MONITORING AND EVALUATION TOOLS AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IN KENYA

[1] Olima Victor Ochieng', [2] Dr. Mungai Anne-Marie Wairimu, Phd

[1] Master of Science Degree in Monitoring and Evaluation at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

[2] Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

ABSTRACT

The general objective of the study was to establish the influence of monitoring and evaluation tools on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to determine the influence of M&E partnership on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya, to establish the influence of M&E plans on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive research design. This study was conducted at the ministry of health. According to MOH(2023) report, ministry of health has a total of 630 employees comprising of 105 top managers, 210 middle level managers and 315 lower level managers. Management employees were targeted since they are in the best position to provide information on monitoring and evaluation tools. The study's sample size was reached at using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination formula. The 239 respondents were chosen with the help of stratified random sampling technique. This study relied on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through use of semi structured questionnaires. The study also conducted pilot test to test the validity and the reliability of the data collection instrument. The data collection instrument generated both qualitative and quantitative data. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics for data analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25). Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentages were used in this study. In relation to inferential statistics, the study used correlation analysis. This was used to establish the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. Data was then presented in a tables, bar charts and pie charts. The study concludes that M&E partnership has a positive and significant influence on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya. In addition, the study concludes that M&E plans have a positive and significant influence on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the management of the ministry of health in Kenya should foster collaborative platforms that bring together government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. By establishing these multi-stakeholder forums, stakeholders can share insights, resources, and best practices, which will strengthen data collection and analysis processes.

Key Words: Monitoring and Evaluation Tools, Project Performance, Ministry of Health, M&E Partnership, M&E Plans

Background of the Study

In recent years, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has faced increasing pressure to deliver effective and efficient health services amid evolving challenges such as emerging diseases, limited resources, and growing population needs. The study of project performance within the MoH is crucial for understanding how well health projects are meeting their objectives, utilizing resources, and contributing to overall health system improvements. Effective project management is essential for ensuring that health initiatives, ranging from disease prevention programs to infrastructure development, are executed successfully and yield positive outcomes for public health (Saleem, Ilkhanizadeh & Na'ibi, 2022). Historically, the MoH has implemented numerous projects aimed at enhancing healthcare delivery, improving public health, and strengthening health systems. These projects often involve complex coordination among various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international partners. Despite the well-intentioned goals of these projects, there have been recurring challenges related to project performance, including issues with planning, resource allocation, implementation, and monitoring. Understanding these challenges is key to improving project outcomes and achieving strategic health objectives (Khan, 2023).

The study of project performance within the MoH involves evaluating several dimensions, including project planning and design, execution, monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment. It examines how projects align with the MoH's strategic priorities and health sector goals. This evaluation often involves analyzing project documentation, financial reports, and performance metrics, as well as gathering feedback from stakeholders involved in project implementation. Insights gained from such studies can inform best practices, highlight areas for improvement, and guide future project management strategies (Bbosa, Edaku & Kiyingi, 2023). In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on using data-driven approaches and innovative technologies to enhance project performance. This includes the integration of advanced monitoring systems, data analytics, and performance management frameworks to improve decision-making and accountability. By systematically studying project performance, the MoH can better address the complexities of health project management, optimize resource use, and ultimately achieve more effective health outcomes (Winiko, Mbugua & Kyalo, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The Ministry of Health (MoH) in Kenya plays a pivotal role in shaping the country's public health landscape. As the primary institution responsible for formulating and implementing health policies, overseeing healthcare delivery, and managing health programs, the MoH significantly impacts the well-being of millions of Kenyans. Its initiatives, ranging from disease control to health system strengthening, are crucial for improving health outcomes and ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare services. Given the centrality of the MoH in public health, its performance is directly linked to national health metrics and the overall quality of life in Kenya (Onjure & Wanyoike, 2020).

However, despite the vital role of the MoH, there have been persistent issues related to project performance. Many health projects have faced challenges such as delays, budget overruns, and suboptimal outcomes. For instance, reports from the Kenya National Audit Office indicate that several health projects have experienced significant cost overruns and delays, with some projects only partially meeting their intended objectives. Specifically, the 2023 audit report highlighted that over 30% of health projects funded in the previous year were either behind schedule or had exceeded their budgets by more than 20%. These issues have raised concerns about the efficiency and effectiveness of project management within the MoH (Thambura, *et al*, 2023).

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tools are critical in addressing these performance challenges. Effective M&E systems provide the framework for tracking project progress, assessing outcomes, and identifying areas for improvement. By systematically applying M&E tools, the MoH can enhance its ability to manage projects more effectively, make data-driven

decisions, and ensure accountability (Omunga & Gitau, 2020). For example, implementing robust M&E frameworks can help in identifying performance gaps early, optimizing resource allocation, and ensuring that project objectives align with national health priorities. Evidence from other sectors and regions demonstrates that organizations with strong M&E practices tend to achieve better project outcomes, suggesting that a similar approach could benefit the MoH in Kenya by improving project performance and health service delivery (Mohamud & Pedo, 2022).

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to establish the influence of monitoring and evaluation tools on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya

Specific Objectives

i. To determine the influence of M&E partnership on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya
ii. To establish the influence of M&E plans on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Resource Dependency Theory

Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) is a concept in organizational studies that explores how external resources influence the behavior and strategies of organizations. Developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), RDT posits that organizations are dependent on resources that are controlled by external entities, such as suppliers, customers, and governments. These resources can include capital, information, raw materials, and human resources, which are crucial for an organization's survival and success. Because resources are often scarce and unevenly distributed, organizations must manage their dependencies to mitigate uncertainty and gain stability. At the core of RDT is the idea that organizations face external pressures and constraints due to their dependence on critical resources (Ebitimi & Nsikan, 2024). This dependency creates power imbalances, where entities that control the resources can exert influence over the organization. For instance, a company that relies on a single supplier for a critical component may find itself at a disadvantage if the supplier decides to raise prices or limit supply. Consequently, organizations engage in various strategies to manage these dependencies and reduce their vulnerability to external forces. These strategies may include forming strategic alliances, diversifying sources of supply, or investing in developing alternative resources (Ntambara & Irechukwu, 2021).

RDT also emphasizes that organizations do not operate in isolation but are embedded within a broader network of interdependencies. This network impacts how organizations respond to external pressures and shape their strategies. For example, a healthcare organization might form partnerships with pharmaceutical companies, research institutions, and government agencies to ensure a stable supply of medical resources and to influence policy decisions that affect its operations. By navigating these complex relationships, organizations can better control their resource environment and enhance their competitive advantage (Pingano & Onjure, 2020). Moreover, RDT highlights the importance of organizational adaptation and strategic behavior in response to resource constraints. Organizations continuously assess their resource environment and adapt their strategies to manage risks and capitalize on opportunities. This adaptability can involve structural changes, such as reorganizing internal processes or seeking new funding sources, to better align with external demands. By effectively managing resource dependencies, organizations can achieve greater stability, reduce uncertainty, and improve their overall performance (Mokua & Kimutai, 2020).

Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) is grounded in several key assumptions about organizational behavior and the external environment. One fundamental assumption is that organizations are not self-sufficient and must rely on external entities to obtain essential resources, such as capital, information, and raw materials. This dependency creates a need for organizations to actively manage their relationships with external stakeholders to secure these resources and mitigate potential threats. RDT assumes that organizations face a degree of uncertainty due to their reliance on external sources, which influences their strategic decisions and behaviors (Mbuvi & Gekara, 2020).

Another assumption is that power imbalances exist between organizations and their resource providers. According to RDT, entities that control critical resources hold power over those that depend on them. This power dynamic affects how organizations negotiate, collaborate, and strategize. To address these imbalances, organizations are assumed to engage in strategic behaviors such as forming alliances, diversifying their resource base, or developing alternative resources to reduce their dependence and enhance their strategic position (Ebitimi & Nsikan, 2024). RDT also assumes that organizations are rational actors seeking to minimize uncertainty and maximize stability. This rationality implies that organizations will continuously assess their resource environment and adapt their strategies to manage dependencies effectively. The theory posits that organizations make strategic decisions based on their need to manage external pressures and maintain access to essential resources, thus influencing their overall performance and survival (Ntambara & Irechukwu, 2021).

Despite its foundational contributions to understanding organizational behavior, Resource Dependency Theory has faced several critiques. One major critique is that RDT can be overly deterministic, suggesting that organizations are primarily reactive to external pressures and power dynamics. Critics argue that this perspective may overlook the proactive and innovative capacities of organizations. For instance, organizations might not only adapt to external dependencies but also actively shape their resource environments through strategic initiatives, partnerships, and investments, which RDT does not fully account for (Pingano & Onjure, 2020).

Another critique concerns the theory's focus on power imbalances and dependency. RDT tends to emphasize the challenges and constraints organizations face due to their reliance on external resources, potentially underestimating the positive aspects of these relationships. For example, resource dependencies can lead to beneficial collaborations and opportunities for growth, such as accessing new markets or leveraging specialized expertise. Critics suggest that RDT might benefit from a more nuanced understanding of how dependencies can also create value and strategic advantages (Mokua & Kimutai, 2020). Additionally, RDT has been critiqued for its limited attention to the internal dynamics of organizations. While the theory focuses on external dependencies, it may neglect how internal factors, such as organizational culture, leadership, and internal resource management, influence strategic decisions. Critics argue that integrating internal and external perspectives could provide a more comprehensive view of how organizations manage dependencies and navigate their resource environments (Mbuvi & Gekara, 2020). This theory was relevant in determining the influence of M&E partnership on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya.

Theory of Change

Theory of Change developed by Weiss in the 1990s is a strategic framework used to plan, participate in, and evaluate the impact of social programs or initiatives. At its core, it is a method for mapping out the pathway from an organization's activities to the desired long-term outcomes and impacts. The Theory of Change approach involves a detailed articulation of how and why a desired change is expected to happen, providing a comprehensive roadmap for achieving goals. The process begins with defining the long-term goals or impacts that an organization or initiative aims to achieve (Denice, 2020). These goals are typically broad and encompass the ultimate change that is sought in the community or field. Once these goals are

established, the Theory of Change outlines the necessary preconditions or intermediate outcomes that need to be achieved to reach these long-term goals. This involves identifying the sequence of changes or steps that are anticipated to lead to the final impact. The framework also details the strategies and activities that will be employed to achieve these outcomes, linking them to specific indicators that will measure progress and success (Muhayimana & Kamuhanda, 2020).
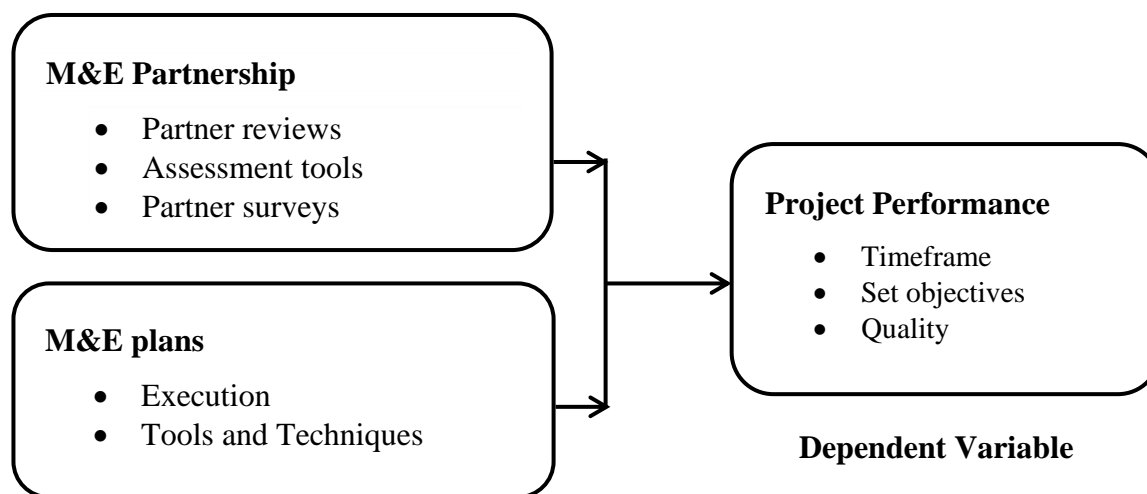
A crucial aspect of the Theory of Change is the articulation of assumptions and contextual factors that influence the success of the interventions. This includes assumptions about how change occurs, the environment in which the program operates, and potential external factors that could affect outcomes. By documenting these assumptions, the Theory of Change helps to clarify the logic behind the program's approach and provides a basis for adjusting strategies as needed (Ndothya & Chege, 2024). Additionally, the Theory of Change framework is designed to facilitate ongoing reflection and learning. It encourages stakeholders to continuously assess whether the program's activities and strategies are effectively leading to the desired outcomes. This iterative process helps organizations refine their approaches based on real-world feedback and evidence, enhancing the likelihood of achieving the intended impact (Musyimi & Ondara, 2022).

The Theory of Change (ToC) relies on several key assumptions that underpin its framework. One primary assumption is that change is both logical and predictable; it presupposes that a clear, rational pathway can be mapped out from activities to desired outcomes. This involves the belief that well-defined interventions will lead to expected results if all preconditions are met. Another critical assumption is that the causal relationships identified in the ToC are valid and that the assumptions about how and why change occurs hold true. This means that stakeholders must believe that their proposed strategies and activities will indeed lead to the anticipated intermediate outcomes and long-term impacts (Minyiri & Yusuf, 2020). Additionally, the Theory of Change assumes that the external environment, including political, economic, and social factors, will not drastically alter the planned course of action. It also assumes that the indicators chosen for measuring progress are accurate and reflective of the changes being sought. By documenting these assumptions, the Theory of Change aims to clarify the logic behind interventions and set expectations for the program's impact (Denice, 2020).

Despite its utility, the Theory of Change faces several critiques that question its effectiveness and applicability. One significant critique is that the framework can be overly idealistic, relying on a linear and often simplistic view of how change occurs. Critics argue that this linearity fails to account for the complex, non-linear nature of real-world change processes, where multiple factors and feedback loops can influence outcomes unpredictably. Another issue is the potential for the Theory of Change to be too rigid, with its detailed planning sometimes leading to inflexibility. This rigidity can hinder an organization's ability to adapt to emerging challenges or opportunities that were not anticipated in the initial planning phase (Muhayimana & Kamuhanda, 2020). Additionally, the process of developing a Theory of Change can be time-consuming and resource-intensive, which may not be feasible for all organizations, especially smaller ones with limited capacity. There is also the concern that the assumptions underlying the Theory of Change may not always hold true, leading to misaligned strategies or unrealistic expectations. Finally, the effectiveness of the Theory of Change heavily depends on the quality of stakeholder engagement and the accuracy of the causal links and assumptions made. If these elements are flawed, the framework may not provide the intended clarity or guidance, potentially compromising the program's impact (Ndothya & Chege, 2024). This theory was relevant in establishing the influence of M&E plans on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya.

Conceptual Framework

Maxwell, (2019) avers that a conceptual model is a research tool for modelling theoretical relationships of constructs under study for further investigation. It is the system of concepts, assumptions and expectations about phenomenon under consideration (Maxwell, 2020)

M&E Partnership

- Partner reviews
- Assessment tools
- Partner surveys

M&E plans

- Execution
- Tools and Techniques

Project Performance

- Timeframe
- Set objectives
- Quality

Dependent Variable

Independent Variables

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

M&E Partnership

M&E stands for Monitoring and Evaluation, a crucial component in project management and organizational performance. An M&E partnership refers to a collaborative relationship between organizations or stakeholders focused on developing, implementing, and refining monitoring and evaluation systems (Ebitimi & Nsikan, 2024). Partner reviews are critical assessments conducted to evaluate the performance and contributions of organizations or individuals within a partnership. These reviews often involve a systematic analysis of each partner's activities, achievements, and challenges, providing insights into how effectively they are meeting the agreed-upon goals and objectives. During a partner review, factors such as adherence to timelines, quality of deliverables, and collaboration efficiency are scrutinized. The review process typically includes feedback mechanisms where partners can discuss their perspectives, address issues, and identify areas for improvement. By regularly conducting partner reviews, organizations can ensure that all partners remain aligned with the project's vision, enhance accountability, and foster a more productive and harmonious working relationship (Ntambara & Irechukwu, 2021).

Assessment tools are instruments or methodologies used to evaluate the performance, impact, or effectiveness of a project, program, or partnership. These tools can range from quantitative measures like surveys and performance metrics to qualitative approaches such as interviews and focus groups. In the context of M&E partnerships, assessment tools are designed to provide reliable data and insights that inform decision-making and strategic planning. Examples of assessment tools include logic models, which map out the theory of change and expected outcomes, and performance scorecards, which track progress against predefined indicators. The choice of assessment tools depends on the specific needs of the partnership and the nature of the activities being evaluated. Effective use of these tools enables partners to gauge their progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make data-driven adjustments to improve overall performance (Pingano & Onjure, 2020).

Partner surveys are structured questionnaires used to gather feedback and opinions from partners regarding various aspects of the collaboration. These surveys can be instrumental in

understanding partners' perceptions of the partnership's effectiveness, their satisfaction with the collaboration process, and any challenges they may be facing. Typically, partner surveys include questions about communication effectiveness, resource allocation, decision-making processes, and overall satisfaction with the partnership. By systematically collecting and analyzing survey responses, organizations can gain valuable insights into the dynamics of the partnership and identify areas for enhancement. Surveys are often conducted at regular intervals or at key milestones to monitor the partnership's health and ensure that issues are addressed promptly. Overall, partner surveys serve as a tool for fostering open communication, improving relationships, and driving continuous improvement within the partnership (Mokua & Kimutai, 2020).

M&E plans

An M&E plan, short for Monitoring and Evaluation plan, is a strategic document that outlines how a project, program, or organization will systematically track progress, assess outcomes, and measure the impact of its activities. It serves as a roadmap for monitoring and evaluating efforts, providing a structured approach to ensure that objectives are met and resources are used effectively (Musyimi & Ondara, 2022). Execution refers to the process of implementing a plan or strategy effectively to achieve its objectives. In the context of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), execution involves the systematic application of the M&E plan to track and assess project performance. This includes ensuring that all planned activities are carried out as intended, data is collected according to the established methods, and analyses are conducted to evaluate progress. Effective execution requires coordination among team members, adherence to timelines, and regular review of processes to address any challenges that arise. Successful execution also involves engaging stakeholders and communicating findings to ensure that the insights gained from M&E activities lead to actionable improvements and informed decision-making (Minyiri & Yusuf, 2020).

Tools and techniques in M&E are essential for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data to assess project or program effectiveness. These can range from quantitative tools like surveys, questionnaires, and data management systems to qualitative techniques such as interviews, focus groups, and case studies. Quantitative tools help measure and track numerical indicators, while qualitative techniques provide deeper insights into the context and experiences of stakeholders. Advanced tools may include data visualization software to present findings clearly or statistical software for complex data analysis. Choosing the appropriate tools and techniques depends on the specific objectives of the M&E plan and the nature of the data required (Denice, 2020).

Objectives in an M&E plan are specific, measurable goals that a project or program aims to achieve. They provide a clear framework for what the project intends to accomplish and serve as the basis for measuring success. Objectives should be well-defined, realistic, and aligned with the overall mission of the project or organization. They are typically broken down into short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals, each with associated indicators to track progress. For instance, a project objective might be to improve community health by increasing access to clean water, with indicators such as the number of new water facilities installed or the reduction in waterborne diseases. Well-articulated objectives guide the development of M&E activities, ensuring that data collection and analysis are focused on assessing the achievement of these goals and making necessary adjustments to enhance effectiveness (Muhayimana & Kamuhanda, 2020).

Empirical Review

M&E Partnership and Project Performance

Ebitimi and Nsikan (2024) assessed on monitoring & evaluation partnerships and construction project performance in Rivers Nigeria. It adopted a survey approach; utilized structured questionnaire to collect data from 71 on-site construction project managers and engineers. The study found that a significant relationship exists between monitoring & evaluation partnerships

and construction project performance. The study concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between monitoring & evaluation partnerships and project performance in the construction industry.

Ntambara and Irechukwu (2021) researched on monitoring & evaluation partnerships and project performance in Rwanda. a case study of Busanza Housing Project Kicukiro District. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The target population was 120 people. Using Sloven's formula, a sample size of 94 respondents was selected to participate in this study. The study found that there are significant correlations found between monitoring & evaluation partnerships and project performance. The study concluded that monitoring & evaluation partnerships affected the performance of Busanza housing project.

Pingano and Onjure (2020) conducted a study on the influence of monitoring and evaluation partnerships on implementation of county government sponsored projects in Rabai Sub-County, Kenya. The study employed descriptive survey research design and had a target population of 46 county governments sponsored projects in Rabai sub-county from which the accessible population comprised 92 project officials were derived. The study found that monitoring and evaluation partnerships have a significant relationship with implementation of county government sponsored projects in Rabai Sub County. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation partnerships have a significant influence on implementation of county government sponsored projects in Rabai Sub-County, Kenya.

Mokua and Kimutai (2020) investigated on monitoring and evaluation partnership and performance of public private partnership projects in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Survey research design was employed.. A population of 161 project staff in 26 projects was targeted. The study also involved 10 county government officials. Stratified sampling, simple random and purposive sampling designs were applied to select 125 respondents for the study sample. The study found that monitoring and evaluation partnership has significant influence on the performance of PPP projects. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation partnerships have profound significance in the performance of the PPP projects.

Mbuvi and Gekara (2020) examined on the role of monitoring and evaluation partnerships on performance of gender mainstreaming projects in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design and was conducted in the 125 gender mainstreaming projects in Nairobi County; Kenya. The study found that monitoring and evaluation partnerships have a strong positive influence performance of gender mainstreaming projects in Kenya. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation partnerships have a significant positive influence performance of gender mainstreaming projects in Kenya.

M&E plans and Project Performance

Denice (2020) assessed on the impact of M&E plans on performance of national parks in Tanzania: a case of Serengeti national park. This study employed a descriptive survey research targeting 91 respondents, where by a sample was drawn purposively with non-random sampling. The study found a positive and significant relationship between M&E plans and the performance of national parks in Tanzania. The study concluded that M&E plans influence performance of national parks in Tanzania.

Muhayimana and Kamuhanda (2020) conducted a study on the relationship between monitoring and evaluation plans and public projects performance in Rwanda with reference to Science and Technology Skills Development (STSD) project. The study adopted explanatory research design with a mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative information. 146 project participants became research participants as primary respondents of the study. The study found that there is significant relationship between monitoring and evaluation plans and public projects performance. The study concluded that there is a positive significant between monitoring and evaluation plans and Efficiency of Science and Technology Skills Development Project.

Ndothya and Chege (2024) examined on monitoring and evaluation plans and performance of care international projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study employed a descriptive research approach. It targeted 155 staffs of CARE International Kenya. The study found that monitoring and evaluation plans had a positive and substantial impact on projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation plans have an effect on performance of care international projects.

Musyimi and Ondara (2022) researched on monitoring and evaluation plans and performance of county funded projects in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The researcher used a descriptive research approach with a target populace of 41 County officials drawn from various departments inclusive of stakeholders. The study found that there was positive and significant relationship between monitoring and evaluation plans and project performance. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation plans affects performance of county funded projects.

Minyiri and Yusuf (2020) investigated on the influence of monitoring and evaluation plans on water project performance in Migori County, Kenya. The study applied descriptive approach through survey design. The target population comprised of 228 stakeholders and water service company staffs working on water project in Migori County. The sample size of the study was 145 respondents. The study found that monitoring and evaluation plans has a statistical significant influence on water project performance. The study concluded that there existed a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between monitoring and evaluation plans and performance of water project.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive research design. This study wase conducted at the ministry of health. According to MOH(2023) report, ministry of health has a total of 630 employees comprising of 105 top managers, 210 middle level managers and 315 lower level managers. Management employees were targeted since they are in the best position to provide information on monitoring and evaluation tools. The study's sample size was reached at using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination formula (Russell, 2019). Using this formula a representative sample of 239 was obtained. The 239 respondents were chosen with the help of stratified random sampling technique. This research used a questionnaire to collect primary data. The researcher collected questionnaires, code them, and enter them into the Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 26) for analysis. The descriptive statistical techniques of frequency, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze the quantitative data acquired. Inferential statistics including regression and correlation analysis was used in the study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher sampled 239 respondents who were each administered with the questionnaires. From the 239 questionnaires 219 were completely filled and returned hence a response rate of 91.6%. The response rate was considered suitable for making inferences from the data collected. As indicated by Metsamuuronen (2019), a response rate that is above fifty percent is considered adequate for data analysis and reporting while a response rate that is above 70% is classified as excellent. Hence, the response rate of this study was within the acceptable limits for drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

Descriptive statistics

M&E Partnership and Project Performance

The first specific objective of the study was to determine the influence of M&E partnership on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to M&E partnership and project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya. The results were as shown Table 1.

From the results, the respondents agreed that feedback provided during partner reviews is constructive and leads to actionable changes (M=3.995, SD= 0.896). In addition, the respondents agreed that the frequency of partner reviews is adequate to address any emerging issues promptly (M=3.900, SD= 0.876). Further, the respondents agreed that there is a structured process for following up on recommendations from partner reviews (M=3.887, SD= 0.782).

The respondents agreed that the assessment tools are easy to understand and use for all partners involved (M=3.855, SD= 0.685). The respondents also agreed that adequate training is provided to ensure all partners can effectively use the assessment tools (M=3.797, SD= 0.698). In addition, the respondents agreed that the assessment tools are seamlessly integrated into their M&E framework (M=3.771, SD= 0.727). Further, the respondents agreed that partner surveys are conducted at an appropriate frequency to gather relevant feedback (M=3.687, SD=0.777). The respondents also agreed that the survey questions are relevant and help them understand the partnership's effectiveness (M=3.632, SD=0.562).

Table 1: M&E Partnership and Project Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Feedback provided during partner reviews is constructive and leads to actionable changes.	3.995	0.896
The frequency of partner reviews is adequate to address any emerging issues promptly.	3.900	0.876
There is a structured process for following up on recommendations from partner reviews	3.887	0.782
The assessment tools are easy to understand and use for all partners involved.	3.855	0.685
Adequate training is provided to ensure all partners can effectively use the assessment tools.	3.797	0.698
The assessment tools are seamlessly integrated into our M&E framework.	3.771	0.727
Partner surveys are conducted at an appropriate frequency to gather relevant feedback.	3.687	0.777
The survey questions are relevant and help us understand the partnership's effectiveness.	3.632	0.562
Aggregate	**3.816**	**0.750**

M&E plans and Project Performance

The second specific objective of the study was to establish the influence of M&E plans on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya.The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to M&E plans and project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya. The results were as shown Table 2.

From the results, the respondents agreed that the M&E plan is executed according to the established timelines and milestones (M=3.940, SD=0.772). In addition, the respondents agreed that roles and responsibilities for implementing the M&E plan are clearly defined and communicated (M=3.840, SD=0.889). Further, the respondents agreed that resources allocated for executing the M&E plan are adequate to meet its objectives (M=3.827, SD=0.768). The respondents also agreed that the tools used for monitoring and evaluating activities are appropriate and effective (M=3.800, SD=0.562).

As shown in the results, the respondents agreed that techniques employed for data collection and analysis are suitable for the M&E objectives (M=3.743, SD=0.879). In addition, the respondents agreed that the M&E tools and techniques are updated regularly to reflect best

practices and emerging needs (M=3.708, SD=0.692). Further, the respondents agreed that the M&E objectives are realistic and achievable within the given timeframe and resources (M=3.688, SD=0.760). The respondents also agreed that Indicators used to measure the M&E objectives are relevant and effectively capture the desired outcomes (M=3.624, SD=0.590).

Table 2: M&E plans and Project Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The M&E plan is executed according to the established timelines and milestones.	3.940	0.772
Roles and responsibilities for implementing the M&E plan are clearly defined and communicated.	3.840	0.889
Resources allocated for executing the M&E plan are adequate to meet its objectives	3.827	0.768
The tools used for monitoring and evaluating activities are appropriate and effective.	3.800	0.562
Techniques employed for data collection and analysis are suitable for the M&E objectives.	3.743	0.879
The M&E tools and techniques are updated regularly to reflect best practices and emerging needs.	3.708	0.692
The M&E objectives are realistic and achievable within the given timeframe and resources.	3.688	0.760
Indicators used to measure the M&E objectives are relevant and effectively capture the desired outcomes.	3.624	0.590
Aggregate	**3.771**	**0.739**

Project Performance

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya. The results were as shown in Table 3.

From the results, the respondents agreed that the project milestones and deadlines are clearly defined and communicated to all stakeholders (M=3.902, SD= 0.766). In addition, the respondents agreed that the project is progressing according to the established timeline and milestones (M=3.887, SD= 0.886). Further, the respondents agreed that any delays in the project timeline are promptly identified and addressed with appropriate corrective actions (M=3.849, SD= 0.785). Further, the respondents agreed that the project objectives are clearly defined and understood by all team members (M=3.827, SD= 0.678).

The respondents also agreed that the project objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) (M=3.696, SD= 0.554). In addition, the respondents agreed that progress towards achieving the project objectives is regularly assessed and reported (M=3.677, SD=0.734). Further, the respondents agreed that the quality standards for project deliverables are clearly defined and communicated (M=3.543, SD=0.654). The respondents also agreed that regular quality checks are conducted to ensure that deliverables meet the established standards (M=3.522, SD=0.982).

Table 3: Project Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The project milestones and deadlines are clearly defined and communicated to all stakeholders.	3.902	0.766
The project is progressing according to the established timeline and milestones.	3.887	0.886
Any delays in the project timeline are promptly identified and addressed with appropriate corrective actions.	3.849	0.785
The project objectives are clearly defined and understood by all team members.	3.827	0.678
The project objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).	3.696	0.554
Progress towards achieving the project objectives is regularly assessed and reported	3.677	0.734
The quality standards for project deliverables are clearly defined and communicated.	3.543	0.654
Regular quality checks are conducted to ensure that deliverables meet the established standards.	3.522	0.982
Aggregate	**3.738**	**0.755**

Correlation Analysis

This research adopted Pearson correlation analysis to determine how the dependent variable (project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya) relates with the independent variables (M&E partnership, M&E plans).

Table 4: Correlation Coefficients

		Project Performance	M&E Partnership	M&E Plans
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	219		
M&E Partnership	Pearson Correlation	.815**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003		
	N	219	219	
M&E Plans	Pearson Correlation	.825**	.327	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.032	
	N	219	219	219

From the results, there was a very strong relationship between M&E partnership and project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya (r = 0.815, p value =0.003). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.003 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the findings of Ebitimi and Nsikan (2024) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between M&E partnership and project performance.

Moreover, there was a very strong relationship between M&E plans and project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya (r = 0.825, p value =0.002). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.002 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the findings of Denice (2020) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between M&E plans and project performance.

Regression Analysis

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.331	0.084		3.940	0.001
M&E partnership	0.386	0.097	0.387	3.979	0.000
M&E plans	0.376	0.095	0.375	3.957	0.001

The regression model was as follows:

$Y = 0.331 + 0.386X_1 + 0.376X_2$

According to the results, M&E partnership has a significant effect on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya β_1=0.386, p value= 0.000). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.000 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the findings of Ebitimi and Nsikan (2024) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between M&E partnership and project performance.

The results also revealed that M&E plans has a significant effect on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya $\beta1$=0.376, p value= 0.001). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.001 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the findings of Denice (2020) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between M&E plans and project performance.

Conclusion

The study concludes that M&E partnership has a positive and significant influence on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya. Findings revealed that partner reviews, assessment tools and partner surveys influence project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya.
In addition, the study concludes that M&E plans have a positive and significant influence on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya. Findings revealed that execution, tools and techniques and objectives influence project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya

Recommendations

The study recommends that the ministry of health in Kenya should foster collaborative platforms that bring together government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. By establishing these multi-stakeholder forums, stakeholders can share insights, resources, and best practices, which will strengthen data collection and analysis processes.
In addition, the study recommends that the ministry of health in Kenya should integrate adaptive learning mechanisms within these plans. By incorporating regular feedback loops and performance reviews, M&E frameworks can be continuously refined based on real-time data and emerging challenges. This approach allows project teams to make informed adjustments, enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of health interventions.

Suggestions for Further Studies

This study was limited to the influence of monitoring and evaluation tools on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya hence the study findings cannot be generalized to project performance in other ministries in Kenya. The study therefore suggests further studies on the influence of monitoring and evaluation tools on project performance in other minstries in Kenya.

REFERENCES

Abdul, Q. P, Aedel, H & Hwang, A. J. (2022). Influence of Monitoring and Evaluation Tools on Sustainability of Donor Funded Projects in Afghanistan. *Journal of Entrepreneurship & Project Management, 6*(3), 11-22.

Bbbosa, S, Edaku, C & Kiyingi, F. P. (2023). The Influence of Monitoring and Evaluation Tools on the Performance of Uganda Red Cross Society in Eastern Uganda. *Open Journal of Social Sciences, 11*(1), 208-227.

Borisch, Q. C, Amer, H. C & Jahaf, P. S. (2023). Monitoring & Evaluation Tools and Project Performance of the Development Projects in China: Study of Yangqu Dam. *Journal of Entrepreneurship & Project Management, 7*(12), 1-10.

Denice, F. (2020). Impact of M&E plans on performance of national parks in Tanzania: a case of Serengeti national park. Retrieved From, https://repository.out.ac.tz/.

Ebitimi, D. T & Nsikan, J. (2024). Monitoring & evaluation partnerships and construction project performance in Rivers Nigeria. *DiamondBridge Economics and Business Journal, 4*(1), 1-27.

Eka, N. M & Safari, E. (2023). Monitoring and evaluation tools and project performance in international organizations: a case of prism implemented by Heifer International Rwanda, Musanze District. *Journal of Entrepreneurship & Project management, 7*(6), 69-82.

Lawal, Y. (2022). The Role of Monitoring and Evaluation Tools of Project Performance in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja Nigeria. *Journal of Business and Management, 24*(12), 50-56.

Lütfi, S., (2020) Validity and reliability in quantitative research. *Business and management studies. An International Journal, European Leadership University*

Mabizela, H & Zwane, Z. (2023). Monitoring and evaluation tools as critical approach to enhance the performance of local government: South Africa. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science, 12*(7), 74-84.

Minyiri, A. C & Yusuf, M. (2020). Influence of monitoring and evaluation plans on water project performance in Migori County, Kenya. *Africa International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 2*(6), 1-18.

Mohamud, I. F & Pedo, M. (2022). Monitoring and evaluation tools and performance of health projects in Isiolo County, Kenya. *International Journal of Social Sciences Management and Entrepreneurship, 6*(1), 278-287.

Mokua, C & Kimutai, G. (2020). Monitoring and evaluation partnership and performance of public private partnership projects in Nairobi City County, Kenya. *International Journal of Current Aspects, 3*(6), 124-148.

Pingano, L. K & Onjure, C. O. (2020). Influence of monitoring and evaluation partnerships on implementation of county government sponsored projects in Rabai Sub-County, Kenya. *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies, 8*(5), 85-102.

Saleem, N, Ilkhanizadeh, S & Na'ibi, A. A. (2022). Assessing the Impact of Implementing Training, Monitoring and Evaluation Tools on Employee Performance, a Study of Microfinance Firms in Pakistan. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies, 9*(3), 1-14.

Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R., (2019). *Research methods for business:* A skill building approach (5th ed.). Chichester, West Sussex:

Thambura, J. M, Mwangi, N, Mbugua, J & Kikwatha, R. (2023). Monitoring and Evaluation tools, and Performance of Livelihood Development Programme: Case of Caritas Meru, Kenya. *European Journal of Business and Management Research, 8*(3), 82-88.

Wanjala, M. Y, Iravo, M. A, Odhiambo, R & Shalle, N. I. (2020). Influence of monitoring and evaluation tools on project performance in Kenyan State Corporations. *European Scientific Journal, 13*(19), 354-370.

Winiko, S. M, Mbugua, J & Kyalo, D. N. (2020). Utilization of monitoring and evaluation tools and performance of digital education technology project in Malawi. *International Journal of Innovative Research & Development 7*(11), 1-11.