

# Impact of Training M&E Personnel on the Performance of Market Development Projects in the Meru County Government.

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## **Abstract**

*Project managers aim for public projects to perform well, which includes completing projects on time, staying within budget, meeting specified end product standards, fulfilling customer needs, and achieving management goals. This study aimed to examine the impact of training M&E personnel on the performance of market development projects within the Meru County Government. The numerical information obtained through the surveys was coded, inputted, and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 27 software. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were employed. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages were used to summarize the data. The study's findings were visually presented through graphs, tables, and figures to enhance comprehension. The results indicated that M&E teams in all sub-counties received training, engaged in baseline surveys involving public participation, and had access to M&E plans developed by the county M&E unit. Spearman correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship of 0.494 between the M&E plan and project performance. Specifically, the analysis revealed that, on average, there was a statistically significant correlation between M&E training and stakeholder involvement with project performance, at 0.6 and 0.7 respectively.*

**Key words; training, monitoring, evaluation, performance**

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## **I. Introduction**

A project is a set of tasks having a predetermined beginning and ending that are intended to produce special results (Kerzner, 2017). A project is considered successful if it meets established objectives and fulfills the client's specified quality standards. The project life cycle consists of five separate stages that a project usually goes through. At the outset, known as "project initiation," we evaluate the potential benefits and practicality of the endeavor. The next phase is project planning, which involves creating a detailed plan to guide the implementation team once the project is approved. Project execution follows, focusing on creating deliverables that meet stakeholder expectations.

In order to maintain track of time and money, which are important measures of a project's success, and to prevent scope creep, implementation teams must constantly monitor and assess their work. Project closure is the last stage of a project's life cycle. At this pivotal point, the team may reflect on the project's progress and record their findings. How well a project completes its goals is a good indicator of its performance (Kerzner & Saladis, 2017). Performance metrics are a way to assess the efficacy, efficiency, and influence of a program, as stated by Miller (2007).

Evaluating and monitoring current initiatives entails collecting and analyzing data continuously, comparing actual results to projected ones, and then making adjustments based on the findings. In any organization, project monitoring is the intentional and systematic gathering of information, aimed at learning from past experiences to enhance future practices and activities. This management function encompasses four key components: planning, training, baseline surveys, and information systems.

An excellent management technique and an essential part of every project lifecycle is M&E. Evaluation and monitoring are two sides of the same coin; they are complementary but distinct concepts. As per McCoy et al. (2005), monitoring entails the continuous collection of data on certain indicators to enable fundamental decision-making on the adherence of a project intervention to the plan. The process of gathering data systematically and periodically to assess the plan, its implementation, and its results in terms of how well-managed, efficient, efficiently dispersed, and readily controllable they were is called evaluation. Crawford and Bryce (2003) state that project managers may utilize monitoring and evaluation frameworks to determine if their execution strategies are effective or whether they need to make changes. Additionally, project results should be shown via evaluation and monitoring in order to substantiate project finance. The emphasis of assessment and monitoring has shifted from following or tracking results to monitoring execution. The tracking of input mobilization was enhanced by including general approaches of monitoring and evaluation. Tasks undertaken, finished, and results provided. The problem with an execution-centered strategy is that it doesn't help stakeholders like managers, partners, and policymakers understand if the project was successful or not in producing the expected outcomes (Kusek and Rist 2004).

The concepts of coordinating M&E have been around for a long time on a global scale (Ivan, 2019). The Department of Finance in Australia was an early adopter of assessment systems and a trailblazer in their development. Advantages such as a strong human resource base, competent public sector institutions and management, a public service marked by honesty, professionalism, and integrity, established accounting, budgetary, and financial systems, a history of accountability and transparency, and strong political leadership all contributed to the initiative's success (Adugna, 2022). To guarantee ownership and sustainability, M&E methods in Asia include broad engagement in development concerns.

Successful project completion and the attainment of developmental objectives are outcomes of the Italian government's adoption of project management methods, according to research by Arnaboldi, Azzone, and Savoldelli (2014). The need for the government to abandon inflexible organizational structures in favor of more adaptable ones was the driving force behind the adoption of project management techniques in the public sector, they said. Additionally, they stressed the need of tailoring the project management strategy to the unique requirements of government agencies.

White and Fortune (2002) surveyed 236 project managers from various government agencies in the UK to assess the state of project monitoring and evaluation in the country. In order to determine how successful the project management approaches, tools, and techniques were, they polled participants. Despite facing some difficulties, 41% of the projects that were reported were deemed fully effective in their use of project management methods.

In response to the country's deteriorating infrastructure and its rapidly expanding population, the Indian government has sought out large-scale public-private partnerships (PPPs) for crucial infrastructure projects. The sheer scale and diversity of the projects, as well as the cultural and linguistic variations within and between Indian groups, made it impossible for the central government to take on such a task. As a consequence, authority was decentralized, dividing the country into councils that managed areas with 1.5 million or more residents. These councils operated identically to county administrations (Alkharashi and Skitmore, 2009). Decentralization of development projects was essential to India's progress, according to Alsuwaidi (2011), who examined the state of development in Asian nations. These reasons included, but were not limited to, a lack of funding, insecurity, different taxes, improving infrastructure, community beliefs, stakeholder involvement, and technological advancements.

Less developed nations, including those in Africa, are putting project management practices and tools into practice in their first phases. This relatively recent technique uses a comprehensive scheduling and management system to optimize resource use and fulfill predefined tasks within budget and schedule constraints. According to a 2009 study conducted in Nigeria by Idoro and Patunola-Ajayi, public institutions and their contractors fall short of their obligations concerning the allotted budget, specifications, and deadlines because contemporary project management tools, approaches, and techniques are still undervalued in the public sector. Effective project execution in Nigeria's public sector is hampered by social and political institutions, cultural hurdles, and a lack of funds, according to Idoro and Patunola-Ajayi (2009). The Public Procurement Authority (2010) reports a notable rise in Ghana's project completion rates. Agyeman (2014) conducted research which indicates that almost all governments have had project execution as their major operational center from ancient times.

The Ghanaian government claims that creating successful governance requires careful monitoring and assessment. To establish a policy that is focused on the civil service is the aim of the civil service law. In order to do this, it requires policy planning in addition to monitoring and assessment mechanisms for all economic sectors. Comprehensive monitoring is still lacking (Koranteng, 2008). A component of Botswana's project monitoring and evaluation is effective resource management. Hawkins (2004).

To facilitate the execution of projects, Kenya has exerted considerable effort since the proclamation of its 2010 constitution to establish policy frameworks and legal instruments at the county government level. It is

necessary to verify that the money were truly used for their intended purpose as a large amount of resources have been spent. Monitoring and evaluation procedures must be implemented accurately, which calls for transparency, high-caliber project performance, and accountability for the project's impact and resource use.

In order to effectively grow and affect their work, the counties must satisfy the requirements of their receivers, establish clear reporting procedures, and make use of resources. Every year, they have to assess their performance and advancement as well. Because of this, they must collaborate with every department in a fluid manner using result-based management. (Koranteng (2008).

The World Bank (2012) lists low levels of technology as one of the many reasons affecting the execution of development initiatives in Kenya. Other problems include politics, corruption, tribalism/nepotism, misdirected priorities, and financial embezzlements. UNDP (2010) assessed the types of projects and levels of polarization in Kenya and found that major initiatives fail due to nepotism and tribalism, where the most numerous tribes dominate governmental offices and projects. The removal of obstacles to growth and the subsequent distribution of benefits to all citizens was a key reason why Kenyans embraced the new constitution. Devolution also included the distribution of appropriate development projects to underprivileged communities in rural areas, urban slums, and other underserved regions of the nation.

The GOK report (2014) states that since the new constitution was proclaimed, the nation has achieved remarkable progress in several areas such as infrastructure, education, mining, water, small and medium enterprise (SME) initiativekenses, and general industrialization. Each of Kenya's 47 counties has full control over its own development plans and projects; each county also contributes financially to its own programs, with the remaining funds coming from the national government to cover any shortfalls (the Republic of Kenya, 2013). Nevertheless, the counties' performance during project execution is still not up to par for a variety of reasons. Lack of clear internal communication processes and laws in public institutions, low staffing levels, little stakeholder involvement, and uninspired workers who were paid late or nonexistent compensation are some of the reasons why many projects have failed or stagnated.

. No studies have focused on this region to suggest ways that project management principles may be implemented to help with the country's big problem: government projects not using them.

Specifications, time, and money have been the three pillars upon which project success has rested. Impact, beneficiary value, efficiency, and sustainability are all components that make up a project's overall quality (Kensek & Noble, 2014). Staying within the allotted budget, completing the project in the allotted time for design and occupancy, and meeting all necessary technical standards for quality, safety, and environmental protection are the utmost important aspects of project performance. When projects are well-executed, businesses are able to maximize profits, reduce the impact of potential negative outcomes on the project's goals, and even prevent negative outcomes from happening. When it comes to small organizations, project risk management is all about the time and money saved. That there are a plethora of generic risk management methods and models specific to projects is not surprising.

Three fundamental aspects of every successful project are time, money, and quality; they will serve as the project's performance metrics (Shulha, Caruthers & Hopson, 2010). For a product to be considered high-quality, it must have all the characteristics that are necessary for it to fulfill the intended function. Design and contrast papers should clearly and unambiguously describe the definition of quality criteria to guarantee effectiveness and conformance of quality performance. For the sake of this research, we defined project performance in terms of time, money, quality, and profitability, as small and medium-sized businesses prioritize return on investment (ROI) above project investment (PI). Cost, quality, stakeholder and customer happiness, and the success in accomplishing project goals are the traditional metrics used to evaluate project success in Kenya.

Cost, scope, and time are three endpoints that are expected to be met by all actions. Successful projects meet their budget, schedule, and quality goals in this way. Failures are those that don't (PMI, 2014). Essential performance metrics include achievement and dissatisfaction. Metrics and evaluation (M&E) and key performance indicators (KPIs) assist measure a project's success. In order to get a quantitative assessment of how well a project is doing, it is necessary to keep an eye on key indicators. From the goals that have been set, indicators are produced. When all of the project's goals and objectives have been met, the project's scope will have been satisfied. Projects are more likely to succeed in reaching their goals when their scope and objectives are defined early on.

Finding out how much it will cost to finish a project is a good way to gauge how well it went. Everything about a project that has a monetary component is included in the cost. According to research on compressive measurement of projects (PMI, 2014), among the many performance metrics examined were stakeholder satisfaction, project cost, project timeline, and performance requirements. Project functionality, project management, and contractor's commercial performance were the three dimensions into which the success of a project was divided in a study on project success measurement (Philips, 2018). Within project management, the study covered topics such as budget, schedule, and technical specifications. Positivity in the workplace, proficiency in navigating bureaucratic politics, and command of technology progress were other factors examined

(Philips, 2018). This research will measure the performance of a project using the measures of success outlined earlier: time, money, and number of goals accomplished.

In Kenya, the success of projects is affected by various factors, such as corruption, political influences, financial mismanagement, misaligned priorities, tribalism, nepotism, and limited technological advancements (Abdi & Kimutai, 2018). According to Musyoki, (2018), issues like nepotism and tribalism hinder project leaders from selecting competent and capable implementers, thus impacting the implementation phase due to a lack of understanding, skills, and expertise. Although the new constitution has taken steps to address nepotism, these challenges persist in Kenya today. However, the new constitution has also facilitated development by introducing devolution, which led to the establishment of Meru County and 46 other counties. By prioritizing devolution, development projects have become more accessible to the people, particularly benefiting marginalized regions and individuals at the grassroots level.

Study by Narayan et al. (2021) on devolution among low-and middle-income countries in Africa, notable advancements have been observed across various sectors in the country, including infrastructure, water projects, mining activities, basic education, and healthcare services. These improvements have taken place despite the persistent issue of nepotism. In Kenya, county governments now possess increased autonomy in planning and executing development initiatives, collecting taxes for project funding, and managing resources efficiently. The national government has also allocated deficit budgets, taking into account factors such as population and needs (Koskei & Otinga, 2021).

Nevertheless, there are a number of reasons why the counties' monitoring and assessment of project performance is not up to par. Inadequate personnel, unclear public institutional regulations, unclear internal communication channels, and inadequate or nonexistent incentives for timely payments are all factors. The project has been considerably delayed and failed due to these issues. Importantly, no studies have focused on this particular area to provide suggestions for how to handle the country's big problem with effective management techniques in government projects. Examining market initiatives in Meru County and investigating strategies that might result in improvement, this research sought to solve the M&E difficulties in Kenyan government projects.

The County Government of Meru has initiated various strategies to foster the growth of market infrastructure in all nine Sub Counties. For example, in Imenti South Sub County, they intend to enhance Nkubu and Ntharene Markets by expanding their facilities. Likewise, in Imenti North Sub County, the focus is on establishing a modern retail market at Gakoromone, while Buuri Sub County aims to expand Timau Market. In addition, Igembe Sub County has plans to enlarge Kangeta Market. The development of other Sub Counties, such as Tigania East and Tigania West, was duly considered during the formulation of Meru County Annual Development Plans (ADP) over the course of the five-year plan.

Key partners have highly regarded the monitoring data and evaluation findings made possible by the institutionalization of M&E, which has meant the formation of M&E units with strategic, legal, and institutional plans. Enhanced planning, budgeting, and policymaking have resulted in better adequacy, and institutionalized M&E has played a crucial role in the improvement strategy/program cycle by increasing the responsibility of execution to provide effective critique.

M&E is now constantly a part of global initiatives to attain ecological, financial, and social management. The sustainability standards and indicators for M&E are critical both nationally and internationally when it comes to characterizing, monitoring, and disseminating information regarding ecological, financial, and social patterns, tracking progress toward objectives, and influencing arrangements and practices.

Those involved in a project may gauge whether or not things are moving in the right direction with the use of M&E.

A sensible method for determining if and how objectives are being met after some time to fulfill community requirements should be provided by monitoring and evaluation in education programs. Throughout the program phases, ACF (2011) emphasizes the importance of community engagement and the enhancement of neighborhood capacities. This means that communities should actively work to identify their own needs, define the program's objectives, and put the program's monitoring and evaluation strategies into action. To make sure the initiatives are tailored to the people and meet their needs and wants, this level of participation is essential. According to (ACF, 2011), one more method of monitoring and evaluation is planning for monitoring. This procedure sets up a project's objectives, presumptions, indicators, and actions. Monitoring and project management are made much simpler when there are clear indications for the types of data that may be gathered, examined, and used to determine the course of the project..

Among the methods used for monitoring and evaluation are human capability assessments and baseline survey utilization, as stated in an IFAD (2015) annual report on outcomes and effect. In addition, the information type contained in the system is the most common point of complaint for M&E systems in IFAD programs. There were instances of illogical and inconsistent indicators and logical frameworks in the Pakistan IFAD Country Programme Evaluation, while in Belize, there were two distinct frameworks that added complexity and uncertainty. Project assessment documentation did not adequately account for conducting systematic baseline and subsequent beneficiary surveys, according to the Ethiopia IFAD Country Programme Evaluation. To illustrate the

point, a baseline survey was conducted in one Ethiopian project two or three years after the initiative's launch. Human ability was found to have a significant role in assessing project progress and evaluating outcome accomplishment, according to the IFAD assessment. According to a study of an Australian NGO conducted by Spooner and Dermott (2008), program managers were tasked with doing data analysis due to a lack of time. Despite being tasked with data collection and analysis, several employees expressed a lack of competence in this area. Finally, a number of staff members expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of communication or feedback channels between management and the M&E team. Loo (2004) identified a number of areas where project management practices in developing countries needed to be improved, including technical areas, better scope management, better budget management, standard project management practices, organizational learning, project reviews and audits, effective resource planning, training for managers and staff, empowered teams, and effective planning.

Among the methods of monitoring and evaluation that have been covered, the log frame stands out as a popular and effective approach. It summarizes strategies to deal with the problems that have been identified, the emphasis on these strategies, and the outcomes that are intended. Indicators are then used to track the progress made towards these objectives. It should be supported with other specific tools and working techniques that encourage the compelling participation of partners; yet, it is certainly not a replacement for knowledge and professional judgment (Europe Aid, 2012). Furthermore, it has been admitted that talks with partners may have an impact on some of its strategic choices, which might make it difficult to put certain suggestions into practice (Europe Aid, 2012). The monitoring and assessment techniques that were looked at indicate that the following subjects need further investigation: performance of M&E planning, stakeholder involvement, and market development activities in Meru County.

Government-funded initiatives present recipients with a remarkable opportunity. As per a report by Education for All Global Monitoring (2020), the success of these projects goes beyond mere timing; it relies on adhering to defined scopes and securing sufficient financial support. Active involvement from key stakeholders is crucial to enhance available resources and meet project requirements. In the public sector, resourcefulness and contributions to economic development are essential aspects of these projects. Considering the various factors involved, the M&E of government projects pose significant complexity for project managers and administrators (UNESCO, 2020).

In Kenya, the government offers subsidies for numerous projects in various sectors, including road construction, water dams, education, and IT initiatives. The primary stakeholders encompass Kenyan citizens, the business community, and investors. Kenya's decentralization policy aims to enhance citizen participation and government ownership by shifting governance activities from centralized to consultative approaches. This transition involves considering authority, functions, competence, and vital resources at the county level (Ngigi & Busolo, 2019). Nevertheless, challenges related to project monitoring and evaluation have made achieving a seamless transition in county governments more challenging. Not sticking to the project schedule, going over budget, and not following the quality standards stated in the architectural plans and bill of goods are common problems that lead to inefficient project delivery. Several market building projects were suggested by the Meru County government in the County Integrated Development Plan 2018–2022. These included the Gakoromone Modern Retail Markets, the expansion of Ntharene and Timau Markets, as well as the Nkubu and Kangeta Markets. Regrettably, these projects were not completed, with some left unfinished and unused. A study by Tabassi, Abdullah, and Bryde (2019) examined project management practices in the Malaysian construction industry and their impact on project performance, specifically focusing on how these practices affected project progress. Similarly, Mongare (2017) conducted a study on project management activities and IT projects in Kenyan local banks, highlighting the benefits of project tracking and assessment in successful IT project implementation. It is essential to acknowledge that Mongare's research was based on secondary data and may not have adequately addressed certain research goals. Thus, by investigating the connection between training monitoring and evaluation personnel and the accomplishment of Meru County Government's market development initiatives, this study aimed to fill the gaps in earlier research.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical Literature**

Scott introduced the concept of institutional theory in 1991, highlighting the significant role institutions play in shaping organizational design and evaluating performance. According to Scott, organizations represent localized expressions of broader institutions, and adherence to institutionalized norms enhances legitimacy, reduces ambiguity, and fosters a clearer understanding of an organization's actions and endeavors.

Specifically within public sector sustainable service projects, this theory investigates how organizational climate and hierarchical culture impact project management success (Brammer and Walker, 2012). Institutional theory aids in comprehending the pressures on institutions to standardize, potentially leading to decreased institutional diversity. Organizations strive to conform to recognizable and accepted standards within their

industry, thus bolstering their credibility. Moreover, the theory underscores the significance of sound policies across all project stages, including performance assessment. Monitoring and evaluation can indicate changes and pressures that necessitate government adaptation. In order to learn how the project team reacts to external influences and leadership backing, it is helpful to do periodical re-evaluations. In order for public service organizations to carry out successful initiatives, this notion is fundamental. Because it calls for taking into account all internal and external aspects, this theory is also related to project feasibility. Risk and opportunities need to be assessed based on how the organization perceives its environment. Project feasibility determine how the organizational structure will align with project implementation (Brammer & Walker, 2012).

## **2.2 M&E Staff Training and Project performance**

Rogito (2010) investigated how (M&E) affects project performance using the Youth Enterprise Development Fund in Marani District, Kenya, as a case study. Examining how training affected the monitoring and assessment of youth programs' implementation was the primary goal. The study also sought to ascertain what additional strategies and tactics may enhance the performance of youth programs, the degree to which M&E plan frameworks influenced the project itself, and the effectiveness of M&E benchmark evaluations prior to project commencement. In the inquiry, a descriptive design method was used.

Many youth project implementers did not get enough training in monitoring and evaluation, and even fewer attended seminars, according to the results. In addition, the research found that project failure was more likely when monitoring and evaluation training was not provided. The study also included young initiatives in the education and finance sectors of Kenya's economy, among others.

Mulandi (2013) aimed to investigate the factors that influence the (M&E) systems used by non-governmental organizations in Nairobi, Kenya's governance domain. The following research goals guided the study: examining the effects of data quality on M&E system performance in NGOs; examining the effects of human capacity on M&E system performance in NGOs; investigating the effects of the legal framework on M&E system performance in NGOs; and investigating the effects of using monitoring and evaluation information on M&E system performance in NGOs.

This study used a survey as its research strategy. The results show that data gathering went according to plan, and that software tools were the main means of data processing. The employment of software for data analysis did, however, confront storage and training-related problems. The program officers also showed that they knew their way around assessment and monitoring tools. The use of quantitative indicators was preferred over qualitative ones, and benchmark assessments were carried out before the initiative was put into action. The efficacy of monitoring and evaluation procedures was thereafter secondary to an assessment of human resources' ability to utilize M&E systems in a subsequent research.

Research by White (2013) on the evolution of M&E best practices in INGOs revealed that these organizations encounter many obstacles when trying to execute or oversee M&E initiatives. One problem is a lack of capacity for (M&E). This is because M&E professionals usually have a lot on their plates, juggling many projects across different regions or industries. Managing the (M&E) tasks for several separate projects quickly exhausts the limited M&E resources and causes M&E professionals to burn out. As a result of high rates of burnout and turnover, organizations are ill-equipped to support the progress of M&E and have a hard time recruiting competent M&E personnel. Also, Mibey (2011) looked at how the Kazi Kwa Kijana project's monitoring and evaluation procedures were carried out. Given that capacity building should be a significant part of the project nationwide, it is imperative to invest more in human resources development and training in the critical technical area of monitoring and evaluation (in Kenya).

Njiri (2015) conducted study to find out how the success of agribusiness projects managed by non-governmental organizations in Murang'a County was impacted by the usage of M&E systems. The following were the objectives of the study: how Murang'a County's agribusiness project success is influenced by indicators; how human resources influence M&E system utilization in NGOs involved in agri-business; how data systems impact M&E system performance in NGOs; and lastly, how propriety standards impact M&E system performance in NGOs. We also wanted to know how utilizing M&E findings affected M&E system performance in NGOs, so we could guide our research accordingly.

The study indicates that the availability and use of project indicators have a negative relationship with the success of NGO projects. On the other hand, it has been shown that the availability of human resources for (M&E) is favorably connected with project success. The usage of data systems was positively correlated with a project's overall performance; however, there was a negative correlation found between the effectiveness of NGO programs and the use of monitoring and evaluation findings. After giving it some more thought, the author stressed the importance of manpower, or human resources, in monitoring and evaluation. Staff capability, collaboration, and involvement are just a few areas of human resources that may need additional research into their effects on project success.

### III. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1 The materials

This research specifically aimed to investigate the impact of project management, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder participation, project feasibility, and leadership buy-in on the execution of market development activities within Meru County Government. This was accomplished by following the steps outlined by Bloomfield and Fisher (2019) for descriptive survey research. These steps include collecting and evaluating data via observation in the field without making any adjustments. By conducting interviews and surveys with the target population, the researcher was able to learn what they needed to know to achieve the study's aims.

All of the Meru County's Government market initiatives were the primary subject of this study from 2018 to 2023. The individuals participating in the study were selected from the market management committees and their leadership, consisting of 410 officials across different levels of management within these committees.

**Table 1: Target Population**

Sub Counties		Markets	Population	Percentage
<b>Imenti South County</b>	<b>Sub</b>	Nkubu fresh produce market	10	2.4
		Keria fresh produce Market	10	2.4
		Ntharene fresh produce market	40	9.8
		Katheri Market	40	9.8
<b>Imenti North County</b>	<b>Sub</b>	Gakoromone Market	42	10.3
		Kinoru Market	18	4.4
<b>Imenti central County</b>	<b>Sub</b>	Kariene Market	30	7.3
		Equator market	10	2.4
<b>Buuri Sub County</b>		Kirua market	35	8.5
		Timau market	25	6.1
<b>Tigania Sub County</b>		Nchiru Market	25	6.1
		Kangeta Market,	25	6.1
<b>Igembe Sub County</b>		Maua Cereals and Fruits Market	25	6.1
		Mutuati Fresh produce market	25	6.1
		Athiru Ruujine Market,	10	2.4
<b>Tigania East County</b>	<b>Sub</b>	Mikinduri Cereals and Livestock market,	25	6.1
		Kiguchwa Market	15	3.7
<b>Total</b>			<b>410</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Meru CIDP, 2018-2022

#### 3.2 Methods

According to Bryman and Cramer (2013), the aim of data analysis is to provide answers to research questions and achieve research objectives. Records was implied and edited after collection. The editing process included reviewing the surveys for missing or unnecessary information and removing them. A codebook was produced to help with the coding process by providing a reference for filling out the entry sheets with the necessary data. Both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques were used. The quantitative data were analyzed, presented, and interpreted using regression statistics, descriptive and inferential statistics, and other methods to help understand the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. For the investigation, a multiple regression model was used:

$$Y = b_0 + b_1X_1 + \epsilon; \text{ Where:}$$

Y = Project performance

$b_0$  = Constant  
 $b_1$ , = Regression Coefficients.  
 $X_1$ , = Training of M&E Staff  
 $\epsilon$  = Error term.

Thematic analysis was utilized to interpret the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions. The data was characterized using means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages. To make the data easier to interpret, graphs, tables, and figures were used (Kombo, 2006).

#### IV. Results and Discussion

##### 4.1 Response Rate

This research included 123 participants from all nine of Meru County's sub-counties that have had market schemes put into place. The response rate was 87.8 percent, giving a total of 108 completed and returned questionnaires out of 123 that were sent out (see table 2). A response rate of 87.8% was deemed suitable for analysis, as hinted at by Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), which is 50%.

**Table 2: Response rate**

variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Response</b>	108	87.8%
<b>Non-Response</b>	15	12.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Researcher (2024)

##### 4.2 M&E Training and Performance of Market Projects.

Determining the impact of M&E educational programs on the accomplishment of market goals in Meru County was the main goal of this study. This goal was accomplished by asking respondents to indicate whether or not M&E staff training affects the final result of market projects, whether or not the performance of county-funded education projects is impacted by the availability of competent workers, and how frequently M&E staff and particular M&E areas are trained. The subthemes under which the study's findings are arranged are: Number of employee training sessions, Objective Training on specific areas of M&E, and Availability of competent people. Table 4's descriptive data makes it abundantly evident that the majority of the constituents, or sub-variables, had a major impact on the market efforts' performance. On a Likert scale with five points, 1 represented "strongly disagree," 2 represented "disagree," 3 represented "neutral," 4 represented "agree," and 5 represented "strongly agree". The tabulated results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: M&E Training and performance**

Statement	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev
<b>Accessibility of skilled labor.</b>	108	4.3%	7.1%	4.3%	21.4%	62.4%	4.31	1.12
<b>the incidence of staff training</b>	108	2.9%	4.3%	8.6%	20%	64.3%	4.386	1.01
<b>Object training focused on certain M&amp;E topics</b>	108	7.1%	4.3%	20.0%	25.7%	42.9%	3.929	1.207
<b>Average</b>							<b>4.208</b>	<b>1.112</b>

Source: Researcher (2024)

More than 83.8 percent of those who took the survey agreed that well-trained teachers and administrators are essential to the achievement of educational goals supported by county budgets. A mean score of 4.31 out of 5 indicates substantial agreement with the significance of experienced individuals for the successful completion of major initiatives, which lends credence to this. In addition, almost three-quarters of those who took the survey think that regular staff training on M&E best practices improves project outcomes.

The vast majority of those who participated (88.6%) think that specific training with an emphasis on M&E is necessary to achieve project objectives. According to Rogito (2010), M&E training boosts the percentage of project goals met, which is consistent with these findings. Additionally, studies demonstrate that inadequate monitoring and assessment training often results in project failure.

##### 4.3 Correlation Results of Study Variables

Using Pearson correlation analysis, this study looked at how monitoring and assessment processes affected the market development initiatives of the Meru County Government. Table 4 displays the analysis's findings.



**Table 4: Correlation analysis**

		Project performance	M&E Planning
<b>Project performance</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	108	
<b>M&amp;E Planning</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.494	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.017	
	N	108	108

Source: Researcher (2024)

The data show a substantial correlation of 0.648 between M&E training and project performance. The correct input from the M&E unit will lead to better performance on county-funded projects, therefore it follows that trainings for M&E workers should focus on this area. These findings are in line with those of Nabulu (2015), who found a similar favorable relationship between M&E performance and government project outcomes. This study's results show the results of a correlation analysis performed on the study's sample population at a significance level of 0.05.

**4.4 Regression Analysis**

This study used multiple regression analysis to look at possible links between independent variables in order to ascertain how M&E procedures influenced the effectiveness of activities. An overview of the model that explains the variation of the predictor variables (adjusted R Square) may be seen in Table 5.

**Table 5: Model summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.836 <sup>a</sup>	0.675	0.655	0.4766

a. Predictors: (Constant), M&E training  
Source: Researcher (2024)

The independent variable, M&E training has an adjusted R2 value of 0.675, account for 67.5% of the variance in the success of Meru County's market development initiatives. Therefore, additional variables not included in this research account for the remaining 32.5% of the difference.

**Table 6: ANOVA of the regression**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.193	4	4.548	23.587	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	161.498	103	0.934		
	Total	163.691	107			

a. Dependent Variable: Project Performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), M&E training  
Source: Researcher (2024)

The model accurately predicts the impacts of M&E Training on the effectiveness of Meru County's market development initiatives, with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the approved threshold of 0.05.

**Table 7: Regression Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.267	0.408		5.557	0.130
	M&E staff training	0.266	0.157	0.088	1.155	0.000

### **a. Dependent Variable: Project Performance**

Source: Researcher (2024)

The way in which to which M&E training affect Meru County Government market development projects' success is shown in Table 7 of the results of the multiple regression analysis. As per the SPSS generated table, regression equation;

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$  becomes:

$$Y = 2.267 + 0.266X_1$$

Based on the regression equation, the market development projects in Meru County are expected to perform at a level of 2.267 when the variable (M&E Training) is maintained constant at zero.

One goal of the research was to find out how different market development initiatives in Meru County fared after M&E staff had received training. Results showed that project performance improved by 0.266 percentage points for every unit increase in M&E staff training. We may infer that there was a statistically significant impact of teaching the M&E workers since the computed p-value is less than 0.005. Mibey (2011) asserts that M&E staff training had a significant impact on how these people evaluated project performance, which raised the possibility of project success. Their skills in M&E task management and their ability to work together were both impacted by their training. Project success is more probable for a company that puts money into employee education and professional development in critical M&E areas.

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The purpose of this research was to investigate the methods used by the Meru County Government of Kenya to monitor and evaluate its market development initiatives. According to the results, the county's M&E unit was in charge of the planning phase of the M&E process, with project officials getting updates on how it was going. But there was no evidence that the M&E strategy affected the success of market growth initiatives.

While the majority of monitoring and evaluation officers were informed on project requirements, the research found that their training sessions were inadequate and time-limited. Staff attitudes and organizational culture may be addressed, project goals can be understood, and responsibilities can be defined with the help of thorough training in monitoring and evaluation. This has the potential to further solidify the connection between monitoring and evaluation efforts and results achieved by projects. Consequently, it follows that adequate M&E training is critical for reducing the likelihood of problems caused by inadequate personnel.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

According to the findings, there are a number of obstacles that the Meru County Before monitoring and assessment methods may affect the effectiveness of their market development initiatives, the government must overcome. There aren't enough of them with the necessary qualifications to oversee monitoring and evaluation activities at the sub-county level. The findings showed that a significant number of M&E staff members lacked adequate training in monitoring and assessing, which seriously hindered the effectiveness of the M&E units. Therefore, it is recommended that M&E workers have a degree or higher qualification in order for them to perform their jobs within the units successfully. The county government should provide M&E operations additional funding in order to enhance trainings, carry out ongoing monitoring and evaluation of projects during execution, and ascertain if the intended goals were met.

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