94% feedback rate.

Demographics Statistics Analysis

The education level was clustered as not schooled, Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate level education. The investigation showed that most employees at 38.9% hold diplomas and bachelor's degrees, 11.1% of the employees hold Master's degrees, 5.6% of the employees hold Certificates, and 5.6% are not schooled in the project management

Analysis of Monitoring and Evaluation Practices on Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations' Project in Kiambu County, Kenya

discipline. The results implied that non-governmental organizations engaged qualified employees in their mandate of project implementations. The results are supported in the sense that most reputable organizations prefer learned employees and always ensure there is enough support for the academic development of their employees

Statistical Descriptive for Performance on Non-Governmental Organization Performance

The study sought to determine the influence of performance on non-governmental organization project performance. Parameters were in the range of five indicators for non-governmental organization project performance.

Table 1: Statistical Descriptive for Performance on Non-Governmental Organization Performance

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Sum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|--|-----|---------|---------|-----|------|----------------|----------|
| Do the organization record feedback from suggestion boxes and opinion polls? | 198 | 1 | 5 | 748 | 3.78 | 1.086 | 1.179 |
| Do the organization record a decrease or increase in beneficiary dependencies? | 198 | 2 | 5 | 759 | 3.83 | .900 | .810 |
| Do the organization record improvement of its implementation activities? | 198 | 3 | 5 | 792 | 4.00 | .579 | .335 |
| Do the organization record community acceptance and engagements? | 198 | 2 | 5 | 792 | 4.00 | .819 | .670 |
| Do the organization record an improvement of its contractual target? | 198 | 3 | 5 | 814 | 4.11 | .568 | .323 |
| Do the organization record full utilization of its projects funds? | 198 | 3 | 5 | 836 | 4.22 | .534 | .285 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Valid N (listwise) | 198 | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Source: Researcher (2023)

Analysis of Variance

The output from the data of the Analysis of Variance is presented in Table 2. F-Statistics stands at 494.378 as well as P value is established to be 0.000. The outcomes showed that the genre was influential in the prediction of the linear correlation of response variable (non-governmental organization project performance) and Explanatory Variables (monitoring and evaluation Planning practices, monitoring and evaluation Technical skill practices, and Participatory monitoring and evaluation practices) as P-value of 0.000 was minimal to the conventional standard merit of 0.05.

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 2207.623 | 3 | 735.874 | 494.378 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 288.766 | 194 | 1.488 | | |
| | Total | 2496.389 | 197 | | | |

Research Findings, Discussions, and Conclusion

Based on the results, this study concluded that monitoring and evaluation planning practice, technical skill practice, and participatory monitoring and evaluation practice all have a strong positive relationship with the project performance of non-governmental organizations in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Monitoring and Evaluation Planning Practice

To this end, this study concludes that monitoring and evaluation planning practice, positively affect the project performance of non-governmental organizations in Kiambu County in Kenya and this effect is statistically significant. Monitoring and evaluation planning practice meant to improve the planning of project activities significantly affect the project performance of non-governmental organizations in Kiambu, Kenya. Similarly, the study concludes that monitoring and evaluation planning that seek to record and implement programme activities significantly improve the project performance of the non-governmental organization in Kiambu, Kenya.

Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Skill Practice

This study also concludes that monitoring and evaluation technical expertise positively and significantly affect the project performance of non-governmental organizations in Kiambu County Kenya from the regression coefficient results. As non-governmental organizations hire M&E-certified personnel, the personnel's apply themselves to the correct mandates, to organizations supporting monitoring and evaluation programmes activities implemented, and

Analysis of Monitoring and Evaluation Practices on Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations' Project in Kiambu County, Kenya

organizations have monitoring and evaluation systems reports drafted and pinned for references to improve non-governmental organizations' project performance.

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Practice

Finally, this study concludes that participatory practice positively and significantly affect project performance in non-governmental organization in Kiambu County, Kenya. Having stakeholders develop participatory monitoring and evaluation plans, the organizations' stakeholders should attend and follow through with the project activities. Having stakeholders review participatory monitoring and evaluation reports, improves the project performance of non-governmental organizations in Kiambu County Kenya.

Conclusion

Based on the results, this study concluded that monitoring and evaluation planning practice, technical skill practice, and participatory monitoring and evaluation practice all have a strong positive relationship with the project performance of non-governmental organizations in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Recommendations

The primary objective of this study was to examine the analysis of monitoring and evaluation practices on the performance of non-governmental organizations' projects in Kiambu County. The independent variables being monitoring and evaluation planning practice, monitoring and evaluation technical skill practice, and participatory monitoring and evaluation. In the research output, it turned out that just 88.4% of non-governmental organization performance would be caused by individualistic variables in this research. This clearly shows that there are other factors that affect organizations' performance and in order to excavate an in-depth analysis to ascertain a comprehensive understanding of non-governmental organization performance further research is required. The research therefore recommends unearthing 11.6% of other factors affecting non-governmental organization performance. The starting point would to do a comparative analysis on monitoring evaluation technical skill and participatory monitoring and evaluation practice based on project performance. The second point would be on the evaluation of the target audience and beneficiaries based on the participatory monitoring and evaluation since stakeholders involvement have different comprehension of non-governmental organization performance in project implementations. Also broadening this research to other governmental stakeholders would give a clear indication of what complimentary implementation of programme activities, and joint stakeholder collaborations that will enhance non-governmental organization project performance.

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Analysis of Monitoring and Evaluation Practices on Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations' Project in Kiambu County, Kenya

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