

# An Assessment Of Leadership Practices And Its Influence On Utilization Of Monitoring And Evaluation Results In Non-Governmental Organizations In Nairobi City County, Kenya.

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## Abstract:

Efforts to make development programs more effective have gone through a paradigm shift from process to results. Increased pressure on the development community and especially NGOs to account for resource use and demonstrate success has significantly increased the need for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Despite heightened activities of NGOs, poverty levels have continued to rise and living standards continue to deteriorate. Expected results of various development initiatives have not been forthcoming. As one of the components of improved performance of NGOs, utilization of M&E results has been cited as wanting by many studies. Using the case of NGOs in Nairobi City, this study sought to establish the influence of leadership practices on utilization of M&E results. To achieve this, one specific objective was evaluated, guided by one research question and hypothesis. The objective was: to assess how leadership practices influence utilization of M&E results in NGOs in Nairobi City County. Multi-stage sampling technique was used whereby stratified random sampling was applied to obtain a sample of 284 NGOs from a target population of 979 NGOs. Two Program Directors, two Program Managers as well as two Project Coordinators were also randomly picked for the Key Informant Interviews. Structured questionnaire was used as the main tool to collect data. Interview guide was also used to collect information for triangulating the results. Quantitative data from the study respondents were analyzed through bivariate regression analyses while qualitative data were analyzed qualitatively using content analysis. The findings showed that leadership practices had a significant positive influence on utilization of M&E results as shown by the regression coefficients of  $R^2 = 0.107$ ;  $F (cal) = 24.665 > F (crit) = 3.92$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$  and  $\beta = 0.303$ ,  $t = 4.966$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . The study recommended that NGO management boards prompt leaders to establish cultures of utilization of M&E results. Human resource departments to ensure that leaders employed in NGOs possess the relevant training, experience as well as goodwill to ensure utilization of M&E results. Specific aspects of leadership such as follow - up on utilization of M&E results and establishment of reward systems for those who comply should be encouraged by management boards and possibly made mandatory in NGOs.

**Key Words:** Leadership practices, M&E Results, Utilization of M&E results.

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## I. Introduction

The last decade has been marked by concerted efforts to make development programs more effective. This has seen the development community shift focus from processes to results. The development community is increasingly coming under pressure to account for resource use and to demonstrate that their policies and actions are improving the lives of beneficiary groups. This has increased interest in the need to monitor and evaluate the outcomes and impact of all development programs both nationally and internationally (United Nations, 2012).

Monitoring is a non-stop function that makes use of systematic series of information on predetermined indicators to offer management and the principle stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with

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warning signs of the extent of progress and fulfillment of targets and progress within the use of available finances (World Bank, 2011). Evaluation is a process that involves systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of project related data that can be used to understand how the project is functioning in relation to its objectives. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) need to be designed as an intertwined participatory exercise where all stakeholders are involved (Bamberger, 2012).

Monitoring and Evaluation is a process that helps improve performance and achieve results. Its goal is to improve current and future management of outputs, outcomes and impact. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) has evolved over time and has mirrored the paradigm shifts that have occurred in management of projects (Nyonje, Ndunge and Mulwa, 2012).

Utilization of M&E results has been cited as wanting in a number of studies. Monitoring & Evaluation has been considered as the weakest link, for all development projects funded by the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group. According to a report by Swedish International Development Agency, most stakeholders in the projects studied never saw the results of evaluations and that the few who did, found nothing very new or useful in them (Segone, 2008). It has been noted that in the last decade, several billions of shillings had been spent on evaluations, yet a third of those studies were not worth their investment (in terms of utilization) and another third were of uneven quality (Quesnel and Quebec, 2010).

Evaluation outcomes use indicates a gradual shift from the conventional activity-based method to the modern-day results-based technique (Hardlife and Zhou, 2013). Furthermore, the world is experiencing a growing demand for effective usage of evaluation outcomes (Porter and Goldman, 2013). The questions of whether or not evaluations are used are as old as the evaluation enterprise itself, and this serves to affirm that it is certainly an early practice, but a present-day discipline as more scholarship on the same is relatively new (Ledermann, 2012). According to UNDP (2002), utilization of results to enhance performance is the principle motivation behind setting up a Monitoring and Evaluation System. In this way, where there is no efficient utilization of results, the entire idea of Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks as "ground-breaking the board instruments" helping enhance execution is vanquished.

The emerging consensus on use of results comes against a backdrop of widespread displeasure with the performance of NGOs development programs in many countries today. Despite heightened activities by the NGOs, the poverty levels and living standards continue to worsen. Malnutrition and ill health cases increase by the day among other challenges. These situations show that the expected results of various development programs have not been forthcoming (Chesos, 2010).

Leadership practices in NGOs have a bearing on the utilization of M&E results. It is through leadership that NGOs are able to effectively ensure utilization of M&E results. Some leadership practices in an NGO may increase utilization of M&E results and vice versa. Leadership practices were defined as ways by which the management of an organization promotes utilization of M&E results, rewards and recognizes those who comply, commits towards utilization of M&E results and makes executable and replicable decisions regarding utilization. It also includes follow up on success and sanctions for those who fail to comply and commit to utilization. M&E Results, on the other hand were defined as outcomes of Monitoring & Evaluation exercises in NGOs that are usually communicated in the form of a report and Utilization of M&E results was defined as the action of making practical and effective use of M&E results to ensure that NGO objectives are realized. This ensures there is change in performance and learning in the NGO. There is also change in design of programs, program implementation and documentation of processes due to use of results.

## **II. Research Methodology**

This study is anchored on pragmatism research paradigm since the NGOs in Nairobi City County are diverse with different purposes that need different capacities and approaches in investigating. Considering that in this study the influence of the independent variable was to be determined, cross-sectional survey research design was considered most suitable for the task. A random sample of 284 was selected from a target population of 979 NGOs in Nairobi City County. Using the allocation method in Stratified sampling, sample size through proportional allocation method was used: In this method, the sampling fraction, was the same in all strata. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides and the response rate was 72.89% which was 207 questionnaires. Respondents were requested to provide answers on 5 likert items in the questionnaire that were measured by a five-point likert scale, where 5= strongly agree, 4=agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree. Then mean of each item was computed to assess the extent to which respondents agreed with view expressed in the item after which the composite mean was computed to assess the extent to which respondents agreed with the leadership practice. This was followed by correlational analysis that was used to show the strength and direction of association between the independent and dependent variable. Finally regression analysis was used to test the research hypothesis and to show the explanatory power of the independent variable (Leadership practices) on the changes in the dependent variable (Utilization of M&E results). The level of significance for acceptance or rejection of the null hypothesis was set at  $p=0.05$ .

### III. Analysis and Findings

The study sought to establish the opinion of respondents on whether leaders in their organization promoted utilization of M&E results. The findings recorded a mean of 4.31 with a standard deviation of 0.513. This indicates that majority of the respondents were in agreement that leaders in their organizations promoted the utilization of M&E results. The second item asked whether leaders in their organization rewarded those who utilized M&E results. The results returned a mean of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 0.627, a demonstration that respondents were ambivalent on the particular statement. A quarter of respondents were neutral in their opinion while the rest were in agreement. Moreover, the study also sought to find out whether leaders in that particular organization were committed to supporting the utilization of M&E results. Here, the mean was 4.21 and a standard deviation of 0.569. This was evidence that a substantial number of respondents felt that leaders in their organization were committed to supporting the utilization of M&E results. In addition to that, the next item sought to establish whether decisions made by leaders with regard to utilization of M&E results in the organization were executable. The mean was 4.04 with a standard deviation of 0.538. These findings indicated that the respondents were in agreement that leaders in their organization made decisions that were highly executable. The study went further to test if leaders in the organization ensured there was follow-up on the utilization of M&E results. The item returned a mean of 3.72 and a standard deviation of 0.687. This illustrated that more respondents were a- indifferent about the particular item with more than a third either being neutral or actually disagreeing with the statement that leaders in their organization ensured follow-up on utilization of M&E results.

From these findings, it emerged that generally the respondents had a favorable view of their leadership in matters of utilization of M&E results. Respondents felt that leaders in their organizations promoted utilization of M&E results, were committed to supporting utilization of M&E results and made highly executable decisions regarding utilization of M&E results. However, they were a little ambivalent with regard to leaders rewarding those who utilized results as well as leaders in their organizations ensuring there was follow-up on the utilization of M&E results. This observation was further subjected to an evaluation of the composite mean of the 5 items. The composite mean was 4.03 with a composite standard deviation of 0.587. This result indicated that majority of the respondents were in agreement that leadership practices drove the utilization of M&E results in their organizations. This is illustrated in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Summary of Leadership Practices and Likert Scale.**

	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	MN	STDV
1	Leaders in this organization promote utilization of M&E results	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	5 (2.4 %)	133 (64.3 %)	69 (33.3 %)	4.31	0.513
2	Leaders in this organization reward those who utilize M&E results.	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	52 (25.1 %)	124 (59.9 %)	31 (14.9 %)	3.89	0.62655
3	Leaders in this organization are committed to supporting utilization of M&E results.	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	16 (7.7 %)	131 (63.3 %)	60 (28.9 %)	4.21	0.5688
4	The decisions made by leaders with regard to utilization of M&E results in this organization are highly executable.	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	26 (12.6 %)	147 (71.0 %)	34 (16.4 %)	4.038	0.53829
5	Leaders in this organization ensure there is follow- up on utilization of M&E results.	0 (0 %)	5 (2.4 %)	70 (33.8 %)	109 (52.7 %)	23 (11.1 %)	3.72	0.68728

Further, the study validated the quantitative data by collecting qualitative data using Key Informant Interviews. Participants were in agreement that leaders in their NGOs promoted utilization of M&E results. This view was captured from a participant who retorted

“.....Leaders promote utilization of M&E results and these results come in handy in planning for the next project cycle as well as justification of project changes that are based on evidence.”

(Respondent, Program Director)

In the same vein another respondent agrees that;

“Leaders promote utilization of M&E results through building strong systems for the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning function as this is important in project data analysis to inform project outcomes, outputs and overall impacts that are critical in measuring NGO performance and traction to funding agencies.”

(Respondent, Program Manager)

The participants further, were in agreement that no rewards were offered for programs/projects that utilized M&E results.

Further examination using correlation analysis was carried out and the findings shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Correlation Coefficients for Leadership Practices and Utilization of M&E Results**

Variables	Utilization of M&E results	Leadership practices
Utilization of M&E results	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	
n207		
Leadership practices	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.328 0.000
n207 207		1

The study findings in Table 2 illustrate that leadership practices had a weak positive and significant correlation with utilization of M&E results in NGOs in Nairobi City County, with  $r = 0.328$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ .

The results of the quantitative data were further subjected to regression analysis for the purpose of testing the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis:  $H_0$ ; Leadership practices do not have a significant influence on utilization of M&E results in Non - Governmental Organizations NGOs in Nairobi City County

Hence hypothesis one was tested using the model

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$  where:

Y= Composite for utilization of M&E results

$\beta_0$  = Constant

$\beta_1$  = Beta coefficient

$X_1$  = Composite for Leadership practices

$\epsilon$  = Error term

The results of the test are represented in table 3 below.

**Table 3: Contribution of Leadership Practices to Utilization of M&E Results**

Change Statistics									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig F
1	0.328	0.107	0.103	0.38505	0.107	24.665	1	205	0.000

Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Practices

Dependent Variable: Utilization of M&E Results

The model represented a path coefficient  $R^2$  which shows the proportion of variation in the dependent variable explained by the regression model. Table 3 shows that leadership practices had a coefficient  $R^2$  0.107. Coefficient  $R^2$  of value 0.107 indicates that 10.7% of the variation in utilization of M&E results can be accounted for by the influence of leadership practices in that particular NGO. Therefore, the study deduced that leadership practices had a positive influence on the utilization of M&E results in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Analysis of variance was further used to assess the goodness of fit of the regression model for the data analyzed. Results showed that the F-calculated 24.665, was greater than F- critical 3.92 and p-value of  $p < 0.001$  was less than the significance level of  $p = 0.05$ , showing that the model was a good fit for the data analyzed. This

indicated that the model could be used to predict the influence of leadership practices on utilization of M&E results in NGOs in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

**Table 4: ANOVA for Leadership Practices and Utilization of M&E Results**

Model		Sum of	df	Mean	F	Sig
Squares		Square				
1	Regression	3.657	1	3.657	24.665	0.000
	Residual	30.394	205	0.148		
	Total	34.051	206			

Coefficients of regression for the influence of leadership practices on utilization of M&E results are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Coefficients of Regression for Leadership Practices and Utilization of M&E Results**

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig
	Coefficients				
	B	Std Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.891	0.248		11.654	0.000
Leadership Practices	0.303	0.061	0.328	4.966	0.000

By substitution of the values from Table 5, the regression model becomes:

$$Y = 2.891 + 0.303X + 0.248$$

Where: Y= Utilization of M&E results

X= Leadership practices

The results in Table 5 also show that leadership practices has a significant positive influence on utilization of M&E results as shown by the regression coefficient of  $\beta = 0.303$ ,  $t=4.966$ ,  $p=0.000 < 0.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis that leadership practices do not have a significant influence on utilization of M&E results was rejected and the alternative accepted.

The objective of the study sought to assess the extent to which leadership practices influence utilization of M&E results. From the likert scale analysis, the study demonstrated that leadership practices were important in explaining utilization of M&E results ( $M=4.03$ ,  $SD=0.59$ ). It was established that utilization of M&E results was enhanced when leaders promoted utilization of results, rewarded those who utilized M&E results, made executable decisions related to M&E and ensured there was follow up on utilization of M&E results. Correlation analysis showed a positive and significant relationship between leadership practices and utilization of M&E results ( $r= 0.328$ ;  $p=0.000 < 0.05$ ). In addition to that, regression analysis indicated that 10.7 per cent of the variance in utilization of M&E results could be explained by leadership practices in that NGO ( $R^2 = 0.107$ ). Leadership practices also had a significant positive influence on utilization of M&E results as shown by the regression coefficient of  $\beta = 0.303$ ,  $t=4.966$ ,  $p=0.000 < 0.05$ . Therefore the null hypothesis that leadership practices does not have a significant influence on utilization of M&E results was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

#### IV. Discussion of Findings

The indicators in this study were consistent with those of Kusek and Rist (2004), who observed that successful efforts to shift focus of government to results have enjoyed high levels of sustained leadership. Successful reforms have generally been led from the executive branch- from the Cabinet Office (United Kingdom), the Treasury (New Zealand), the Vice President (United States), or the Chief Minister (Andhra Pradesh, India).

The results were also consistent with those of Archibald (2013) who asserts that leaders can play an important role in supporting evaluative thinking in their organization and building an evaluative culture where critical reflection and learning from mistakes is encouraged. Evaluative thinking may be defined as “a cognitive process in the context of evaluation, motivated by an attitude of inquisitiveness and a belief in the value of evidence, that involves such skills as identifying assumptions, posing thoughtful questions, pursuing deeper understanding through reflection and perspective taking and making informed decisions in preparation for action.

Kusek and Rist (2004) observe that a leadership team who are committed to change in their own organizations could accelerate the adoption of results-based M&E and introduction of a more result-based budget process. The presence of strong leadership, usually through a strong champion or champions at the most senior levels is among the strategies used to achieve greater performance and to successfully shift to a results-based culture.

## **V. Conclusions and Recommendation**

The objective of the study assessed the extent to which leadership practices influences utilization of M&E results. The study established that leadership practices such as promotion of utilization, rewarding the NGOs that utilize results and supporting the utilization of M&E results require emphasis so as to ensure that utilization of M&E results becomes cultural in NGOs. Follow-up on utilization also encourages implementers to ensure M&E results are generally utilized. This finding is important for the body of knowledge in this discipline as it encourages leaders to understand their role in utilization of M&E results in NGOs. The study established that utilization of M&E results depends on quality of leadership. Since utilization of M&E results requires effort from both the leaders and implementers in NGOs, involvement of leaders in promotion of utilization is fundamental. Leaders' commitment towards ensuring utilization is enhanced seems to touch on all NGO staff and therefore leaders should encourage utilization through rewards and tokens for those who comply and follow-up on project staff to ensure they understand what they need to do. NGO management boards should prompt leaders to make decisions regarding utilization and lead NGOs in establishing cultures of utilization. Human resource departments should ensure that leaders employed in NGOs possess the relevant training, experience as well as goodwill to ensure M&E results are utilized. Specific aspects of leadership such as follow-up on utilization of M&E results and establishment of reward systems for those who comply should be encouraged by management boards and possibly made mandatory in NGOs. The study revealed that these strategies promote utilization of M&E results.

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