



**INFLUENCE OF PROJECT MONITORING SKILLS ON MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN FUNDED PROJECTS IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF KAKAMEGA**

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## INFLUENCE OF PROJECT MONITORING SKILLS ON MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN FUNDED PROJECTS IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF KAKAMEGA

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### ABSTRACT

*Monitoring and evaluation enhance effectiveness of a project or a program by establishing clear links between past, present and future interventions and results. It helps organizations to extract, from past and ongoing activities, relevant information that can be used as the basis for programmatic fine-tuning, reorientation and planning. Without monitoring and evaluation, it is impossible to judge if work is going in the right direction, whether progress and success can be claimed, and how future efforts can be improved. The objective of this study was to assess the influence of project monitoring skills on monitoring and evaluation system performance in funded projects in the county government of Kakamega. A total of 263 projects were funded by the county government of Kakamega in the year 2016/2017, across all sectors of the economy. The target population was 294. The study was conducted through a descriptive survey research design. Data was collected through the use of structured questionnaires consisting of open ended and closed ended questions. The study used multiple linear regression equation to develop a link between project monitoring skills and effectiveness of M&E system. The study found out that the effective performance of an M&E system depends on project monitoring skills. A regression analysis showed a statistically significant positive relationship between project skills on the performance of M&E system. Study findings were of significance to Public institutions by contributing to a better understanding and knowledge of strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems and also would be of benefit to researchers and scholars who might use its " findings as a reference and to enrich M &E literature".*

**Key Words:** *Monitoring and Evaluation Skills, Project Performance, County Government of Kakamega*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Monitoring is the process of regular and systematic collection, analysing and reporting of information about a project's inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts (World Bank, 2011). It is a systematic collection and analysis of information as a project progresses along the lines of pre-set procedures and indicators which will eventually show the success or failure of the project (Karani, Bichanga, & Kamau, 2014). It is a routine and continuous activity, used to collect information on a project's/program's activities, outputs, and outcomes in order to track its performance.

Evaluation is the periodic and systematic collection of data to assess the design, implementation and impact in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, distribution and sustainability of outcomes and impacts (Meri, 2010). It entails comparing what was planned against the outcomes to check efficiency, effectiveness and impact of a project. Evaluation is a learning strategy that aims at improving knowledge about the logic and outputs of an intervention (Wholey, Hatry & Newcomer, 2010).

Sri Lanka's MfDR and M & E system and practices have been internationally recognized as best practice approaches worthy of scaling up (Acevedo, Rivera, Lima, & Hwang, 2010). However, a number of problems have been encountered during its implementation. These included; weaknesses in dissemination of M & E findings, M & E institutions and the planning institutions seemed to function in isolation, lack of an effective formalized feedback arrangement to integrate lessons into the planning and design of new projects, shortage of professionals, multiple results frameworks, too many indicators, lack of aid predictability, and weak statistical capacity (World Bank – IDB, 2010).

In Africa, government M & E systems operate in complex terrain. In Ghana, despite the numerous

government's support for a harmonized monitoring and evaluation system, challenges ranging from gross financial mismanagement, lack of adequate operational and technical capacity and lack of coordination between stakeholders and those in charge of projects have been experienced (Porter & Goldman, 2013). To overcome this, there is need to develop better institutional capacities that will help to strengthen the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation systems.

In Kenya, efforts to establish individual project and program-based M & E began in 1980s and 1990s (Njeri, 2016). Most development plans prepared during this period included a section on M & E. However, most of these M & E plans were prepared in response to donor demands, leading to very specific project and program evaluations (GoK, 2016). As a consequence of the dominance of donor requirements, the M&E reports produced were not shared with the intended project/program beneficiaries. Development of an integrated M & E system in Kenya began in 2000 with the implementation of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) 2000-2003 (Booth, 2003). This was enhanced during the implementation of the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ESRWEC), 2003-2007.

### **Statement of the Problem**

County governments have since 2013 carried out various projects successfully with counties like Machakos, Meru and Kericho reporting up to 12% increase in positive projects implementation (Abdalla & Otieno, 2017). However, studies have shown that 49.21% of the planned county development projects could not be achieved due to prevailing factors like wrong prioritization of development projects, lack of financial resources, political influence, corruption, low levels of technology, poor infrastructure, lack of community involvement, poor management support and many more to some unnecessary issues that

could otherwise be avoided (Adek, 2016). Poor monitoring and evaluation is a key factor leading to stagnation of development projects in various counties (Kenya National Bureau Of Statistics, 2013). Best practice requires that projects are monitored for control because stakeholders require transparency, accountability for resource use and its impact, worthy project performance and organizational learning which will assist in forthcoming projects (Mutinda & Kiruja, 2015). Whereas County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (CIMES) has been used to monitor implementation progress for investment programs outlined in the Medium-term Plans III and County Integrated Development Plan (2018-2022), the counties have several challenges relating to the development and use of Monitoring and Evaluation systems. First, only six (Kakamega, Kisii, Meru, Machakos, Taita Taveta and Muranga) out of the forty seven counties have running offices for Monitoring and Evaluation (Muiga, 2015). The units lack required skills and capacity and their M&E reports are not well coordinated resulting in the use of different M&E definitions and concepts (SIDA, 2014). Furthermore, studies have shown that the M&E of decentralized development in Kenya is not systematic, has failed to adopt the M&E requirements and the information generated is not timely and accurate (Sialala, 2016). The study was therefore important as it analysed how monitoring and evaluation skills determined monitoring and evaluation system performance in funded projects in the County Government of Kakamega.

### **Study Objective**

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of project monitoring skills on monitoring and evaluation system performance in funded projects in the County Government of Kakamega.

### **Research Hypotheses**

H<sub>01</sub>: Project monitoring skills has no significant relationship with monitoring and evaluation system

performance in funded projects by the county government of Kakamega.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **General Systems Theory**

The theory was proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 1940s. This theory is an interdisciplinary theory about complex systems in nature, society, and science, and is a framework by which one can investigate and/or describe any group of objects that work together to produce some result (Mele, Pels, & Polese, 2010). A system consists of elements, attributes and internal relationships. In regard to its elements, a system is composed of people, processes and products; its attributes, composed of the input, process and output characteristics of each component; and its relationships, composed of interactions between components and characteristics (Tien & Berg, 2003). System theory is a set of things that affect one another within an environment and form a larger pattern that is different from any of the parts (Chikere & Nwoka, 2015). In GST, there are two different types of systems: closed and open. Closed systems are systems that are isolated from its environment, and open systems are systems that interact with its environment (Norberg & Cumming, 2008). When a group of people are interacting together in an environment, much more complicated systems develop (Cordon, 2013).

The theory is used to develop a holistic view of a system within an environment and is best applied to situations where the elements within the system inextricably connect and influence one another (Ruwa, 2016). All social systems receive input from the environment, engage in processes, and generate outputs and in addition to having a structure, serve particular functions. (Latkin, Weeks, Glasman,

Galletly, & Albarracin, 2010). In applying the theory, the study holds that all systems are interrelated parts constituting an ordered whole and each sub system influences other parts of the whole. This implies that when one part of the system is strengthened, the system improves as a whole (Pillay, 2012). Similarly when one part of the system is weakened, the part will have negative implications on the whole. These interact and all have a key role in contributing monitoring and evaluation system performance. Neglecting one element is likely to have a negative effect on the M & E system.

### Empirical Review

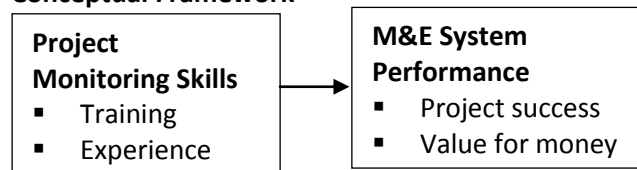
An M & E system cannot function effectively without skilled people who effectively execute the M & E tasks for which they are responsible (Kiura, 2017). Skills for literacy, numeracy, interviewing and monitoring in quantitative and qualitative methods, for management information systems are necessary for participatory monitoring and evaluation (Mulanji, 2012). It is therefore necessary to have officials or consultants who are highly skilled in M & E in order to have an effective M & E system. Understanding the skills required and the capacity of people involved in the M&E system (undertaking human capacity assessments) and addressing capacity gaps through structured capacity development programs is at the heart of the M & E system (Gorgens & Kusek, 2010). Skills and knowledge needs will require training the staff (internally or via external course), hiring already trained people. Staff training is a huge determinant of how M & E is carried out (Waithera & wanyoike, 2015).

A study by Mogaku (2010) on the influence of M & E methods on performance of Women Enterprise Funded Projects in Kisii Central District, Mogaku, (2010) noted that project performance was poor due to inadequate M & E skills by women groups. Employee training and development initiatives can transform organizations with providing extra skills to

employees to not only increase safety and productivity but training leads to higher job satisfaction, which shows up in better corporate performance (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Training of project personnel on M & E has a positive relation with probability of implementing M & E. The higher the level of skills in M & E, the higher the probability of implementing M & E of projects (Nduati, 2011). However, the scarcity of M&E skills has been exacerbated by high turnover of M & E staff with experience showing that, as soon as a person has been trained in M & E, these highly marketable skills lead to other job opportunities (Gorgens & Kusek, 2010).

In county governments, most responsibilities for M & E have been reassigned among existing county staff, especially planning officers or economists working in the department responsible for county economic planning and development (SIDA - GoK, 2016). In order to ensure that the county staff members reassigned to M & E activities fully meet the county government's M & E needs and increase the quality of M & E programming at county level, the skills of the selected staff have to be augmented through in-house M & E training and other courses to offered by MED and other suitable M & E training institutions (Government of Kenya, 2016).

### Conceptual Framework



Independent variable

Dependent variable

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Author (2018)

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive survey research design as conceptualized by Kothari (2004). Descriptive



research design allows a researcher to collect information in a manner that reduces cost of data collection. A total of 263 projects were funded by the county government of Kakamega in the year 2016/2017, in all the ten (10) departments. There was an M & E unit in the county responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation activities. The M & E unit comprised of County M&E Officer (1), An M & E officer from the department in which the project was being implemented (10), an Expert in the area/sector where the project was being implemented (263), a member from the project team trained in M & E in the department (10) and a representative from the Independent delivery unit (10). The total target population was therefore 294. Structured

questionnaires were used to collect data from the total population. In a questionnaire people were asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order. Data was collected using questionnaires that were hand delivered and picked using the same method. Data collected was coded, organized, and cleaned for any errors that might have occurred during data collection.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Monitoring and evaluation skills

The sampled respondents were provided with 4 statements related to monitoring and evaluation skills. The pertinent results are as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Monitoring and evaluation skills**

Statements	5	4	3	2	1
1 County government of Kakamega organizes regular trainings for staff involved in M & E	47.0	19.7	19.7	6.8	1.7
2 Skills obtained during training are useful during M & E	53% (62)	23.9% (28)	21.4% (25)	1.7% (2)	0.0
3 M & E skills obtained have enhanced Monitoring and Evaluation activities.	48.7% (57)	36.8% (43)	10.3% (12)	4.3% (5)	0.0
4 Training in M & E has improved service delivery in Kakamega County	51.3% (60)	22.2% (26)	22.2% (26)	2.6% (3)	1.7% (2)

Respondents were asked if County government of Kakamega organized regular trainings for staff involved in M & E. Majority (47.0%) strongly agreed, 19.7% agreed and a similar number were not sure. 6.8% disagreed and 1.7% strongly disagreed. Respondents were also asked if Skills obtained during training were useful during M & E. 53% strongly agreed that they obtained useful skills during M&E. 23.9% agreed, 21.4% were not sure while 1.7% disagreed. When asked whether M & E skills obtained had enhanced Monitoring and Evaluation activities, majority (48.7%) strongly agreed, 36.8% agreed, 10.3%% were not sure while 4.3% disagreed.

When asked whether Training in M & E had improved service delivery in Kakamega County, majority strongly agreed 51.3%. 22.2% were neutral and a similar number were not sure. 2.6% disagreed while 1.7% strongly disagreed. An M & E system cannot function effectively without skilled people who effectively execute the M & E tasks for which they were responsible (Kiura, 2017). Understanding the skills required and the capacity of people involved in the M&E system (undertaking human capacity assessments) and addressing capacity gaps through structured capacity development programs is at the heart of the M & E system (Gorgens & Kusek, 2010).

## Performance of monitoring and evaluation

The sampled respondents were provided with 4 statements related to M&E system performance. The pertinent results were as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Performance of monitoring and evaluation**

Effectiveness of M&E System	5	4	3	2	1
1 The cost of M&E activities is always within the budget	45.3% (53)	17.1% (20)	20.5% (24)	15.4% (18)	1.7% (2)
2 M&E resources are economically utilized	33.3% (39)	37.6% (44)	20.5% (24)	8.5% (10)	0.0
3 The M&E objectives are largely achieved	23.1% (27)	54.7% (64)	19.7% (23)	2.6% (3)	0.0
4 The M&E responsibilities and duties are clearly outlined	30.8% (36)	49.6% (58)	17.9% (21)	1.7% (2)	0.0

When asked if the cost of M&E activities was always within budget, 45.3% strongly agreed, 20.5% were not sure, 17.1% agreed, 15.4% disagreed while 1.7% strongly disagreed. Asked if M&E resources were economically utilized, 37.6% agreed, 33.3% strongly agreed, 20.5% were not sure and only 8.5% disagreed. Asked if the M&E objectives were largely achieved, 54.7% agreed, 23.1% strongly agreed, 19.7% were not sure while 2.6% disagreed. The researcher also sought to find out if M&E responsibilities and duties were clearly outlined. 49.6% agreed, 30.8% strongly agreed, 17.9% were not sure and only 1.7% disagreed.

### Assumptions of Linear regression

#### Influence of Project Monitoring Skills on M & E System Performance

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of project monitoring skills on M & E system performance in funded projects in the county government of Kakamega. The objective sought to test the research hypothesis of the study which

posits:  $H_{01}$ : Project monitoring skills has no significant relationship with M & E system performance in funded projects by the county government of Kakamega. This was accomplished by use of linear simple regression ( $R^2$ ) at significance level of 0.05.

#### Correlation between Project Monitoring Skills and the Monitoring and Evaluation System Performance

The Pearson correlation analysis was used to assess the relationship between project monitoring skills and the M & E system performance. In assessing the influence of Project monitoring skills on the M & E system Performance, the study established a coefficient of correlation ( $r$ ) as 0.637\*\*,  $P < 0.01$  at 99.0% confidence level. This showed that there exists a significant positive relationship between project monitoring skills and the M & E system Performance. This implied that the M & E system Performance at Kakamega County Government increased with an increase in Project monitoring skills and an increase in Project monitoring skills led to an increase in their M & E system Performance. The results were as shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Correlation between Project monitoring skills and the monitoring and evaluation system Performance**

Project monitoring skills	M&E system Performance
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<b>Project monitoring skills</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	117	
<b>Monitoring and evaluation system Performance</b>	Pearson Correlation	.637**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	117	117

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Regression Results of Project Monitoring Skills and M & E system Performance

A simple linear regression was carried to assess the influence of project monitoring skills on M & E system Performance at Kakamega County Government and

thereby test the research hypothesis of the study. The detailed results of simple linear regression analysis involving Project monitoring skills and M & E system Performance was as shown in Table 4 which was composite table comprising of Model summary, ANOVA and regression coefficients.

**Table 4: Simple Regression Analysis Results**

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.637 <sup>a</sup>	.406	.401	.566		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Project monitoring skills						
b. Dependent Variable: M&E System Performance						
ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.176	1	25.176	78.623	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	36.824	115	.320		
	Total	62.000	116			
a. Dependent Variable: M&E System Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Project monitoring skills						
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	2.312	.161			14.316	.000
Project monitoring skills	.532	.060	.637		8.867	.000
a. Dependent Variable: M&E System Performance						

The proportion of variance in M & E system Performance explained by the Project monitoring skills was 40.6% or  $R^2=0.406$ . From the findings, the F ratio was greater than 1, as indicated by a value of 78.623, which meant that improvement due to fitting

the model was much greater than the model inaccuracies ( $F(1,116)= 78.623, P=0.000$ ). This also implied that project monitoring skills was useful predictor of M & E system Performance. Project monitoring skills carried positive significant predictive power of 0.532,  $P=0.000$ . This implied that a unit change in project monitoring skills level would result



to significant change in M& E system Performance by 0.532 in the same direction. Therefore, the linear regression results indicated that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between project monitoring skills and M & E system.

The null research hypothesis posited  $H_{01}$ : Project monitoring skills has no significant relationship with M & E system performance in funded projects by the county government of Kakamega was rejected using the significant value of B coefficient and  $R^2$ . From the results, project monitoring skills had significant positive influence on M & E system Performance with  $P < 0.01$  and it significantly accounted 40.6% variance in M & E system Performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected as project monitoring skills has significant relationship with M & E System performance in funded projects by the county government of Kakamega.

These findings compared favorably with Mogaku (2010) on the influence of M & E methods on performance of Women Enterprise Funded Projects in Kisii Central District, Mogaku, (2010) noted that project performance was poor due to weak M & E systems. The study concluded that the implementation of M & E was affected by M & E skills. Similar results were obtained by Nduati (2011) by revealing that Training of project personnel on M & E has a positive relation with probability of implementing M & E.

## **CONCLUSION**

The objective endeavored to determine the influence of M&E skills on M&E system performance. The study concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between M&E skills and the performance

of an M&E system. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, project monitoring skills influences monitoring and evaluation system performance in funded projects in the county government of Kakamega. The study also established that M & E skills are crucial to the performance of an M&E system. County Government of Kakamega organized regular trainings for those involved in M&E. The trainings improve the skills needed for M&E. This had led to improved service delivery

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Project M & E skills influenced performance of M & E system performance. The study therefore recommended that county governments in Kenya should enhance the capacity of personnel undertaking M & E. This can be achieved by organizing regular training so as to impart useful skills that are need in M & E. Further, there was need to perform training need assessment so as to train the staff on the relevant aspect of M & E.

## **Suggestions for further Research**

The empirical study indicated a number of relevant issues that the research project did not investigate, but which might be important for further research. Further research should be done on other determinants of M & E system performance other than M & E skills.

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