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Monitoring and Evaluation Practices and Performance of Construction Projects Projects in Secondary Schools in Homa Bay County, Kenya

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Abstract: **Construction projects in secondary schools across Kenya face persistent challenges of incomplete delivery, cost overruns, and inadequate planning. According to the Auditor General's Report for Homa-Bay County (2024), only 60% of school construction projects in the county are completed, compared to a national comparator average of 90% in counties such as Kericho, Kakamega, and Uasin Gishu reflecting a significant 30-percentage-point performance deficit. This study determined the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices on the performance of construction projects in public secondary schools in Homa-Bay County, Kenya. Specifically, it examined the influence of performance reviews, M&E transparency and accountability, project team involvement, and baseline surveys on construction project performance. The study was anchored on four theoretical frameworks: Stakeholder Theory, Institutional Theory, Resource Dependence Theory, and Goal Setting Theory. A descriptive research design was adopted, employing a semi-structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 310 respondents drawn from a target population of 1,620 stakeholders, comprising Board of Management (BOM) chairpersons, project managers, community members, and school principals. Stratified and simple random sampling were employed. Multiple regression analysis was utilized for inferential analysis while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data. Findings revealed that, despite limited implementation, all four M&E practices; performance reviews, transparency and accountability, team involvement, and baseline surveys positively and significantly influenced construction project performance. The study concluded that M&E practices are critical predictors of construction project performance in public secondary schools. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education and county governments institutionalize regular M&E frameworks, enforce accountability standards, and build stakeholder capacity in construction project management.**

Keywords: **Monitoring and Evaluation, Construction Projects, Secondary Schools, Performance Reviews, Baseline Survey, Transparency, Stakeholder Involvement, Homa-Bay County, Kenya.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Access to quality educational infrastructure is recognised as fundamental to realising Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education for all (UNESCO, 2020). Timely construction and completion of school facilities including classrooms, laboratories, and sanitation blocks are therefore prerequisites for delivering on this global commitment. In Kenya, the introduction of Competency-Based Education (CBE) in 2019 by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) placed fresh demand on secondary school infrastructure, necessitating the construction of additional classrooms nationwide. Homa-Bay County received Government of Kenya (GoK) funding to construct 300 classrooms in selected secondary schools across the county.

Despite significant public investment, the performance of these construction projects has been unsatisfactory. The Auditor General's Report for Homa-Bay County (2024) indicates a project completion rate of only 60%, compared to 90% in comparable counties. This 30-percentage-point gap represents substantial wastage of public resources and a tangible deprivation of learners' constitutional right to safe and adequate learning environments (Republic of Kenya, 2010 Constitution; Students' Rights Act, 2012).

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) was defined by Odiabo (2026) as an organised process of collecting, analysing, and utilising data to ensure projects are implemented as planned has been consistently linked to improved project performance globally. However, the evidence base examining M&E practices specifically within secondary school construction projects in Kenya remains sparse. While studies have explored M&E in primary schools and other sectors, the secondary school construction context in Homa-Bay County has not been directly addressed.

This study therefore sought to fill this gap by determining the influence of M&E practices on the performance of construction projects in public secondary schools in Homa-Bay County, Kenya. Four specific objectives guided the inquiry: (i) to establish the influence of performance reviews on construction project performance; (ii) to examine the influence of M&E transparency and accountability on project performance; (iii) to determine the influence of team involvement on project performance; and (iv) to assess the influence of baseline surveys on project performance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on four theoretical frameworks that collectively provide a lens for examining the relationship between M&E practices and construction project performance.

The Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) posits that organisations are social entities reliant on the coordinated participation of diverse stakeholders for effective project outcomes. Applied to this study, it explains the critical role of engaging BOM chairpersons, project managers, community members, and school principals in performance reviews and evaluation processes. The theory guided the examination of whether inclusive stakeholder involvement was associated with improved construction project performance.

Institutional Theory (Scott, 2004; Meyer & Rowan, 1977) emphasises organisational conformity to established norms, regulatory expectations, and external legitimacy pressures. In Kenya's construction sector, the Ministry of Roads and Construction mandates performance reviews and M&E reporting for all publicly funded projects (Republic of Kenya, 2023). This theory frames the study's examination of how adherence or non-adherence to these institutional expectations influences project outcomes.

Resource Dependence Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) highlights that organisations depend on external resources including information, capital, and human expertise for survival and effectiveness. In the context of school construction projects, this theory underpins the examination of stakeholder financial contributions, community involvement, and the allocation of resources guided by baseline surveys.

Goal Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1990) holds that specific, challenging, and measurable goals enhance organisational performance. In construction project management, this theory is relevant to the study's examination of whether baseline surveys articulate clear, measurable project objectives and benchmarks, and whether performance reviews provide feedback aligned with goal attainment.

2.2 Performance Reviews and Project Performance

Performance reviews serve as mechanisms for providing structured feedback, identifying implementation weaknesses, and enforcing accountability among project stakeholders (Karuga, Mutuku & Sang, 2024; Otundo, 2024; Büyüközkan & Karabulut, 2020). Evidence from Kenya's road construction sector indicates that regular performance reviews are positively correlated with timely project completion by enabling project managers to detect deviations early and implement corrective measures (Odiambo, 2026; Njeru & Kirui, 2022). Nonetheless, Masvaure (2022) documented limited emphasis on performance reviews in Homa-Bay County's private schools, while Kala (2020) reported similar constraints in Mandera County. These studies focused on primary schools and road projects, creating a gap in the secondary school construction context.

2.3 M&E Transparency, Accountability, and Project Performance

Transparency and accountability in M&E are widely recognised as enablers of construction project efficiency. When project stakeholders have access to project information and are held to clearly defined responsibilities, resource wastage is minimised and commitment to project goals is enhanced (Reggi & Dawes, 2023; Masvaure, 2022). In Sub-Saharan Africa, Issifu and Agyapong (2023) found that transparent disclosure of project details significantly improved budget performance in technology start-up industries. However, Mohamed and Kulmie (2023) found that in Homa-Bay tertiary institutions, M&E reports were largely confined to project managers, with community members excluded raising concerns about accountability in publicly funded construction.

2.4 Project Team Involvement and Project Performance

Effective team involvement in M&E processes strengthens decision-making quality, reduces implementation errors, and fosters a sense of ownership among project stakeholders (Chen & Geng, 2023; Ogendo, 2021). Masvaure (2022) noted that denying key stakeholders access to M&E results undermines project effectiveness. Di Maddaloni and Davis (2021) emphasised that 'secondary stakeholders' particularly local communities — remain underrepresented in project management research, despite their critical role in project legitimacy and implementation. Findings from Homa-Bay primary schools indicated that stakeholders participated in M&E monitoring but were rarely engaged in project evaluation (Muchiri, 2021).

2.5 Baseline Survey and Project Performance

Baseline surveys establish the pre-project status quo, provide measurable benchmarks, and guide accurate resource allocation (Chen & Geng, 2023; Ojwala & Kitada, 2022). Juliet (2022) argues that without baseline surveys, it is impossible to quantify the impact of any project intervention. Despite their importance, empirical evidence from Kenya indicates widespread disregard for baseline surveys: Muchiri (2022) found that 54% of Kenyan university projects omitted them, while Njeru and Kirui (2022) reported that only 58% of Kenya National Highways Authority projects incorporated them. Phiri (2020) similarly found that 57% of virtual university participants, despite receiving training, did not regard baseline surveys as critical. These findings suggest a systemic gap in baseline survey implementation within Kenyan public institutions.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design to accurately characterise the state of M&E practices in secondary school construction projects in Homa-Bay County and establish their relationship with project performance (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative data from a semi-structured questionnaire with qualitative data from key-informant interviews with school principals.

The target population comprised 1,620 stakeholders directly involved in 240 completed classroom construction projects across Homa-Bay County. This included 240 BOM chairpersons, 240 school principals/administrators, 240 project managers/contractors, and 900 community members. Stratified sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation across stakeholder categories, followed by simple random sampling within each stratum. Using Yamane's (1967) sample size formula at a 95% confidence level (e=0.05), a sample of 310 respondents was determined comprising 54 BOM chairpersons, 54 project managers, 202 community members, and 30 principals (the latter engaged through key informant interviews until data saturation was achieved).

The primary data collection instrument was a six-section semi-structured questionnaire measuring demographic variables, construction project performance, performance reviews, M&E transparency and accountability, team involvement, and baseline survey practices using a five-point Likert scale. Validity was established through expert content validation (coefficient = 0.85), while test-retest reliability returned a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.89, both exceeding the 0.70 threshold recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2013). Data were analysed using SPSS Version 21 through descriptive statistics (mean, frequencies, and percentages) and inferential statistics employing multiple regression analysis. Qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Performance Reviews and Construction Project Performance

Respondents were asked to rate their agreement on four dimensions of performance review practice using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Ratings for Performance Reviews

Performance Review Item	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
Enhanced timely project completion	9%	9%	15%	18%	48%	**2.14**	1.35
Regular reviews of project reports	7%	17%	21%	36%	18%	**2.61**	1.18
Transparent review reports to all parties	11%	17%	35%	22%	15%	**2.90**	1.18
Regular feedback of review reports	17%	36%	17%	20%	10%	**3.30**	1.32

The results indicate that most respondents disagreed that performance reviews enhanced timely project completion (mean = 2.14) or were conducted regularly (mean = 2.61). Transparency of review reports was also viewed negatively (mean = 2.90), while feedback provision was rated more favourably (mean = 3.30). Over 54% of principals interviewed confirmed that performance reviews were not heavily emphasised in construction project management in the county.

Regression analysis indicated that performance reviews significantly predicted construction project performance across all four dimensions ($p < 0.05$). The ability of reviews to accelerate project completion accounted for 7% of variance in performance ($\beta = 0.07$), while regular reviews explained 5.0% ($\beta = 0.050$). Feedback frequency contributed 1.6% ($\beta = 0.016$). These findings are consistent with Issifu and Agyapong (2023) and Otundo (2024), who similarly found that performance reviews positively predict construction outcomes, albeit with modest effect sizes. The limited explanatory power is partly attributable to the low frequency and transparency of review processes documented in the county.

4.2 M&E Transparency, Accountability, and Construction Project Performance

Table 2 presents respondent ratings on M&E transparency and accountability.

Table 2: Mean Ratings for M&E Transparency and Accountability

Transparency & Accountability Item	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
M&E report access to all stakeholders	8%	14%	22%	19%	37%	**2.38**	1.32
Clear responsibilities for all parties	14%	23%	28%	27%	11%	**2.96**	1.18
Input sought from all parties	18%	21%	32%	21%	8%	**3.19**	1.19
Stakeholders engaged in decision-making	22%	35%	22%	11%	10%	**3.61**	2.58

Respondents largely disagreed that M&E reports were accessible to all stakeholders (mean = 2.38), with principals noting that reports were treated as confidential. Clarity of role responsibilities yielded an undecided response (mean = 2.96), as did stakeholder input seeking (mean = 3.19). Decision-making involvement was rated more positively (mean = 3.61).

Regression results showed that stakeholder access to M&E reports explained 13% of variance in project performance ($\beta = 0.127$, $p < 0.05$). Clear role delineation and consultation of stakeholder input accounted for 7% ($\beta = 0.127$) and 14% ($\beta = 0.143$) respectively. These findings align with Masvaure (2022), who found that report access is central to effective project execution, and Ojwala and Kitada (2022), who found that consulting stakeholders promotes project efficiency. The qualitative data reinforced these results:

> *"Consulting members in decision making when implementing construction projects means that you value them, thereby motivating them to give their best service in the project implementation." — School Principal*

4.3 Project Team Involvement and Construction Project Performance

Findings on team involvement are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean Ratings for Project Team Involvement

Team Involvement Item	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
Adequate support to all stakeholders	11%	6%	11%	18%	54%	**2.02**	1.37
Sufficient funding from all stakeholders	11%	17%	26%	33%	13%	**2.80**	1.19
All stakeholders monitor projects	8%	15%	30%	26%	21%	**2.60**	1.19
All stakeholders evaluate projects	13%	31%	22%	21%	14%	**3.06**	1.25

Respondents disagreed that stakeholders were adequately supported in project implementation (mean = 2.02), with principals citing limited safety training and capacity building as key constraints. Funding sufficiency (mean = 2.80) and monitoring involvement (mean = 2.60) were rated indecisively, while evaluation involvement was marginally undecided (mean = 3.06).

Regression analysis confirmed that stakeholder support explained 7% of project performance variance ($\beta = 0.070$, $p < 0.05$), financial involvement also 7% ($\beta = 0.072$, $p < 0.05$), and monitoring involvement 3% ($\beta = 0.025$, $p < 0.05$). Stakeholder evaluation involvement was not a significant predictor ($\beta = -.001$, $p > 0.05$), likely reflecting the technical barriers to community participation in formal evaluation processes. As one principal noted:

> *"Monitoring process is a technical process, which requires expertise and competencies. As a result, majority of the community members have just elementary education, making it hard to participate in monitoring process."*

These findings are broadly consistent with Chen and Geng (2023) and Masvaure (2022), who established that participatory project management improves efficiency, while acknowledging that skills gaps among community-level stakeholders limit the depth of such participation.

4.4 Baseline Survey and Construction Project Performance

Respondent ratings on baseline survey practice are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Mean Ratings for Baseline Survey Practice

Baseline Survey Item	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
Clear goals set for M&E of projects	8%	8%	11%	21%	53%	**1.97**	1.28
Clearly stipulated completion guidelines	11%	14%	32%	36%	7%	**2.86**	1.10
Adequate budgets clearly indicated	13%	23%	31%	21%	13%	**3.01**	1.21
Regular M&E reports for tracking progress	18%	32%	23%	15%	13%	**3.30**	1.27

The majority of respondents disagreed that baseline surveys contained clearly articulated project goals (mean = 1.97) the lowest mean in the study, indicating a critical gap. Over two-thirds of principals confirmed that baseline surveys were rarely shared with project stakeholders. Completion guidelines (mean = 2.86) and budget indication (mean = 3.01) were rated indecisively, while regular M&E progress reporting was rated more positively (mean = 3.30).

Regression analysis found that the presence of clear goals in baseline surveys explained 9% of project performance variance ($\beta = 0.089$, $p < 0.05$) the highest among baseline survey variables. Budget inclusion predicted 5% ($\beta = 0.052$, $p < 0.05$), completion timelines 7% ($\beta = 0.068$, $p < 0.05$), and regular progress reporting 7% ($\beta = 0.069$, $p < 0.05$). These findings are consistent with Ojwala and Kitada (2022) and Oliver (2020), who emphasise that baseline surveys must articulate concrete, measurable objectives to serve as effective management tools. Qualitative data further underscored the perceived importance of budgetary transparency in baseline surveys:

> *"An act of explaining how project budget is being implemented is being viewed as a responsibility of top executives, making it hard for project stakeholders to scrutinise its utilisation and efficiency." — School Principal*

5. CONCLUSION

This study determined that M&E practices — performance reviews, transparency and accountability, team involvement, and baseline surveys — exert a statistically significant positive influence on the performance of construction projects in public secondary schools in Homa-Bay County, Kenya. Despite each practice being characterised by limited and inconsistent implementation, regression analysis consistently confirmed their predictive significance ($p < 0.05$ across all significant variables).

Performance reviews were infrequently conducted and insufficiently transparent, yet their presence was linked to improved project timelines. M&E transparency and accountability were constrained by restricted report access and unclear role definitions, yet consultation of stakeholders and clear responsibilities were associated with measurable improvements in performance. Team involvement was limited by skills gaps among community-level stakeholders and reliance on government funding as the sole financing source, but where involvement occurred, it positively predicted performance. Baseline surveys were poorly communicated to stakeholders and rarely included clear goals or budgets yet where they did, they were the strongest single predictor of performance.

These findings collectively point to a systemic under-investment in M&E infrastructure and capacity in Homa-Bay County's secondary school construction projects. The 30-percentage-point gap in completion rates relative to comparator counties is, in part, attributable to these M&E deficiencies.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Policy Recommendations

The Ministry of Education and the Homa-Bay County Government should institutionalise mandatory M&E frameworks for all publicly funded school construction projects, requiring regular performance review cycles, transparent reporting to all stakeholders, and documented baseline surveys with clearly stated goals, budgets, and completion timelines. Compliance should be a condition of fund disbursement.

The Ministry of Construction should develop standardised baseline survey templates for school construction projects and mandate their use and dissemination to all project stakeholders at the commencement of each project. Project managers should be required to present baseline survey findings to all relevant parties.

6.2 Practice Recommendations

County education offices should partner with civil society organisations and academic institutions to build M&E capacity among community members, BOM chairpersons, and school administrators. Annual in-service programmes focused on participatory project monitoring and basic construction management skills would improve the depth of stakeholder involvement in M&E processes.

Project managers and principals should institutionalise fortnightly performance review reports distributed to all construction stakeholders, including community representatives, to foster shared accountability and enable early corrective action.

6.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Future studies should examine the moderating role of county-level governance quality on the M&E–performance relationship. Longitudinal studies tracking project outcomes over time, as well as comparative studies between counties with different M&E implementation levels, would further enrich the evidence base.

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