INFLUENCE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLANNING ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION BY NATIONAL LANDS COMMISSION IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: **A well-defined project strategy that will guide the implementation phase often precedes a project. However, changes often occur as the event progresses. The national lands commission projects continue to encounter major delays, cost overruns, and projects never went according to plan. In this regard, the study investigated the influence of monitoring and evaluation planning on project implementation by National Lands Commission in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The descriptive research design was employed in study methodology. 6 projects being implemented by the commission were targeted and 66 respondents among them 6 project managers and 60 project team members were the respondents. These respondents received structured questionnaires to gather data for the study. A total of 6 questionnaires were first piloted to ensure that met the required standard in collecting final data for the study. This was determined by subjecting the questionnaires for validity and reliability tests whereby three test for validity including; content validity, criterion validity and face validity were applied. Cronbach's alpha test was used to measure reliability. The study's data was qualitative and quantitative and thematic method and descriptive statistics was used respectively in analysis data. The study used inferential statistics to see how the variables interact with each other. The data was presented in the form of tables and figures. The regression analysis results indicated that M&E planning, had a positive significant influence on project implementation. The study concluded that M&E planning helps in making decisions with clear objectives in mind and helps you concentrate on results that matter, while M&E allows you to learn from past successes and failures as well as lessons learned during project execution. The study recommended that project managers should define project objectives by defining the project's purpose, the process to follow and how stakeholders will be informed that the project is accomplishing its purpose.**

Keywords: **M&E planning, Project Implementation.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The project implementation phase ensures that the final deliverables meet the client's acceptance criteria through careful monitoring and control procedures, and any agreed upon improvements are implemented during this phase (Crawford & Bryce, 2017). According to Schulz, Slevin, and Pinto (2019), the implementation phase consumes most of the project's time and resources, so this phase is usually the most expensive. During this period, the complexity of the schedule is also the most difficult for the project manager to solve. Once project monitoring is in place, there is a good chance that the actual time spent planning project tasks will exceed the estimated time. Thus, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are two of their most significant parts to ensure that many projects are implemented at the right time and place.

The purpose of monitoring is to identify any corrective actions required for effective project implementation and to provide regular and timely updates on its progress (Hazir, 2018). According to Khorramshahgol, Azani, and Gousty (2020), the goal of project evaluation is to form findings and recommendations that will act as guidelines or recommendations for carrying out the projects that have already begun in the coming years. The assessment will also provide useful/relevant recommendations for future planning and implementation through validation activities. Thus, M&E is interactive but also has specific focus areas. For example, monitoring focuses on the project's inputs, activities, and outputs, while evaluation assesses the project's results and objectives while taking into account the project's external environment.

Project management monitoring and evaluation is becoming increasingly popular in Malaysia and is used throughout the country's economy and plays a major role in the Malaysian economy, including agriculture, forestry, petroleum and more recently manufacturing (Nitithamyong & Tan, 2018). Abdul, Wang, Mohammad and Long (2021) argue that any successful organization must manage projects effectively and responsibly to increase productivity. In order to improve the country's economic performance to a competitive level, announced government initiatives such as the Economic Transformation Program will need research on project management techniques to succeed. The future of green energy in Malaysia is also seen as a growing industry. Therefore, it is very important to set a precedent for good project management in projects.

The Planning Commission of the Government of Pakistan is responsible for developing quality standards and overseeing project planning and control monitoring systems. To maximize the likelihood of project success and accomplish the expected objectives of the projects undertaken, suitable application monitoring and assessment processes are required (Mobey & Parker, 2019). Rehman, Khan, and Khan (2021) observed that the country has a high rate of project failure due to insufficient organizational capacity to implement projects due to the current project management system practices in public sector organizations in Pakistan. Therefore, continuous improvement of project performance is essential to increase organizational effectiveness, especially in developing countries such as Pakistan.

Project monitoring and assessment are critical activities in project implementation to verify that key goals and objectives are met. However, the construction industry in Ghana has experienced numerous problems in establishing monitoring and evaluation, resulting in underperformance (Frimpong, 2017). Alutu and Udhawuve (2019) observed that the main factors for implementing PM&E in construction projects in Ghana are: Inadequate institutional capability, insufficient resources and budget allocation for monitoring and evaluation. As a result, an effective project monitoring and evaluation system required to provide information to interested parties for decision-making during project implementation.

Igwe and Ude (2018) observed that the successful implementation of six projects in Anambra, Imo and Rivers states in Nigeria was largely dependent on environmental factors compared to the skills of the project team. According to Ojoko, Osman, Rahman and Bakhary (2018), successful project implementation requires collective responsibility among project stakeholders; the negative effects of economic uncertainty on the success of project implementation if project experts are able to demonstrate the exact cost and duration of the project, it will be reduced. As a result, throughout the project planning stage, suitable environmental scanning, monitoring, and assessment are necessary.

Kogi (2018), argues that the implementation of Kenyan government projects is one of the most pressing concerns and shows that the effective implementation of these projects requires proper monitoring and evaluation practices. For example, a project implemented by Kenya Post was implemented in line with the organization's strategic review, which enabled greater customer focus, creative autonomy, and fostered an entrepreneurial culture and adaptive employee performance. According to Wamuyu (2020), effective project management techniques that monitor progress and risk are essential to ensure that the right projects are implemented in line with organizational priorities and improve project performance.

According to Kogi (2018), the level of funding, project cost control and planning for the implementation of a development project in Nairobi, their influence is significant, so proper project estimation should be done right from the project initiation stage. On the other hand, according to Kariithi and Mbugua (2018), implementing the Kiambu County Development Project was significantly influenced by policy and economic considerations, who recommended better budget allocation for the project across all counties in Kenya to ensure comprehensive implementation.

Zhouhu, Jian, Jie, Jie, and Shan (2018) note that M&E planning provides a manual that explains the M&E strategy's purpose, objectives, and important aspects. Furthermore, M&E includes a roadmap that explains how monitoring and evaluation will be carried out, as well as how the project manager intends to use the evaluation data to improve the project and make decisions. According to Burke (2020), M&E planning aids in the definition, implementation, tracking, and improvement of

monitoring and evaluation techniques within a single project or group of projects; it encompasses all of the phases, parts, and actions that occur. Therefore, when planning program interventions, a monitoring and evaluation plan should be developed at the outset.

The National Land Commission (NLC) was established as a constitutional commission under Article 67(1) of Kenya's 2010 Constitution. The Commission was established by the Land Act of 2012, the National Land Commission (NLC) Act of 2012, and the Land Registration Act of 2012. The current Commission is comprised of the Chairman and eight Commissioners, seven of whom began their terms on November 15, 2019, and the other two on December 21, 2020.

The Commission's mission is to oversee the administration of public land on behalf of the National and County Governments. Managing leases on public land, evaluating grants and dispositions, advising the National Government on a comprehensive program for land title deed registration, investigating all historical land injustice complaints and recommending appropriate redress, monitoring and supervising land use planning, and making recommendations. During the fiscal years 2019/20 - 2021/22, the Commission received Kshs. 1,663.8 million and Kshs. 1,138.3 million, respectively. In fiscal year 2021/22, the funding was increased to Ksh 1,687 million. Actual expenditures for Fiscal Years 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22 were Ksh. 1.6 billion, 1.1 billion, and 1.6 billion, respectively. Furthermore, the absorption rate was 95.5% in fiscal year 2019/20, 94.0% in fiscal year 2020/21, and 99.1% in fiscal year 2021/22.

For the last five years, the National Land Commission's projects, namely Final survey and vesting (Development), state of land use planning baseline study, Land conflicts and dispute resolution: HLIs, Litigation ADR & TDR, ICT Networking & Infrastructure, Land administration activities, and Land Disputes & Conflict Resolution, have faced significant challenges, primarily low budget allocation and a lack of staff training, which has resulted in project completion falling short.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Typically, a well-defined project plan precedes project implementation and serves as a guide during the implementation stage. However, as time goes by, there are usually changes. Furthermore, all project managers are concerned about many projects failing during the implementation phase (Crawford & Bryce, 2019). According to Pinto and Mantel (2020), up to 70% of all projects fail to meet the expectations of their customers. In Kenya, government ministries or their implementing agencies in state enterprises identify, plan, and implement public sector initiatives. However, because of a number of unfortunate project executions, the expected advantages are just to some extent or never understood.

Under Article 67(2)(h) of the Constitution of Kenya, the Commission has a critical role to play in increasing its monitoring and oversight of land use planning across the country. However, most projects completed by the Land and Resources Commission significant scheduling and financial management difficulties exist. As a result, the project was unable to proceed. be completed on time, which increased costs. Expected benefits were partially realized or never realized due to many failed projects. Over the past 5 years, the commission has implemented several projects financed by various partners, most of which were not completed within the stipulated time, costs and client requirements. For example, KES 321, 126 and 140 million were allocated to the Final Survey and Allocation (Development) Project, Land Use Planning Basic Research Project, Land Conflict and Dispute Resolution: HLIs Project, Litigation ADR and TDR Project, but the funds were never allocated. The ICT network and infrastructure project was allocated Ksh 110 million but only Ksh 106 million was funded, leaving a deficit of Ksh 4 million. The program for land management activities allocated 2,296 million but received only 100 million, and the program for land conflicts and conflict resolution allocated 400 million. but received only DKK 37 million. The Commission needs adequate funding in this area to strengthen internal systems to provide effective services. However, due to the reduced funding, the commission will be unable to meet the program's objectives.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

Pawson and Tilley's (1997) publication of realistic evaluation theory gives a paradigm that underpins the understanding of what outcomes program interventions produce, how they occur, and what is important in the various contexts in which the intervention takes place (Pawson & Tilley, 2004). Reality assessment includes "what works for whom, in what context and how?". This approach allows evaluators to identify what makes an intervention successful or unsuccessful, as well as what factors in the context of the intervention should be taken into account to replicate it in other domains. Similarly, Fukuda-

Parr, Lopes, and Malik (2002) note that the goal of realist evaluations is to identify the contextual variables that enable treatments to be effective, hence increasing understanding of how they create effects.

Julnes, Mark, and Henry (2018) note that realist evaluations are presumptively founded on the idea that projects and programs operate in specific circumstances and are affected by the reactions of various stakeholders to them. According to Holm and Kontinen (2020), the examination of realism seeks to address questions such as what works, for whom, under what conditions, and why. They hope to gain a better knowledge of how development initiatives operate in various circumstances. Therefore, when evaluating a new, pilot, or innovative program where there is evidence that the program is working, but it is not clear how, why, or for whom, a realist evaluation may be considered most appropriate.

The theory is central to this study because it is predicated on the premise that projects run under unique conditions and are heavily influenced by the responses of numerous stakeholders to them. As a result, project managers must understand how and why projects work in various environments. This means they'll be able to make better decisions about which projects to manage and how to adapt them to varied situations. Furthermore, the theory's fundamental purpose is to better understanding of how and why different projects work in diverse contexts, and it focuses on causality to determine which project tasks contribute to which results and how.

Empirical Literature Review

Hubert and Mulyungi's (2018) study looked at how project implementation in Rwanda was affected by monitoring and evaluation planning. A descriptive research approach was adopted, and the study's target group consisted of 72 NGOs in Kigali's Gasabo region. Each NGO was assigned two respondents (a mechatronics specialist and a financial manager), resulting in a total of 144 responses. Correlation analyses and explanatory statistics were used to analyse the data. The Spearman correlation coefficient indicates a strong positive link of the planning and implementation of M&E projects.

The impact of monitoring and evaluation planning on project implementation in Pakistan has been studied by Naeem, Khanzada, Mubashir and Sohail (2018). With the help of a questionnaire, information was obtained from 100 project managers. Analyze data using non-probability sampling (convenience sampling) techniques. The relationship was examined using regression and correlation approaches, and Planning has proved to be beneficial in terms of success. The results of this study indicate that the predictor has an important impact on both and a non-significant impact on the response variable.

Gaibo and Mbugua (2019) conducted research in Marsabit County, Kenya, to determine the effect of monitoring and evaluation plans on the implementation of county government infrastructure development projects. This study was conducted under the crosssectional research design. There are 165 people in this sample. The findings did not indicate any link between the planning of the M&E and the implementation of the development projects.

Muute and James (2019) evaluated the effect of project monitoring and assessment on building program performance in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The target population included 125 Nairobi City County development projects. As responses, one hundred twenty-five project managers were picked. The study discovered that effective M&E planning for quality projects was being carried out, which aided the construction projects' performance significantly.

The study by Rumenya and Kisimbi (2020) looked at how project implementation in non-governmental organizations was affected by monitoring and evaluation planning. The study included program staff, managers and monitoring and evaluation staff from 22 registered NGOs working with the Department of Education in Mombasa County. Participants were self-selected into the study sample by completing an online questionnaire. The findings indicate that organisational planning for M&E is strongly and positively associated with projects' completion.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was employed in study methodology. 6 projects being implemented by the commission were targeted and 66 respondents among them 6 project managers and 60 project team members were the respondents. These respondents received structured questionnaires to gather data for the study. A total of 6 questionnaires were first piloted to ensure that met the required standard in collecting final data for the study. This was determined by subjecting the questionnaires for validity and reliability tests whereby three test for validity including; content validity, criterion validity and face validity were applied. Cronbach's alpha test was used to measure reliability. The study's data was qualitative and quantitative and thematic method and descriptive statistics was used respectively in analysis data. The study used inferential statistics to see how the variables interact with each other. The data was presented in the form of tables and figures.

4. FINDINGS

The descriptive statistics results of M&E planning are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of M&E Planning

Statements	M	SD
Difficulties and challenges can be identified more easily with effective project tracking.	4.58	0.42
The project plans improves teamwork in M&E during project implementation	4.05	0.95
The planning process aids decision making throughout project implementation.	4.50	0.50
There is a sense of direction in M&E due to proper planning process	4.12	0.88
The planning process assists in successfully coordinating resources during project implementation to deal with changes.	4.55	0.45

Results of Inferential Analysis

Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

		M&E planning	Project implementation
M&E planning	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	64	
Project implementation	Pearson Correlation	.697**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	64	64

The results in Table 2 show that the Pearson's r value of M&E planning was 0.697 indicating that M&E planning had a strongly correlation with project implementation. The findings agree with Muute and James (2019) who evaluated the effect of project monitoring and assessment on building program performance in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study discovered that effective M&E planning for quality projects was being carried out, which aided the construction projects' performance significantly.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.809[a]	.731	.723	1.916.

Adjusted R square = 0.723, 72.3 % of project implementation attributed to M&E planning, 27.7 % representing other variables not studied.

Table 4: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	0.539	.490		6.610	.000
	M&E planning	0.729	.046	4.256	2.781	.001

The results as presented in Table 3 show that the project implementation would be at 0.539 without the influence of M&E planning. Also, by increasing M&E planning by a single unit would lead to 72.9% increase in project implementation.

The results in Table 3 indicated that the multiple linear regression model was given by;

$$Y = 0.539 + 0.729 \text{ (M\&E planning)}$$

In addition, the results in Table 3, shows that M&E planning had a positive and significant relationship as indicated by t-values. The relationships ($p < 0.05$) are all significant with M&E planning (t=2.781, $p < 0.05$).

5. CONCLUSIONS

According to the study, M&E helps to guide decisions towards clear objectives and helps to concentrate on outcomes that matter, whereas M&E allows for the learning from past experiences and lessons learned during project execution. Provides advice to support the development and execution of successful project management and execution (M&E) planning, M&E planning focuses on stakeholder involvement in the design and execution of projects and explains how to create an environment of learning for management and for implementation of projects.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the study, project managers should define project objectives by defining the project's purpose, the actions to be taken, and how stakeholders will know if the project is meeting its purpose. Project managers should define indicators to measure progress towards those objectives, decide on data collection methods and frequency, decide on various data sources to track indicators, decide from the initial planning stages who will be responsible for collecting data for each indicator and develop an analysis plan and report templates.

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