

INFLUENCE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN ON PERFORMANCE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROJECTS IN VIHIGA COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: *While Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) in Kenya play an important role in supplying skills requisite for improved workers' productivity, economic competitiveness, occupational integration, raising income levels and expanding opportunities for employment, compilation and provision of vocational training related information related to performance of the vocational training projects is unsystematic, slow to reach and hard to receive which are indicators of weaknesses in their monitoring and evaluation practices. These weaknesses in Monitoring and Evaluation can adversely affect performance of TVET projects. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of monitoring and evaluation on performance of vocational training projects with a specific objective to examine the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation Plan on performance of vocational training projects.*

Methodology: *This study adopted descriptive research design and the population consisted of 66 staff representing Vocational Training center managers, Finance Officers and Procurement, representatives from County Government departments.*

Findings: *An average positive relationship was found to exist between monitoring and evaluation tools and performance of vocational training projects. The general recommendation is that staff in the county government departments and vocational training centers should be trained on project management and monitoring and evaluation process. The Monitoring and Evaluation plan should be prepared first to plan for the other elements in the monitoring and evaluation process.*

Keywords: *Logical framework, Monitoring and Evaluation plan, Performance Indicator*

INTRODUCTION

According to Battisti (2018) there are various monitoring and evaluation tools and approaches ranging from data collection methods, analytical frameworks, performance indicators, the logical framework, theory based evaluation, formal surveys, cost benefit and cost effectiveness analysis among others. Ning (2017) points out that some of these tools are complementary or substitutes, some broad in scope while others are narrow in scope. The choice of a particular M&E tool depends on various considerations such as the intended purpose, the main stakeholders, how fast the feedback information is needed and the costs involved.

Frameworks or log frames which are tools to organize intended results, that is, measurable development changes. They inform the development of the M&E plan and both must be consistent with each other (Koleros et al., 2020). Secondly, the M&E plan, which is used to systematically organize the collection of specific data to be assessed, indicating roles and responsibilities of project/plan stakeholders. Third are the various processes and methods for monitoring (such as regular input and output data gathering and review, participatory

monitoring, process monitoring) and for evaluation (including impact evaluation and thematic, surveys, economic analysis of efficiency and lastly the Management Information System, which is an organized repository of data to assist managing key numeric information related to the project/plan and the analysis (Abedin, 2019).

In Kenya monitoring and evaluation responsibility in education lies with the quality and standards officers who monitor and advise on education standards in various areas such as academic performance, science congress, music, drama, sports, environment, healthcare among others (Chege & Bowa, 2020). The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kenya has developed guidelines for monitoring and evaluation processes. However, they rely on traditional and informal control structures to fulfill their mandate. The formal monitoring systems in Kenya have not yet been fully incorporated in the government projects control systems under monitoring and evaluation (Maalim, 2017).

One of the main purposes of monitoring and evaluation in education in Kenya is to make sure that technical and vocational training or education is being provided to the whole population at all levels within the country. Quality education is a multidimensional concept that takes into account the quality aspects on inputs such as material, human and financial, processes such as teaching, learning and effectiveness of management practices) and outputs of learning such as the learning outcomes and quality of results (Kala, 2020).

The increasingly growing importance of the country level of effectiveness in funding education has led to emergency of governance issues such as governance, sustainability and accountability. There is increasing importance of involving stakeholders such as civil society and local community thus mostly participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation. This has led to introduction of a well-established system for reporting programmes and initiatives, the availability of quality and reliable data, efficiency in coordination among departments and stakeholders, availability of the supporting infrastructure and capacity for implementing improved systems (Sulemana *et al.*, 2018).

According to Goldman *et al.*, (2018) there is also another significant change in the perception which has been taking place as a result of multi donor and multi sectorial metamorphosis of Monitoring and Evaluation from being predominantly donor led to country led approaches. The assessments and evaluations conducted is in partnership with stakeholders, civil society and local community and capacities have been internalized within the country set up.

The technical and vocational training monitoring and evaluation framework consists of agencies, quality assurance stakeholders, principles, guidelines and tools to help TVET in Kenya to develop, improve and assess the quality of the technical and vocational training system and to give orientation to all parties including external stake holders on all issues touching on the quality of technical and vocational education such as training, services among others. Although specific elements of quality can be defined, there is no formula or uniform model for a standard TVET quality assurance system (Anudo & Orwa, 2020). The National TVET system originated from having operated under different ministries and departments at different stages, qualifications and quality levels. The stage of development and maturity of TVET systems differs from county to county.

Monitoring and Evaluation tools on Vocational Training Project Performance in Vihiga County

The county's Vocational Training unit is under the department of Education and since the function is devolved, the administration has been undertaking measures such as developing the supportive legal framework and policy framework to enhance sound functioning of the sector. The County has the county has 30 vocational

training centers spread across the five sub counties. However in terms of monitoring and evaluation they face challenges such as lack accurate records relating to enrollment rates per course, individual program performance outcomes and status of infrastructural facilities per Vocational Training Centre, infrastructural challenges among others.

Some of the vocational training projects in the county include construction of infrastructural facilities such as classes and workshops, partnerships to enhance technology transfer, student enrollment based initiatives (County Department of Education,2018) among others which are funded by either national government, the county government itself, development partners while others are co-funded. Generally, vocational training performance is perceived in terms of the overall quality of the TVET projects, impact, value to beneficiaries, successful completion and the number of people who have benefited from it.

Problem Statement

Ideally Technical and vocational education training projects would achieve maximum results in supplying skills (Bolli *et al.*,2018), if proper monitoring and evaluation is in place. However, most of their projects have achieved minimal results as evidenced by the many stalled projects and discrepancies in key project records which lead to rise in audit queries (Kavale & Kalola,2017).Vocational Training projects in Vihiga County have experienced minimal performance and compilation and provision of Vocational Training projects information related to performance of the projects is unsystemmatic, inconsistent, unrelated, slow to reach decision makers and difficult to receive (Vihiga County Economic Survey, 2018). The critical question that arises is ‘why project performance information that is key for decision making is difficult to get?’

Though there exist studies on Monitoring and Evaluation in vocational training institutions (Bolli *et al.*, 2018; Anudo & Orwa,2020; Kavale & Kalola, 2017) there is no known study on how project monitoring and evaluation tools affect performance vocational training projects in County Governments and particularly Vihiga County. Further, the M&E tools that have been studied (Shihemi; 2016, Baraza; 2014) in context of other sectors such as building and construction and not vocational training sector in particular. This study therefore sought to analyze M&E plan, rapid appraisal, performance indicators and the logical framework for possible influence on performance of vocational training projects in County governments with reference to Vihiga County.

Research Objectives

Influence of monitoring and evaluation tools on performance of vocational training projects in County Governments in Kenya with a specific objective to examine the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation Plan on performance of Vocational Training projects in Vihiga County.

Scope of the Study

The choice of Vihiga County is because studies about monitoring and evaluation for county sponsored projects have not been carried out and because the county is experiencing performance monitoring related challenges.

The study targeted Vocational Training Centre (VTC) managers, Finance officers and procurement officers in all the 30 TVET centers in Vihiga County and representatives from County Government department namely Education and Vocational training, Finance and Economic Planning and Physical Planning. The specific categories were selected because they have key information and are also involved in preparation of periodical reports submitted to the management on request. The study period was September 2020 to May 2021.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive research design and the population consisted of 66 staff representing Vocational Training center managers, Finance Officers and Procurement, representatives from County Government departments namely Education and Vocational Training, Finance and Economic Planning and Physical planning. The researcher chose these categories since they are directly involved in running of Vocational Training Centre projects, collection of data about the projects and documentation. The researcher applied purposive sampling to sample since respondents represented the category that has the information required for the study. The researcher used questionnaires and interviews in data collection and the data was analyzed quantitatively through Statistical Package for Social Scientists-SPSS.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Measuring Performance of TVET Projects

The researcher sought to establish the perception of respondents regarding how performance of vocational training projects is measured. Given that the questionnaire elicited responses on 5 point Likert scale, the researcher that project performance is gauged basing on completion time (M=8.3,SD=0.522), completion within budget (M=4.24,SD0.542) and number of beneficiaries (M=4.83,SD=0.389). This is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Measuring performance of TVET projects

	SA%	A%	N%	D%	SD%	Mean	Std. Deviation
Completion within stipulated time scale	41.7	33.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	0.522
Completion within budgeted costs	16.7	58.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	4.25	0.452
The number of beneficiaries in TVET project	58.3	16.7	8.3	8.3	8.3	4.83	0.389
Valid N (listwise)	48						

Source: Researcher (2021)

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Availability of a plan for monitoring and evaluating performance of Vocational Training projects

From table 2 below, respondents (66.7%) had a monitoring and evaluation plan in their institutions while 33.3% did not have the plan. The findings give an indication that the monitoring and evaluation plan is used as monitoring and evaluation tool for TVET projects.

Table 2: Presence of M&E Plan

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	32	66.7	66.7
	No	16	33.3	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher (2021)

Use of Monitoring and Evaluation Plan in Monitoring and Evaluating Vocational Training projects

Respondents (M=3.7500, SD=1.21543) with 25% and 50% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that M&E planning takes care of all Monitoring and Evaluation aspects. Also respondents (M=3.6667, SD=1.07309) with 8.3% and 75.0% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that most of the monitoring and evaluation plans include a list of partnerships and collaborations that will help the projects achieve results. Respondents (M=3.833, SD=1.1934) with 25% and 58% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that most of the monitoring and evaluation plans include a plan for dissemination and utilization of information gained. Further, respondents (M=3.9167, SD=1.24011) with 33.3% and 50% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that M&E plan bring together all stakeholders and beneficiaries in the monitoring and evaluation process. Also, respondents (M=4.0833, SD=1.37895) with 58.3% and 16.7% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that M M&E plan indicates the timeline for conducting the proposed Monitoring and evaluation activities. The findings were summarized in table 3.

Table 3: Use of Monitoring and Evaluation Plan in Monitoring and Evaluating Vocational

	SA%	A%	N%	D%	SD%	Mean	Std. Deviation
M&E planning takes care of all Monitoring and Evaluation aspects	25.0	50.0	8.3	8.3	8.3	3.7500	1.21543
M&E plans include a list of partnerships and collaborations that will help the projects achieve results	8.3	75.0	8.3	8.3	8.3	3.6667	1.07309
M&E plans includes a sub-plan for dissemination and utilization of information gained	25.0	58.0	8.3	0.0	8.3	3.833	1.1934
M&E plan bring together all stakeholders and beneficiaries in the monitoring and evaluation process	33.3	50.0	8.3	0.0	8.3	3.9167	1.24011
M&E plan indicates the timeline for conducting the proposed Monitoring and evaluation activities	58.3	16.7	8.3	8.3	8.3	4.0833	1.37895
Valid N (listwise)	48						

Source: Researcher (2021)

Effectiveness of the M&E plan as a monitoring and evaluation tool for Vocational Training projects

Respondents (75%) rated the monitoring and evaluation plan as a very effective project monitoring and evaluation tool followed by 25% who rated the monitoring and evaluation plan as an effective monitoring and evaluation tool. This shows that the information contained in monitoring and evaluation plan can be relied upon to monitor and evaluate the performance of Vocational Training projects in line with Kibera (2013) that monitoring and evaluation plan brings together all stakeholders and beneficiaries in the monitoring and evaluation process of the project or program and that different actors work together to design the system, carry it out and interpret the results. The findings were summarized in table 4 next page.

Table 4: Effectiveness of the M&E plan as a monitoring and evaluation tool for Vocational Training projects

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Effective	12	25.0	25.0

Source: Researcher (2021)

Analysis of Correlation

The researcher sought to establish the relationship between the independent variables (Monitoring and Evaluation plan, and the dependent variable (Performance of vocational training projects in county governments). Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used in this regard. The findings are outlined in table 5 below.

Table 5: Analysis of Correlation

Correlations		Average Measurement of project Performance	Effectiveness of M&E plan	Effectiveness of Rapid Appraisal Methods	Effectiveness of Performance Indicators	Effectiveness of Logical Framework
Average Measurement of project Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.347*	.079	.075	.633**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.016	.592	.611	.000
	N	48	48	48	48	48
Effectiveness of M&E plan	Pearson Correlation	.347*	1	-.317*	.060	.346*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016		.028	.684	.016
	N	48	48	48	48	48

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Summary of Correlations

A positive significant relationship of 0.347** was established between monitoring and evaluation plan and performance of Vocational Training projects in county governments which demonstrates that the monitoring and evaluation plan is a valid tool for monitoring and evaluating the performance of Vocational Training projects in County governments. This shows that the M&E plan ensures that monitoring and evaluation for Vocational training projects is well planned for by taking care of all aspects that need to be in place to ensure that there is early detection of Vocational Training project progress.

Coefficients

The coefficients are derived from table 6 as follows.

Table 6: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.768	3.458		-.511	.625
	Effectiveness of M&E plan	.231	.326	.217	.709	.502

a. Dependent Variable: Average Measurement of vocational training projects Performance

The multiple regression model below used in analyzing the relationship among the variables.

$$y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

$$Y = -1.768 + .231 X_1$$

Where:

Y = Performance of TVET projects

α = Constant term

β_1 = Beta Coefficient

X_1 = Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

ε = Error term

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Measuring Project Performance

Respondents pointed out that some of the projects carried out in vocational and training centers include construction of workshops for practical, construction of lecture rooms, acquisition of machinery, upgrading of existing infrastructure among others. These projects are implemented in line with County integrated development plan, Performance contract targets for the department of Vocational Training and respective strategic plans. Respondents indicated that measuring performance of projects in the county is mostly on quarterly basis where the relevant directors and other responsible staff collect and fill data about the status of the projects whether completed or ongoing.

This is in line with Battisti (2018) that there are various monitoring and evaluation tools and approaches ranging from data collection methods, analytical frameworks, performance indicators, the logical framework, theory based evaluation, formal surveys, cost benefit and cost effectiveness analysis among others. Ning (2017) also supports that some of these tools are complementary or substitutes, some broad in scope while others are narrow in scope. Respondents indicated that in determining the success of projects in vocational training centers they look at factors such as number of beneficiaries, completion within the budgeted amount, quality of the project, stakeholder satisfaction and completion within time.

Effect of Monitoring and Evaluation Plan on Project Performance

A positive significant relationship of 0.347** was established between monitoring and evaluation plan and performance of Vocational Training projects in county governments which demonstrates that the monitoring and evaluation plan is a valid tool for monitoring and evaluating the performance of Vocational Training projects in County governments. Respondents explained that they carry out monitoring and evaluation for the various projects being undertaken because it is a requirement in order to inform the decisions to be taken concerning specific projects. Necesito, Santos & Fulgar (2015) have similar findings about the need of a monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure that project performance is measured objectively. The monitoring and evaluation system provides guidance to businesses, institutions, communities and other parties involved in TVET projects.

An average positive relationship was found to exist between monitoring and evaluation tools and performance of vocational training projects.

Recommendation of the Study

The Monitoring and Evaluation plan should be prepared first to plan for the other elements in the monitoring and evaluation process. The plan should include a list of partnerships and collaborations which will help the department of vocational training and vocational training centers to achieve the desired results. The plan should also include dissemination and utilization of the information gained.

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