



EXTERNAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION CONSULTANT FACTORS AND PERFORMANCE OF KENYA NATIONAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY PROJECTS IN NYANZA REGION, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to establish the relationship between external M&E consultant factors and the performance of KENHA projects, focusing on how project team qualifications, and consultant capacity impact project outcomes. This study was anchored on motivation theory, and resource-based view theory. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The target population comprised 217 stakeholders, including project managers, M&E consultants, engineers, and other key personnel directly involved in KENHA projects. Stratified random sampling was used to select a representative sample of 139 respondents, ensuring the diverse perspectives of key stakeholders were captured. Data were collected using structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed using a drop-and-pick-up-later approach, and research assistants facilitated data collection to enhance the response rate. Validity was ensured through content and construct validity, with expert reviews guiding the refinement of the research instruments. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a threshold of 0.7 set as the minimum acceptable value for internal consistency. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS), which facilitated the computation of descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that all factors significantly impact project performance, with coefficients of 0.389 ($p = 0.000$) for project team qualifications, and 0.412 ($p = 0.000$) for consultant capacity. These findings suggest that enhancing qualifications, and capacity positively affects project outcomes. The study concludes that investing in professional development, and increasing consultant capacity are critical for achieving superior project performance. It is recommended that KeNHA continuously prioritize the professional development of project teams, and enhance consultant capacity to optimize project success.

Key Objectives: External M&E Consultant Factors, Performance, KENHA Projects, Project Team Qualifications, Consultant Capacity

Background of the study

Project success is a critical determinant of economic development, organizational growth, and societal progress globally. However, achieving consistent project success, particularly in infrastructure sectors, remains a challenge for many organizations due to the complexity of modern projects (Basheka, 2021). Effective project management extends beyond sound planning and execution; it requires strategic oversight through monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to ensure projects are delivered on time, within budget, and meet quality standards (Marcelino-Sádaba et al., 2020). External M&E consultants play a crucial role in this oversight, providing independent assessments that guide corrective measures and enhance accountability, ultimately steering projects towards successful outcomes.

The commitment of the project team, characterized by effective time management, productivity, and communication, also significantly influences project outcomes. Committed teams enhance project coherence and facilitate smooth execution of M&E processes, which are critical for identifying and addressing project inefficiencies (Larsson et al., 2020). Consultant capacity, including the number of employees, training programs, and resource adequacy, further determines the effectiveness of external M&E. Well-resourced M&E teams are better positioned to conduct thorough evaluations, provide timely feedback, and support project success (Olawale & Sun, 2020).

Moreover, the qualifications and experience of M&E consultants directly impact their ability to manage complex project challenges. Consultants with specialized skills, relevant education, and extensive experience bring valuable perspectives that drive performance improvement. Qualified consultants are adept at identifying critical project risks, suggesting viable solutions, and fostering stakeholder confidence, contributing to successful project outcomes (Kinyua & Muthee, 2023).

Globally, there is a growing emphasis on enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of M&E consultants to improve project performance. This focus underscores the need to understand the factors that influence the effectiveness of external M&E consultants, particularly in high-stakes projects. Effective monitoring reduces schedule and cost overruns while ensuring quality standards are achieved, and evaluation helps planners assess the extent to which projects have met their objectives (Crawford & Bryce, 2023; Field & Keller, 1997).

Government and non-governmental organizations implementing projects often choose between internal monitoring by existing staff and external monitoring by consultants. Internal monitoring may lead to divided attention due to staff multitasking, often causing delays. In contrast, external consultants form dedicated project teams, ensuring that projects receive the necessary focus and are completed within set timelines. This arrangement highlights the distinct advantages of external M&E, making it a preferred option in many large-scale projects (Julius & Monroe, 2021).

The conceptions of Monitoring and Evaluation are generally approached as a unified function of project management, crucial for implementing necessary adjustments during the project lifecycle. Monitoring is a continuous process that tracks project progress, checks adherence to quality standards, and ensures optimal resource utilization, aiding in rational decision-making. In contrast, evaluation is a periodic activity that critically assesses the design, implementation, and outcomes of a project, offering strategic insights that reshape project trajectories when necessary (Basheka, 2021).

In Kenya, the Kenya National Highway Authority (KENHA) is a state corporation responsible for constructing and maintaining major highways. Over the years, KENHA has extensively utilized external consultants for monitoring ongoing construction projects, highlighting the vital role of M&E in ensuring the success of infrastructure projects. This study aimed to evaluate the influence of qualifications, and consultant capacity on project performance, providing insights to optimize the role of external M&E consultants in driving project success.

Statement of the Problem

The Kenya National Highway Authority (KENHA) has been instrumental in implementing major road infrastructure projects across Kenya, including the Nyanza region. Despite significant investments aimed at improving the regional transport network, many KENHA projects in Nyanza have consistently faced challenges, particularly related to delays, budget overruns, and quality shortfalls. According to the Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, Urban Development, and Public Works (2023), approximately 60% of road projects under KENHA in Nyanza have failed to meet their initial timelines, with average delays ranging from 12 to 18 months beyond the scheduled completion date. Additionally, over 55% of these projects have exceeded their budgets by an average of 25%, leading to financial inefficiencies and resource wastage (Kenya Roads Board, 2022). The quality of completed projects is also a significant concern, with reports indicating that more than 40% of roads constructed under KENHA in Nyanza develop defects such as potholes and surface wear shortly after completion (Auditor General, 2023). These persistent issues are often attributed to ineffective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices, which fail to provide timely and accurate feedback necessary for corrective actions during project implementation (Muthee & Kinyua, 2022).

The effectiveness of external Monitoring and Evaluation consultants, who are mandated to oversee these projects, has increasingly come under scrutiny. A survey by the Institute of Engineers of Kenya (2022) revealed that 67% of M&E consultants working on KENHA projects in Nyanza face challenges related to poor compensation and lack of resources, which directly impact their effectiveness. Furthermore, 72% of these consultants reported that inadequate training and qualifications were major obstacles to delivering high-quality evaluations, ultimately compromising the success of the projects they oversee. This highlights the need for a deeper understanding of how these factors affect consultant performance and, consequently, project outcomes (Muiruri et al., 2021; Ochieng & Wafula, 2020).

The challenges are further exacerbated by a lack of commitment among project teams, which undermines the effectiveness of M&E oversight. According to the Kenya Roads Board (2023), project teams frequently exhibit poor time management, low productivity, and significant communication gaps, all of which are compounded by inadequate M&E practices. This lack of commitment contributes to inefficiencies, delays, and project failures, which are particularly problematic in a region where infrastructure development is crucial for economic growth. Additionally, the limited capacity of M&E consultants, characterized by insufficient staffing and inadequate training programs, has been identified as a major barrier to achieving project success in Nyanza (Kariuki & Kinyanjui, 2021). Despite the critical role that M&E consultants play, these challenges highlight significant gaps in the current approach to project monitoring and evaluation.

Given the substantial financial and developmental implications of these persistent issues, it is clear that the current M&E practices are not robust enough to meet the demands of KENHA projects in Nyanza. This underscores the urgent need to address the factors affecting the performance of external M&E consultants. Several empirical studies have explored the impact of M&E consultant factors on project performance, but gaps remain, particularly in terms of knowledge, context, and conceptualization specific to KENHA projects in Nyanza (Mwangi et al., 2022; Kimani & Otieno, 2021; Wambua & Muthoni, 2020). This study, therefore, sought to assess the impact of external Monitoring and Evaluation consultant factors on the performance of Kenya National Highway Authority projects in Nyanza Region, Kenya, addressing these research gaps and contributing valuable insights into the optimization of M&E practices.

Objectives of the Study

The main focus of this study was to assess the impact of external monitoring and evaluation consultant factors on the performance of Kenya National Highway Authority projects in Nyanza Region, Kenya.

The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- i. To evaluate the influence of project team qualifications on performance of Kenya National Highway Authority projects in Nyanza Region, Kenya
- ii. To establish the influence of consultant capacity on performance of Kenya National Highway Authority projects in Nyanza Region, Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Resource-Based View Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory was initially introduced by Penrose (1959) and later refined by Wernerfelt (1984) and Barney (1991). The theory asserts that a firm's resources—tangible and intangible—are critical to its performance and sustained competitive advantage. Barney (1991) emphasized that resources must be valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) to provide a sustainable competitive edge. According to RBV, firms that effectively leverage their unique resources are better positioned to achieve superior performance compared to competitors who cannot replicate these resources. Resources under RBV include assets such as technical capabilities, human expertise, financial capital, brand reputation, and organizational culture.

Further development of RBV introduced the concept of dynamic capabilities, as proposed by Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997). Dynamic capabilities refer to a firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources to address rapidly changing environments, thereby enhancing its adaptability and long-term survival. Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) argue that dynamic capabilities are essential for firms operating in high-velocity markets, where static resources alone cannot guarantee competitive advantage. These capabilities enable organizations to continuously innovate, respond to market changes, and maintain a sustainable advantage over competitors.

Critics of RBV, however, argue that the theory lacks specificity in defining what constitutes valuable resources, making it challenging to operationalize in practical settings (Priem & Butler, 2001). Kraaijenbrink, Spender, and Groen (2010) contend that the VRIN criteria are too broad and do not provide clear guidelines on how resources can be evaluated for their contribution to competitive advantage. Additionally, the theory has been criticized for focusing too heavily on internal resources while neglecting the role of external market dynamics and the influence of external stakeholders (Foss & Knudsen, 2003). RBV's assumption that resources are inherently valuable and capable of sustaining long-term advantage has also been questioned, as resources must be effectively managed and adapted to maintain their relevance in evolving markets (Sirmon, Hitt, & Ireland, 2007).

In the context of Monitoring and Evaluation, RBV is highly relevant in understanding the impact of consultant capacity on project performance. M&E consultants rely on a range of resources—including human expertise, technical skills, and financial backing—to execute their roles effectively. The theory underscores the importance of not just possessing resources but managing them effectively to enhance performance. Consultant capacity, therefore, becomes a critical variable, as the ability of M&E consultants to leverage their resources directly influences the quality and effectiveness of project oversight, driving successful project outcomes.

Agency Theory

Agency Theory was first proposed by Alchian and Demsetz (1972) and was further refined by Jensen and Meckling (1976). The theory describes the relationship between a principal (e.g., an organization or client) and an agent (e.g., project manager or consultant) who performs tasks on the principal's behalf. The theory emphasizes the need for contracts that ensure agents act in the principal's best interests. Jensen and Meckling (1976) highlight how information

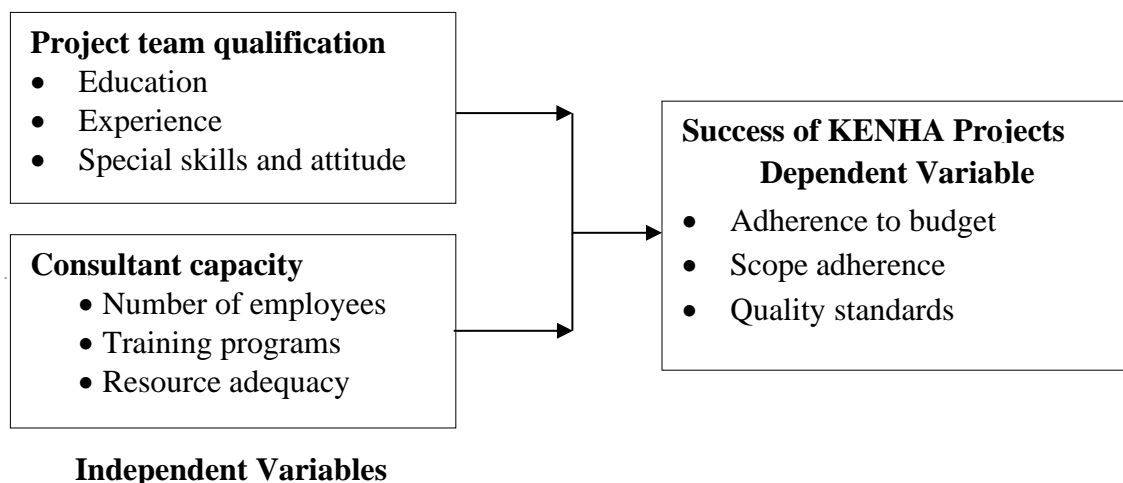
asymmetry and differing goals between principals and agents can lead to conflicts and inefficiencies.

Alchian (2012) argues that monitoring performance within this principal-agent relationship incurs costs, and inefficient information flow can lead to poor outcomes. Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) add that agency problems arise when agents prioritize their personal goals over those of the principal, often leading to manipulation of performance data. The Project Manager, acting as the client's agent, must align their actions with the client's interests, necessitating effective communication and information sharing to minimize conflicts.

Critiques of Agency Theory highlight its assumptions of self-interest and the inherent distrust between agents and principals. Perrow (1986) argues that the theory assumes all agents are inherently opportunistic, which may not be the case in real-world scenarios where mutual trust and shared goals exist. Moreover, Eisenhardt (1989) notes that the theory places excessive emphasis on contractual controls, potentially undermining intrinsic motivation and creativity among agents. Additionally, Ghoshal and Moran (1996) argue that the over-reliance on monitoring and control mechanisms can lead to a culture of micromanagement, stifling innovation and reducing overall organizational performance.

This theory closely relates to the variable of consultant capacity. It underscores the importance of aligning consultant actions with project goals and ensuring efficient resource utilization, highlighting the need for transparency and accountability in monitoring and evaluation practices.

Conceptual Framework



Project Team Qualification

Project team qualification refers to the educational background, professional experience, skills, and competencies that team members bring to their roles. Ziek and Anderson (2019) state that qualified project teams possess the technical know-how, problem-solving abilities, and industry-specific knowledge required to execute complex tasks effectively. Qualifications may include formal education, professional certifications, and specialized training that equips team members with the expertise needed to navigate project challenges. Schwalbe (2021) emphasizes that the qualifications of project team members are directly linked to their ability to make informed decisions, innovate solutions, and manage risks.

Qualified project teams contribute significantly to the success of infrastructure projects by leveraging their knowledge and skills to enhance project planning, execution, and evaluation. Müller and Turner (2020) found that project teams with higher qualifications are better equipped to handle unforeseen challenges, such as design changes or technical failures, thereby minimizing project delays and cost overruns. Furthermore, Martinelli and Milosevic (2021)

argue that the diversity of skills within a qualified team fosters a collaborative environment where innovative solutions can be developed to address complex project issues.

However, it is also noted that qualifications alone do not guarantee project success. According to Alami (2021), interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership are equally important for translating technical expertise into actionable project outcomes. The study argues that continuous professional development and on-the-job training are necessary to keep skills relevant in a rapidly evolving industry.

Consultant Capacity

Consultant capacity refers to the overall ability of consulting teams, including the number of employees, the adequacy of training programs, and the availability of resources, to fulfill their roles effectively. Grant and Baden-Fuller (2020) describe capacity as an organization's ability to mobilize and utilize its resources efficiently to achieve its objectives. In the context of M&E consultants, capacity involves having the right mix of skills, sufficient staffing levels, and access to tools and technologies that support effective project monitoring and evaluation. Parker (2019) emphasizes that adequate consultant capacity ensures that projects are evaluated comprehensively, timely feedback is provided, and corrective actions are implemented promptly.

Consultant capacity plays a pivotal role in determining the effectiveness of M&E processes, which are critical to the overall success of infrastructure projects. Davies and Brady (2020) found that consultants with higher capacity—characterized by adequate staffing, regular training, and sufficient resources—are more capable of conducting detailed evaluations and identifying potential risks before they escalate. The study also highlights that well-resourced consultants can better adapt to changing project conditions and provide targeted support to project teams, enhancing the quality of project outcomes. Whitley (2021) notes that limited consultant capacity can lead to insufficient monitoring, missed deadlines, and overlooked quality issues, underscoring the need for continuous investment in building consultant capabilities.

Barney and Clark (2021) argued that capacity alone is insufficient without strategic alignment. They emphasize the importance of ensuring that consultant capacity is aligned with project goals and stakeholder expectations. A misalignment can result in wasted resources and inefficiencies, highlighting the need for clear communication and strategic planning in capacity management.

Success of KENHA Projects

The success of KENHA projects refers to the achievement of project objectives, including timely completion, adherence to budget, scope adherence, and meeting quality standards. According to Turner and Zolin (2019), project success is typically measured by the extent to which a project meets its predetermined goals within the constraints of time, cost, and quality. For KENHA, project success is not only about completing the infrastructure on time and within budget but also ensuring that the constructed roads meet the required quality standards to serve their intended purpose effectively.

Turner and Müller (2020) emphasize that well-structured remuneration packages enhance team motivation and commitment, leading to improved project outcomes. High team commitment further drives collaboration, effective communication, and problem-solving, which are essential for project success (Peterson & Baker, 2021). Qualified teams bring the technical expertise necessary to overcome challenges and maintain project quality, while robust consultant capacity ensures that M&E processes are effectively executed, providing critical insights that guide project decisions (Davies & Brady, 2020).

Müller, Gerald, and Turner (2021) argued that achieving project success also requires a balanced approach that addresses both technical and human factors. They caution against focusing solely on procedural aspects without considering the soft skills and team dynamics

that contribute to successful project delivery. Therefore, a holistic approach that integrates the strengths of each variable is essential for ensuring the consistent success of KENHA projects.

Empirical Review

Project Team Qualification

Ali and Khan (2021) explored the impact of team qualifications on project performance in the construction sector in Pakistan. The study was based on the Resource-Based View Theory, which emphasizes the value of human resources. A descriptive research design was employed, targeting 250 project team members, with a sample of 130 selected using systematic sampling. Data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews and analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The study found that team qualifications were positively linked to project performance, with a correlation of 0.65 ($p < 0.05$). The authors recommended mandatory skills training for project teams.

Chima and Ndubisi (2020) examined the role of qualifications in project performance in the Nigerian construction industry. Guided by the Competency Theory, the study adopted a cross-sectional survey design with a population of 300 engineers and project managers. A sample of 150 respondents was chosen through purposive sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using multiple regression. The findings showed that qualifications significantly predicted project success ($\beta = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$). The study recommended that firms invest in professional certifications for their staff to enhance project performance.

Mensah and Owusu (2021) examined the influence of team qualifications on project performance in Ghana's construction industry. Grounded in the Theory of Skills Acquisition, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach, targeting 300 project team members. A sample size of 150 was selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected through focus groups and surveys and analyzed using thematic and regression analysis. The findings indicated that higher qualifications were strongly associated with better project outcomes ($r = 0.80$, $p < 0.01$). The study recommended continuous education and training programs for project staff.

Mutua and Njoroge (2019) investigated the effect of project team qualifications on the success of road infrastructure projects in Kenya. Anchored on the Human Capital Theory, the study employed a correlational research design targeting 200 project managers and engineers. A sample size of 120 was selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. The study found that higher qualifications were associated with better project outcomes, with a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.05$). The study recommended continuous professional development for project teams.

Muriuki and Wambui (2022) assessed the effect of project team qualifications on project outcomes in Kenya's construction sector. Using the Knowledge-Based View as a theoretical foundation, the study utilized a survey design targeting 400 project staff. A sample of 200 respondents was selected through stratified sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed with regression models. The study found that team qualifications had a significant impact on project success ($\beta = 0.73$, $p < 0.05$). The authors recommended that firms prioritize hiring qualified personnel to enhance project delivery.

Consultant Capacity

Zhou and Chen (2022) assessed the impact of consultant capacity on the success of construction projects in China. Using the Systems Theory as a framework, the study adopted a descriptive research design targeting 300 consultants. A sample of 180 respondents was chosen through systematic sampling. Data were collected through online surveys and analyzed using path analysis. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between consultant capacity and project performance ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that enhancing consultant capacity is vital for project success and recommended continuous professional development.

Oluwaseun and Adebayo (2020) investigated the influence of consultant capacity on the performance of public construction projects in Nigeria. Guided by the Theory of Constraints, the study employed a mixed-methods approach with a target population of 400 consultants. A sample size of 200 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected through surveys and focus group discussions and analyzed using thematic and statistical analysis. The study found that consultant capacity significantly impacted project outcomes, with a positive correlation ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.01$). The study recommended enhancing resource adequacy and providing continuous training for consultants.

Ibrahim and Musa (2021) explored the effect of consultant capacity on project outcomes in Nigeria's construction sector. Guided by the Contingency Theory, the study employed a cross-sectional survey design with a target population of 200 consultants. A sample of 120 respondents was selected using purposive sampling. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires and analyzed using regression analysis. The results showed that consultant capacity significantly affected project success ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$). The study recommended that consulting firms invest in capacity-building initiatives to enhance project oversight.

Odhiambo and Mwangi (2020) examined the impact of consultant capacity on the performance of infrastructure projects in Kenya. The study was based on the Resource Dependency Theory, which highlights the role of external resources in organizational performance. A descriptive survey design was used, targeting 150 consultants from road projects across Kenya. A sample size of 100 respondents was selected using stratified sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings indicated that consultant capacity positively influenced project performance, with a coefficient of 0.67 ($p < 0.05$). The study recommended enhancing consultant capacity through targeted training programs.

Mungai and Karanja (2021) examined the role of consultant capacity in the performance of road construction projects in Kenya. Anchored on the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, the study used a descriptive research design, targeting 250 consultants. A sample of 150 respondents was selected through random sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews, and analyzed using regression and correlation analysis. The study found that consultant capacity was a key determinant of project success ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$). The authors recommended increasing consultant staffing levels and resources to boost capacity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design, which is suitable for examining relationships between variables at a specific point in time. The target population comprised 217 relevant stakeholders involved in Kenya National Highway Authority (KENHA) projects, including project managers, M&E consultants, engineers, and other key personnel who directly influence project outcomes. The study used stratified random sampling procedure to select respondents. The study's sample size was reached at using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination formula (Russell, 2013). Using this formula a representative sample of 139 was obtained.

In this research, primary data were collected using questionnaires. The pilot test involved 10% of the sample size, translating to 14 respondents, selected from a similar setting outside the main study area to ensure comparability. The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used to generate frequencies, descriptive and inferential statistics, as well as to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the results of the analysis. Regression and correlation analysis was used to calculate the inferential statistic.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study targeted a sample size of 139 respondents, consisting of key stakeholders involved in KeNHA projects, such as project managers, M&E consultants, engineers, and other relevant personnel. Out of the 139 questionnaires distributed, 119 were returned, representing an excellent response rate of 85.6%. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a response rate of

70% and above is considered excellent, validating the data's adequacy for analysis and reporting.

Descriptive Analysis

Project Team Qualifications

The first objective of the study was to evaluate the influence of project team qualifications on performance of Kenya National Highway Authority projects in Nyanza Region, Kenya. This section examines how project team qualifications influence KENHA project performance. Table 1 presents the findings obtained.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Project Team Qualifications

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Team members have the necessary educational qualifications to execute their roles effectively.	3.805	0.842
Relevant work experience among team members enhances project success.	3.794	0.853
Specialized skills within the team contribute significantly to project performance.	3.821	0.831
Continuous professional development is encouraged among team members.	3.788	0.863
Team members possess the required technical expertise for their roles.	3.780	0.844
The attitudes of team members positively impact project outcomes.	3.742	0.826
The qualification of team members meets the project's complexity requirements.	3.763	0.851
Certification and training are prioritized within the team to enhance performance.	3.792	0.838
Aggregate Score	3.785	0.856

The findings on project team qualifications in Table 1 reveal that respondents generally agree on the importance of qualifications in enhancing project performance, with an aggregate score of 3.785 (SD = 0.856). The highest-rated aspect, specialized skills within the team contributing significantly to project performance, had a mean score of 3.821 (SD = 0.831), indicating that the unique expertise of team members is highly valued. Team members are seen as having the necessary educational qualifications to execute their roles effectively, with a mean of 3.805 (SD = 0.842), highlighting the importance of academic credentials in enhancing project outcomes. Relevant work experience is also seen as crucial, with a mean of 3.794 (SD = 0.853), suggesting that experienced team members are better equipped to drive project success. Continuous professional development is encouraged among team members, as indicated by a mean score of 3.788 (SD = 0.863), pointing to the emphasis on skill enhancement as a key factor. The statement that team members possess the required technical expertise for their roles had a mean of 3.780 (SD = 0.844), further underscoring the importance of having qualified personnel. Positive attitudes of team members, with a score of 3.742 (SD = 0.826), are also seen as influential, reflecting how individual behaviors contribute to overall project success. Meeting the project's complexity requirements with appropriate qualifications was rated at 3.763 (SD = 0.851), showing that teams are generally well-suited for the tasks at hand. Certification and training prioritization were also noted positively, scoring 3.792 (SD = 0.838), which indicates a focus on maintaining high standards. The aggregate score of 3.785 (SD = 0.856) confirms that qualifications, including education, skills, and ongoing training, are vital to the performance of project teams.

The findings therefore revealed that respondents agreed that having team members with the necessary educational qualifications, relevant work experience, and specialized skills significantly contributes to the success of KENHA projects. This is supported by the study conducted by Njeri and Wanjiku (2020), which found that the technical expertise and qualifications of project team members play a pivotal role in enhancing project outcomes,

especially in complex infrastructural projects. Further, the work of Kimani and Karanja (2018) emphasized that continuous professional development and certifications among project teams enhance their problem-solving capabilities, thus improving overall project performance. These studies validate the critical role of team qualifications in influencing the successful implementation of projects.

Consultant Capacity

The second objective of the study was to establish the influence of consultant capacity on performance of Kenya National Highway Authority projects in Nyanza Region, Kenya. This section focuses on the effect of consultant capacity on the performance of KENHA projects. Table 2 presents summary of findings obtained.

Table 4. 1: Descriptive Statistics on Consultant Capacity

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
The number of consultants engaged is adequate for the project needs.	3.759	0.812
Consultants receive relevant training to keep their skills up-to-date.	3.745	0.842
There are sufficient resources allocated to consultants for project evaluation.	3.774	0.831
Consultant capacity influences the timely completion of projects.	3.798	0.865
The consultant team's size is proportionate to the project demands.	3.771	0.841
Consultants are well-equipped to handle complex project evaluations.	3.782	0.833
Adequate capacity among consultants leads to more accurate project assessments.	3.795	0.846
The availability of skilled consultants enhances project performance.	3.800	0.854
Aggregate Score	3.778	0.841

The findings on consultant capacity in Table 4.6 indicate a positive perception of the adequacy and effectiveness of consultant resources, with an aggregate score of 3.778 (SD = 0.841). The availability of skilled consultants enhancing project performance received the highest rating, with a mean score of 3.800 (SD = 0.854), emphasizing that having competent consultants is critical for achieving desired project outcomes. The adequacy of consultant engagement for project needs was also positively rated, with a mean of 3.759 (SD = 0.812), suggesting that the number of consultants involved is generally sufficient. Training relevance for keeping skills up-to-date was rated at 3.745 (SD = 0.842), indicating the importance of ongoing professional development. Consultant capacity influencing the timely completion of projects, with a mean of 3.798 (SD = 0.865), highlights that capacity directly affects project schedules. The consultant team's size relative to project demands was rated 3.771 (SD = 0.841), suggesting a good match between team size and project requirements. Consultants are perceived as well-equipped to handle complex evaluations, scoring a mean of 3.782 (SD = 0.833), showing confidence in their capabilities. Adequate capacity leading to more accurate assessments was also viewed positively, with a mean of 3.795 (SD = 0.846).

The aggregate score of 3.778 (SD = 0.841) reflects overall agreement that consultant capacity plays a pivotal role in the successful performance of projects. Respondents generally agreed that adequate consultant capacity, including sufficient training, resources, and the ability to handle complex evaluations, leads to better project outcomes. This aligns with the findings of Otieno and Muturi (2019), who found that consultant capacity significantly impacts project performance, particularly in ensuring timely project completion and accurate assessments. Additionally, Njenga and Mugo (2017) found that the adequacy of consultant resources and skills is directly linked to project quality and stakeholder satisfaction. These studies reinforce the importance of building and maintaining high consultant capacity to drive project success.

Project Performance

The main focus of this study was to assess the impact of external monitoring and evaluation consultant factors on the performance of Kenya National Highway Authority projects in

Nyanza Region, Kenya. This section evaluates the performance of KENHA projects. Table 4.7 presents the findings obtained.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Project Performance

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
The projects are completed within the allocated budget.	3.832	0.854
Project timelines are consistently met without significant delays.	3.784	0.861
The quality standards of completed projects meet the required specifications.	3.792	0.849
Projects are delivered within the defined scope without significant deviations.	3.756	0.872
Stakeholder satisfaction with the project outcomes is generally high.	3.743	0.834
Monitoring and evaluation processes contribute positively to project performance.	3.821	0.842
The projects achieve their intended objectives effectively.	3.785	0.831
There are effective mechanisms in place to address any issues that arise during the project.	3.800	0.826
Aggregate Score	3.789	0.846

The results regarding project performance show generally positive evaluations, with all statements scoring above 3.7. Projects being completed within the allocated budget had the highest mean score of 3.832 (SD = 0.854), indicating a strong perception that budget management is effectively handled. Meeting project timelines without significant delays was rated positively, with a mean of 3.784 (SD = 0.861), underscoring timely project execution as a key achievement. The adherence to quality standards was also seen favorably, with a mean score of 3.792 (SD = 0.849), reflecting that projects meet specified requirements. Delivery within scope without major deviations scored 3.756 (SD = 0.872), suggesting that projects generally stay on track. Stakeholder satisfaction was rated positively, with a mean of 3.743 (SD = 0.834), highlighting the effectiveness of the projects in meeting expectations. Monitoring and evaluation processes were acknowledged for their positive contribution, with a mean of 3.821 (SD = 0.842), demonstrating the importance of these processes in enhancing project outcomes. Effective achievement of intended project objectives was rated at 3.785 (SD = 0.831), indicating successful goal attainment. The presence of effective mechanisms to address project issues was positively noted, with a mean of 3.800 (SD = 0.826).

The aggregate score of 3.789 (SD = 0.846) indicates a general agreement that KENHA projects are performing well in key areas such as budget, timelines, quality, and stakeholder satisfaction. These findings are consistent with those of Mutua and Kimuyu (2018), who found that effective monitoring and evaluation practices contribute significantly to the successful performance of public sector projects, particularly in meeting timelines and maintaining quality standards. Similarly, Kamau and Njenga (2020) reported that performance is enhanced when there are effective mechanisms to address project challenges and when project objectives are clearly defined and monitored. These studies highlight the importance of structured performance evaluations and proactive management practices in achieving project success.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent variables (project team qualifications, and consultant capacity) and the dependent variable (project performance). The analysis was performed at a 95% confidence level, with significance determined at $p < 0.05$.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

Variable		Performance	Team Qualifications	Consultant Capacity
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	119		
Project Team Qualifications	Pearson Correlation	0.733**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	119	119	
Consultant Capacity	Pearson Correlation	0.755**	0.278	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.412	
	N	119	119	119

Note: $p < 0.05$

The correlation coefficient between project team qualifications and project performance was 0.733 ($p = 0.000$), indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that higher qualifications among team members lead to better project performance, as skilled and knowledgeable teams can effectively handle complex project tasks. Mensah and Owusu (2021) similarly found that higher qualifications were strongly associated with better project outcomes in Ghana's construction industry, highlighting the value of continuous education and professional development. Mutua and Njoroge (2019) also found a significant positive correlation between team qualifications and project success, recommending ongoing training to enhance team capabilities. These findings emphasize the importance of investing in team qualifications to ensure project success.

The correlation coefficient between consultant capacity and project performance was 0.755 ($p = 0.000$), indicating a very strong positive relationship. This finding suggests that adequate consultant capacity, including sufficient resources and skilled personnel, significantly enhances project outcomes. Zhou and Chen (2022) found similar results, highlighting that enhanced consultant capacity was vital for project success in China's construction sector. Mungai and Karanja (2021) also identified consultant capacity as a key determinant of project success, recommending increased staffing levels and resources to boost capacity. These findings reinforce the importance of building consultant capacity to improve project performance.

Regression Analysis

The regression coefficients provide insights into the individual contribution of each independent variable to project performance.

Table 5: Coefficients of the Regression Model

Variable		Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)		0.214	0.102	2.098	0.038
Project Team Qualifications	Team	0.389	0.079	4.924	0.000
Consultant Capacity		0.412	0.075	5.493	0.000

The coefficient for project team qualifications is 0.389 ($p = 0.000$), indicating that project team qualifications have a significant positive impact on project performance. This coefficient implies that as the qualifications of the project team members improve, there is a 0.389 unit increase in project performance. This underscores the importance of having well-qualified and skilled team members who are capable of managing complex project tasks efficiently. Ali and Khan (2021) support this finding, showing that higher qualifications among team members were linked to better project performance in Pakistan's construction sector. Investing in professional certifications, continuous training, and education ensures that project teams are

equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge, enhancing their ability to contribute positively to project outcomes.

The coefficient for consultant capacity is the highest among the variables, at 0.412 ($p = 0.000$), indicating a strong and significant positive effect on project performance. This suggests that increasing consultant capacity by improving resource allocation, training, and overall team size can result in a 0.412 unit increase in project performance. The significant contribution of consultant capacity to project success aligns with findings by Mungai and Karanja (2021), who found that consultant capacity was a key determinant of project success in Kenya's road construction projects. Enhancing consultant capacity ensures that the project evaluation processes are accurate, timely, and effectively managed, which is crucial for achieving project goals. This result emphasizes the need for continuous professional development, adequate staffing, and resource availability to maximize the positive impact on project performance.

Based on the regression coefficients provided in the analysis, the regression equation that predicts the performance of KENHA projects can be formulated as follows:

$$\text{Project Performance} = 0.214 + 0.389 (\text{Project Team Qualifications}) + 0.412 (\text{Consultant Capacity})$$

Conclusions

Project team qualifications significantly influence project performance. Higher levels of education, relevant experience, and continuous professional development equip team members with the skills needed to handle complex project tasks. Investing in team qualifications is therefore critical for enhancing project outcomes.

Consultant capacity is a major determinant of project success. Adequate capacity, including skilled personnel, sufficient resources, and continuous training, directly contributes to better project performance. Enhancing consultant capacity ensures that projects are completed on time, within budget, and to the required quality standards.

Recommendations

KeNHA should prioritize continuous professional development by offering training programs, certifications, and educational opportunities for project team members. Encouraging team members to pursue advanced qualifications will enhance their skills and improve their ability to manage complex project tasks. Additionally, recruiting personnel with specialized skills and relevant experience should be a key focus in building qualified project teams.

KeNHA should enhance consultant capacity by ensuring adequate resource allocation and providing ongoing training opportunities. Increasing the number of skilled consultants engaged in projects and equipping them with the necessary tools and resources will improve project evaluation processes. KeNHA should also consider expanding its consultant pool to meet the demands of complex projects and maintain high performance standards.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Further studies could also examine the impact of external economic factors on the performance of public sector projects, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of project success.

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