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MONITORING PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF PROJECTS BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to examine how monitoring practices impact the performance of projects by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Specifically, the study examined the influence of monitoring planning, the use of monitoring tools on project performance by non-governmental organizations in Nairobi City County. The study adopted a descriptive research design, targeting a population of 2,824 NGOs in Nairobi City County. Simple random sampling was used to select 167 organizations to take part in the study. A questionnaire was used to collect primary data from which M&E managers, M&E officers, project managers, project officers, and other project staff directly involved in project implementation. The response rate attained was 74.3%. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential analysis, with the statistics and findings presented using charts, tables and descriptive texts. The study established that monitoring planning, use of monitoring tools had a strong and positive correlation with project performance at 99% confidence level. Multiple linear regression was fitted as follows: $Y = 0.239 + 0.364\ X_1 + 0.286\ X_2$. A unit increase in monitoring planning, use of monitoring tools results in an improvement in project performance by 0.364, 0.286. The study concludes that monitoring planning, the use of monitoring tools have a positive and significant influence on how NGOs in Nairobi City County perform their projects. The study recommends mainstreaming these practices in project implementation. These practices enhance the robustness of monitoring activities and optimize the likelihood of projects to attain set objectives and sustain the resulting outcomes.

Key Words: Monitoring Practices, Monitoring Planning, Use of Monitoring Tools, Project Performance, Non-Governmental Organizations

Background to the Study

One of the most direct means of demonstrating accountability for investments in development and service delivery by both state and non-state actors is by steering projects and interventions to success. Several factors influence the success of a project, including project mission, support by top management, project plan and schedule, consultation with client, technology adoption, client acceptance, communication, sufficient skilled personnel, monitoring, feedback and problem-solving (Oh & Choi, 2020). It thus follows that project managers need to have an exhaustive understanding of these intrinsic and extraneous factors impacting project success and create a comprehensive project schedule to guide their decision-making in implementation of projects they oversee (Muchelule, 2018).

Monitoring refers to a continuing function aimed at providing stakeholders and management of an intervention with a basis for measuring progress in attainment of results, while evaluations are selective exercises aimed at systematically and objectively assessing progress towards realizing broader targeted outcomes (Kabonga, 2019). Together, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) can be described as a combination of processes encapsulating planning, data collection, analysis and utilization, which serve to help organizations harness relevant information from undertakings in the past or present to support fine-tuning, reorientation and future planning for programs (Diplomatic Academy, 2018). Monitoring and its associated practices form the basis upon which interventions can be steered and evaluations conducted at the defined periodic intervals. It provides a basis for project stakeholders a means for continuously assessing the implementation of an intervention or project (Muchelule et al., 2017).

At the most foundational level, monitoring serves two purposes. The first entails systematically collecting data against pre-specified project indicators across all cycles of a project. Often in project setting, different facets of implementation are tracked, and these can dictate the type, purpose and approach to monitoring. Indicators are developed to cater to these different types of monitoring. These include performance monitoring, results monitoring, impact monitoring, situation monitoring, financial monitoring, administration and logistics monitoring, and compliance monitoring, among others (Simister, 2017). This framework allows for evidence-based reporting at different stages of implementation of a project. Project managers often adopt Implementation-Focused Monitoring Systems to support these monitoring functions.

The second purpose, closely related and dependent on the former, is quality control. Muchelule (2018) points out that quality in a project can be guaranteed by identifying causes of poor performance in a project and eliminating them. Monitoring and its associated practices provide a premise for guaranteeing quality in an intervention by monitoring progress against set milestones and schedules, aligning project outputs with pre-defined quality standards and best practices, and promoting transparency in implementation and project delivery.

These underscore the utility of monitoring in a project setting as a tool for management that forms part of the nucleus of factors that determine project success and attainment of project objectives. The utility of monitoring is even more amplified with the increased demand for data and evidence in driving implementation. Evidence-based decision-making ensures decisions on the project are premised on valid, reliable and high-quality data (EvalCommunity, n.d.). Monitoring tools, practices and systems, thus, provide an avenue for project stakeholders to gather relevant, timely and reliable data to inform management and decision-making during implementation (Guijt, Randwijk, & Woodhill, 2012; Kamau, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Kenya play a crucial role in bridging the gap between government initiatives and the needs of communities, particularly in the realm of socio-economic development. For instance, Ponge (2019) points out that NGOs help bridge the

gaps in access to education, especially for those in rural areas. Ngure et al. (2021) estimate that up to 30% of services related to maternal and child health in Kibera are delivered by NGOs. At a macro level, the resources flowing through NGOs further illustrate their significance in socio-economic development in Kenya. According to the NGO sector report, NGOs spent KES 118 billion in implementing projects in Kenya in Financial 2021/2022, with the NGOs implementing projects in the health, children and education sectors accounting for the largest share of this amount at 30.1%, 10.4% and 10% respectively.

M&E has been widely adopted in the implementation of these projects. The ideal scenario, with mainstreaming of M&E in the projects, would be that these projects and undertakings by NGOs are executed successfully at a 100% rate. However, this is not the case largely due to how M&E is used. Mbithi (2020) points out that whilst monitoring and evaluation is being undertaken in most projects by NGOs, this is often not to inform project management but to fulfill donor requirements. Consequently, the manner in which organizations appreciate the role of M&E in their undertaking is narrow and limited to the reporting part. This presents a significant risk, considering that the majority of the projects by NGOs have a socio-economic inclination thus have a great potential impact for improving the lives and livelihoods of their target beneficiaries. With the narrowed appreciation of M&E as a whole within projects, NGOs fail to expend more efforts and resources to establish and adopt robust monitoring practices and M&E techniques to optimize the outcomes and impact of their projects.

The implications of this narrowed view of monitoring practices and M&E in general is evident from the success rate of interventions. According to a study by the World Bank focusing on the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for international development projects, nearly 39% of projects implemented by World Bank failed to achieve goals due to imperfect project design, poor coordination and management, cost overruns and poor stakeholder management (Ika, Diallo, & Thuillier, 2012). This remains the case presently. Wanja (2017) points out that 40% of projects being implemented by NGOs are not being implemented on time and with right quality standards owing to untimely allocation of resources and poor management. Itambo & Pedo (2022) note that, an average of 40% of projects by NGOs face time overruns and about 35% completely fail to proceed to completion during their early stages. Chege & Chesire (2022) also establish similar findings for cash transfer projects by NGOs in Baringo County, Kenya. They note that over 40% of projects related to cash transfers that are implemented by NGOs in Baringo County between 2019 and 2021 failed to meet their objectives. These signal the need for better adoption and mainstreaming of monitoring practices within these organizations.

Scholars have documented widely the positive association between monitoring practices and performance of projects (Muchelule, 2018; Ika, Diallo & Thuillier, 2012; Muchelule, Mulama, & Musiega, 2015). This suggests that the success rate of projects by NGOs in the country could be enhanced significantly with the adoption of more robust monitoring practices. However, in Kenya, the body of literature on this domain remains limited. For instance, Muchelule (2018) and Makau & Musembi (2023) cover the association between monitoring and project performance in state corporations and transport and infrastructure projects, respectively. Hussein (2020) focuses on how monitoring practices influence the performance of the Water Sector Trust Fund project, further illustrating the positive association between monitoring practices and project performance. However, much of the existing literature focuses on the broader implications of M&E as a whole on projects' success. Among the literature focusing on monitoring practices, the context is of projects by government institutions and agencies. Additionally, they cover similar variables. Broadly, literature expending a unique focus on monitoring practices is limited.

This study sought to bridge this gap by establishing the association between monitoring practices and the performance of projects by NGOs across different sectoral focus areas. The study is focus on Nairobi City County, where the majority of the organizations in Kenya are domiciled.

Objectives of the Study

i. To examine the influence of monitoring planning on project performance among NGOs in Nairobi City County, Kenya.
ii. To determine the influence of monitoring tools on project performance among NGOs in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Utilitarian Theory

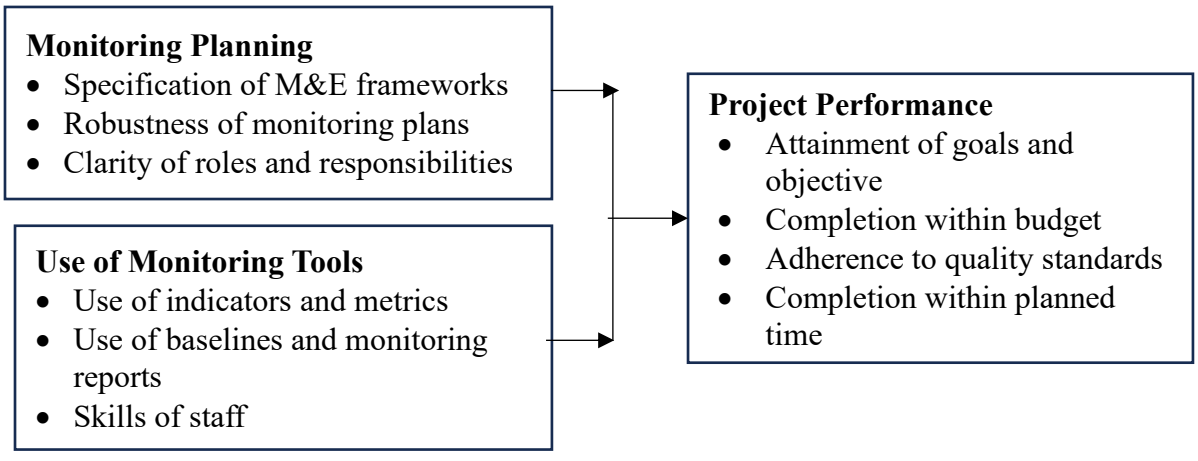
The utilitarian theory originates from the philosophical works of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) in the 18th and 19th centuries. The theory is rooted in utilitarianism, which posits that the morality of an action is largely determined by its perceived utility to the greater segment of the population. It is a moral theoretical movement advocating for actions considered to foster good over those of the contrary (Kanu & Ndubisi, 2023).

With the utilitarian theory, the core focus is utility – a parameter used in economics as a measure of value of actions (Muchelule, 2018). In essence, for any two possible options that an organization or an entity can pursue, the ideal choice is one that promises greater utility and is often what is conserved to be ideal, though it may not be ethical. This sets the premise for introduction of M&E concepts in determining the ideal options to pursue. With M&E, it is possible to conduct a cost-benefit analysis to quantify the viability of options being pursued. Additionally, the principles of utilitarianism can complement M&E functions towards promoting adaptation and continuous improvement. Monitoring and evaluation processes can be designed to provide timely feedback, allowing for adjustments to maximize positive outcomes in line with the utilitarian idea of continually seeking the greatest overall happiness.

The theory thus relates to all variables related to monitoring practices, particularly taking into account the ethical dimension. Decisions on monitoring planning, tools and approaches could benefit from the ideas fronted by the utilitarian theory – ensuring the conduct and overall management of an intervention takes into account the greater good of key stakeholders. Ultimately, the implications of the choices impact how outcomes and the impact of actions and choices are perceived and the satisfaction of stakeholders with the said outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework visually presents a theoretical model of how the dependent variable and the autonomous variables are perceived to interact (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Figure 2.1 below is the conceptual framework for the study variables.



Monitoring Planning

Monitoring planning is the process of specifying the goals of an intervention, defining the strategies and methodologies to be followed, deciding on the systems to use, setting targets and defining the timelines (Muchelule, 2018). Naoum, Fong, & Walker (2004) note that monitoring planning entails determining appropriate strategies to be pursued toward the achievement of objectives. As such, the monitoring planning process forms the premise for undertaking all monitoring activities in a project. Muchelule et al., (2017) posit that considerations on the methods, tools and procedures to be used need to be made during the monitoring planning phase of a project.

A key aspect of monitoring planning is defining the scope and schedule of a project, selecting of monitoring frameworks, scoping the resources and specifying the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders to be involved in the project. The selection of a monitoring framework is a key aspect of this. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, an M&E framework highlights the main components of a program and demonstrates the steps that are required to realize the desired results (UN, n.d.). A holistic M&E framework should demonstrate how the project is intended to work, define the relationship between factors and delineate both the internal and external components and elements that are critical to the realization of the targeted objectives of the intervention.

There exist various types of M&E frameworks, with the type of M&E framework adopted for a specific intervention being dependent on the situation and the main objective of an intervention. There are three commonly used frameworks in the development space, which include the results framework, the conceptual framework and the logical framework (Measure Evaluation, 2020). These apply in typical interventions and projects where project inputs, outputs and outcomes can be linearly linked or plotted. The literature clearly demonstrates the utility of these frameworks to the success of interventions. For instance, according to INTRAC, a logical framework is useful for clarifying the objectives of an intervention by identifying the expected causal links across the results chain: inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impacts (Garbutt & Simister, 2017). Conceptual frameworks address the theory of change, the potential impact of the intervention on target beneficiaries, the timeframe within which the change could occur and how the change will be measured (International Labour Organization, 2017). A results framework articulates the different chains or levels of results of an intervention in a matrix, a summary, or a graphical display (UN Habitat, 2017). These provides a basis for M&E activities by allowing interventions to plot each input and component to the output and overall goal. The monitoring framework selected informs the resource and technical expertise allocation (Guijit & Woodhill, 2002). The allocation and distribution of the defined resources is then determined by the defined project scope and schedule.

It is worth noting that monitoring planning varies by type, country and the sector in which the project is being undertaken (Koffi-Tessio, 2002). This points to the need for monitoring systems to be modified appropriately to suit a specific setting, accommodating its unique dynamics with sufficient flexibility (Jha et al., 2010). To achieve this, monitoring planning should be linked to project strategic plans and work plans (Muchelule, 2018). The approach should accommodate participatory methods to assess progress, leverage multiple information sources, and allow for adaptive management of the program. Anchoring monitoring planning on acceptable best practices sets the stage for data and evidence-driven management.

Monitoring Tools

Monitoring tools are used in projects to help track whether a project is attaining the intended results planned and highlighting the actions that need to be changed to correct course (Hussein, 2020). Muchelule (2018) underscores the fact that monitoring tools educate choices and decisions taken throughout the lifecycle of a project. Scholars make the case that monitoring

tools are of uttermost utility for a project, pointing to the existence of a positive correlation between the utilization of tools relevant to a project context and its success.

Namayi & Anaya (2023) explored the relationship between monitoring practices and implementation of construction projects at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Kenya. They explored monitoring planning, and monitoring tools as the variables of interest. They established that there is a positive correlation between monitoring tools and performance of airport construction projects. Hussein (2020) explored the influence of monitoring practices on project performance at The Water Sector Trust Fund. He also focused on monitoring planning, monitoring tools and adoption of monitoring practices as the variables of interest and established that monitoring tools had a positive effect on project performance.

Onyango (2015) explored the relationship between M&E tools and the performance of projects by NGOs in Nairobi County, Kenya. He established that a positive relationship exists between monitoring and evaluation tools and program performance. He also noted that a logical framework is a useful tool for overall program management, while results frameworks and earned value management are useful for performance management (Onyango, 2015).

Whilst there exists a variety of monitoring tools, the ideal tools to be adopted for a project are premised on the unique project context. Muchelule et al., (2017) note that the operating context, implementation requirements, and the capacity of an agency determine the monitoring tools of a project. They highlight that mainstream monitoring tools widely utilized globally include logical framework, performance indicators, set surveys, rapid appraisal, impact monitoring, and cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses, among others.

Overall, monitoring tools vary by type and across different countries and sectors (Koffi-Tessio B., 2002). Muchelule et al., (2017) point out that while approaches such as participatory observation, surveys, and direct measurement are more reliable and generate more valid monitoring data, they are often costly. This underscores the importance of context in determining the particular monitoring tools that will be adopted in a project. However, generally, the main objective is to ensure monitoring data is available on demand. It thus follows that the selection of monitoring tools should be premised on the information needed, the stakeholder requiring the information and the costs associated with adopting and sustaining the tools.

Project Performance

According to Berezin, Sergi & Gorodnova (2018), the performance of a project can be measured using indicators tracking project cost, time, quality, client changes, and client satisfaction, among other performance indicators. Musyoki & Musembi (2023) emphasize that of all the variables used to measure project success, time, costs and quality of outputs are the primary metrics for measuring project performance. They make the case that the authorized time limit, expenditure and scope are the primary dimensions of focus in project management.

In this regard, an assessment of the performance of a project by NGOs goes beyond assessing whether the set targets and outcomes have been achieved. The assessment also involves evaluating whether the results were attained within the planned timeframe and budget. Chileshe et al. (2022) also point out that a key assessment of performance of a project is the sustainability of realized outcomes of a project and its contribution to long-term organizational growth.

However, it is worth noting that the perception of successful performance of a project is often subject to the context within which the project was implemented. To account for challenges in performance measurement emanating from contextual dynamics, Głodziński (2019) proposes a framework and means for measuring complex projects. The proposed framework incorporates quantitative, qualitative, financial and non-financial metrics that aid in holistically

evaluating performance. The metrics span production, procurement, finance, product quality, legal compliance, and client and stakeholder satisfaction.

Empirical Review

Monitoring Planning and Project Success

Tangala & Senelwa (2023) investigated the influence of monitoring practices on airport construction projects undertaken at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design. One hundred seventy-three constants, contractors and project team members were consulted using a semi-structured questionnaire. The study established that monitoring planning had the strongest effect on the implementation of construction projects at the airport.

Okafour (2021) examined the influence of M&E system on the performance of projects. He explored, among other variables, the influence of monitoring planning on the performance of projects. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Thirty-two respondents drawn from the RANA project were consulted. The study established that there was a direct positive correlation between monitoring planning and performance of projects.

Muchelule et al., (2017) investigated the influence of monitoring practices on the performance of projects by Kenyan state corporations. The study adopted a mixed methods research design. Data was collected from 65 state corporations selected using simple random sampling technique from a population 187 state corporations in Kenya. The study established that monitoring planning had negative effects on project performance. They point to the need for further research on monitoring planning to validate its influence on project performance.

Atwa & Mudi (2019) investigated the influence of M&E planning on the performance of water supply projects in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design and collected data from 128 respondents sampled from 28 water supply projects in Kakamega County. Using Pearson correlation analysis, the study found that there is a significant positive relationship between M&E planning and performance of water supply projects in the county.

Hussein (2020) investigated the influence of monitoring practices on performance of projects at the water sector trust fund. Among the four variables whose influence on project success were investigated was monitoring planning. The study adopted a descriptive research design and 275 respondents drawn from departments in the organization were consulted. The study established that monitoring planning had a positive effect on project performance. He points out that project monitoring planning is useful for getting a better understanding of the needs of beneficiaries and refining the scope and objectives to be relevant, achievable and measurable.

Use of Monitoring Tools and Project Success

Hussein (2020) investigated the influence of monitoring practices on performance of projects at the water sector trust fund. Among the four variables whose influence on project success were investigated was monitoring tools. The study adopted a descriptive research design and 275 respondents drawn from departments in the organization were consulted. The study established that monitoring tools had a positive effect on project performance. He points out that monitoring tools are useful for gauging whether the results of a project are being realized as envisioned, identifying the actions required to trigger the attainment of results, and measuring the overall impact of an undertaking.

Walubengo (2019) investigated how application of project design tools and competencies of managers influenced the performance of community-based projects. The study was premised in Bungoma County, Kenya. Walubengo established that the use of tools such as Gantt charts and network diagrams had a significant positive relationship with project performance. These tools were noted to improve the scheduling of project activities. He also points out that

inadequate budget for M&E limits the extent to which monitoring tools can be applied in a project.

Jamaal (2018) studied the effects of participatory M&E on performance of projects at the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute in Mombasa, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design, consulting 144 employees of Kenya Maritime and Fisheries Research Institute. The study established that the lack of appropriate tools for M&E inhibited participatory M&E and, by extension, project success, given the positive association between stakeholder involvement and project success, as he illustrates.

Tangala & Senelwa (2023), while investigating the influence of monitoring practices on airport construction projects undertaken at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya, also established that monitoring tools had a positive effect on project implementation. Muchelule (2018) also arrives at similar findings when investigating the relationship between monitoring practices and performance of projects by Kenyan state corporations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research shall adopt descriptive research design to answer the key research questions. The target population for this study is Non-Governmental Organizations operating in Nairobi, Kenya, as registered by the NGO Coordination Board. According to the Non-Governmental Organizations Coordination Board, 12,162 NGOs and NGOs are registered in Kenya (NGOs Co-Ordination Board, 2023). The majority of these organizations operate in Nairobi City County. According to the NGOs Coordination Board database, 2,824 are based in Nairobi County (NGOs Co-ordination Board, n.d.). These constitute the study population. The study unit of observation were M&E officers, M&E managers, project managers and officers, and other project staff directly involved in project implementation and implementation of monitoring activities.

The study adopted simple random sampling technique to identify NGOs to be consulted during the study. From the population of 2824 NGOs, the study utilized the Yamane formula (1967) to identify the 167 NGOs to be engaged for the study. It shall adopted a precision level of 7.5% to accommodate logistical and resource constraints. Primary data was collected from respondents purposively selected from the sampled organizations using a closed-ended questionnaire. A pilot test was conducted with a sample of 20 respondents to ascertain the validity and reliability of study instruments before administering the survey to the entire population. Raw data was subjected to a data cleaning process, which shall entail sifting the data for accuracy and completeness and organizing the entries along key research variables. Descriptive and inferential analysis were performed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study sampled 167 organizations working in Nairobi, Kenya. Across all the organization the study questionnaire was administered to, 124 completed returned the questionnaire. This translates to a response rate of 74.3%. Based on this benchmark, the response rate attained is considered excellent and sufficient for robust analysis.

Descriptive Analysis

In this section, the study presents descriptive statistics on the study questions. These findings highlight the main attributes of the dataset, illustrating the distribution and variability of the responses across different organizations. The measures used are mean and standard deviation. For each question asked, respondents were requested to rate their responses using a Likert scale ranging from 1-5, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. The means and standard deviations were used to interpret the findings where a mean value of 1-1.4 was strongly disagree, 1.5-2.4 disagree, 2.5-3.4 Not sure, 3.5-4.4 agree

and 4.5-5 strongly agree. Standard deviations greater than 2 was considered to be large, pointing to widely spread-out data from the mean.

Monitoring Planning

The first objective was to determine the effect of monitoring planning on performance of projects by NGOs in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding monitoring planning. Table 1. presents the findings.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Monitoring Planning

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Projects are always anchored on clearly defined M&E frameworks (Theory of Change, Logical Framework, Results framework, etc.)	4.506	0.488
M&E frameworks are always tailored to project objectives and performance indicators	4.473	0.493
Project monitoring plans always cover all project activities comprehensively and include key targets and deliverables	4.310	0.487
Monitoring plans highlights potential project risks and mitigation strategies	4.262	0.490
Staff are well-trained in monitoring planning practices	3.807	0.501
Staff roles and responsibilities in projects are clearly defined and matched to qualifications	4.186	0.466
Aggegate Score	**4.257**	**0.488**

The findings show that on average, respondents agreed with most statements on monitoring planning, with an overall mean of 4.257. Respondents in most organizations agreed that their projects are anchored on clearly defined M&E frameworks, such as a Theory of Change, Logical Framework and Results Framework (M = 4.506, SD = 0.488). They also agreed that the M&E frameworks are always tailored to project objectives and performance indicators (M = 4.473, SD = 0.493). Regarding monitoring plans, respondents agreed that the monitoring plans are comprehensive and cover al project activities, highlighting key targets and deliverables (M = 4.310, SD = 0.487), and that monitoring plans always highlight potential risks for the project and the mitigation strategies (M = 4.262, SD = 0.490). Regarding staff skills, respondents agreed that staff are well-trained in monitoring practices (M = 3.807, SD = 0.501). Respondents also agreed that staff roles and responsibilities in projects are always clearly defined and matched to qualifications (M = 4.186, SD = 0.466).

Overall, the findings align with sentiments by Tangala & Senelwa (2023), Okafour (2021) and Muchelule, et al., (2017) who found that monitoring planning has a strong influence on performance of projects. Muchelule, et al., (2017) note that monitoring planning allows for project teams to make considerations on the most ideal methods, tools and procedures to be used. Muchelule (2018) further states that monitoring should be linked to project strategic plans and work plans, key tools that guide project implementation throughout the project lifecycle.

Use of Monitoring Tools

The second objective was to determine the effect of use of monitoring tools on performance of projects by NGOs in Nairobi City County. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding use of monitoring tools. Table 4.5. presents the findings.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Use of Monitoring Tools

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Monitoring tools are well-assessed and refined for their relevance in every project	4.127	0.546
Indicators and metrics provide meaningful insights on project progress and status	4.089	0.755
Project baselines serve as useful benchmarks for monitoring project progress and performance	4.323	0.645
Monitoring reports are consistently delivered on time and used to inform project management decisions	4.186	0.679
Staff are well-trained in utilizing monitoring tools and approaches effectively	4.202	0.423
Aggegate Score	**4.183**	**0.609**

The findings show that in general, respondents agreed with most sentiments related to use of monitoring tools, with an overall mean of 4.183. Specifically, respondents agreed that monitoring tools are well-assessed and refined for their relevance in every project (M = 4.127, SD = 0.546) and that indicators and metrics provide meaningful insights on the progress and status of projects in their organizations (M = 4.089, SD = 0.755). Further, respondents agreed that project baselines serve as useful benchmarks for monitoring project progress and performance (M = 4.323, SD = 0.645), and that monitoring reports are consistently delivered on time and used to inform project management decisions (M = 4.186, SD = 0.679). Regarding training, respondents also agree that staff are well-trained in utilizing monitoring tools and approaches effectively (M = 4.202, SD = 0.423). The findings align with findings by Onyango (2015), Hussein (2020) and Tangala and Senelwa (2023) that monitoring tools have a significant influence over performance of projects. Muchelule (2018) notes that monitoring tools educate the choices and decisions that are undertaken throughout a project. This is illustrated by the strong appreciation of monitoring tools in projects among the respondents surveyed.

Project Performance

The core objective of the study was to establish how monitoring practices impact performance of projects by NGOs in Nairobi City County. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the listed sentiments regarding project performance. Table 3. presents the findings.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Project Performance

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Most of your projects meet their intended objectives and targets	4.234	0.557
Projects are implemented and completed within expected timeframes	4.129	0.584
Project/programme timelines are actively monitored and delays are promptly addressed	4.218	0.564
Projects are implemented and completed within the expected budget thresholds	4.226	0.623
Financial resources for projects are managed efficiently and deviations are addressed promptly	4.323	0.592
Project outputs consistently meet or exceed desired quality standards	4.177	0.663
Quality assurance measures are effectively implemented	4.186	0.714
There is continuous improvement in quality of project outputs	4.363	0.575
Aggegate Score	**4.232**	**0.609**

The findings indicate that majority of respondents agreed with most sentiments regarding project performance, with the overall mean of 4.232. They agreed that projects meet their intended objectives and targets (M = 4.232, SD = 0.557). Regarding project timelines, respondents agreed that the projects are implemented and completed within expected timeframes (M = 4.129, SD = 0.584), and that project timelines are actively monitored and delays promptly addressed (M = 4.218, SD = 0.564). Regarding project budget, respondents agreed that projects are implemented and completed within the expected budget thresholds (M = 4.226, SD = 0.623) and that financial resources for projects are managed efficiently, with deviations being addressed promptly (M = 4.323, SD = 0.592). Regarding project quality, the respondents also agreed that projects outputs consistently meet or exceed desired quality standards (M = 4177, SD = 0.662), that quality assurance measure are effectively implemented (M = 4.186, SD = 0.714) and that there is continuous improvement in quality of project outputs (M = 4.363, SD = 0.609).

Overall, respondents agreed with sentiments regarding project performance within their organizations (M = 4.232, SD = 0.609). These sentiments show that most organization in Nairobi City County perceive their projects to be performing well. Musyoki & Musembi (2023) point out that project success can be measured using metrics tracking the time, cost and quality of the outputs. Projects that monitor schedule, the costs and the quality of outputs are more likely to realize the intended outcomes. However, it is also noteworthy that perception of performance and success is influenced by the context. Głodziński (2019) proposes a framework that incorporates quantitative, qualitative, financial and non-financial metrics. Such a framework can provide project teams with a holistic indication of how projects perform within unique project contexts.

Inferential Statistics

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was performed to determine the direction and strength of the existing relationship between the independent and dependent study variables. Correlation values range between 0 and 1. Values between r = ±0.1 to ±0.29 signals small relationship between variables, if the value is between r = ±0.3 to ±0.49, the relationship is medium and if r= ±0.5 and above, the relationship is strong. The study tested correlation among study variables at 99% confidence interval. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table *4*: Correlation Analysis

		Project Performance	Monitoring Planning	Use of Monitoring Tools
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	124		
Monitoring Planning	Pearson Correlation	.807**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	124	124	
Use of Monitoring Tools	Pearson Correlation	.769**	.708**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	124	124	124

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

There is a positive correlation between project performance and monitoring planning. The correlation analysis relevels a strong correlation between monitoring planning and performance of projects by NGOs in Nairobi City County ($r = 0.807$, $P < 0.01$). The findings suggest that the monitoring planning has a string influence over performance of project among NGOs. Previous studies by Okafour (2021), Muchelule et al., (2017), Hussein (2020) and Atwa & Mudi (2019) have shown that monitoring planning has a strong influence on project performance in projects by various government institutions and agencies. Similar influence is observed in projects by NGOs.

There is a strong and significant positive relationship between use of monitoring tools and the performance of projects by NGOs in Nairobi City County ($r = 0.769$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that the monitoring tools employed have a significant influence over how the project will perform. These findings align with previous studies by Onyango (2015), Hussein (2020) and Tangala and Senelwa (2021). The findings also underscore emphasis by Muchelule et al., (2017) on need for context specific monitoring tools that adapted to suit unique project dynamics. This in recognition of findings by Koffi-Tessio, (2002) pointing out that monitoring tools vary by type and across different countries and sectors. Monitoring tools adopted by state institutions and organs may not have the same utility when used by non-state actors like NGOs.

Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was conducted to test the effects of the independent variables, monitoring planning, monitoring tools, on the dependent variable, project performance. The findings are presented below.

Model Summary

The model summary provides insights on the degree of variability observed in the dependent variable as a result of changes in the independent variables. More precisely, the model test to what extent project performance is explained by monitoring planning, monitoring tools. Table 5 presents the findings.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.897a	0.804	0.797	0.17828

a Predictors: (Constant), Monitoring Planning, Use of Monitoring Tools

R represents the correlation coefficient and measures the strengthen and the direction of the relationship between the predictor variables (monitoring planning, monitoring tools) and the outcome variables (project performance. R value of 0 indicates there is no relationship between variables, a value of 1 indicates there is perfect positive relationship between the variables, while -1 indicates there is a perfect negative relationship between the dependent and independent variables. In this regard, a value of R closer to 1 indicates the relationship is strong. As illustrated, in the model, $R = 0.897$, indicating that there is a strong positive linear relationship between the predictor variables and the performance of projects by NGOs.

R Square is the coefficient of determination that measures the proportion of the variance in the dependent variables that is predicted by the dependent variables. The observed R Squared value was 0.804. This implies that monitoring planning, and monitoring tools collectively influence 80.4% of project performance by NGOs in Nairobi City County. This suggests that there are other combined factors that related to broader application of M&E and other project management

dynamics that have a significant influence on the performance of project by NGOs in Nairobi City County.

Analysis of Variance

The ANOVA table below presents the information regarding the overall fit of the regression model. It also provides additional insights on whether the independent variables included in the model have a significant influence on the variance observed in the dependent variable, which, in this case is performance of projects by NGOs in Nairobi City County. The model was tested at a confidence interval of 95%. Table 6 below presents the ANOVA findings.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.516	4	3.879	122.047	.000[b]
	Residual	3.782	119	0.032		
	Total	19.298	123			

a Dependent Variable: Project Performance
b Predictors: (Constant), Monitoring Planning, Use of Monitoring Tools

As illustrated in the table, the F-statistic is 122.047, with the p-value 0.000 < 0.05. The ANOVA results show that predictor variables (monitoring planning, use of monitoring tools) hold significant predictive power over performance of project by NGOs in Nairobi City County. The F-critical value of 122.047 further illustrates the strength of the model in predicting project performance for NGOs in Nairobi City County.

Coefficients

Table 7 presents the regression coefficients of the study variables.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.239	0.214		2.805	0.006
	Monitoring Planning	0.364	0.078	0.307	4.642	0.000
	Use of Monitoring Tools	0.286	0.062	0.194	2.981	0.003

a Dependent Variable: Project Performance

The regression model fitted is as follows:

$$Y = 0.239 + 0.364\ X_1 + 0.286\ X_2$$

Where: Y = Project Performance; X_1 = Monitoring Planning; X_2 = Use of Monitoring Tools;

The constant term is 0.239. This represents the value of the dependent variable (Y) if all the independent variables are set at to 0. The constant value has a P value of 0.006, (P < 0.05), indicating the intercept is reliably greater than 0, thus significant.

Monitoring Planning has a coefficient of 0.364 and a p-value of 0.000. Here P < 0.05, which suggest that monitoring planning is a significant predictor of project performance by NGOs in Nairobi City County. This aligns with from findings by Muchelule (2018), Hussein (2020) and

Tangala & Senelwa (2023) who found that monitoring planning is a significant predictor of project performance. The findings underscore utility of monitoring planning withing broader M&E practices in the context of NGO sector.

Use of monitoring tools has a coefficient of 0.286, and a p-value of 0.003. $P < 0.05$, which indicates that the use of monitoring tools in projects significantly influences how the projects perform. These findings are consistent with the findings of Onyango (2015), Muchelule, et al. (2017), Walubengo (2019) and Jamaal (2018) that emphasizes importance of utilizing context-specific monitoring tools throughout the lifeline of a project.

Conclusion

Study findings reveal that monitoring planning positively influences the performance of projects by NGOs in Nairobi City County. This shows that anchoring projects on clearly defined monitoring frameworks, having comprehensive monitoring plans and ensuring project staff have the necessary skills and competencies to perform monitoring activities in a project are useful in setting up projects for success. The influence of monitoring planning over project performance is also significant. As such, the study concludes that monitoring planning is a useful practice to undertake in projects, as it is one of the main factors that influence the performance of projects by NGOs.

Regarding monitoring tools, the study concludes that their use has significant influence over the performance of projects, as they provide a basis for tracking progress. Indicators and metrics are critical in tracking the performance of projects over time, while baselines and monitoring report are useful for assessing progress made towards attainment of goals and objectives. Given the importance of monitoring tools in projects, it is also important that staff are trained and their capacity developed progressively on how to use the monitoring tools in their projects.

Recommendations

Regarding monitoring planning, the study recommends that organizations invest time and resources in planning for monitoring activities. This can be done by ensuring project are anchored on clearly defined M&E frameworks, monitoring plans are comprehensive and highlight project needs, risks and mitigation strategies, and that the staff implementing projects are skilled and their capacities in applying monitoring practices are continuously improved. By conducting monitoring planning, projects are better placed to apply other monitoring practices such as use of monitoring tools and techniques, and stakeholder involvement.

Monitoring tools helps organizations operationalize the techniques envisioned, and overall, progressively track how projects perform. As such, organizations should invest in adopting monitoring tools that best suit the context of their projects. This entails leveraging research and planning to identify the tools that would be most useful for each unique project, and tailor them to the projects. Additionally, organizations should also invest in sharpening the skills of project staff on how to effectively utilize the tools. By adopting the most relevant tools in project monitoring, organizations are better placed to obtain data on demand to gauge their progress towards intended objective and make decisions on how best to increase likelihood of realizing set goals and amplifying the outcomes of projects.

Suggestions for Further Studies

This study focused on how monitoring planning, use of monitoring tools impact the performance of projects by NGOs in Nairobi City County. However, the study variables only explain 80.4% of

project performance, signaling that there exist other factors that impact how projects by NGOs in Nairobi County perform. The study recommends that further research focuses on exploring these factors.

Additionally, the study targeted NGOs across all sectors. This may have subjected the findings to variations based on sectoral dynamics. As such, further studies could narrow down to specific sectors and highlight how the dynamics of monitoring practices are within unique sectors.

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