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Resource Allocation Influence on Performance of County Government Funded Water Projects in Kisii County, Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to examine how resource allocation influences performance of M&E practices on county government funded water projects in Kisii County.

Methodology: The study will adopt a descriptive survey design. The study target population includes 201 county water staff managing 90 water projects across the county. The census method was used to research the 201 staff involved in water projects. The primary data was collected by use of questionnaires and Key Informant interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed by employing descriptive statistics and inferential analysis, and the results were presented by tables and figures. Whereas, qualitative data was done through narrative analysis and presented in form of verbatim and narrations.

Findings: findings indicated that a mere 12.9% of the participants agreed that the county government allocated a specific budget for M&E activities, while 12.4% strongly agreed. However, a significant 38.2% disagreed with this allocation. Similarly, the budget's adequacy came under scrutiny, with only 3.5% deeming it sufficient, while 37.6% disagreed. Infrastructure provision for M&E activities raised uncertainty among 8.8% of respondents, and only 16.5% agreed on its adequacy. Furthermore, while the allocation of adequate human resources for M&E garnered strong agreement (31.8%), it was met with disagreement by 14.7% of participants.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: This study was anchored in the change theory. The county government of Kisii County can capitalize on this finding by prioritizing adequate resource allocation for M&E activities. This capitalizing may involve dedicating specific budgets, ensuring infrastructure provision, and allocating sufficient human resources. Policymakers and project managers should closely evaluate the resource allocation process, addressing concerns raised by participants in the study. Adequate resources lay the foundation for streamlined operations, data collection, and stakeholder engagement. By recognizing the strategic significance of resource allocation, the county government can significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of water project implementation.

Keywords: *Resource Allocation, Performance, M&E Practices, County Government Funded Water Projects*

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INTRODUCTION

Resource allocation plays a critical role in determining the performance of county government-funded water projects, as it directly impacts project planning, implementation, and sustainability. Adequate financial resources ensure the timely procurement of materials, hiring of skilled labor, and adherence to project timelines, which are essential for achieving quality outcomes. Conversely, budgetary constraints often lead to delays, compromises on material quality, and incomplete projects. Human resource allocation also influences performance; employing qualified personnel enhances technical efficiency and problem-solving capacity. In addition, the equitable distribution of resources across various projects ensures that underserved areas benefit, fostering inclusivity and social equity. A lack of transparency and accountability in resource utilization can result in mismanagement and corruption, further undermining project outcomes. Effective stakeholder engagement, including community involvement, ensures that resources are aligned with local needs and priorities, enhancing project relevance and acceptance. Strategic resource allocation also requires robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and make necessary adjustments. Finally, political goodwill and support are instrumental in securing funding and minimizing bureaucratic delays. As such, the performance of water projects is closely tied to the strategic planning and effective utilization of allocated resources (Ngugi & Muturi, 2020).

Just like the rest of the world, Projects implemented in the African continent are often behind schedule and above budget, but their failure rate is over 50% **(Ika & Jan, 2014)**. Khan (2013) noted that projects frequently fail to achieve the desired objectives as a result of ineffective M&E designs. In Sudan for instance, Sabbil & Haroun (2015) posits that in spite of the broader cognizance that projects are geared towards promotion of way of life and improvement of standards of living, there is a continued trend of dismal performance of projects undertaken by county Governments. He noted that the success or failure of a project is dependent on how sustainable M&E frameworks are.

The government of Kenya according to (National Council for Law Reports, 2010) is mandated by the Kenyan Constitution in schedule four to ensure that M&E mechanisms are an integral part of the development and execution of government policies, projects and programmes so as to ensure there is transparency and accountability. As a result, the government of Kenya in the year 2004 as reported by (Senelwa, 2021) developed a government-wide M&E reporting system known as the National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (NIMES) and County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (CIMES) framework at national and county government levels respectively. Subsequently the M&E directorate was established (Senelwa, 2021) and its mandate was to track implementation of the Indicators of the Medium –Term plans of the Kenyan Vision 2030.

Statement of the Problem

Project M & E is a critical component of the project management phase, that if not properly handled, may lead to project failure. Globally, progressive projects pivot their success on routine and continuous process of data gathering to measure extends of performance and achievement against set goals. Currently, Kenya faces transitional challenges from a centralized state to devolved governance system. This has prefigured both challenges and opportunities. The decentralized form of governance has exerted pressure on especially the performance of government water departments. Therefore, this calls for effective monitoring and evaluation systems. Though M & E practices implementation have substantial cost, time

as well as human resource implications, they are significant for successful projects and should not be overlooked at the beginning of the process (Khan, 2013). Counties and government ministries have an established M&E system of reporting that helps to keep projects on track and assists in reporting within the departments and agencies. However, monitoring and evaluation reports generated are not used to guide policy makers and other relevant stakeholders (Senelwa, 2021). Similarly, National and county Governments according to (Senelwa, 2021) do not have adequate capacity to monitor and evaluate their own projects due to inadequate human and financial resources. The government of Tanzania has been experiencing challenges in implementation of their water projects. Despite most of the projects being implemented at community level failing to meet expectations, Participatory M&E is still critical at the infancy stages of projects (Mgoba & Kabote, 2020).

There are several empirical studies that have been undertaken focusing on implementation of water funded projects. However, few of them focus on water projects that are being implemented by the County Governments with the bulk of research focusing on water projects implemented by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and National Government agencies mostly through Constituency Development funds among other funds. For instance a study conducted by (Cleophas et al, 2017) sought to find out the Effect of Contractor Capacity and Monitoring and Evaluation on Completion of Water Projects among Water Services Boards in Kenya. Another study conducted in Marsabit County on Monitoring and Evaluation practices on performance of water projects focused on 14 projects being implemented by the national government within the county (Roba & Odollo, 2022). Another study conducted in Machakos County focused on Project Monitoring and Evaluation Practices on Performance of Water and Sanitation Projects (WASH) funded by the National Government (Waweru & Dr Kimathi, 2022).

None of these studies have specifically touched on the influence of M&E on water projects funded by the now devolved system of county Governments and most specifically in Kisii County, hence the need for the researcher to conduct this study to help bridge the knowledge gap. In view of the aforementioned, this study therefore seeks to assess the M & E function on implementation of county government funded water projects in Kisii County. The study will particularly focus on planning, stakeholder involvement, M & E Training and resource allocation for M & E Implementation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The Program Theory

Bickman (2011) developed the Program theory that contains a group of statements that describe a certain program. According to Sedani & Sechrest (2013) the program theory gives details on why, how, and under what conditions the program effects occur, predict the outcomes of the program, and specify the requirements necessary to bring about the desired program effects. Over the years, the program theory has been used to guide evaluation; it highlights the potential of the program to address challenges by addressing the needs in the need assessment (Seith & Philippines, 2012). Further it offers techniques to establish areas of impact in evaluation.

The Program Theory steer an evaluation through the identification of key elements that affects projects and articulates ways in which the identified elements will associate with each other (Donaldson & Lipsey, 2014). Data collection plans are then made within the framework in order to measure the extent and nature of each element's occurrence. Once collected, the data

are analyzed within the framework. First, data that have been collected by different methods or from different sources on the same program element are triangulated (Donaldson & Lipsey, 2014).

Another early proponent theory, Weiss (1972) recommended using path diagrams to model the sequences of steps between a programs' intervention and the desired outcomes. This kind of casual model helps the evaluator identify the variable to include in the evaluation, discover where in the chain of events the sequence breaks down, and stay attuned to changes in program implementation that may affect the pattern depicted in the model.

Program theory is thus defined in evaluation practice today as the construction of a plausible and sensible model of how a program is supposed to work (Pilcher, 2012) or a set of propositions regarding what goes on in the black box during the transformation on input to output, that is, how a bad situation is transformed into a better one through treatment inputs. It is also looked at as the process through which program components are presumed to affect outcomes. Rossi (2004) cited by Pilcher (2012) describes program theory as consisting of the organizational plan which deals with how to garner, configure, and deploy resources, and how to organize program activities so that the intended service system is developed and maintained. The theory also deals with the service utilization plan which looks at how the intended target population receives the intended amount of the intended intervention through interaction with the programs service delivery system. Finally, it looks at how the intended intervention for the specified target population brings about the desired social benefits (impacts) Rogers, as cited by Patton (2008) identifies advantages of the theory-based framework to monitoring and evaluation to include being able to attribute projects outcomes to specific projects or activities and identify unanticipated and undesired program or project consequences. Therefore, theory-based evaluations enable the evaluator to tell why and how the program is working.

Resource Allocation and Implementation of M&E Practices on Water Projects

A study conducted by (Patrick & Dr. Martine, 2015) on Monitoring and Evaluation of Development Projects and Economic Growth in Kenya revealed that an increase in budgetary allocation to the M&E function increases the probability of M&E implementation in projects by 13.13% while holding all other factors constant. This was echoed by Gitonga (2012) who in his study found that there is no specific percentage to be allocated for M&E but normally varies between 2.5% and 10% depending with the overall budget and the project. Gitonga further states that the more participatory M&E is, the higher its budget. Frankel and Gage (2017) concur with Gitonga by stating that there is no set formula for proportion of project's budget to be allocated to M&E. Most donors and organizations recommend between 3 to 10 percent of the project's budget. The general rule of thumb is that the M&E budget should not be too little as to affect the accuracy and credibility of results and neither should it consume resources to the extent of interfering with other projects activities. M&E activities resources allocation should be undertaken within organizations towards their monitoring and evaluation system in a controlled manner to ensure that this does not pose a challenge to the implementation of their strategy (Mugambi and Kanda, 2013). This should be assessed keenly for donor-funded programs where the availability of funds is not under the organization's control. Lack of adequate resources is an impediment to the success of the system and process and organizations should ensure they have set aside sufficient funds to support monitoring and evaluation activities (Gwadoya, 2011). Oluoch (2012) also observes that lack of sufficient funds hinders performance.

Results-Based Financing (RBF) is becoming an increasingly popular financing approach for development projects but evidence on its effectiveness remains weak, especially in the WASH sector. Access to safe and affordable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure and services is essential to quality of life. According to Kumar (2017), globally, billion people do not have access to safe drinking water. Consequently, one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, number six, is to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all by2030. There are resources required to meet these targets, and public finance by itself will not be enough, meaning private investments or innovative financing approaches like WASH microfinance are needed.

For a project to perform effectively several resources should be mobilized to maximize their effectiveness. Examples of these resources are; tools, facilities, finance and manpower among others. Resource mobilization is utilized to ensure that new and additional resources are secured in your organization. This is achieved by maximizing and making good use of available resources. Resource mobilization is also termed as new business due to its ability of ensuring continuation of organization services to satisfy clients, improvement and step-up of products within the organization and last but not least, encourages organization stability. In this context, both private and public sectors should in a position of creating new business to stay in business (Norton, 2017).

According to Maxx (2015), financing monitoring and evaluation projects should ensure proper allocation and distribution of funds through a reliable and a transparent channel. Accountability of every phase should be done by ensuring the auditing process abides by the rules and regulations and generation of audit report is accurate (Gala, 2016). According to World Bank (2018) annual report, Kenya is ranked the third largest recipient of the World Bank funded projects. The World Bank's portfolio in Kenya consists of 24 active national and eight regional operations with a total commitment of US$4.2billion. The projects are mainly focused on transport, energy, water, urban, health and social protection. In the year 2013, the Bank approved more than US$900 million for urban transport, the Ethiopia-Kenya power interconnector, infrastructure finance and judicial performance improvement. The Bank has also leveraged nearly US$300 million in private investments through partial risk guarantees for private independent water projects to improve Kenya's water supply (www.worldbank.org)

Available resources are the assets that an organization has and can access and utilize in its operations which include human resources, financial resources, materials and equipment (Cleland & Ireland, 2014). Resource Planning is vital to ensure the success of M&E exercises and also ensures a result-based approach within minimal constraints. Resource planning has been described by Burke (2013) as a detailed summary of all types of resources required to complete a specific task. As gathered from the National Government Constituency Development Fund (2016), the board avails resources based on Constituency Thesiss for funds to cater for M&E activities. However, the board reserves the right to review the amount of funds requested to the various projects.

Project Performance is a critical subject not only for project managers and the financiers but also for the entire league of stakeholders. Performance Measurement is critical since it provides an assessment of the accountability and transparency status of the project. It also justifies the project costs and an assessment on the extent to which the project objectives are being met. A number of approaches have been suggested as effective tools of measuring the performance of projects. The approaches most commonly used include the Triple Constraints Methodology and the Project Management Diamond Approach. The Triple Constraints Methodology, also

referred to as the Project Management Triangle or the Iron Triangle has been applied to measure performance in a wide range of public and Private sector projects (Anbari, Carayannis, and Voetsch, 2018). The three constraints are time, cost and quality. Time is an important factor to consider in project performance measurement as the activities of a particular project can either take shorter or longer amount of time to complete. Time is an important project resource that needs to be budgeted for and utilized wisely as failure to meet the deadlines in a project often creates adverse effects.

Cost is another critical dimension of project performance. It is important for projects to stick to the budget unless it is for very special reasons. It's fundamental for project managers and the organization as a whole to have an estimated cost when undertaking a project. Budgets serve to check for possible abuses and ensure that project is developed or implemented below a certain cost. Scope concerns the actual outcome of the project undertaken and consists of a list of deliverables, which need to be addressed by the project team. Project managers should know how to manage both the scope of the project and any change to that effect which impacts on time and cost (Rosenau and Githens, 2016). Though quality is not a part of the Triple Constraints Methodology, it is always the ultimate objective of every deliverable in the project. As such project time and cost savings as well as the achieved project deliverables (scope) should not come as a sacrifice on the quality of the project. As such, the Triple Constraints Methodology always assumes quality in the performance assessment and any shortcoming on this variable would mean poor performance. High cost does not always mean high quality but using substandard materials to lower project costs does not also serve the idea of saving the inputs and falls short of ideal project performance (Anbari, 2018).

The project Management Diamond has been presented more recently by Shenhar and Dvir (2017) as an improvement on the Triple Constraints Methodology. The model acknowledges Quality as a key parameter to measure alongside Scope, Cost and time and also makes an assumption that consume and stakeholder's expectations are being met. Like the Project Management Triangle, the Diamond Approach asserts that successful projects must be delivered within cost and delivered on time. They must also meet the agreed scope and meet the quality standards agreed upon. The model then assumes that the cost, quality, time and scope achievements are in line with customer expectations (Schwalbe, 2018).

Every year Government and donor agencies invest Millions of dollars in project implementation. Studies indicate that, despite increasing attempts to tackle the problem, many projects are failing to maintain the flow of expected long time benefits of about over 15 to 20 years (Ochelle, 2017). Studies by a number of scholars have shown that, for WSS to be successful in the slums there are a number of financial elements that need to be considered. This includes: the sources of finances, the number of finances allocated, financial management and many more.

Binder (2018) and Odhiambo (2019) argue that, the financing process is critical for the sustainability of WSP both in the rural and urban dwellings. According to the documented literature, insufficient funding is one of the factors which cause poor maintenance of the project outputs and at last project failure. Financial issues need to be addressed because they are an obstacle in achieving water supply and sanitation in over 70% of the countries. Usually, there is a very significant underfunding including basic costs of operating and repairing facilities for the cases of operating projects. Worst hit are the slum areas, where affordability is lower while the cost of water services is higher. The tariffs rarely cover maintenance, operation, repair and replacement. This leaves a gap for attracting private sector investment, which is normally

expensive and difficult. In addition, the cost estimates always don't reflect actual costs for ongoing programs, capital maintenance expenditures, and indirect support costs.

Kahariri (2014) did a study in Huruma estate, Nairobi County. Findings from the study indicated that, sustainability would increase with investment in specific areas. This includes investment in capacity building and institution to operate and maintain the system. This could also extend to the development of mechanism which support cost recovery, and provision of incentives which gear towards investments locally. This indicates that it is necessary to consider the level of investment that was required during the operation and maintenance of the project. In addition, this ties itself to the sources of funding. In the slums for example, it has been found that, neither the national governments nor county governments are ready to fund the various WSS projects, since they felt that the rates of return are very low. The few private individuals funding some initiatives or the non-governmental bodies are not doing enough since the demands for WSS are more than what they fund.

According to African Development Fund (2015), despite the fact that government and the international community are the major donors who should allocate funds into WSS projects and the slums, financing all expenditure of the project in the slums should not be pegged entirely on the government or donors. It is the role of the government however to establish proper regulatory and institutional frameworks. It is essential to address its post-construction sustainability after the completion of a project. This is to ensure that funds collected, institutions, and expertise available are kept to ensure that water supply systems are viable and functional. In this case, the systems are said to be sustainable, if all the foregoing processes are in place.

In his work, Keli (2015) has given a positive relationship between financial management and sustainability of WS projects implementation. According to him, financial management is very important as far as operation and maintenance of donor projects is concerned. The aspect of financial management also entails setting of water tariffs. Many donor projects fail to be sustainable for a long period due to high tariffs introduced by management committee or poor financial management skills. Fast tracking transparency on expenditure and income, accounting and book keeping are essential aspects in sustainability of projects (Bolt and Fonseca, 2017). This particular aspect of financial management has led to most donor projects for example in the slums like Mjini in Kitui, Majengo in Nairobi, Nyarenda in Kisumu and Dandora in Nairobi to collapse due to underhand techniques used by water committees.

Josephine (2014) while looking at factors influencing management of HIV/AIDs projects funded by community-based organizations concluded that the level of donor funding, to a large extent or to some extent influenced management of project funds. CBPs contain scarce resources thus they need to collaborate with other organizations and donors who can provide resources. Most of the respondents indicated that level of donor funding influenced management of project funds.

Human capital ought to be matched with clear job description; if there is a gap, then skills improvement should be planned for. Those who are engaged in projects out in the field, managers need to provide effective support (Chepkemoi & Otieno, 2020). Organizations must always strive to make better their staff in order to produce results. This support to the field officers together with the increased expectations and opportunity may prompt the officer to enhance his output (Chepkemoi & Otieno, 2020).

The technical capacity of the organization can greatly determine how to produce evaluation‘s lessons (Chepkemoi & Otieno, 2020Creating enough supply of human resource capacity is crucial in order to achieve sustainability of the M&E system and should be done progressively. This call for recognizing that growing‖ evaluators needs technically oriented M&E training and development, though this can be achieved through workshops. Both formal training coupled with on-the-job experience are work together in creating capacity for evaluators (Chepkemoi & Otieno, 2020).

Research Gaps

Evidence from literature point out that in Sub-Saharan Africa substantial M&E achievements on the ground are rare (Mackay, 2017; UNICEF, 2019). Most studies done in Kenya focus on specific projects or specific areas and therefore makes it difficult to generalize to large organizations' projects and this study attempts to fill the gap. The four independent variables had high propensity of influencing implementation of WASH projects in UNICEF in Kenya. The study therefore focused on establishing this influence. It is not clear how theplanning influences omplementarion in Kisii ounty

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was used because it enables the researcher to generalize the findings to a larger population. The study target population according to (Kisii County Government, 2018) Annual Development plan includes 201 respondents drawn from the Ministry of water both at the county and at the sub-counties spread across the 90 Water Projects. Other key players involved in Monitoring and Evaluation of water projects include Water Resource and Management Authority (WARMA), Monitoring and Evaluation department under the Economic Planning Section, Gusii Water and Sanitation Company (GWASCO), Lake Victoria South Water Services and Water Resource Users Association. Probability sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Census was used to select all 200 respondents. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, Observation as well as secondary published data. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. The results were presented by tables and figures.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Analysis

Resource Allocation

The study sought the opinion of the respondents on the various aspects of Resource Allocation. The respondents were required to rate each statement that match the application of Resource Allocation using 5 points likert scale were a rate of 5 represented, Strongly Agree and 1 represented Strongly Disagree as seen in Table 1.

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Table 1: Resource Allocation

	SA	D	N	A	SD	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
A specific budget is allocated for implementation of M&E function	33.5%	38.2%	2.9%	12.9%	12.4%	1	5	2.32	1.379
The budget allocated to the M & E department is adequate.	41.2%	37.6%	7.6%	3.5%	10.0%	1	5	2.04	1.240
Adequate infrastructure is provided for M&E	13.5%	15.3%	8.8%	16.5%	45.9%	1	5	3.66	1.508
Adequate funds are allocated to M&E IT	10.6%	11.8%	5.3%	34.1%	38.2%	1	5	3.78	1.349
Adequate Human resources have been involved in the M & E function.	9.4%	14.7%	6.5%	37.6%	31.8%	1	5	3.68	1.313

One of the objectives of the researcher was to find out whether the county government has a budget specifically allocated specifically for implementation of M&E activities. Out of the 170 respondents, 12.9% were in agreement that the county has allocated a specific budget while 12.4% strongly agreed. 2.9% were undecided while 38.2% disagreed. There was an overall mean score of 2.32 and a standard deviation of 1.379. Since the respondents reported that the county has a specific budget allocated for M&E activities, the researcher wanted to find out whether the budget was adequate. Majority of the respondents represented by 7.6% were unsure whether the budget was adequate or not while 37.6% felt that the budget was inadequate. Cumulatively 45.2% of the respondents felt that there was a need for the county government to increase the amount of funds allocated to the M&E activities. However, 3.5% of the respondents felt that the budget allocated was adequate while 37.6% disagreed and 41.2% strongly disagreed. The overall mean score was 2.04 and a standard deviation of 1.240.

The researcher wanted to find out whether adequate infrastructure was put in place by the county government for M&E activities and from the findings, 16.5% of respondents agreed with the respondent. A large percentage of respondents as represented by 8.8% were unsure of the adequacy of infrastructure while 15.3% disagreed with the statement. Cumulatively 24.1% felt that there was need by the county government to increase infrastructure meant for M&E activities. There was an overall mean score of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 1.508. The researcher also found it necessary to establish whether adequate Human resources were availed for the M&E activities. 31.8% of the respondents strongly agreed while 37.6% agreed. 6.5% were not sure whether the adequate Human resources were provided while 14.7% disagreed with the statement. There was an overall mean score 0f 3.68 and a standard deviation of 1.313.

An overall mean of below 3.10 pointed out that majority of the respondents disagreed or were undecided on statements representing M&E resources allocated. Most respondents felt that the budget allocated and the infrastructure provided for M&E were not adequate. The Human resources involved in the M & E function was found to be adequate.

The findings of this study are in agreement with a study conducted by Patrick & Martine (2015) that an increase in budgetary allocation to the M&E function increases the probability of M&E implementation in projects by 13.13% while holding all other factors constant. Frankel and Gage (2017) concur that the M&E budget should not be too little as to affect the accuracy and credibility of results and neither should it consume resources to the extent of interfering with other projects activities. It concurs with Mugambi and Kanda (2013) that M&E activities resources allocation should be undertaken within organizations towards their monitoring and evaluation system in a controlled manner to ensure that this does not pose a challenge to the implementation of their strategy. Lack of adequate resources is an impediment to the success of the system and process and organizations should ensure they have set aside sufficient funds to support monitoring and evaluation activities (Gwadoya, 2011).

These findings resonate with the Theory of change which explains how a set of interventions such us allocation of funds to Monitoring and Evaluation exercise leads to specific changes. (United Nations Development Group , 2017). This means that pumping funds to the M&E exercise in the project organization positively impacts successful implementation of projects within the constraints of time, cost and quality.

Implementation of Water Funded Projects

The study sought the opinion of the respondents on the various aspects of implementation of county government water funded projects. The respondents were required to rate each statement that match the application of implementation of county government water funded projects using 5 points likert scale were a rate of 5 represented, Strongly Agree and 1 represented Strongly Disagree as shown in Table 2.

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Table 2: Implementation of Water Funded projects

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
All stakeholders are involved in M&E implementation	8.8%	11.8%	7.6%	34.7%	37.1%	1	5	3.79	1.296
Ex-ante evaluation (Needs assessment) is conducted.	5.3%	5.9%	9.4%	44.7%	34.7%	1	5	3.98	1.077
Ex-post (end evaluation is done)	12.9%	9.4%	7.6%	35.3%	34.7%	1	5	3.69	1.372
Project outcomes and outputs are properly documented.	14.7%	8.2%	12.4%	32.4%	32.4%	1	5	3.59	1.395
The project team meets schedule requirements in terms of milestones, deadlines and assignees.	38.2%	35.9%	11.8%	4.7%	9.4%	1	5	2.11	1.238
The project team reviews client satisfaction through feedback for future projects.	24.7%	42.4%	8.8%	14.1%	10.0%	1	5	2.42	1.277
The project team uses the right M&E tools	14.7%	8.2%	12.4%	32.4%	32.4%	1	5	3.59	1.395

The study sought to find out whether the county government involves all listed stakeholders in M&E activities. Majority (34.7%) of respondents agreed, 37.1% strongly agreed, while 7.6% were neutral and 11.8% disagreed. There was an overall mean score of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.296.

The researcher also asked the respondents to give their opinion as to whether the county government conducted ex-ante evaluation (Needs assessment) before M&E activities commence. 44.7% agreed, 34.7% strongly agreed, 9.4% were neutral, while 5.9% disagreed with the statement. There was an overall mean score of 3.98 and a standard deviation of 1.077. On the opinion that Ex-post (end evaluation is done), 35.3% agreed, 34.7% strongly agreed, 7.6% were neutral, while 9.4% disagreed with the statement as indicated by the mean score of 3.69 and a standard deviation of 1.372.

On the statement that project outcomes and outputs are properly documented, 32.4% agreed, 32.4% strongly agreed, while 12.4% were neutral and 8.2% disagreed with the statement as indicated by the mean score of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 1.395. On the statement that project team meets schedule requirements in terms of milestones and deadlines; 4.7% agreed, 9.4% strongly agreed, while 11.8% were neutral and 35.9% disagreed as indicated by the mean score of 2.11and a standard deviation of 1.238. On the statement that project team reviews client satisfaction through feedback for future projects, 14.1% agreed, 10% strongly agreed, 8.8% were neutral while 42.4% disagreed and 24.7%strongly disagreed as indicated by the mean score of 2.42 and a standard deviation of 1.277. From the findings 32.4% of respondent agreed, 32.4% strongly agreed, 12.4% neither agreed nor disagreed and 8.2% disagreed on the statement that project team uses the right M&E tools as indicated by the mean score of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 1.395.

An overall mean of above of 3.31 pointed out that majority of the respondents agreed on statements representing implementation of water funded projects. This indicted that the county government made sure that all stakeholders were involved in the M&E implementation, ex-ante evaluation (Needs assessment) was conducted and ex-post (end evaluation was done). Project outcomes and outputs were properly documented. The project team meets schedule requirements in terms of milestones and deadlines, reviews client satisfaction through feedback for future projects as the team uses the right M&E tools. This agrees with Muhammad (2016) that project performance enhancements occur through planning, implementation and monitoring processes. Planning, execution, control, and proposal of project performance explored. The findings showed project-planning processes contribute to the project performance.

Influence of Resource Allocation on Implementation of Water Projects

The fourth objective of this study examined the influence of resource allocation on implementation of county government funded water projects in Kisii County. The descriptive statistics revealed that Kisii county government has endeavored to provide funds for M&E function. For instance, through cumulative agreement to questionnaire statements, it emerged that adequate funds are allocated for M&E information technology. Similarly, there is adequate human resources involved in the M&E functions; and adequate infrastructure is also provided for M&E. However, descriptive analysis results indicated that budgeting for M&E was not satisfactory. Respondents tended to disagree that the M&E function had a specific budget, and that the budget allocated was adequate.

Nevertheless, multiple regression results revealed that resource allocation was a significant predictor of implementation of county funded water projects in Kisii County. The regression coefficient of 0.325 confirmed that for every percentage increase in resource allocation, there was a 32.5% increase in implementation of water projects. Meanwhile, the t-value of 5.168 confirmed that resource allocation was the M&E function with the highest influence on the implementation of county funded water projects in the county. The findings in this study regarding resource allocation are consistent with previous findings. For instance, in finding that budgetary allocation for M&E functions was not satisfactory, the study reflects similar views registered by other scholars. For instance, Mburu (2013) used countries such as Ghana, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Kenya, Nigeria, Mozambique, Tanzania, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and Uganda to show that public budgeting was a challenge for development in Africa. Similarly, Mugambi and Theuri (2014) established that despite having in place procedures for budget preparation, counties in Kenya were experiencing political influence that tended to interfere with budget preparation. Therefore, this study adds to this discourse, albeit in contemporary times.

The finding showing that resource allocation contributes largely to the implementation of county government funded water projects in Kisii County underscores the importance of resources in projects implementation. Empirical evidence has indeed demonstrated that resource saving is among other factors that are of high importance to project management (Daneshpour & Takala, 2017). Moreover, it has been posited that available resources, including financial, human, material and equipment give leeway to organizational operations and are bound to enable realization of desired goals (Cleland & Ireland, 2014).

Moreover, The findings of this study align with previous research emphasizing the importance of resource allocation in project implementation. Adequate resource allocation has been shown to positively impact project outcomes and performance (Fey & Björkman, 2017; Unegbu et al.,

2022; Weiss et al., 2017). Moreover, studies have highlighted the significance of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) functions in project management and how proper resource allocation to M&E activities can lead to improved project success (Kabeyi, 2019; Maendo et al, 2018). The results of this study support the existing body of knowledge by showing that resource allocation significantly predicts the implementation of county-funded water projects in Kisii County. The regression coefficient of 0.325 demonstrates the positive relationship between resource allocation and project implementation, which has been identified in previous research (Chepng'eno & Kimutai, 2021; Moreno-Monsalve et al., 2022).

Additionally, the study's finding that budgeting for M&E was not satisfactory and influenced project implementation is consistent with earlier research highlighting the negative impact of inadequate funding on project success (Gemino et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2017). The importance of adequate budgeting and resource allocation for successful project implementation has been well-documented (Bower, 2017; Valle-Cruz et al., 2022). The high t-value of 5.168 indicating that resource allocation was the M&E function with the highest influence on project implementation is in line with studies that have identified resource allocation as a critical factor in project management (Banihashemi et al., 2017; Camilleri, 2016).

In conclusion, the findings of this study add to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence of the significant impact of resource allocation on the implementation of county-funded water projects. The study underscores the importance of proper resource allocation, particularly in M&E functions, to enhance project outcomes and emphasizes the need for adequate budgeting for successful project implementation. Policymakers and project managers can use these findings to improve resource allocation strategies and achieve better project results.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study delved into the nexus between resource allocation and implementing county government-funded water projects in Kisii County. Using a 5-point Likert scale, the participants provided their opinions on resource allocation aspects, and these findings were subsequently supplemented by regression analysis. The descriptive results elucidated the impact of resource allocation on project implementation. Respondents expressed concerns regarding the sufficiency of resource allocation in key areas of budgeting, infrastructure, and human resources for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities.

In specific terms, the descriptive findings indicated that a mere 12.9% of the participants agreed that the county government allocated a specific budget for M&E activities, while 12.4% strongly agreed. However, a significant 38.2% disagreed with this allocation. Similarly, the budget's adequacy came under scrutiny, with only 3.5% deeming it sufficient, while 37.6% disagreed. Infrastructure provision for M&E activities raised uncertainty among 8.8% of respondents, and only 16.5% agreed on its adequacy. Furthermore, while the allocation of adequate human resources for M&E garnered strong agreement (31.8%), it was met with disagreement by 14.7% of participants.

The regression analysis further substantiated these descriptive findings, establishing resource allocation as a substantial predictor of project implementation. The positive regression coefficient indicated that an increment in resource allocation corresponded to a considerable increase in water project implementation. Remarkably, the associated t-value showcased resource allocation as the M&E function with the most significant impact on project

implementation. It affirms its influential role in shaping the outcomes of county government-funded water projects in Kisii County. This unity between descriptive and regression outcomes emphasizes the pivotal role of resource allocation in influencing the successful execution of these projects.

Conclusions

Resource Allocation in project implementation plays a crucial role, significantly impacting overall project success. While participants express concerns over budget sufficiency and infrastructure adequacy, the regression analysis highlights resource allocation as a powerful predictor of project implementation. Adequate resource allocation, encompassing budgets, infrastructure, and human resources, is a critical enabler of successful water projects. This reiterates the significance of directing appropriate investments towards securing the required resources, a facet that emerges as a linchpin in driving the efficacy of project execution. By ensuring the availability of sufficient funds, well-structured infrastructure, and a competent workforce, projects are poised for streamlined operations, comprehensive data collection, and robust stakeholder engagement.

Implications to Theory and Practice

Implications to Theory

Within the theory of change framework, the study's findings align harmoniously with a fundamental principle: the pivotal role of stakeholder involvement in driving project success. By substantiating the assertion that robust engagement of stakeholders amplifies project outcomes and bolsters long-term sustainability, the study enriches the theory of change with practical insights and empirical evidence. The research serves as a valuable contribution by illustrating the precise mechanisms through which stakeholder engagement influences the trajectory of projects. These findings illuminate the pathway through which theory is translated into action, shedding light on the tangible benefits of involving stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle.

In doing so, the study breathes life into the theory of change by offering tangible examples of how effective stakeholder engagement yields better-informed decision-making, facilitates adaptive management practices, and substantially improves the overall efficacy of project implementation. These practical insights validate the importance of stakeholder engagement and bridge the gap between theoretical constructs and real-world project dynamics. By establishing a clear link between stakeholder involvement and project success, the study's contributions enhance the theoretical underpinnings of the theory of change, providing a comprehensive perspective that enriches our understanding of how stakeholder engagement drives transformative project outcomes.

Implications to Practice

Adequate allocation of resources, encompassing budgets, infrastructure, and human resources, emerges as a lynchpin for successful water projects. This underscores the strategic significance of securing the necessary resources for streamlined operations, comprehensive data collection, and robust stakeholder engagement. The study's findings validate the role of resource allocation stakeholders as key determinants of project efficacy.

Recommendations for Practice

Resource allocation, encompassing budgets, infrastructure, and human resources, is a critical enabler of successful water projects. The county government of Kisii County can capitalize on

this finding by prioritizing adequate resource allocation for M&E activities. This capitalizing may involve dedicating specific budgets, ensuring infrastructure provision, and allocating sufficient human resources. Policymakers and project managers should closely evaluate the resource allocation process, addressing concerns raised by participants in the study. Adequate resources lay the foundation for streamlined operations, data collection, and stakeholder engagement. By recognizing the strategic significance of resource allocation, the county government can significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of water project implementation.

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