



**PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE OF
COUNTY REFERRAL HOSPITALS IN METROPOLITAN COUNTIES IN KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The general objective of the study was to establish the influence of project monitoring and evaluation on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to establish the influence of M&E planning on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya, and to examine the effect of M&E reporting on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. This study used descriptive research design. The study therefore targeted 4 county referral hospitals including Mbagathi County Referral Hospital, Kiambu County Referral Hospital, Kajiado County Referral Hospital and Machakos County Referral Hospital (MOE, 2023). The senior project managers were selected because they handle the organization decisions and are therefore well conversant with the influence of project monitoring and evaluation on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. Therefore, the target population was 325 project managers in 4 county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. The study's sample size was reached at using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination formula. The study used simple random sampling to select 176 respondents. This study also used questionnaire to collect data relevant to this study. Quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques which are frequencies, mean, standard deviation. Inferential statistics which include Pearson correlation and the Regression Analysis Model were used to test the relationship between study variables. The significance of the model was tested at 5% level of significance. Data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The study results were presented through use of tables and figures. The study concludes that M&E planning has a positive and significant effect on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. The study also concludes that M&E reporting has a positive and significant effect on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the management of county referral hospitals in Kenya should implement a comprehensive M&E planning framework is essential for enhancing the performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya.

Key Words: Project Monitoring and Evaluation, M&E Planning, M&E Reporting, Performance, County Referral Hospitals, Metropolitan Counties

Background of the Study

County referral hospitals, often situated in intermediate administrative regions, serve as critical nodes in the healthcare system by providing specialized medical care and managing more complex cases that primary healthcare centers and smaller hospitals cannot handle. These institutions are designed to bridge the gap between primary health services and national referral hospitals, ensuring that patients receive the appropriate level of care based on their medical needs (Borisch, Amer & Jahaf, 2023). Historically, the performance of county referral hospitals has been a focal point in healthcare policy discussions due to their pivotal role in the healthcare delivery chain. These hospitals are tasked with not only treating patients but also with managing resources effectively, ensuring accessibility, and maintaining high standards of care. Evaluating their performance involves examining various aspects, including patient outcomes, resource utilization, staff competency, and infrastructure adequacy. Performance assessments often reveal insights into systemic issues such as staffing shortages, financial constraints, and logistical challenges, which can impact the quality of care and patient satisfaction (Saleem, Ilkhanizadeh & Na'ibi, 2022).

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on performance measurement and improvement in healthcare systems worldwide. For county referral hospitals, this has meant a focus on developing robust metrics and benchmarks to assess their operations. Studies often investigate key performance indicators such as patient wait times, treatment efficacy, infection rates, and patient safety. Additionally, there is growing attention to patient-centered care approaches, which prioritize the experiences and outcomes of patients receiving treatment. This comprehensive evaluation helps identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement, guiding policy makers and healthcare administrators in making informed decisions to enhance hospital performance (Jahaf, 2020).

Furthermore, the performance of county referral hospitals is influenced by a myriad of external factors, including regional healthcare policies, economic conditions, and community health needs. Understanding these variables and their impact on hospital operations is crucial for developing effective strategies to improve service delivery. By analyzing performance data and integrating feedback from patients and healthcare providers, stakeholders can address systemic issues and implement targeted interventions to optimize the functionality and effectiveness of these essential healthcare institutions (Abdul, Aedel & Hwang, 2022)

Statement of the Problem

County referral hospitals play a crucial role in the healthcare system of Kenya, particularly in Metropolitan Counties where they serve as vital hubs for specialized medical care. These hospitals are essential for managing complex cases and providing advanced treatments that primary health facilities are not equipped to handle (Njiru & Thorornjo, 2024). They act as the bridge between local healthcare providers and national referral hospitals, ensuring that patients receive appropriate care based on their medical needs. Their significance extends beyond just treating illnesses; they are pivotal in reducing the burden on national hospitals, improving overall healthcare accessibility, and enhancing health outcomes across the region. Effective operation of these hospitals is crucial for maintaining a functional and equitable healthcare system (Koima & Mukulu, 2020).

However, county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya face several challenges that affect their performance. Recent data indicates that these hospitals often experience high patient loads, inadequate staffing, and limited medical supplies. For instance, a report by the Kenya Health Sector Support Programme highlights that many county referral hospitals are operating at over 120% of their capacity, leading to increased wait times and reduced quality of care. Furthermore, financial constraints and administrative inefficiencies exacerbate these issues, resulting in suboptimal healthcare delivery. Statistics from the Ministry of Health reveal that over 40% of patients in metropolitan areas report dissatisfaction with the quality of services due to these operational challenges (Macharia & Bowa, 2020).

Project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) can significantly influence the performance of county referral hospitals by providing a structured approach to assess and enhance their operations. Effective M&E practices enable hospitals to track progress, identify areas of improvement, and implement evidence-based interventions. Through regular monitoring, hospitals can evaluate their resource utilization, patient care practices, and overall service delivery. Evaluation activities, such as performance audits and feedback mechanisms, help in pinpointing inefficiencies and developing targeted strategies to address them. By integrating M&E processes into hospital management, county referral hospitals can improve their operational efficiency, enhance patient satisfaction, and ultimately achieve better health outcomes. Thus, robust project monitoring and evaluation are instrumental in driving performance improvements and ensuring that these critical healthcare institutions function optimally (Machuka and Atambo (2021).

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to establish the influence of project monitoring and evaluation on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya

Specific Objectives

- i. To establish the influence of M&E planning on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya
- ii. To examine the effect of M&E reporting on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Change (ToC)

Theory of Change developed by Weiss in the 1990s is a strategic framework used to plan, participate in, and evaluate the impact of social programs or initiatives. At its core, it is a method for mapping out the pathway from an organization's activities to the desired long-term outcomes and impacts. The Theory of Change approach involves a detailed articulation of how and why a desired change is expected to happen, providing a comprehensive roadmap for achieving goals. The process begins with defining the long-term goals or impacts that an organization or initiative aims to achieve (Murorunkwere & Munene, 2022). These goals are typically broad and encompass the ultimate change that is sought in the community or field. Once these goals are established, the Theory of Change outlines the necessary preconditions or intermediate outcomes that need to be achieved to reach these long-term goals. This involves identifying the sequence of changes or steps that are anticipated to lead to the final impact. The framework also details the strategies and activities that will be employed to achieve these outcomes, linking them to specific indicators that will measure progress and success (Herman, 2023).

A crucial aspect of the Theory of Change is the articulation of assumptions and contextual factors that influence the success of the interventions. This includes assumptions about how change occurs, the environment in which the program operates, and potential external factors that could affect outcomes. By documenting these assumptions, the Theory of Change helps to clarify the logic behind the program's approach and provides a basis for adjusting strategies as needed (Mutsune & Ngugi, 2023). Additionally, the Theory of Change framework is designed to facilitate ongoing reflection and learning. It encourages stakeholders to continuously assess whether the program's activities and strategies are effectively leading to the desired outcomes. This iterative process helps organizations refine their approaches based on real-world feedback and evidence, enhancing the likelihood of achieving the intended impact (Wanjala, *et al*, 2020).

The Theory of Change (ToC) relies on several key assumptions that underpin its framework. One primary assumption is that change is both logical and predictable; it presupposes that a clear, rational pathway can be mapped out from activities to desired outcomes. This involves

the belief that well-defined interventions will lead to expected results if all preconditions are met. Another critical assumption is that the causal relationships identified in the ToC are valid and that the assumptions about how and why change occurs hold true. This means that stakeholders must believe that their proposed strategies and activities will indeed lead to the anticipated intermediate outcomes and long-term impacts (Wambua & James, 2020). Additionally, the Theory of Change assumes that the external environment, including political, economic, and social factors, will not drastically alter the planned course of action. It also assumes that the indicators chosen for measuring progress are accurate and reflective of the changes being sought. By documenting these assumptions, the Theory of Change aims to clarify the logic behind interventions and set expectations for the program's impact (Murorunkwere & Munene, 2022).

Despite its utility, the Theory of Change faces several critiques that question its effectiveness and applicability. One significant critique is that the framework can be overly idealistic, relying on a linear and often simplistic view of how change occurs. Critics argue that this linearity fails to account for the complex, non-linear nature of real-world change processes, where multiple factors and feedback loops can influence outcomes unpredictably. Another issue is the potential for the Theory of Change to be too rigid, with its detailed planning sometimes leading to inflexibility. This rigidity can hinder an organization's ability to adapt to emerging challenges or opportunities that were not anticipated in the initial planning phase (Herman, 2023). Additionally, the process of developing a Theory of Change can be time-consuming and resource-intensive, which may not be feasible for all organizations, especially smaller ones with limited capacity. There is also the concern that the assumptions underlying the Theory of Change may not always hold true, leading to misaligned strategies or unrealistic expectations. Finally, the effectiveness of the Theory of Change heavily depends on the quality of stakeholder engagement and the accuracy of the causal links and assumptions made. If these elements are flawed, the framework may not provide the intended clarity or guidance, potentially compromising the program's impact (Mutsune & Ngugi, 2023). This theory was relevant in establishing the influence of M&E planning on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya.

Communication Theory

Communication Theory developed by Claude Shannon (1948) encompasses a broad range of concepts and frameworks aimed at understanding how information is conveyed, received, and interpreted between individuals or groups. At its core, Communication Theory seeks to explain the processes of encoding, transmitting, and decoding messages within various contexts, including interpersonal, group, organizational, and mass communication. The field integrates insights from psychology, sociology, linguistics, and media studies to analyze and improve the effectiveness of communication (Chukwudu, *et al*, 2022). One fundamental aspect of Communication Theory is the study of the communication process itself, which involves several key components: the sender (or encoder), the message, the medium (or channel), the receiver (or decoder), and the feedback. The theory explores how these elements interact to facilitate or hinder understanding. For instance, Shannon and Weaver's Transmission Model of Communication, one of the earliest and most influential frameworks, describes communication as a linear process where a message is sent from a sender to a receiver through a channel, with potential noise disrupting the message. This model emphasizes the technical aspects of communication, such as signal clarity and transmission efficiency (Anyembe & Yusuf, 2022).

Another critical component of Communication Theory is the examination of how context influences communication. This includes understanding the role of social, cultural, and situational factors in shaping how messages are created and interpreted. For example, the Interactional Model of Communication highlights the dynamic and reciprocal nature of communication, where both parties are actively involved in encoding and decoding messages, and context plays a crucial role in shaping meaning. The model underscores the importance of

feedback and adjustment in ongoing communication processes (Mursal, 2024). Additionally, Communication Theory explores the impact of communication on relationships and organizational effectiveness. Theories such as Social Penetration Theory and Uncertainty Reduction Theory focus on how interpersonal relationships develop and how individuals manage uncertainty in their interactions. In organizational contexts, theories like the Communication Accommodation Theory examine how individuals adjust their communication styles to fit with others, aiming to improve group cohesion and effectiveness (Mwangi & Moronge, 2020).

Communication Theory also addresses the influence of mass media and digital communication. Theories such as the Agenda-Setting Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory analyze how media content shapes public perception and how individuals use media to fulfill their needs. With the rise of digital platforms, Communication Theory increasingly examines the complexities of online interactions, including issues of digital literacy, information overload, and the impact of social media on personal and public discourse (Ngochi, Mbugua & Thion'o, 2020).

Communication Theory is grounded in several foundational assumptions that guide its analysis and application. One primary assumption is that communication is a fundamental and intentional process through which individuals and groups exchange information. This view presupposes that communicators have clear intentions and purposes when sending and receiving messages. Another key assumption is that communication involves a sender, a message, a medium, and a receiver, and that effective communication depends on the successful transmission and understanding of the message. This model assumes that if these components function optimally, mutual understanding and effective information exchange will occur (Chukwudu, *et al*, 2022). Additionally, Communication Theory assumes that meaning is constructed through the interaction between communicators and is influenced by contextual factors such as cultural, social, and situational variables. This implies that communication is not just about the content of the message but also about how it is interpreted within its specific context. Furthermore, many communication theories operate under the assumption that feedback plays a crucial role in the communication process, allowing for adjustments and improvements in understanding and interaction (Anyembe & Yusuf, 2022).

Despite its broad applicability, Communication Theory faces several critiques that highlight its limitations and challenges. One critique is that some traditional communication models, such as Shannon and Weaver's Transmission Model, can be overly simplistic and linear, failing to capture the complexities and nuances of real-world communication. These models may not fully account for the interactive and dynamic nature of communication, where meanings are negotiated and continuously evolving (Mursal, 2024). Another issue is that Communication Theory sometimes assumes a level of rationality and clarity in communication that may not always exist. In reality, messages can be ambiguous, misunderstood, or distorted by various factors such as emotional states, biases, or noise. Additionally, the emphasis on context and interpretation in Communication Theory can lead to difficulties in establishing universal principles or standards for effective communication. This contextual variability can make it challenging to apply theoretical insights consistently across different settings (Mwangi & Moronge, 2020).

Furthermore, with the advent of digital and social media, traditional communication theories may struggle to address the complexities of online interactions, such as the impact of anonymity, the spread of misinformation, and the influence of algorithms on communication patterns. As communication technologies and practices evolve, there is an ongoing need for theories that can adapt to and address these new dynamics effectively (Ngochi, Mbugua & Thion'o, 2020). Lastly, critics argue that Communication Theory sometimes overlooks power dynamics and social inequalities that affect communication processes. For instance, dominant voices and perspectives might shape the flow of information in ways that marginalize less powerful groups, an issue that traditional theories may not fully address (Chukwudu, *et al*,

2022). This theory was relevant in examining the effect of M&E reporting on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is an assumed model that aids in the identification of study concepts as well as their interactions with one another (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). The independent variables M&E planning and M&E reporting while the dependent variable was performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya.

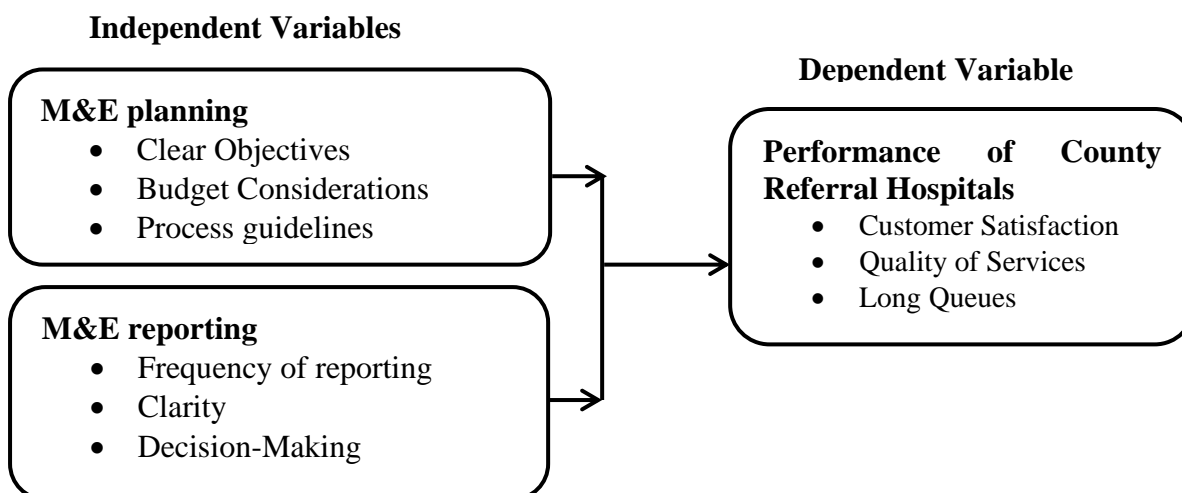


Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework

M&E Planning

M&E Planning refers to the process of designing and organizing the framework and activities necessary for effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of a project, program, or intervention. It involves establishing a systematic approach to tracking progress, measuring outcomes, and assessing the overall impact to ensure that objectives are met and resources are used efficiently (Wanjala, *et al*, 2020). Clear objectives are fundamental to effective M&E planning, as they define what a project or program aims to achieve and provide a roadmap for evaluating progress. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART), ensuring that they are well-defined and can be accurately assessed. Clear objectives allow for the development of precise indicators that measure progress toward achieving these goals. For example, if a health program aims to reduce malnutrition in children, a clear objective might be to “decrease the incidence of malnutrition among children under five within two years.” This objective provides a concrete target and timeframe, facilitating the design of appropriate monitoring and evaluation activities. By setting clear objectives, stakeholders can align their efforts, track progress effectively, and make informed decisions based on the results (Wambua & James, 2020).

Budget considerations are crucial in M&E planning as they determine the resources available for monitoring and evaluation activities. An adequately funded M&E plan ensures that there are sufficient resources for data collection, analysis, reporting, and any necessary adjustments. Budgeting involves estimating costs for various M&E components, including personnel, data collection tools, software, and training. For instance, allocating funds for hiring skilled M&E staff and investing in reliable data management systems can significantly impact the quality and effectiveness of the evaluation. Additionally, budget considerations should account for contingencies and potential unforeseen expenses, such as extended data collection periods or additional training needs. Proper budgeting helps ensure that M&E activities are not only feasible but also sustainable, allowing for comprehensive and ongoing assessment throughout the project lifecycle (Murorunkwere & Munene, 2022).

Process guidelines provide a structured approach to conducting M&E activities, ensuring consistency, reliability, and transparency. These guidelines outline the steps and procedures to

be followed, from designing the M&E framework to reporting results. They typically include detailed instructions on data collection methods, data management practices, and analysis techniques. For example, process guidelines might specify how to conduct surveys, how to ensure data quality and integrity, and how to handle data entry and storage. Additionally, guidelines often include protocols for ethical considerations, such as obtaining informed consent and maintaining confidentiality. Establishing clear process guidelines helps standardize M&E practices, making it easier to compare results, replicate methods, and adhere to best practices. This structured approach also facilitates effective communication among team members and stakeholders, contributing to a more organized and efficient evaluation process (Herman, 2023).

M&E Reporting

M&E Reporting refers to the process of documenting, analyzing, and communicating the results of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities to stakeholders. This process involves summarizing data collected through monitoring and evaluation efforts, assessing progress toward objectives, and providing insights into the effectiveness and impact of a project or program. M&E reporting serves several key purposes: it informs stakeholders about the outcomes and impacts of the project, supports decision-making and strategic planning, and ensures transparency and accountability (Anyembe & Yusuf, 2022).

The frequency of reporting in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a crucial factor that influences the effectiveness of the reporting process. It refers to how often M&E reports are generated and shared with stakeholders. The timing of reports can vary based on the needs of the project, the requirements of funders, and the preferences of other stakeholders. Regular reporting, such as quarterly or annual reports, allows for ongoing tracking of progress and timely updates on the project's status. This frequent communication helps in identifying issues early and making necessary adjustments to ensure that objectives are met. Conversely, less frequent reporting might lead to delayed identification of problems or missed opportunities for improvement. The frequency of reporting should strike a balance between providing sufficient updates to stakeholders and avoiding excessive documentation that might overwhelm or detract from the focus on actionable insights (Mursal, 2024).

Clarity is essential in M&E reporting as it ensures that the information presented is easily understood by all stakeholders. Clear reporting involves using straightforward language, well-organized structures, and effective data visualization techniques to convey complex information. Reports should avoid jargon and technical terms that may not be familiar to all readers, and instead present findings in a way that is accessible and comprehensible. This includes clearly defining indicators, explaining methodologies, and summarizing key results and their implications. The goal is to ensure that stakeholders, regardless of their background or expertise, can grasp the main points of the report, understand the outcomes, and make informed decisions based on the information provided. Clear reporting not only enhances transparency but also builds trust with stakeholders by providing them with reliable and understandable insights into the project's performance (Mwangi & Moronge, 2020).

Effective M&E reporting plays a pivotal role in decision-making by providing stakeholders with the necessary information to assess the progress and impact of a project or program. Decision-making is often contingent on the insights derived from M&E reports, which highlight achievements, identify challenges, and recommend actions for improvement. Well-structured reports offer evidence-based conclusions and actionable recommendations that guide strategic planning and operational adjustments. For instance, if a report reveals that certain interventions are not achieving the desired outcomes, decision-makers can use this information to recalibrate strategies or allocate resources differently. The quality of decision-making depends on the accuracy, relevance, and timeliness of the information presented in the reports. Therefore, M&E reporting must be designed to support informed decision-making by delivering clear, concise, and actionable insights that help stakeholders understand performance and make data-driven choices (Ngochi, Mbugua & Thion'o, 2020).

Empirical Review

M&E Planning and Organization Performance

Murorunkwere and Munene (2022) conducted a study on monitoring and evaluation planning and Performance of Non-Governmental Organization Projects in Rwanda: A Case of Care International Village Savings and Loan Associations Project. The research design that was used is descriptive. The targeted population was 157 composed by staff of Care International staff working with Village Saving and Loan Association and beneficiaries from five saving groups of Rulindo District Village Saving and Loan Association. A sample size of 113 respondents was sampled using simple random sampling. The study found that monitoring and evaluation planning have an important impact on the performance of Care International VSLA projects in Rwanda. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation planning affects the performance of NGOs in Rwanda, especially for Care International Village Saving and Loan Association projects.

Herman (2023) investigated on the factors influencing monitoring and evaluation planning on the performance of water supply projects in Dodoma City Council. A descriptive research design and a mixed method approach, both qualitative and quantitative, were used to collect and analyze data from 170 respondents, determined by the Yamane formula. The study found that monitoring and evaluation planning significantly affected water supply projects performance. The study concluded that Dodoma City Council, Dodoma Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Authority, and Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Authority Dodoma, provide adequate support for monitoring and evaluation practices in order to effectively increase efficiency in water supply project performance.

Mutsune and Ngugi (2023) assessed on 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. The study found that M&E planning had a positive and significant relationship. The study concluded that M&E planning had a positive significant influence on project implementation.

Wanjala, *et al* (2020) researched on the influence of monitoring and evaluation planning practices on projects performance of Kenyan State Corporations. Mixed research design was adopted and a target population of 187 state corporations was used. Simple random sampling were used to select 65 state corporations who forms the sample size. The study found that monitoring and evaluation planning had negative significant effect project performance in Kenyan State Corporations. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation planning has a negative and significant relationship with project performance.

Wambua and James (2020) examined on monitoring and evaluation planning and performance of county funded education projects in Makueni County, Kenya. The research design used is descriptive survey. The study targeted 31 county funded education projects in Makueni County. The study found a positive relationship between M&E plan and project performance. The study concluded that M&E plan had significant influence on performance of county funded education projects.

M&E Reporting and Organization Performance

Chukwudu, *et al* (2022) examined on the impact of monitoring and evaluation reporting on employee productivity. The study adopted the survey research design. The population of the study consists of all employees who are engaged in the operations of the three main mobile service providers in Lagos state which was a total of 359. The sample size of 359 was arrived at using a census approach. The study found that the relationship between monitoring and evaluation reporting on employees' productivity is significant. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation reporting has an effect on employee productivity.

Anyembe and Yusuf (2022) assessed on monitoring and evaluation reporting on performance of non-governmental organizations: a case of Trocaire Somalia. The study used a mix expo facto and survey design. The target population included the entire staff of Trocaire in the regional office and frontline workers (208) where a sample of 103 respondents was used. The study found that monitoring and evaluation reporting has a positive and significant influence on organization performance. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation reporting leads to improvement in organization performance.

Mursal (2024) investigated on the influence of M&E reporting on performance of non-government organizations funded projects in Wajir County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design using a mixed-method approach to collect information-rich data from the research participants. The target population consisted of the twenty-five projects operated by five active NGOs in Wajir County. The study found that M&E reporting has a positive influence on the performance of projects. The study concluded that M&E reporting influence performance of non-government organizations funded projects.

Mwangi and Moronge (2020) conducted a study on the influence of monitoring and evaluation reporting on performance of World Bank funded projects in Nairobi City County, Kenya. This study used a descriptive research design. The target population of this study was 51 World Bank projects in Nairobi County. The study found that there was significant relationship between monitoring and evaluation reporting and performance of projects. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation reporting has a positive and significant effect on performance of world banks in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Ngochi, Mbugua and Thion'o (2020) researched on an analysis of the influence of monitoring and evaluation reporting on projects performance among selected constituency development fund projects in Kirinyaga County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The targeted population was 180 respondents. The study found that monitoring and evaluation reporting has a great and direct influence on performance of CDF projects. The study found that monitoring and evaluation reporting affect the performance of a project.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive research design which involved gathering of data that describes events then organizing, tabulating depicting and describing the data. This study was conducted in county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. Metropolitan counties include; Nairobi City County, Kiambu County, Kajiado county and Machakos County. The study therefore targeted 4 county referral hospitals including Mbagathi County Referral Hospital, Kiambu County Referral Hospital, Kajiado County Referral Hospital and Machakos County Referral Hospital (MOE, 2023). The senior project managers were selected because they handle the organization decisions and are therefore well conversant with the influence of project monitoring and evaluation on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. Therefore, the target population was 325 project managers in 4 county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. The study's sample size was reached at using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination formula (Russell, 2019). Therefore, using the formula, the sample size for the study was 176 respondents. The respondents were chosen with the help of simple random sampling technique.

This research used a questionnaire to collect primary data. This study gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data analyzed by use of content analysis. Quantitative data was coded then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software version 28. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data in frequency distributions and percentages which were presented in tables and figures. The study also adopted multiple regression analysis to test the relationships between the variables.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The researcher sampled 176 respondents who were each administered with the questionnaires. From the 176 questionnaires 156 were completely filled and returned hence a response rate of 88.6%. The response rate was considered as suitable for making inferences from the data collected. As indicated by Metsamuuronen (2019), a response rate that is above fifty percent is considered adequate for data analysis and reporting while a response rate that is above 70% is classified as excellent. Hence, the response rate of this study was within the acceptable limits for drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

Descriptive Statistics

M&E Planning and Organization Performance

The first specific objective of the study was to establish the influence of M&E planning on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on the statements relating to M&E planning and performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. The results were as shown in Table 1.

From the results, the respondents agreed that objectives are regularly updated as project goals change (M=3.902, SD= 0.897). In addition, the respondents agreed that project goals and M&E objectives are clearly linked (M=3.884, SD= 0.731). Further, the respondents agreed that all stakeholders understand the M&E objectives (M=3.843, SD= 0.763). The respondents also agreed that there are provisions for unexpected M&E costs (M=3.816, SD=0.641). In addition, the respondents agreed that M&E expenditures are tracked and managed within budget (M=3.736, SD= 0.675). The respondents agreed that additional M&E expenses are justified and approved (M=3.721, SD=0.866). The respondents also agreed that M&E process guidelines for data collection and reporting are detailed (M=3.688, SD=0.741). In addition, the respondents agreed that data quality and integrity procedures are in place (M=3.644, SD=0.888).

Table 1: M&E Planning and Organization Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Objectives are regularly updated as project goals change.	3.902	0.897
Project goals and M&E objectives are clearly linked.	3.884	0.731
All stakeholders understand the M&E objectives.	3.843	0.763
There are provisions for unexpected M&E costs.	3.816	0.641
M&E expenditures are tracked and managed within budget.	3.736	0.675
Additional M&E expenses are justified and approved	3.721	0.866
M&E process guidelines for data collection and reporting are detailed.	3.688	0.741
Data quality and integrity procedures are in place.	3.644	0.888
Aggregate	3.779	0.775

M&E Reporting and Organization Performance

The two specific objective of the study was to examine the effect of M&E reporting on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to M&E reporting and performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. The results were as presented in Table 2.

From the results, the respondents agreed that M&E reports are delivered according to the agreed-upon schedule (M=3.931, SD= 0.891). In addition, the respondents agreed that reports

are provided at regular intervals as required by stakeholders (M=3.855, SD= 0.857). Further, the respondents agreed that the frequency of reporting meets the needs of the project and stakeholders (M=3.720, SD= 0.714). The respondents also agreed that M&E reports are written in a clear and understandable manner (M=3.685, SD= 0.677). Further, the respondents agreed that key findings and recommendations are prominently highlighted in reports (M=3.678, SD= 0.656). The respondents agreed that reports use straightforward language and avoid jargon (M=3.658, SD=0.759). In addition, the respondents agreed that M&E reports provide actionable insights for decision-making (M=3.649, SD=0.898). Further, the respondents agreed that stakeholders are involved in interpreting M&E findings and making decisions (M=3.622, SD=0.779).

Table 2: M&E Reporting and Organization Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
M&E reports are delivered according to the agreed-upon schedule.	3.931	0.891
Reports are provided at regular intervals as required by stakeholders.	3.855	0.857
The frequency of reporting meets the needs of the project and stakeholders.	3.720	0.714
M&E reports are written in a clear and understandable manner.	3.685	0.677
Key findings and recommendations are prominently highlighted in reports.	3.678	0.656
Reports use straightforward language and avoid jargon	3.658	0.759
M&E reports provide actionable insights for decision-making.	3.649	0.898
Stakeholders are involved in interpreting M&E findings and making decisions	3.622	0.779
Aggregate	3.725	0.779

Organization Performance

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. The results were as presented in Table 3.

From the results, the respondents agreed that patients are generally satisfied with the care they receive at the hospital (M=3.882, SD=0.876). In addition, the respondents agreed that the hospital staff is responsive to patient needs and concerns (M=3.876, SD=0.897). Further, the respondents agreed that patients feel that they are treated with respect and dignity (M=3.872, SD=0.784). The respondents also agreed that the hospital provides high-quality medical care and treatment (M=3.869, SD=0.698).

The respondents agreed that diagnostic and treatment services are accurate and reliable (M=3.854, SD=0.653). In addition, the respondents agreed that the hospital maintains a clean and safe environment for patients (M=3.765, SD=0.789). The respondents also agreed that patients experience acceptable wait times for appointments and services (M=3.742, SD=0.783). Further, the respondents agreed that the hospital has effective measures to manage patient queues and reduce wait times (M=3.722, SD=0.687).

Table 3: Organization Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Patients are generally satisfied with the care they receive at the hospital.	3.882	0.876
The hospital staff is responsive to patient needs and concerns.	3.876	0.897
Patients feel that they are treated with respect and dignity.	3.872	0.784
The hospital provides high-quality medical care and treatment.	3.869	0.698
Diagnostic and treatment services are accurate and reliable.	3.854	0.653
The hospital maintains a clean and safe environment for patients.	3.765	0.789
Patients experience acceptable wait times for appointments and services.	3.742	0.783
The hospital has effective measures to manage patient queues and reduce wait times.	3.722	0.687
Aggregate	3.823	0.771

Correlation Analysis

The present study used Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength of association between independent variables (M&E planning, and M&E reporting) and the dependent variable (performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya). Pearson correlation coefficient range between zero and one, where by the strength of association increase with increase in the value of the correlation coefficients.

Table 4: Correlation Coefficients

		Organization Performance	M&E Planning	M&E Reporting
Organization Performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	156		
M&E Planning	Pearson Correlation	.827**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003		
	N	156	156	
M&E Reporting	Pearson Correlation	.895**	.119	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.067	
	N	156	156	156

Moreover, the results revealed that there is a very strong relationship between M&E planning and performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya ($r = 0.827$, p value =0.003). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.003 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings conform to the findings of Murorunkwere and Munene (2022) that there is a very strong relationship between M&E planning and organization performance.

The results also revealed that there was a very strong relationship between M&E reporting and performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya ($r = 0.895$, p value =0.000). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.000 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the results of Anyembe and Yusuf (2022) who revealed that there is a very strong relationship between M&E reporting and organization performance.

Regression Analysis

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	0.202	0.055		3.673	0.003
	M&E planning	0.481	0.123	0.480	3.911	0.003
	M&E reporting	0.425	0.107	0.424	3.972	0.001

The regression model was as follows:

$$Y = 0.202 + 0.481X_1 + 0.425X_2 + \varepsilon$$

The results also revealed that M&E planning has significant effect on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya, $\beta_1=0.481$, p value= 0.003). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.003 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings conform to the findings of Murorunkwere and Munene (2022) that there is a very strong relationship between M&E planning and organization performance.

In addition, the results revealed that M&E reporting has significant effect on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya $\beta_1=0.425$, p value= 0.001). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.001 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the results of Anyembe and Yusuf (2022) who revealed that there is a very strong relationship between M&E reporting and organization performance.

Conclusions

the study concludes that M&E planning has a positive and significant effect on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. Findings revealed that clear objectives, budget considerations and process guidelines influence performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya.

The study also concludes that M&E reporting has a positive and significant effect on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. Findings revealed that frequency of reporting, clarity and decision-making influences performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya.

Recommendations

the study recommends that the management of county referral hospitals in Kenya should implement a comprehensive M&E planning framework is essential for enhancing the performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. This framework should include clear objectives, key performance indicators, and regular evaluation timelines tailored to the specific needs of the hospitals. By establishing a systematic approach to monitoring progress and outcomes, hospital management can identify strengths and areas for improvement more effectively.

The study also recommends that the management of county referral hospitals in Kenya should establish a robust M&E reporting system that ensures timely and transparent communication of health data. Regular and structured reporting allows hospital management to track progress against established benchmarks, identify areas needing attention, and celebrate successes. By fostering a culture of transparency, where findings from M&E reports are shared with all stakeholders hospitals can encourage collaborative problem-solving and innovation

Suggestions for Further Studies

This study was limited to the influence of project monitoring and evaluation on performance of county referral hospitals in Metropolitan Counties in Kenya hence the study findings cannot be generalized to performance of private hospitals in Kenya. The study therefore suggests further studies on the influence of project monitoring and evaluation on performance of private hospitals in Kenya.

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