

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Effects of Monitoring & Evaluation Planning on the Performance of Infrastructural Projects at Dedan Kimathi University, Kenya

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### **Abstract:**

*Monitoring & Evaluation, with reference to institutional development, has not been well-investigated. Universities are critical institutions in socio-economic development. This study aimed to examine the influence of Monitoring & Evaluation planning. Based on project performance, indicators are delivered on time and within budget. The study explored Dedan Kimathi University, Kenya, as a case study. The specific objective was to establish the effects of M & E planning on the performance of infrastructural projects at Dedan Kimathi University, Kenya. The study employed a descriptive survey to determine if the M&E parameter influenced a project's performance. The investigation was predicated on change theory alongside program theory. A simple random sampling technique was used to enable the research to reach the many departments involved in infrastructural development. The major data collection technique and questionnaires were used to gather crucial information. A Sample of 157 applicants represented a population of 265 people. According to the findings, monitoring and evaluation variable had a major impact on project performance as components of M&E activity had a conscious goal to steer the project's success. The research suggested that flexibility be encouraged in the key M&E factor to inform re-planning and review of M&E tools to strengthen data collection, information sharing, and management.*

**Keywords:** Monitoring, evaluation, project, performance, influence, and infrastructural

### **1. Introduction**

Education institutions building projects are non-permanent initiatives performed to generate crystal-clear aims within pre-determined time and expense limits. This implies that a project must have a definite direction and a distinctive scope with a realistic view of current finances to be resourcefully accomplished. (Adam, Josephson, & Lindahi, 2017) Range, time, merit, and investment plan are four essential concepts of benefits realization in management that work together to ensure that tasks are done successfully (Sanganyi, 2016).

Because of the importance of M&E in project execution, academic studies have been conducted worldwide to concentrate on crucial aspects that effect project success. For example, China has been recognized and remains to be recognized as one of the most prosperous countries worldwide in terms of M&E engagement as a device of accomplishment in both the corporate and government sectors (Phiri, 2015). So according to Ndung'u (2018), a research study on the representation of sterilization project development in target grade schools in China, numerous factors influenced their proliferation, including the M&E merger done by public authority executive bodies.

Developing economies perform regular reviews, varying from full public review processes in India and Malaysia to critical surveillance of particular projects in a number of African and Middle Eastern countries (SANDARINE, 2018). The overall mission is to promote and centralize the checks and balances at all branches of administration (Ojok, 2016). Similarly, in several non-industrial nations, project maintainability is a critical criterion since a large number of high-cost operations face manageability constraints regularly. This issue has stimulated the interest of all campaign contributors, including the World Bank and bilateral assistance organizations (Khan, 2019).

In China, unique public authorities are responsible for administering compliance obligations (Patrice, 2019).

Stakeholders have parameters for monitoring projects, such as the ten phases of performance-based monitoring and appraisal (World Bank, 2015), people-centered, appraisal, mirroring, and studying for the sake of localized adaptation (World Bank, 2015). (HATANGIMANA, 2017), Results-Oriented checking. There might not be a lot of information available about how these parameters were implemented during the project initiative. Accessible research is primarily conducted in the food security intercession paradigm (Nonyane, 2019).

The United States of America, for instance, has been able to achieve productivity growth as a result of the development of functional and resourceful frameworks aimed at accomplishing advanced objectives (Sang, 2015). During

the last two decades, the United States of America has seen an all-encompassing interest in outcomes-based implementation validation of techniques and movement projects thanks to the collaboration of three reformist presidents, notably Bill Gates, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. President Clinton's Associated with Performance Act of 1993 (GPRA), President Bush's Management Objectives and Formal Evaluation Rating Instrument (PART), and, most recently, President Obama's Prioritized Performance Goals (HPPG) Initiative and the program checking Initiative have all emphasized the importance of accountability and resulted in prediction.

Even though new cases have not been fully adopted as a vital part of accountability for completing projects, other networks, corporations, and African organizations have recently replicated the M&E concept (Wang, 2017). Contributors have figured prominently in situations where public money is scarce. In South Africa, in the context of a project's environment, the executives' climate, the implementation of endeavors in relation to project plans of action, and project controllers, in particular, project associates, are many at times under-informed on the state in addition to the development of their investments' trip with regard to completion (Burke, 2018). They discovered that incorporating observing alongside evaluation into a project's board strategy improves the project's chances of success.

Botswana's administration substantially contributes to providing critical services in the areas where it operates. A considerable sum of money and other resources has been set aside for the HIV/AIDS effort. Investors and other stakeholders expect them to be transparent and accountable. This has necessitated the adoption of monitoring and evaluation approaches to promote transparency and accountability while demonstrating results (Kensek, 2014).

Public Benefit Organization Act, 2013, initial schedule, part II segment 13 on checking, assessing, as well as reporting and announcing mandates that organizations collaborate by use of performance-oriented command to give an address to the matters of their beneficiaries. Develop simple constituting approaches and use instruments for checking and assessing improvement impact in Kenya. They must also evaluate their development on accomplishments once a year (Muiga, 2015).

Mwangu (2015) looked into the impact of checking on Kenyan electorate enhancement reserve activities. The aim of the study was to see if the balancing and control efforts of new hires and chiefs resulted in a better project outcome. M & E mechanism is intended to continue on interval bases to inform the project alignment of critical path purposively to attain the expected outcomes on scheduled activities.

Despite expansive investing by the World Bank funding in capitalizing projects in progressing states, a set of objections has been observed. Research by Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) outcome in 2014 specifically at least 40% of initiated World Bank programs failed in Africa only. The decline rate was beyond 50% in Kenya. Hence, Kenya is disclosed to have achieved a grade of 49% on the success of programs funded between 2009 and 2014, in contrast with Uganda's and Tanzania's grading of 61% and 73%, separately. In Africa, Ghana's grading was 64.7% within the same timeframe, World Bank reports. Kenya is graded substandard on World Bank-financed program's success. From the literature, little or no in-depth research has been conducted on the monitoring and assessment elements that influence the effectiveness of infrastructure projects in public universities, which are critical facilities in a country's socio-economic development. As a result, the researcher plans to use monitoring and evaluation to explore the elements that affect the success of infrastructure undertaking at Kimathi institution of higher learning.

This study aimed to investigate the monitoring and evaluation factors that influence the performance of university infrastructural projects at Dedan Kimathi University in Nyeri County, Kenya. In contrast, the specific objective was to institute the effect of M&E planning on the performance of infrastructural projects. As the research question was, what are the effects of M & E planning on the performance of infrastructural projects?

The significance of this research is essential for organizations other than Dedan Kimathi University, such as local NGOs, worldwide associations, and, in particular, organizations with unsteady task success or those prepared to embrace the usefulness of M&E to project execution better. Due to this research, reputable organizations will begin to analyze and assess projects only to improve job execution rather than as a promise to the donor. The study also intends to provide project management graduates with precise writing as a springboard for future research that will add to M&E expertise. The limitation of the study was that the University's senior administration was extremely busy, making it challenging to find time to collect data during the day. The researcher overcame this by making appointments so that meetings could be scheduled when it was convenient for them.

The investigation examined the elements that influence the observing and appraisal assessment of university infrastructure undertakings, particularly how checking and appraisal plan, checking and appraisal tutelage, benchmarking, and data management affect an undertaking's success. Therefore, undertaking the research at Dedan Kimathi University will accord a practical inference and exhortation for universality to the effect of monitoring and evaluation factors in the success of university projects.

## 2. Literature Review

The factors are of M&E endeavors, such as checking appraisal plan, preparation, benchmarking, and communication Systems, as well as the impact on project execution. A proposed framework for this research is presented after a review of M&E activity exercises and a practical system comparison. The impact of M&E factor on successful project execution is expounded with two theories:

- The theory of change: It emphasizes a set of fundamental contributing factors to the success of projects, as stated by (Beisser, 1970).
- Program theory: It is the application of M & E factors sequence for the achievement of project objects, the proponent (Sidani, 1999).

Due to the dispute over different sorts of M&E activities, it is essential to acknowledge different perspectives on the importance of M&E involves and its achievement. The well-known perspectives on this range are proponents who believe M&E supports completely responsible work. Where standards are established for a range of execution areas, any violation of the principles will result in a reprimand (Cherry, 2015). In a sense, M&E activities complement administration work. Jabeen (2016) defines it as 'enveloping an organization's whole administration, working structures, and culture.'

According to Dabrowska (2016), using assessment in organizations is difficult as a number of elements influence it. It is duly political, environmental, specialist (methodological), and administrative thoughts (mental). These components cover a wide range of topics, even though genuine learning is challenging, regardless of whether all of them are present. Schwatz (2018) examines how checking, and assessment activities reinforce studying and mirroring, emphasizing checking and assessment as apparatus that aids in maintaining direction by enhancing the shape of data obtained. While the majority of the research has focused on non-governmental groups, the expanding profitability of M&E in assisting other organizations in forming learning interactions is noteworthy (Hobbs, 2017).

In the realm of project execution, there has been a wide range of findings. By all accounts, the lone arrangement is what defines 'project execution' (Gomes, 2016). Project execution was defined in this study as the whole substance of a task on its effect, the viability of application, productivity, and manageability. The impact of M&E on project execution is being examined. Project execution is defined as the degree to which task objectives are satisfied. M&E can help identify problems and their causes and offer remedies (Bruos, 2017). M&E also impacts project performance, despite the paucity of research on the matter (Manei, 2016). So at this stage, what exercises are essential to M&E? Leading checking and assessment, referring to United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report, comprises a number of interconnected actions, the most significant of which is drafting a checking and assessment plan organization that will drive the rest of the activities.

Checking and Appraisal design can be defined as a document that outlines how project monitoring and evaluation are exercised. Components include roles and responsibilities in various aspects, e.g., information management and review, data collection, and analysis. Most task-checking and evaluation scholars believe that anticipating M&E should be done as a true indicator of project administering, unlike the minority insisting that it should be done before the organizing stage but before the effort or arbitration time (Riviere, 2018). Regardless of this disparity regarding these views, the entire academics agree that the design should include recollected statistics on assessing a particular activity (de Carvalho, 2015).

According to the written works, some critical issues on M&E plan have been noted (Modell, 2021). It is referred to as resources alongside the time frame that is imperative to complete the assignment. Does the undertaking have internal competence good enough for the planned Checking and Assessment endeavors? Other issues to consider are:

- Is it practicable to conduct the proposed actions?
- Is the drawn schedule workable for finishing the proposed activities?
- Do you have a plan in place to address any ethical dilemma that may emanate from implementing the activities that have been put forward?
- Do you have rules that have been tendered for consideration by an ethical issues panel?

In view of the above, Checking and Appraisal plan is extensive enough to provide project direction monitoring during application (Locatelli, 2017).

On various explorations, checking, and appraisals, academics believe that M&E organization should occur at the starting point of a project (Kabonga, 2018), while a few have confidence in that it may occur during the design phase of a project but prior to the planning or intervention (Mutekhele, 2018). Regardless of their differences of opinion, most academics agree that the plan of action should include details of the undertaking that will be appraised (Amoatey, 2017). This investigation depends on the M&E plan frameworks, which have an impact on project execution.

Furthermore, reviews suggest that there are key factors to consider while developing an M&E strategy. Based on the budget estimate and time frame required to run the projects, Modell (2021) separates these aspects into assets and liabilities. Competence is the project equipped internally to carry out the necessary checks and evaluations, including the analysis of obtained data? Other points raised and addressed by Armstrong (2013) include:

- Is it possible to complete the workouts that have been prescribed?
- Is it possible to transport them?
- Is the projected timetable realistic for finishing the tasks?
- What ethical problems and threats are connected with completing the specified duties, and is there a plan in place to handle these concerns?

With these principles in mind, it is widely agreed M&E plan is complete in terms of the inclusion of project guidance during execution.

The theory of change emphasizes a set of fundamental contributing factors to the success of projects, as stated by Beisser (1970). The proponent of this theory (Weiss, 1997) developed from program theory. The pivot of the theory is based on how to bring adjustment and the agents of change or perceived drivers of change. Rational models ideally used to serve the program theory reveal how the all-inclusive rationale is applied as an input. The theory includes the theory of change and is appertained in the expansion assessment field.

The program theory was advanced by Huey chen, Peter Rossi, Michael Quinn Patton, and Carol Weiss (1995). The proponents of the theory (Lipsey, 1990) propounded that recognizing crucial program elements and availing statistics on the application of these elements connect with the likes, subscribes to evaluation implementation. The data gathering scheme is appended on the structure to avail data to consider every component's scope, essence, and appearance. Once the data on the elements is collected, it is assessed within the arrangements. The program theory is a credible and tenable

representation of program application (Chen, 2014). Haji (2013) stated that this was a scheme concerning information transformation into outcome and how a sympathetic occasion can be changed to a finer one through transformations. Again, it is expressed as a technique where program elements are presumed to ascend the outcomes.

M&E plan is an organized schedule of methodological activities intended to attain objectives. To achieve project performance for future project management, M&E planning was measured using M&E scope, participation level, critical reflection, communication, and reporting as well as effectiveness.

### 3. Research Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design, with a set procedure in which the researcher anticipates undertaking the designed research study aspects (MOUTON, 2015), expressing the process and outline of guidelines in undertaking the research questions. Hence, the embraced a survey research design to determine the ascendancy of monitoring and evaluation performance on infrastructural projects in Dedan Kimathi University, Kenya. The research component was infrastructural projects at Dedan Kimathi University, and the examination component was monitoring and evaluating departmental representatives of the projects. The research depended largely on prime facts. The study applied a questionnaire as the study tool. These applicants were pointedly targeted for their capability to avail relevant information to the research.

265 members of the university infrastructural stakeholders were selected on simple random sampling. The representation pool was as follows:

- 42 university representatives,
- 71 contractors who were involved in construction members, and
- 152 project management committee members

From the three categories, a target population of 265 was obtained, from which a sample size was extracted. From the demography of 265, a sample number of 157 were drawn using proportional sampling.

Level of Management	Frequency	Ratio of Sample	Size of Sample
University representatives	42	0.59	25
Contractors	71	0.59	42
Project Management Committee members	152	0.59	90
Total	265		157

Table 1: Representative Frame

The research depended on information gathered through moderate surveys, which included open-ended and closed-ended questions and certain other items on a Likert scale. The questionnaires used in this study are a good and convenient tool as they capture accurate data, cost-effective and quick data collection from a variety of locations. Secondary data were obtained from project papers and the project's internet site. It was applied to assemble facts provokingly from the sampled respondents in the three categories as a general fact-assembling tool. The structured interview was aligned with the research objectives in a detailed plan. An unstructured interview was applied based on observation and further probing for precision. Interviews provide immediate feedback from the oral stimulated conversation, as structured interviews are carefully planned and compatible, whereas unstructured interviews are flexible and moderate. The investigator sought a consent license from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), which he presented to the executives of each department in gathering pertinent details from the applicants. Descriptive analytics uses frequencies, percentages, means, and variance to condense the obtained data and certify the perception. To evaluate the inferential data, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used. The correlation approach is used to explore bivariate analysis, in accordance with Gupta (2022).

### 4. Summary of Findings and Presentation

This research aimed to ascertain the effects of checking and appraisal planning influences on the achievement of university infrastructure projects. The study aimed to determine whether the University implemented a receptor activation and awareness campaign to solicit thoughts and opinions on new initiatives from relevant parties for consideration in an inclusive M&E schedule planning. Stakeholders include professional project developers and project end users. The campaign enables stakeholders to examine, reflect on, and comprehend the goal of the proposed project's project objective. Table 2 outlines the findings.

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	71	57.7
No	52	42.3
Total	123	100

Table 2: Sensitization and Awareness Campaign

A large percentage of aspirants (57.7 percent) participated in the sensitization and awareness campaign, which would have included M&E unit staff, project integrators, and other key staff on the stakeholders' quorum. In contrast, 42.3 percent were unaware of M&E schedule planning, which included stakeholders' junior staff and ultimate venture end users. Besides the sensitization and awareness creation, the applicants affirmed that the role of most stakeholders from

respect departments was minimal as it is specifically advisory during the program realization other than the actual monitoring and evaluation. Of mention were the departments whose undertakings were not directly involved in using the upcoming infrastructures. A further attempt was made to analyze the participation of relevant stakeholders. A study attempted to determine if the University had a multi-department M & E unit and which undertook their mandate per the schedule. The study outcome is exhibited as follows in table 3 below:

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	49	39.8	39.8
No	74	60.2	100
Total	123	100	

*Table 3: Multi-department M & E Unit*

Most of the applicants (60.2%) were unaware of the multi-department M& E unit. This was occasioned by the fact that only key persons at the management level of the departments were involved in monitoring and evaluating the university projects. In comparison, 39.8% who were aware of the multi-department M & E unit were other staff and project end users who were not key on decision-making levels. However, 39.8% of the applicants representing the M & E multi-department subdivision were privy to the M & E plan schedule and executed their mandate as per the schedule, where their performance influenced the project outcome.

#### 4.1. Rate the Influence of M & E Plan on Project Performance

The investigation attempted to know the role of the applicants on the projects and how they rated the performance of M&E plan on project attainment. The study outcomes are exhibited in table 4 below:

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Improved	56	45.5	45.5	45.5
Not improved	7	5.7	5.7	51.2
Delayed	15	12.2	12.2	63.4
Relevant	37	30.1	30.1	93.5
Not relevant	8	6.5	6.5	100
Total	123	100		

*Table 4: Rate of M & E Plan Influence on Projects*

Since monitoring is a continuous process within the project timelines, and evaluation is an internal review of the project progress, both inform the project alignment to the project objects. The reaction of the key departmental components of the university stakeholders gave their considered views that reflect their true perception of M&E plan contribution to project performance. The outcome, as exhibited in table 4, shows that 45.5% of the applicants responded that the M & E plan influenced the project performance, whereas 30.1% of the applicants responded that M & E plan was relevant, adding up to 75.6% of the applicants reporting positive influence on project success. However, 12.2% of the applicants responded that M&E plan delayed the project performance, especially the evaluation report involving external parties, government agencies, and development partners. While 6.5% and 5.7% of the applicants, respectively, reported that the M & E plan, in their view, was not relevant and did not improve the project performance. From the several study questions put forward to the applicant and the oral interview, the research observation was that the relevant stakeholders were adamant about the changes the infrastructures bring to the normal working environment. That also pointed to the conclusion that some university infrastructures were underutilized or put to a different intended initial use. Therefore, the program planning must include intended or complementary end uses for the desired change to be effective.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

It is the view of this research that monitoring and evaluation have an explicit contribution to the project's success. In fact, monitoring being a continuous process, can guide the project implementation by aligning the project objectives with the key performance indicators. On the other hand, evaluation is an interval check on perceived expected outcomes and verifiable indicators conducted by project internal and external stakeholders.

This study informs that the monitoring and evaluation plan guides the other M & E factors of the project. Therefore, the key to the implementation of the project and its success is determined by how the planning activity was carried out, as a significant section of stakeholders involved influences the project performance.

M & E Plan Phase; from the outcomes, M & E plan is fundamental to project achievement and precedent all other key M & E activities. Therefore, it is recommended that an all-inclusive and professionally conceptualized M & E plan must be drawn and actualized if project expectation is to be progressive and improved. Incorporating multi-departmental M&E unit views will lead to successful project attainment.

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