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DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN PUBLIC SECTOR PROJECTS IN NAIROBI COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

The goal of the study was to identify the factors that contribute to efficient monitoring and assessment of public sector initiatives in Nairobi County. The impact of budgetary allocation for M&E on the execution of public sector projects in Nairobi County the impact of technical project team competence in M&E on the execution of public sector projects in Nairobi County. The theoretical review featured the resource-based theory and the competence-based theory of the firm. This study adopted a descriptive research design since it will be focused on describing the characteristics of the participants involved in the study. It focused on 150 staff working within five public sector projects in Nairobi County. The study applied the questionnaire method of data collection due to the benefit of inclusion of more extensive enquiries and the convenience of getting responses from individuals who were not easily accessible due to busy working schedules. The respondents were given a period of 14 days to complete the questionnaires before collection and there was a drop and pick arrangement of the same. This study data was coded in a form that is more easily understood by applying a 5-point Likert Scale. It then used SPSS (version 20) to conduct regression analysis, descriptive data analysis using measures of central tendency such as standard deviation and mean, and inferential statistics including Pearson Correlation coefficients analysis and regression analysis. The presentation of the results was then done using a combination of graphs and tables.

Key Words: Monitoring and Evaluation, Budgetary Allocation, Execution of Public Sector Projects, Technical Project Team Competence, Stakeholder Involvement, Quality of M&E Data

Background of the Study

The management of projects is a difficult undertaking given the time, cost and quality constraints involved. This is particularly so for projects within the public sector since they attract more political interest and are typically wider in scope. One of the increasingly important determinants of the successful implementation of projects is monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Monitoring is defined as the continuing process applied by stakeholders to get frequent feedback on the progress towards the attainment of their goals and objectives; while evaluation refers to the thorough and independent assessment of finished or continuing activities so as to establish how effectively they are attaining stated objectives and acting as the basis for more informed decision making (Menon, Karl & Wignaraja, 2009).

According to Masuku and Ijeoma (2015), M&E, like many other disciplines, has been evolving over the years in keeping with growing pressures stemming from increasing globalization that has compelled public institutions in the developing world to be more responsive to stakeholder demands. Indeed, the introduction of international experiences into public sector administration in African countries has challenged practitioners to revise their perspectives on problem solving through the integration of modernist M&E approaches. Kabeyi (2019) added that the evolution of M&E has seen it being integrated into project management by aligning it with results based management, promoting an evaluation and learning environment within institutions, supporting internal and external project accountability, capacity building, and promoting beneficiary and stakeholder empowerment.

M&E has ushered in a greater emphasis by public institutions on the enhancement of the governance function by focusing on a more holistic coverage of the entire management, operating systems and culture when working in tandem with the prevailing auditing system. Thus, M&E plays an oversight role in public sector institutions where it can be aligned to the accounting function along with the compliance and performance management field (Ojok & Basheka, 2016). Additionally, public sector M&E has led to the introduction of evidence-based policy making, performance-based budgeting, and results-based management of projects since it has facilitated continuous feedback to the project team thereby providing for public budget resource allocation decisions and timely identification of mistakes (Govender & Hlatshwayo, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

The public sector in Kenya plays a pivotal role in the economy and dominates a number of sectors such as construction where the value of construction work done in 2017 was 67.1% of the total KSh. 437.9 Billion compared with 32.53% for the private sector and 0.37% for foreign contracts. The level of employment in the Kenyan public sector stood at 865,233 as of 30 June 2019 representing a growth of 3% from 2018 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). This indicates that the public sector handles many high value projects that require the best possible project management in order for them to be implemented effectively. Thus, in order to ensure this ideal, the Government of Kenya (GoK) came up with the County Allocation of Revenue Bill in 2019 which sought to apportion at least 5% of all development budgets, both at national and county levels, for M&E (GoK, 2019).

In a study on the factors influencing effective M&E of projects in Machakos County, Kenya, Kioko (2017) determined that whilst the importance of budgetary allocation for effective M&E has been well acknowledged, the County Government has not been able to meet the recommended 5-10% budget allocation threshold due to other competing priorities and political interference. Additionally, Kithinji, Gakuu and Kodombo (2017) found that some public institutions fail to adequately provide budgetary allocations for M&E choosing only to set provide for monitoring leaving out evaluation thereby making them susceptible to failure since

they are not privy to lessons that would have been learned from evaluations.

The effectiveness of M&E in many public sector projects is further undermined by low-level involvement of stakeholders due to a lack of clarity in the communication of the project objectives as well as the illiteracy of a significant portion of the beneficiary communities. Thus, these stakeholders are unable to take full ownership of the projects and incorporate their needs into the implementation of the projects (Karimi, Mulwa & Kialo, 2020). According to Nyakundi (2014), the effectiveness of M&E in public sector projects in Nairobi has been hampered by the lack of champions and advocates to sustain the commitment of organization thereby limiting the investment by such organizations in staff training in M&E and resulting in lack of adequate technical capacity to carry out M&E. Kihuha (2018) added that there is a scarcity of technical M&E professionals in the job market in many African countries, Kenya included, and this has limited the ability of public sector organizations to recruit qualified personnel apply appropriate M&E competencies in the implementation of their projects.

M&E systems rely on a wide variety of data to enable the effective tracking of project implementation progress for more informed decision making, however, most of the systems used by public sector institutions produce data that are incomplete, inaccurate and delayed due capacity constraints that have prevented the application of more stringent and systematic data quality assurance procedures (MEASURE Evaluation, 2017). In fact, many developing countries have been unable to ensure regular assessment of their data collection and analysis systems despite the allocation of resources for conducting such assessments thereby leading to the inability of these systems to provide sufficiently complete, accurate and timely information (Ndegwa, 2015).

This study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by addressing gaps in research such as Wanjiru (2013) who focused on the effectiveness of M&E in NGOs rather than public sector institutions; Kiboi, Kilonzo and Iravo (2018) who limited their study to determinants of M&E in health service delivery while this study is conducting a more holistic investigation; and Njama (2015) who focused on determinants of effective M&E in WASH projects in Amref.

Research Objectives

General Objective

To find out the determinants of effective monitoring and evaluation in public sector projects in Nairobi County.

Specific Objectives

i. The influence of budgetary allocation for M&E on the implementation of public sector projects in Nairobi County.
ii. The influence of stakeholder involvement in M&E on the implementation of public sector projects in Nairobi County.
iii. The influence of technical project team competence in M&E on the implementation of public sector projects in Nairobi County.
iv. The influence of Quality of M&E Data on the implementation of public sector projects in Nairobi County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Resource Based Theory

The Resource Based Theory (RBT), which was advanced by Barney (1991), supposes that in order for an organisation to attain sustained competitive advantage, it needs to ensure the possession and control of unique, prized, incomparable and non-substitutable resources and

capabilities (Kraaijenbrink, Spender & Groen, 2010). Indeed, through the identification and application of such resources and capabilities, an organisation can use them as a source of superior performance that then leads to higher profits than their competitors (Madhani, 2010). In other words, the RBT examines the organization's internal resource capabilities as a source of strategic advantage when competing with other organizations in the outside market environment.

According to Theriou, Aggelidia and Theriou (2009), the ability of an organization's underlying resources and capabilities to generate rent is the critical determinant of its ability to establish and maintain strategic advantages. This is only made possible by the existing resource differences between organisations, competitive imperfections in the strategic factor markets, different expectations, as well as information asymmetries. Kozlenkova, Samaha and Palmatier (2014) posited that the RBT makes two key assumptions, namely, the firms must have in their possession different bundles of resources regardless of whether they operate within the same industry; and the persistence of these resource differences is enabled by challenges experienced by firms in trading resources amongst each other thereby leading to the durability of associated benefits over time (this is referred to as the resource immobility assumption). Implicit in the first assumption, also known as the resource heterogeneity assumption, is the idea that some organisations have superior competencies in the accomplishment of certain tasks owing to their inimitable resources.

This theory is consistent with independent variable one (budgetary allocation for M&E) since the allocation of budgets is primarily concerned with resources, and given that the RBT deals with the identification of resources that will enable the attainment of competitive advantages that the two are consistent. The theory is also aligned with the dependent variable (implementation of public sector projects) because the ultimate objective of the RBT is outperforming rivals, and one measure of this is through the successful implementation of projects.

Stakeholder Management Theory

The Stakeholder Management Theory was originated by Freeman in 1984 when he suggested that organizations comprise a collection of relationships between the business, groups and individuals, and, as such, the success of an organisation is founded on how well it understands and manages the various relationships that exist amongst those that have a stake in the activities of the organisation including consumers, venders, employees, financiers, communities and the top management (Parmar, Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Purnell & De Colle, 2010). Proponents of the theory argue that, without exception, individuals and groups with an a bona fide interest in the organisation draw their motivation to participate from the anticipated benefits that will accrue to them, additionally no single individual's or group's interest or benefit supersedes another's (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

According to Harrison, Bosse and Phillips (2010), the degree to which an organisation prioritises the needs and demands of a broad spectrum of stakeholders through the allocation of value for their satisfaction beyond what may be deemed to be appropriate is a controversial issue. In fact, there are organisations that engage in what is referred to as 'managing for stakeholders' by allocating both decision making and value broadly across their networks of stakeholders. Ademola (2014) contended that given the usually divergent and partially conflicting interests of different sets of stakeholders, keeping most of them happy is a delicate balancing act that calls for optimising rather than maximising of each group's needs through a systematic process of compromise in the allocation of resources by the organisation.

This theory is aligned with the independent variable two (stakeholder involvement) since it is only through proper management of stakeholders than the stakeholders can be involved in projects effectively. Given that the management of stakeholders seeks to ensure the accrual of

synergies to the organisation so as to enhance the attainment of project objectives, then it follows that the theory is also consistent with the dependent variable (implementation of public sector projects).

Competence-based Theory of the Firm

Freiling (2004) posited that the competence theory, which was advanced by Hamel and Prahalad (1994), sought to explain performance differences among organisations by stating that superior performance stemmed from the ability by an organisation to utilise the available resource more effectively or efficiently than its competitors. In other words, the availability of action-related competences are the precursors to more efficient or effective utilisation of both homogeneous and heterogeneous resources through greater adaptation of the resources to the requirements of the target market. Kállay (2012) affirmed that the Competency-based Theory of the firm focuses on the ability of a firm to identify and exploit and grow its potential for production. Indeed, this ability, which is the combined competences of the individuals in the firm, is valuable owing to its scarcity, and is not transferrable since it can only be accessed through 'learning-by-doing'. It is, therefore, the source of an organisation's implicit knowledge.

According to Eden and Ackermann (2010), the lack of clarity by the RBT regarding the constitutionality of resources compelled the development of a more concise approach, the competence based management (CBM), that stipulated that superior strategic performance is a natural consequence of the identification of a unique pattern of competences that are drawn from the analysis of the existing network of relationships between the organisational objectives and the identified competences. Freiling, Gersch and Goeke (2008) argued that firms represent unique opportunities for the transfer of tacit knowledge through training-on-the-job from those who possess the distinct competences to those in need of the same so that this can be used to enhance productivity and act as a source of strategic performance. This is an attribute that is not available for markets owing to the lack of enabling incentive structures given the costliness of the knowledge transfer process.

This theory is in agreement with independent variable three (technical project team competence) since they are both focused on one common aspect, competences, and how these can be used to enhance the utilisation of resources. Additionally, the theory is in agreement with the dependent variable (implementation of public sector projects) since the incorporation of appropriate competences will ultimately lead to the improvement of the implementation of projects.

Theory of Change (ToC)

The Theory of Change (ToC), which was popularised by Weiss (1995), is described as a framework that provides a mechanism for explaining the manner and reason for the implementation of an initiative (Weiss, 2018). The ToC may also be referred to as systematic and cumulative investigations of the associations that exist between activities, outcomes and contexts of a given intervention (Connell & Kubisch, 1998). ToC is also defined as a focused model of initiatives such as projects, programs, strategies or policies make contributions through initial and transitional outcomes to the anticipated results (Serrat, 2017).

Weiss (2018) identified three key reasons for basing interventions on good theories of change. Firstly, an appropriate ToC can enhance the focus of the planning and implementation of initiative by ensuring clarity in the specification of the initiative's outcomes to stakeholders, the identification and implementation of the associated activities as well as the contextual aspects. Secondly, it facilitates the measurement and data collection aspects of the evaluation process by demanding increased clarity by participants on the resultant outcomes and anticipated impacts as well as the means through which they will be accomplished. Thirdly, it

establishes from the start the scientific case for associating the subsequent change to the identified outcomes, thereby getting the necessary buy-in by the stakeholders. Bours, McGinn and Pringle (2014) maintained that the ToC facilitates the process through which stakeholders can incorporate an intervention into abroader strategy and transformative analysis in a flexible and practical manner through clearer description of a vision of meaningful social change, and the ultimate steps needed to accomplish the vision.

This theory is consistent with the independent variable four (quality of M&E data) given that through the enhancement of the quality of M&E data, organizations are able to gain a better understanding of the linkage between activities, outcomes and contexts of a given M&E intervention on account of the accuracy of the data available which is the main concern of the ToC. Further, the theory is consistent with the dependent variable (implementation of public sector projects) since the ToC is concerned with outcomes, and successful project implementation is an outcome.

Conceptual Framework

According to Rocco and Plakhonik (2009), a conceptual framework establishes a mechanism through which the study can be founded on the relevant knowledge bases that lead to the problem statement and research questions and is made up of the theoretical and empirical work relevant to the study. Figure 2.1 represents the conceptual framework for this study.

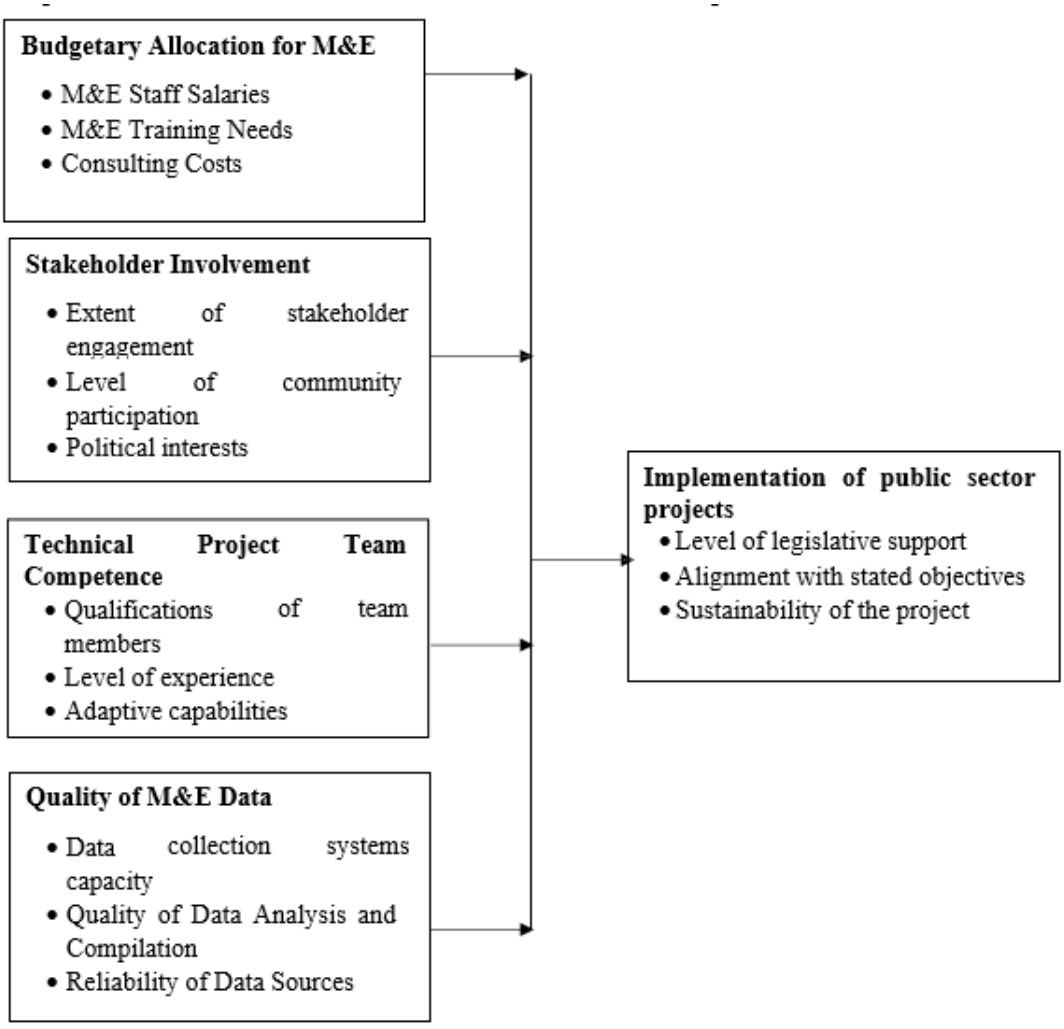

Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework

Budgetary Allocation for M&E

Oseni (2012) referred to a budget as a monetary quantifiable plan, prepared and approved appropriately in advance of a specified period of time specifying forecasted income against anticipated expenditures. Lepori, Usher and Montauti (2013) defined budgetary allocation as the organisational process that ensures the division of centrally available financial resources among organisational subunits. This process ultimately leads to the production of a formal document stipulating the level of resource allocation for a specified period of time. Kithinji *et al.* (2017) established that budgetary allocation for M&E is informed by the importance attached by a given organisation to M&E such that the higher the level of importance, the more the budget allocation. M&E budgets are meant to cater to expenditures such as salaries for M&E staff, M&E training initiatives, the acquisition of software and hardware needed for M& implementation, data collection and analysis, the facilitation of the preparation and submission of M&E reports, and conducting post-project implementation evaluations, just to mention a few.

The first indicator of budgetary allocation for M&E is M&E staff salaries. M&E staff salaries represent the payments made to M&E personnel in the form of basic salaries as well as benefits by organisations in accordance with the budget allocation for the respective period (Hernandez, Tan-Torres & Evans, 2009). M&E staff need to adequately motivated to perform their functions through market-based salaries, benefits and career advancement opportunities. Indeed, performance appraisals are typically conducted to determine this (Niyivuga, Otara & Tuyishime, 2019).

The second indicator of budgetary allocation for M&E is M&E training needs. Hobson, Mayne and Hamilton (2014) determined that M&E training needs are the M&E competence requirements in an organisation that have been established after an assessment of the performance of the M&E staff. In other words, any technical performance deficiencies on the part of the existing M&E personnel to carry out the relevant M&E activities including data collection, analysis, monitoring implementation, preparing monitoring reports, and conducting evaluation are established then a capacity building initiative in form of a training is carried out.

The third indicator of budgetary allocation for M&E is consulting costs. Whenever an organisation acknowledges an inability to carry out the M&E function to the requirement level of technical expertise, it is compelled to recruit either a consulting firm or individual with established technical competency to spearhead the process of implementation. Thus, the associated costs involved in this process constitute the consulting costs (Lafontaine, Busacker, Consult & Sepp, 2013).

Technical Project Team Competence

According to Oh and Choi (2020), project team competence refers to the collection of skills and capabilities of the various members of a project team to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently. Competence is broken down into emotional competence – motivation, self-awareness, intuitiveness, sensitivity and emotional resilience; managerial competence – the ability to manage resources, effective communication, empowerment, development and achievement orientation; and intellectual competence – judgement and critical analysis, imagination and vision, and strategic perspective.

The first indicator of technical project team competence is qualifications of team members. A qualification is defined as a formal certification or validation received by an individual from an authorised body that represents the individual's successful completion of the set out learning objectives and therefore his or her capability to perform tasks pertaining to a certain discipline in an accomplished manner (Telha, Ribeiro, Páscoaa & Tribolet, 2015).

The second indicator of technical project team competence is the level of experience. Hanafi

and Iraqi (2019) defined work experience as the aggregate number of times that an individual has been practically exposed to a given task or discipline, and this is typically measured in years. According to Boardman, Bozeman and Ponomarlov (2010), the level of experience relates to both the nature and length of employment in a given discipline such that in order for it to count it must be at a certain cadre and in a particular industry, not just for a number of years.

The third indicator of technical project team competence is adaptive capabilities. Adaptive capabilities refer to the ingrained readiness of an individual or group of individuals to respond to change in the operational environment. It includes three critical dimensions, namely, horizon scanning – this is the probing of the business environment for opportunities and threats; change management – adjustments made to the project objectives, plans and structures on the basis of information derived from the horizon scanning; and resilience – the ability to withstand disruptions (Ali, Sun & Ali, 2017).

Implementation of Public Sector Projects

According to Kerzner (2010), project implementation refers to the process of carrying out the project plan to ensure the fulfilment of the agreed deliverables, monitoring the progress of the project and ensuring that the deliverables match the expectations. The Institute of Internal Auditors (2011) defines the public sector as comprising governments and all agencies that are publicly controlled or public funded, enterprises and entities that deal in the delivery of public goods, services or programs. Gasik (2015) defined a public project as a project whose execution is undertaken by a public administration, or whose implementation is facilitated by the use of funds drawn from such an administration.

The first indicator of the implementation of public sector projects is the level of legislative support. Legislation refers to rules and regulations enacted by an authorized body for the purpose of ensuring governance of a given action (Raile, Pereira & Power, 2011). Legislative support involves the inclusion of provisions within the law that enable the enforceability of actions that facilitate the implementation of a project (Nduthu, 2018).

The second indicator of the implementation of public sector projects is alignment with stated objectives. ALmasri, Alsaraireh and Bader (2013) posited that alignment with stated objectives, otherwise known as strategic alignment, refers to the process which an organization matches its goals and project activities by identifying internal and external strategic components that are critical for project implementation and ensuring their optimal incorporation. Alsudiri, Al- Karaghouli and Eldabi (2012) added that the alignment of project implementation with stated objectives involves the clarification of the project objectives and communicating them to all the key stakeholders.

The third indicator of the implementation of public sector projects is sustainability of the project. According to Armenia, Dangelico, Nonino and Pompei (2019) the sustainability of projects is the process of incorporating the ideals of sustainability (the careful utilization of natural resources in order to protect the welfare of future generations through the creation of a balance between economic, social and environment aspects of business management) into the management of projects. This ensures that the project managers adopt a more long-term perspective of the impact of the projects so as to ensure the accomplishment to the deliverables to the client without undue harm to the environment or the society.

Empirical Review

Budgetary Allocation for M&E

A study by Rumenya and Kisimbi (2020) on the influence of M&E systems on the performance of projects established that the management of many organisations in Kenya has not provided appropriate incentives and shown commitment to protecting the interests of M&E staff through

appropriate dedicated budgetary allocations which has demotivated the staff. The study, therefore, recommends the provision of adequate level of incentives for M&E personnel as well as the requisite support in order to motivate them to perform optimally. In a different study, Mureithi (2015) investigated the factors influencing the use of M&E systems on public projects in Nakuru County Kenya and found that these projects tend to overlook the critical aspect of M&E as evidenced by inadequate budgetary allocations in terms of incentives systems that are equitable, timely and aligned with project strategies. Indeed, incentives such as salaries need to recognize the technical competence of the M&E personnel.

Kahuthia and Ochieng' (2019) assessed the influence of M&E training on the implementation of community projects in Tana and Athi Rivers Development Authority, Kenya and affirmed that whilst the majority of respondents had received M&E training in Results-Based Management, performance contract target implementation periodical monitoring and progress reporting, there were still gaps in their capacity particularly on what M&E entails, the techniques of conducting M&E, the linkage between M&E and the attainment of organisational objectives, and the benefits that would accrue to them as a result of M&E. Mokua and Kimutai (2019) posited that in response to increasing difficulties that the Kenyan Government was facing in implementing its infrastructure projects, it adopted the PPP model more than two decades ago, however, despite many positive results from this approach, it has been let down by the lack of training in project management and M&E for the majority of its staff which has adversely affected the quality of evaluations done. Additionally, the lack of regular training on new M&E approaches has meant that the project implementation team is completely unaware of technological developments in M&E.

A study by Sghari (2020) on participation of external consultants and management of an organizational change project revealed that many public sector projects involve external consultants during the planning phase of the implementation of the change process where their expertise, neutrality and singularity of purpose drives the process purposely forward, however, the lack of participation of these consultants during the actual implementation of the project creates complexities which the project management team are unable to overcome. The main reason for this limited participation throughout the project implementation has been found to be cost-related since the management try to cut down on expenses. Ikechukwu, Emoh and Okorocha (2017) opined that many public construction projects in Nigeria run into cost overruns due to poor budgeting practices that lead to the underestimation of crucial elements including the costs of external consultancy. Indeed, the study goes on to recommend that the project managers should integrate the application of appropriate project scheduling techniques.

Stakeholder Involvement

Kalu and Rugami (2021) conducted a study on stakeholder involvement and infrastructure projects implementation at Kenya Ports Authority and found that effective communication during stakeholder engagements enable the empowerment of stakeholders and their ability and confidence to participate in the decision making process and lobby for the advancement of their interests in public sector projects. Additionally, participatory engagements of stakeholders foster the establishment of proper conflict resolution mechanisms and builds trust. Nederhand and Klijn (2014) investigated stakeholder involvement in public-private partnerships and established that the broad variety of rules that constrain the procurement process limit the extent of external stakeholder engagement in public private partnership (PPP) projects. This process is typically complicated by the amount of sensitive and valuable information contained in the terms of engagement, thus necessitating only the involvement of the public and private sector partners.

In a study on the extent of community participation in Australian indigenous community projects Snijder, Shakeshaft, Wagemakers, Stephens and Calabria (2015) opined that in order

for communities to participate meaningfully in projects, cultural dynamics and literacy levels need to be considered in the development of the participative frameworks. Additionally, the priorities of the community need to be incorporated in the development of the project objectives. Lastly, the communities should participate through the project lifecycle. Muniu, Gakuu and Rambo (2017) examined the impact of community participation in project decision making on the sustainability of community water projects in Kenya and determined that community members participated in the project decision making process as evidenced by the attendance of meetings, were aware about the major decisions, and influenced the selection of project management committee members. However, there was limited community participation in the planning of the project.

Akwei, Damoah and Amankwah-Amoah (2020) posited that in multiparty democracies, the implementation of public sector projects is dependent upon the affiliation of the project with politicians of the ruling party such that projects that are close to power tend to benefit from political clientelism through financial support or tax breaks, or preferential access to resources. Unfortunately, a high level of political clientelism adversely affects the operational environment for many projects owing to the fact that the public administration system is hampered by institutional bottlenecks. Ma, Mu and de Jong (2021) maintained that innovative solutions to project management constraints faced by governments in the implementation of public sector projects such as co-production are compelled to deal with the interests of politicians since politicians and managers of large state-owned organisations use their superior resources, knowledge, skills and administrative power to influence the choice of projects, the identity of project participants, and either offer or deny their support and commitment.

Technical Project Team Competence

A study by Oh and Choi (2021) on the competence of project team members and success factors with open innovation revealed that the qualifications of team members is a critical determinant of whether a project receives funding, the efficiency and effectiveness of resource utilization, and the extent of stakeholder involvement in the project. Additionally, individuals who have innovative qualifications are essential for the establishment of collaborative knowledge creation processes. Maass, Ahsan and Mowatt (2014) investigated factors that influence public sector employees' intention to work on projects and established that public sector employee's intention to work on a given project is dependent upon their perception of how qualified they are based on colleagues' opinions. However, the study also found that some employees may be intimidated from taking up project positions owing to the additional skills required to accomplish the project goals as well as the risks involved such as budget and time constraints which pushes them to opt for remaining in their normal routine.

According to Irfan, Khan, Hassan, Hassan, Habib, Khan and Khan (2021), many public sector projects experience failure due to deficiency in their planning and poor competency level of their staff. A crucial aspect of project team competence is experience which relates to the number of years of working in a given department, whether the individuals have field experience, and their exposure to critical operational aspects of project implementation. Thus, it is critical that the staff have directly relevant experience both in term of length and depth so as to contribute meaningfully to the attainment of the project objectives. Oh and Choi (2021) added that for experience to be meaningful, it must include skills that are directly relevant to the commission of tasks that are crucial for the implementation of the project. Some of the most highly sought aspects of work experience include the exposure to problem solving situations, the application of best practices in M&E, and demonstrable adaptability in different project management circumstances.

A study by Smith (2020) on adaptive leadership strategies and project success of construction project managers in Jamaica found that the increasingly dynamic operational environments of

public sector projects demand for an adaptive approach to problem solving particularly given the fact that many of the projects are large and complex. Indeed, changes in values and attitudes within the demographic context of the projects call for a willingness by the project management team to adapt through innovation and creativity. A study conducted by the Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (2017) on core skills for public sector innovation established that in order for governments to ensure the success of innovative public sector projects, they need to embrace iterative project management techniques such sprints which provide a foundation for adapting and changing the project scope. Adaptive mind sets also manifest themselves in terms of increased curiosity about the approaches adopted by others who are in the same industry and seeking to deliver on similar projects, then adapting one's approach to match or better the other one so as to accomplish similar success.

Quality of M&E Data

In order for public sector projects to be implemented effectively, they require the evaluation system capacity to be strengthened through the use of trained M&E analysts and data collection specialists who are able to articulate the essence of M&E methodology and information to the project management. This will entail the establishment of a national statistical agency to enable the formulation of a national data development strategy; and the training of M&E specialists as well as all concerned managers on how to use M&E information optimally (United Nations Evaluation Group, 2014). The practice of M&E in Kenya has relied primarily on external consultants both in the public and private sectors which has meant that many public sector employees are not competent in carrying out data collection. Thus, there is a need to conduct capacity building by establishing systems that are in line with best practices in M&E data collection, and are adaptable enough to enable the incorporation of different techniques of project management as well as performance indicators (Wachamba, 2013).

According to Kuraeva and Kazantsev (2015), public sector organisations accumulate great amounts of data owing to the large sizes of the projects from different agencies which call for a high level of analysis and compilation using rigorous systems. This so called big data processing requires significant budgetary allocations which may be beyond the affordability of many developing countries and, as such, require the support of international development partners. Kim, Choi and Byun (2020) in a study on big data analytics in government affirmed that many government projects in Korea had failed to achieve social and economic value creation through the institutionalisation of big data analytics due to a mismatch between the project policies and the established international standards of data analysis. As a consequence these projects could not justify the investment in big data analytics given the poor returns.

Olabode et al. (2019) argued that since public sector projects handle huge amounts of secondary data from a wide variety of sources, it is imperative that any researchers in business and management consider the currency, accuracy or validity of these sources of data. Indeed, whilst the Internet has introduced an almost limitless resource for secondary data, it may be worthwhile for any public sector organisation to invest in subscriptions to top peer reviewed journals where the reliability of data sources for M&E can be vouched for owing to the high standards of professional research. Lowry (2016) posited that in order to enhance the reliability of data sources, public sector organisations in Kenya need to determine the authenticity of these sources by establishing the integrity a record and its uniqueness by subjecting it to an integrated and rigorous registry system such as the Kenya Open Data Initiative (KODI) where the obligations of the custodians of the records and the requirements of the system act as mutually reinforcing oversight mechanisms.

Implementation of Public Sector Projects

Pedo, Kabare and Makori (2018) conducted a study on effect of regulatory framework on the performance of PPP road projects in Kenya and established that given the high level of

complexity and lengthy duration of PPPs, they are influenced by a variety of laws that call for thorough due diligence on the part of all parties concerned, particularly the private sector investor, in order to get assurances on the existing legal framework in a country before bidding for a project so as to pre-empt any probability of a legal oversight curtailing the successful implementation of the project. The study determined that the existing PPP framework in Kenya is too prescriptive especially in regards to the bidding process since it does not provide sufficient practical guidance that will ensure the best value for the Government. In a separate study by Amuyunzu and Kisimbii (2020) on the influence of selected government regulations on implementation of public infrastructure projects in Kenya, it was found that following the advent of the new devolved units of Government in 2013, public infrastructural projects in Kenya have been subjected to rules and regulations at the County level with respect to licensing and building permits for various operational aspects of the project. These operational aspects are covered by environmental regulations, construction codes and standards regulations, public financial management regulations, county government licensing regulations, and project team competence requirements.

Ghonim, Khashaba, Al-Najaar and Khashan (2020) studied strategic alignment and its impact on decision effectiveness and affirmed that in order for a public sector project to be implemented effectively, it must establish strategic alignment in a number of areas including: employees through building consensus on the priorities to be included in the implementation of the project; customers by prioritising the attainment of customer satisfaction; and operations through the integration of all the strategic operational objectives in the implementation of the project. Alford and Greve (2017) examined similarities, differences and changes in strategy in the public and private sectors and ascertained that initially the integration of strategic alignment in the public sector was done under the New Public Management model in the 1980s, however, a new more effective model, the Public Value (PV) framework was introduced around the same time. Thus, it was found that the PV framework, when adopted correctly, can enable the accomplishment of strategic objectives in the public sector by marrying productive capabilities with the authorising environment so as to lead to the realisation of value.

In a study on the importance of the public sector in sustainable development in Poland, Alinska, Filipiak and Kosztowniak (2018) opined that given resource constraints, public sector organisations are unable to properly incorporate the international adopted sustainable development objectives, thus necessitating the involvement of private sector partners. Consequently, through alliances with the private sector partners such as financial institutions, the public sector is better able to meet the financing requirements of sustainable development and enhance its focus on economic, environmental and social imperatives within the implementation of its projects. Marx (2019) studied the design and impact on effectiveness of PPPs for Sustainable Development and posited that through the provision of expertise, knowledge and resources, private sector partners can make significant contributions to the attainment of sustainable development goals by boosting the enforcement capacity and legitimacy. However, for PPPs to work effectively, their institutional design must foster proper collaborations between partners by focusing on the creation of synergies that can lead to enhanced effectiveness and efficiency without compromising on the welfare of future generations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research design refers to the plan that facilitates the achievement of research objectives and providing answers to research queries (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Kothari (2016) breaks down research design into three, namely: exploratory research studies – these formulate a problem for more precise examination so as to determine ideas and insights; descriptive research studies – concerned with describing the characteristics of an individual or a group; and hypothesis-testing research studies – concerned with testing hypotheses of causal

relationships between variables. This study applied a descriptive research design since it was focused on describing the characteristics of the participants involved in the study. The target population is those people, events or records that contain the desired information and can answer the measurement questions (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The study will be limited to Nairobi County. It was focused on 150 staff working within five public sector projects in Nairobi County. These are the staff who had direct or indirect interaction with the implementation of M&E practices within the public sector projects. The distribution of the target population is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Population of the study

CATEGORY	NUMBER
Project Manager	5
Trainers	15
M&E Officers	25
Team Leaders	5
Enumerators	20
Field Staff	80
TOTAL	**150**

DiGaetano (2013) defines the sample frame as the listing of units from which a sample has to be selected. The study drew the research sample from the staff of five public sector projects in Nairobi County and will target 150 members. The study applied a census method for determining the sample size as per the recommendations of Israel (2020), where all the elements of the entire population for small populations of 200 or less will be used in the sample so as to eliminate sampling errors and provide data for all individuals in the population. Sampling techniques can be classified into either random sampling or non-random sampling where the former refers to the possibility of each item in the population having an equal chance of selection in the sample while the latter refers to the subjective selection of items in the population into the sample (Taherdoost, 2016). Since that the study chose a census survey, it did not apply any sampling technique.

The study used the questionnaire method of data collection due to the benefit of inclusion of more extensive enquiries and the convenience of getting responses from individuals who are not easily accessible due to busy working schedules. The study used self-administered questionnaires on 150 members from the target population. The respondents were given a period of 5 days to complete the questionnaires before collection using the Google Forms platform. Data analysis can be generally divided into qualitative and quantitative data analysis where the former deals with organizing, accounting for and explaining data through techniques such as content analysis and grounded theory; while the latter deals with numerical data through the use of software such as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Minitab and Excel (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2009). Dana analysis can also involve the use of a Likert scale which is a quantified measurement tool that comprises a set of statements provided in relation to a real or hypothetical situation in a given study (Joshi, Kale, Chandel & Pal, 2015). This study coded the data in a form that was more easily understood by applying a 5-point Likert Scale. It then used SPSS to conduct regression analysis, descriptive data analysis using measures of central tendency such as standard deviation and mean, and inferential statistics including Pearson Correlation coefficients analysis and regression analysis. The presentation of the results was then done using a combination of graphs and tables.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A response rate is defined as the proportion of individuals who actually submitted their responses to a survey that was administered to them (Saldivar, 2012). Questionnaires were administered to 150 respondents while 116 were returned, representing a response rate of

77.3%. This was consistent with Gordon (2002) who found that an acceptable response rate for a survey inquiry should be 60%.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis

The Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (*r*) is the ratio of the covariance of two variables representing a set of numerical data, and standardized to the square root of the variances (Hall, 2015). The Pearson Correlation coefficients for the variables of the study are presented in Table 1. According to the results, all the independent variables, Budgetary Allocation for M&E, Stakeholder Involvement, Technical Project Team Competence, and Quality of M&E Data, had positive correlations of r = 0.705; r = 0.793; r = 0.871; and r = 0.719, respectively with the independent variable, Implementation of Public Sector Projects. Accordingly, a change in Budgetary Allocation for M&E by a value of 1 leads to a corresponding change of 0.705 in the Implementation of Public Sector Projects. Additionally, a change in Stakeholder Involvement by a value of 1 results in a corresponding change of 0.793 in the Implementation of Public Sector Projects. Further, a change in Technical Project Team Competence by a value of 1 leads to a corresponding change of 0.871 in the Implementation of Public Sector Projects. Lastly, a change in Quality of M&E Data by a value of 1 leads to a corresponding change of 0.719 in the Implementation of Public Sector Projects.

The results also showed that all the p-values of the independent variables were below 0.05 indicating a statistically significant relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable. This corroborated Dahiru (2008) who found that given intervals of 95%, p- values of less than 0.05 indicate that observed differences between groups are unlikely to be due to chance and, as such, are statistically significant. This reflects the relevance of the p-value as an acceptable test of statistical significance.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Coefficients

		Budgetary Allocation for M&E	Stakeholder Involvement	Technical Project Team Competence	Quality of M&E Data	Implementation of Public Sector Projects
Budgetary Allocation for M&E	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Stakeholder Involvement	Pearson Correlation	-.380	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.140				
Technical Project Team Competence	Pearson Correlation	.354**	.161	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.084			
Quality of M&E Data	Pearson Correlation	.576**	.643**	.246**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.009	.008		
Implementation of Public Sector Projects	Pearson Correlation	.705**	.793**	.871	.719**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.047	.000	

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

Multiple Regression Analysis

According to Mooi and Starstedt (2014), regression analysis is a technique that analyses relationships between an independent variable and a dependent variable by fitting a line-of-best- fit through a series of observations. This helps to provide intuitions into: whether the independent variables have a significant relationship with a dependent variable; to test the relative strength of different independent variables' effect on a dependent variable; and make predictions.

Summary of Multiple Regression Model

The multiple regression statistics for the study are illustrated by table 4.10. According to the table, the R Square value for all the variables was 0.838 indicating that the results explained 83.8% of the variation in the Implementation of Public Sector projects whenever there was a one percent change in the four independent variables. This agreed with Hamilton, Ghert and Simpson (2015) who found that in order for R square values to be significant they should be higher than 0.7. In other words, whenever this model is used in future research it will be able to explain any variations in the dependent variable 83.8% of the time. This also shows that there is only a 16.2% difference between all the observed values and their fitted values in the examined data set indicating a strong Goodness-of-fit of the regression model.

Table 2: Multiple Regression – Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.916[a]	.838	.832	.25849

a. Predictors: (Constant), Quality of M&E Data, Stakeholder Involvement, Technical Project Team Competence, Budgetary Allocation for M&E

Analysis of Variance

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) refers to a statistical technique applied in detecting differences between experimental group means when there is one dependent variable and one or more independent variables (Sawyer, 2009). Table 3 shows the findings pertaining to the ANOVA statistics for the study. The results indicate that the ANOVA F-test score, calculated value F_{cal} at 5% level of significance is equivalent to 143.711, which is greater than the F critical value (F_{crit}) of 2.45 indicating that there is a significant relationship between all the independent variables and the dependent variable of Implementation of Public Sector projects. Additionally, the p-value of

0.000 is less than 0.05 indicating that there is a statistically significant relationship between each of the independent variables and the Implementation of Public Sector projects as per the findings of Kao and Green (2008). This demonstrates the goodness of fit of the model.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	38.411	4	9.603	143.711	.000[b]
	Residual	7.417	111	.067		
	Total	45.828	115			

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of Public Sector Projects

b. Predictors: (Constant), Quality of M&E Data, Stakeholder Involvement, Technical Project Team Competence, Budgetary Allocation for M&E

Beta Coefficient Analysis

Peterson and Brown (2005) posited that Beta Coefficients refer to unknown constants that are approximated from the data which are associated with given predictors or independent variables. The beta coefficients of the study are illustrated in table 4. The values of the constant and coefficients enabled the generation of the multiple regression model as follows:

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$

$Y = 4.157 + 0.673X_1 + 0.191X_2 + 0.681X_3 + 0.335X_4 + 0.260$

Where, Y refers to the dependent variable (Implementation of Public Sector projects), X_1 refers to the Budgetary Allocation for M&E variable, X_2 refers to the Stakeholder Involvement variable, X_3 refers to Technical Project Team Competence variable, and X_4 refers to the Quality of M&E Data.

According to the equation, taking all the independent variables to be zero (Budgetary Allocation for M&E, Stakeholder Involvement, Technical Project Team Competence, and Quality of M&E Data), Implementation of Public Sector Projects will be a constant equivalent to 4.157. A review of the findings also shows that a unit increase in Budgetary Allocation for M&E will lead to a 0.673 increase in Implementation of Public Sector Project when all other independent variables are held constant. A unit increase in Stakeholder Involvement will lead to a 0.191 increase in Implementation of Public Sector Projects when all other independent variables are held constant. A unit increase in Technical Project Team Competence will lead to a 0.681 increase in Implementation of Public Sector Projects when all other independent variables are held constant. A unit increase in Quality of M&E Data will lead to a 0.335 increase in Implementation of Public Sector Projects when all other independent variables are held constant. Lastly, the p-values for all the variables are all below 0.05, which indicates that they are all statistically significant.

Table 4: Beta Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.157	.260		15.986	.000
	Budgetary Allocation for M&E	.673	.039	.750	17.298	.000
	Stakeholder Involvement	.191	.039	.201	4.898	.000
	Technical Project Team Competence	.681	.057	.505	11.972	.000
	Quality of M&E Data	.335	.036	.385	9.211	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of Public Sector Projects

Conclusions

Budgetary Allocation for M&E

Many projects undertaken by public sector organisations usually run into cost overruns due to poor budgeting practices that lead to the underestimation of crucial elements including the costs of external consultancy. Public sector organisations have made significant budgetary allocations for staff to receive M&E training in Results-Based Management, performance contract target implementation, and periodical monitoring and progress reporting, however, there are still gaps in their capacity. Whilst the organisations have usually involved external consultants during the planning phase of implementation, the lack of participation of these during the actual implementation of the project creates complexities, which the project

management team are unable to overcome. Contrary to expectations, the management of these organisations have provided sufficient incentives and commitment towards protecting the interests of M&E staff.

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholders are empowered through effective communication in engagements with the organisations. The external stakeholder engagement process is undermined by the broad variety of procurement rules. Cultural issues and literacy levels have proved to be a handicap towards meaningful community participation in the projects. The majority of communities have not been able to participate in the project decision making process and, as such, were unaware of the decisions that have been taken.

Technical Project Team Competence

The organisations have prioritised the qualifications of team members since this is one of the dependencies of the receipt of project funding the efficiency and effectiveness of resource utilization, and the extent of stakeholder involvement in the project. The staff of public sector competences have been exposed to problem solving situations, the application of best practices in M&E, and demonstrable adaptability in different project management circumstances. Additionally, the project staff in these organisations have demonstrated adaptive mind-sets.

Quality of M&E Data

Public sector organisations in Kenya have a systemic M&E capacity deficiency and, as such, are in critical need of capacity building. Indeed, this is reinforced by the great amounts of accumulated data that require a high level of analysis and compilation. Further, researchers in these organisations must consider currency, accuracy and validity of secondary sources of data. However, it is apparent that these organisations have managed to achieve social and economic value creation through the inclusion of advanced data analysis due to a mismatch between the project policies and the established international standards of data analysis.

Implementation of Public Sector Projects

Public sector organisations cutting-edge are expected to exercise high levels of due diligence given the high complexity and lengthy duration of projects so as to ensure that the huge variety of associated laws are borne into consideration during implementation. The implementation of public sector projects must also ensure strategic alignment with the priorities of all major stakeholder including employees by getting the necessary consensus. Most public sector organisations in Kenya have been unable to incorporate international adopted sustainable development objectives owing to capacity constraints, which has necessitated the involvement of the private sector partners. These organisations have been unable to carry out awareness campaigns on the adoption of the Public Value Framework.

Recommendations of the Study

Public sector organisations in Kenya should carry out thorough project planning before project implementation so that they can incorporate all the necessary components for project implementation within the M&E budget. The project planning process should emphasize the adherence to the planned scope, it should use a project planning tool, and ensure continuous monitoring of the implementation progress in order to minimise cost overruns. External consultants should be involved throughout all the phases of project implementation not just in the planning phase so as to deal with the inherent complexities.

The public sector organisations in conjunction with the procurement regulators should endeavour to simplify the procurement rules and regulations so as to enable more effective stakeholder engagement. The political leadership in the areas where the public sector organisations are operational should be lobbied to carry out sensitisation initiatives to deal

with cultural issues by advising people about the ills of retrogressive cultural practices as well as the importance of educating their children so as to raise the literacy levels. Short-term measures such as the use of simpler language or local dialects in community stakeholder engagements can ensure more effective participation throughout the implementation of the projects.

Public sector organisations need to invest in capacity building by establishing systems that are in line with best practices in M&E data collection, and are adaptable enough to enable the incorporation of different techniques of project management as well as performance indicators. Additionally, they should ensure that their M&E staff have the requisite analytical skills to be able to handle the great amounts of data owing to the large sizes of the projects. The organisations should also ensure that they only accept secondary data from verifiable sources so as not to jeopardise the integrity of the information.

The public sector organisations should carry out workshops to appraise their employees on all the laws governing the implementation of projects so as not to fall foul on any of the laws. All employees must be on board on strategic decisions relating to the project implementation through the adoption of a participatory approach to project management. The organisations should also embrace the public private partnership (PPP) model of project financing given resource constraints so as to ensure more effective and efficient project implementation. More awareness campaigns should be carried out on the implementation of the Public Value Framework since this will ensure the proper incorporation of internationally adopted sustainable development objectives within the project implementation process.

Areas of Further Study

Given that the majority of works on the effect of M&E on project implementation have been in private sector organisations or NGOs, more research should be carried out on public sector organisations. Additionally, more research should be conducted on the linkage between M&E and project implementation since the majority of work has focused on other dependent variables such as project performance and project success. Finally, more holistic studies of M&E should be carried rather than on specific components of M&E.

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