



**THE EFFECT OF STAKEHOLDERS' PARTICIPATION ON PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

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### ABSTRACT

*An effective monitoring and evaluation process has been reported as a crucial component of successful projects (Umhlaba Development Services, n.d) that serves to ensure transparency and accountability through [the project work], (Chandurkar & Sen, n.d). The study was carried out to investigate the effect of stakeholders' participation on project monitoring and evaluation. Using systematic quantitative literature review technique, the study investigated variables based on the conceptual model of participation from the Daltons' work (Daltons, 2006) and their effect on cost, time and quality of project monitoring and evaluation as reported in publications sample. A sample of 31 literature materials was analyzed and content analysis used to extract summary narration. The study used participant involvement, basing decisions on complete information, fairness in decision making, efficient administration and positive stakeholder interaction as the independent variables. The dependent variable was project monitoring and evaluation whose cost, time and scope were the parameters being investigated. The study concluded found that the quality of project monitoring and evaluation was influenced by the strength of participation of stakeholders.*

**Keywords:** *monitoring and evaluation, stakeholders' participation, strategic project management*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Project monitoring and evaluation involve efforts by the project authority to measure, record, analyze and respond to deviations on projects' progress towards achievement of milestones. Monitoring and evaluation of development activities provides government officials, development managers and civil society with better means for learning from past experience, improving service delivery, planning and allocating resources, and demonstrating results as part of accountability to key stakeholders (Umhlaba Development Services, n.d). In many projects this process is taken as a formality to please the project sponsor and meet donor requirements yielding false positive impressions about the project which could be far from the truth. The same results from engagement of an external consultant who tries to be 'politically correct' in telling the project authority what they want to hear leading to projects that do not deliver within the constraints of time, cost and quality and worse still, fail to meet the expectations of the client. There has been increased universal acceptance that major stakeholders be actively involved in project selection, monitoring, control and evaluation a process known as participatory monitoring and evaluation. This has however not been achieved as project organizations quote high costs (Office for Coastal Management, 2015), variations in information and inaccurate information as demerits of participatory monitoring and evaluation. Additionally such organizations remain skeptical about the technical ability of local stakeholders to assist in monitoring and evaluation. On the contrary, organizations that have tried participatory monitoring and evaluation have reported the learning curve to be much more rapid than they had predicted (International Finance Corporation, 2007).

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

Monitoring and evaluation studies in most developing countries continue to narrow (Valadez &

Bamberger, 1994) with data collected being underutilized and having minimal contribution to national development and planning. Moreover, resources allocated towards project monitoring and evaluation are being devoted towards monitoring physical and financial implementation of projects and little devoted towards sustainability of these projects. The challenges in project management are evident in portfolio performance of projects by the World Bank from 1981 to 1991 reporting an increase from 11% to 20% of projects 'having major problems' (World Bank, 1991). Whereas there is a universal shift from conventional monitoring and evaluation approaches towards participatory approaches, there is no consensus on the extent to which participatory approaches impacts on monitoring and evaluation but rather focus on challenges and benefits of participatory monitoring. This study therefore aims to fill this gap by investigating the extent to which participation of stakeholders' impact on the monitoring and evaluation of projects and project management at large.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The overall objective of the study was to find out the effect of stakeholders' participation on project monitoring and evaluation. The following were the specific objectives:

- To investigate the effect of participant involvement on project monitoring and evaluation
- To investigate the effect of basing decisions on complete information on project monitoring and evaluation
- To investigate the effect of fair decision making on project monitoring and evaluation
- To investigate the effect of efficient administration on project monitoring and evaluation

- To investigate the effect of positive participant interaction on project monitoring and evaluation

**Research Questions**

The research was guided by the following research questions

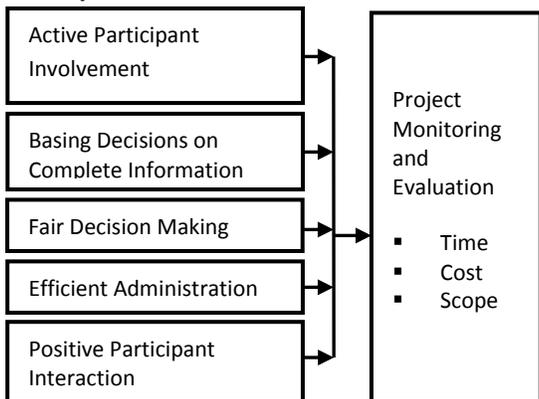
- What is the effect of participant involvement on project monitoring and evaluation?
- What is the effect of basing decisions on complete information on project monitoring and evaluation?
- What is the effect of fair decision making on project monitoring and evaluation?
- What is the effect of efficient administration on project monitoring and evaluation?
- What is the effect of positive participant interaction on project monitoring and evaluation?

**Scope of the Study**

The study investigated the published materials published between 1990 and 2017 on the topic of participatory monitoring and evaluation in project and programmes management.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Conceptual Framework**



**Independent Variables    Dependent Variable**

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework (Source, Researcher 2017)**

**Discussion of the Variables**

The conceptual framework was based on Daltons’ framework for successful stakeholders’ participation (Dalton, 2005).The model identified active participation, decisions based on complete information, fair decision making, efficient administration and positive participant interaction as key elements each with a number of process elements as discussed below.

**Active Participant Involvement**

Active participant involvement requires that stakeholders be actively and meaningfully involved in a deliberation; their input should inform final decision process and help in implementation of the final decisions. This is ensured through four specific elements of active participant involvement involving active participation, early involvement, motivating participating stakeholders and allowing the influence of stakeholders in the final decision.

**Basing Decisions on Complete Information**

Basing decisions on complete information requires that all critical issues and concerns of stakeholders are clarified and addressed through process. This process requires that the best available information on the issues of concern and on other stakeholders is available to all participants, that there is constructive dialogue and participants are allowed opportunity to analyze information and form opinions during the participation process.

**Fair Decision Making**

Project decisions need to be fairly deliberated on giving all stakeholders an equal voice. Fair decision making ensures that stakeholders will likely support the outcome of a process even if they had hoped for a different outcome. To achieve this, the participation process should ensure transparency and representative participation giving the diverse

stakeholder groups and viewpoints in the community the opportunity to participate.

### **Efficient Administration**

Running an effective participation process can be difficult, time consuming and costly. Efficient administration by the sponsoring agency or organization is necessary to ensure that the process is successful and sustainable. Efficient administration involves cost effectiveness, accessibility of stakeholders and limited influence of sponsoring agency.

### **Positive Participant Interaction**

Interactions among stakeholders should be managed to avoid bad experiences amongst the stakeholders as this can alienate the stakeholders from the entire process [monitoring and evaluation]. Key components that foster positive interaction among the stakeholders include positive social conditions, constructive personal behavior and social learning.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research was guided by three theories namely; stakeholder's theory, theory of participation and game theory.

### **Stakeholders' Theory**

The stakeholder theory was advanced by Freeman in 1984 and it seeks to explain how organizations, institutes or projects should be and how it should be conceptualized. Friedman (2006) states that organizations, institutes or projects should be as groupings of stakeholders with diverse range interests, should be in a position to manage the interests, opinions and needs of the stakeholders.

Friedman, (2006) also argued that the management of stakeholders should be fulfilled by the project managers. On the other hand, the project managers should manage the projects for the benefit of its stakeholder's in order to ensure their rights and the participation in decision making. He further argued

that the management of the projects or organizations operating within a particular community must act as the stockholder's agent to ensure the survival of the projects, or organization to safeguard the long term stakes of each group and therefore enabling it to improve its performance. This theory is relevant to this study as it will seek to explore how the participation of stakeholders affects quality of monitoring and evaluation.

### **Theory of Participation**

Modernistic views of theory of participation emphasize on the involvement of the community in the implementation of a project with the purpose of increasing the acceptance and efficiency of use (Lane, 1995). Thus involving primary stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation will create quality monitoring processes and contribute towards the success of project management as a whole.

### **Game Theory**

Pioneered by Jon Von Neumann, John Nash and Oskar Morgenstern, game theory studies human conflict and cooperation within a competitive situation (Dixit & Nalebuff, 2008). Application of game theory is relevant in this research as the project presents an environment where each of the stakeholders seeks to maximize their gains and minimize their losses. The project manager is expected to balance this in order to meet the project objectives as well satisfy the stakeholders who are instrumental to the success of the project.

### **Literature Gap**

The researcher identified a wide gap in literature relating project monitoring and evaluation with stakeholders' participation. This is the gap that this research addressed.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Systematic quantitative literature review involves systematically identifying literature materials,

entering information about each study into a personal database and then quantifying the literature through compiling tables that summarize the current status of the literature (Pickering Catherine, n.d). This method has the advantages of being fast and cost effective when compared to primary data collection methods such as interview and questionnaire administration.

**Table 1: Classification of Literature Sources by Type**

Type of Literature Source	Number
Books	11
Journal Articles	6
Website Pages	1
Conference Articles	1
Corporate Publications	8
Course Modules	3
Theses	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

The researcher used stakeholders’ participation, monitoring and evaluation, impact and influence as keywords that guided the search for online literature using the Google Scholar database and search engine. The personal researcher database was structured using Microsoft Excel 2007 with author and publication details, geographical details, response variables and methods used as the categories and sub categories for the literature sources. Each row represented a single literature article.

Content Analysis was used to extract key themes from each of the material studied. Those sources with repeating patterns over a particular theme were grouped together and summary notes made to reflect their conclusions. The results were reported in form of summary narrations.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The researcher found that project monitoring and evaluation was influenced by participation of the various stakeholders. The stakeholders’ participation affected cost, scope and time

The research population included all literature materials discussing the effect of stakeholders’ participation on project monitoring and evaluation. Out of these, a sample of 31 sources was selected and studied for the purpose of this research. Table 1 below showed the distribution of the literature materials by type.

constraints of monitoring and evaluation and consequently the quality of the process.

**Participant Involvement and Project Monitoring and Evaluation**

Active participation and early involvement of stakeholders were largely reported to impact positively on the quality and scope of monitoring and evaluation while motivating participating stakeholders in some organizations involved impacted led to increase in the budgetary allocations (Umhlaba Development Studies, n.d) in the monitoring and evaluation process. Chaplowe also notes that involvement of project staff and key staff ensures feasibility a key quality criterion for assessing a monitoring and evaluation system (Nondi, 2015, pp. 31), understanding and ownership of the monitoring and evaluation system. (Chaplowe, 2008, pp. 2). Influence of stakeholders in the final decision leads to increased quality of project monitoring and evaluation reports and high impacts.

### **Basing Decisions on Complete Information and Project Monitoring and Evaluation**

Basing decisions on complete information requires that all critical issues and concerns of stakeholders are clarified and addressed through process. Chaplowe states that causal analysis should be based on careful study of local conditions and available data as well as consultations with potential beneficiaries, program implementers, other stakeholders and technical experts. (Chaplowe, 2008, pp. 5). This process requires that the best available information on the issues of concern and on other stakeholders is available to all participants, that there is constructive dialogue and participants are allowed opportunity to analyze information and form opinions during the participation process.

### **Fair Decision Making and Project Monitoring and Evaluation**

Project decisions need to be fairly deliberated on giving all stakeholders an equal voice. Fair decision making ensures that stakeholders will likely support the outcome of a process even if they had hoped for a different outcome. To achieve this, the participation process should ensure transparency and representative participation giving the diverse stakeholder groups and viewpoints in the community the opportunity to participate.

### **Efficient Administration and Project Monitoring and Evaluation**

Running an effective participation process can be difficult, time consuming and costly. Efficient administration by the sponsoring agency or organization is necessary to ensure that the process is successful and sustainable. Efficient administration involves cost effectiveness, accessibility of stakeholders and limited influence of sponsoring agency. The research reveals that efficient administration contributed to successful project monitoring and evaluation.

### **Positive Participant Interaction and Project Monitoring and Evaluation**

(Umhlaba Development Studies, n.d) notes that 'the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation will be greatly influenced by attitude and commitment of local people and partners involved in the project and how they relate and communicate with each other'. This indicates a positive relationship between positive participant interaction and quality of project monitoring and evaluation. Takim & Akintoye agrees that performance measurement has to incorporate the interest of the stakeholders, both economically and morally (Takim & Akintoye, 2002) emphasizing that organizations need to develop their relations with customers, suppliers, lenders and the wider community. These views are also shared by Love et al., (2000) as cited in Takim & Akintoye (2002).

### **SUMMARY**

The study used systematic quantitative literature review technique to investigate the effect of stakeholders' participation on project monitoring and evaluation. The study developed its conceptual model from the Daltons' work (Daltons, 2005) using participant involvement, basing decisions on complete information, fairness in decision making, efficient administration and positive stakeholder interaction as the independent variables. The dependent variable was project monitoring and evaluation whose cost, time and scope were the parameters being investigated. The study concluded found that the quality of project monitoring and evaluation was influenced by the strength of participation of stakeholders.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study concluded that stakeholders determined the success of project monitoring and evaluation and that their participation was paramount for the project to realize its objectives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that stakeholders should not only be engaged during project planning and appraisal stages but throughout the project management lifecycle. Stakeholders' interest should be monitored to ensure that the project management does not lose their influence

especially those on the upper most part of the stakeholders' power grid. Participation of stakeholders throughout the monitoring and evaluation process not only produces a quality monitoring and evaluation system but also ensures the project meets the intended objectives and delivers within the expected standards of quality.

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