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PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE OF DEPOSIT TAKING SAVINGS AND CREDIT COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN KAJIADO COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Deposit-Taking Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (DT-SACCOs) play a pivotal role in promoting financial inclusion and economic empowerment, particularly among underserved and low-income populations. However, the performance of Deposit-Taking Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (DT-SACCOs) has been declining over the years. The general objective of the study is to establish the influence of project monitoring and evaluation on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to determine the influence of M&E planning and M&E team capability on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya. This study was anchored on; Results-Based Management (RBM) Theory and Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory. In this study, a descriptive research design was employed. This study targeted deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya. According SASRA report (2023) there is a total of 35 SACCOs licensed for deposit-taking business in Kajiado County, Kenya. This study targeted the management employees working in these deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya. The total target population was therefore 280 respondents comprising of 35 top managers, 105 middle managers and 140 lower level managers. The Yamane formula was adopted to calculate the study sample size. Therefore, the study sample size was 165 respondents. This study relied on primary data collected through use of structured questionnaires. Data obtained from the field was coded, cleaned, and entered into the computer for analysis using the SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistical included frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistical analysis comprised of multiple regression and correlation analysis. The study results were presented through use of tables and figures. The study concludes that M&E planning has a significant effect on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya. In addition, the study concluded that M&E team capability has a significant effect on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya.. The study recommends that the management of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies should invest in building the technical skills, knowledge, and competencies of their M&E personnel. This can be achieved through targeted training, professional development programs, and exposure to modern monitoring tools and data analysis techniques

Key Words: Project Monitoring and Evaluation, M&E Planning, M&E Team Capability, Performance of Deposit Taking Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies

Background of the Study

Deposit-Taking Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (DT-SACCOs) are member-owned financial institutions that mobilize savings from their members and provide credit facilities, while also accepting deposits similar to traditional banks. Registered and regulated under the Sacco Societies Act in Kenya, DT-SACCOs are licensed by the Sacco Societies Regulatory Authority (SASRA) to carry out deposit-taking business (Borisch, Amer & Jahaf, 2023). These cooperatives operate on the principles of mutual assistance, democratic governance, and member empowerment, aiming to promote financial inclusion and improve the socio-economic welfare of their members. Unlike non-deposit-taking SACCOs, DT-SACCOs offer a wider range of financial services, including savings accounts, fixed deposits, and FOSA (Front Office Service Activities) services, positioning them as key players in Kenya's formal financial sector, especially among low- and middle-income earners in both urban and rural areas (Vaezi, 2020).

Deposit-Taking Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (DT-SACCOs) play a vital role in enhancing financial inclusion, particularly among low- and middle-income earners who may be underserved by mainstream financial institutions. By offering accessible savings and affordable credit facilities, DT-SACCOs empower individuals to invest in education, healthcare, agriculture, and small businesses (Rahman, 2021). In regions like Kajiado County, where formal banking infrastructure is limited, DT-SACCOs act as the primary financial service providers, enabling members to manage their finances and build assets through cooperative efforts (Aamer, 2020).

In addition to financial services, DT-SACCOs contribute significantly to community and economic development. They mobilize local resources through member savings and reinvest them in the form of loans, thereby stimulating entrepreneurship and income-generating activities. This localized financial intermediation helps create employment, reduce poverty, and foster economic resilience at the grassroots level (Chowwalit & Sumalee, 2020). Furthermore, DT-SACCOs promote a savings culture and responsible borrowing habits, contributing to long-term financial stability among their members. DT-SACCOs also play a governance and social role by upholding democratic principles within their operations. Members actively participate in decision-making processes through annual general meetings and board elections, fostering transparency and accountability (Mgoba & Kabote, 2020). This cooperative model builds trust and social cohesion, reinforcing the importance of collective responsibility. Additionally, DT-SACCOs often provide financial literacy training and capacity-building initiatives, equipping members with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed financial decisions. As such, DT-SACCOs are not just financial institutions, but also engines of social and economic transformation within their communities (Nzamwita & Sikubwabo, 2023).

Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a systematic process used to track the progress of a project and assess its effectiveness, efficiency, and impact in relation to set objectives. Monitoring involves the continuous collection and analysis of data throughout the project lifecycle to ensure that activities are being implemented as planned, timelines are adhered to, and resources are being used appropriately (Akanbang & Abdalla, 2021). Evaluation, on the other hand, is a periodic assessment that measures the outcomes and overall success of a project, helping to determine whether the project's goals have been achieved and what lessons can be learned. Together, monitoring and evaluation provide critical information for decision-making, accountability, and improvement, enabling project managers and stakeholders to make informed adjustments and ensure the project delivers meaningful results (Bibohere, Ssekamatte & Olwenyi, 2024).

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) planning is the foundation of an effective M&E system. It involves defining the scope, objectives, indicators, data collection methods, timelines, and

responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating a project (Afomachukwu, 2022). A well-developed M&E plan ensures that project activities are aligned with expected outcomes and that there are clear benchmarks to measure progress and performance. In the context of deposit-taking SACCOs, M&E planning helps track financial performance, member satisfaction, and operational efficiency. It also allows management to identify early warning signs of underperformance, enabling timely interventions. An M&E plan provides structure and direction, ensuring that data collected is relevant, accurate, and timely for informed decision-making (Sifunjo, 2021).

The capability of the M&E team plays a critical role in the success of any M&E system. This includes the team's technical expertise, experience in data analysis, knowledge of performance measurement tools, and ability to interpret and use data effectively (Jamaal, 2020). A skilled M&E team ensures that data collection is systematic, analysis is accurate, and reports are reliable. In SACCOs, competent M&E personnel can identify trends in loan performance, member behavior, and financial sustainability, thereby providing actionable insights to management. Moreover, an effective team fosters a culture of learning and continuous improvement, ensuring that M&E findings are used not just for reporting but for enhancing operations and service delivery (Kathongo & Kamau, 2021).

In China, Borisch, Amer and Jahaf (2023) found that effective project monitoring and evaluation practices are fundamental to the success of large-scale development projects. Without a well-structured framework, it becomes challenging to track progress, identify issues, and implement timely corrective measures. A robust environmental impact assessment (EIA) is critical to mitigate potential ecological and environmental consequences. The Yangqu Dam Project's commitment to conducting a comprehensive EIA highlights the importance of environmental responsibility in development endeavors. The study concluded that incorporating stakeholders at all levels, from local communities to governmental bodies and environmental organizations, is vital.

In Tanzania, Mgoba and Kabote (2020) revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation for the governmental and non-governmental water projects. This shows that effectiveness of PM&E in achievement of community-based water projects differed based on the three categories: low, medium and high. Majority reported high effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation in community-based water projects mainly due to communities' participation. The study concluded that effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation on achievement of community-based water projects was high, more so in non-governmental water projects.

Jamaal (2020) found out that project monitoring and evaluation engages stakeholders in joint planning and assessing progress, leads to successful completion of projects, financial capital is often linked to the viability of projects, project monitoring and evaluation brings financial mobilization practices by the communities leading to success of the projects and total quality management projects requires rigorous pre-planning which leads to success in project performances and influence change in its daily practice. The study concluded that lack of proper training on PM&E and inappropriate tools inhibit participatory monitoring and evaluation and lack of adequate financial resources was noted to affect the performance as well as quality of monitoring and evaluation.

Statement of the Problem

Deposit-Taking Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (DT-SACCOs) play a pivotal role in promoting financial inclusion and economic empowerment, particularly among underserved and low-income populations (Jamaal, 2020). In Kenya, and specifically in Kajiado County, DT-SACCOs provide members with accessible financial services such as savings mobilization, affordable credit facilities, and investment opportunities. These institutions are member-owned

and democratically governed, which fosters a sense of collective ownership and trust. DT-SACCOs contribute significantly to local economic development by enabling members to invest in education, agriculture, business ventures, and home improvement. They also serve as financial safety nets, reducing the reliance on informal and often exploitative lending systems. As such, DT-SACCOs are vital components of Kenya's cooperative movement and national development agenda (Sifunjo, 2021).

One of the key challenges faced by DT-SACCOs in Kenya is limited market share, particularly in comparison to commercial banks and digital financial service providers. While SACCOs have traditionally been strong in rural and semi-urban areas, their reach is increasingly threatened by the rapid expansion of mobile-based banking platforms and fintech solutions (Kathongo & Kamau, 2021). According to the FinAccess 2021 Household Survey, commercial banks accounted for 41.4% of Kenya's formal financial access points, compared to SACCOs at only 12.5%. In Kajiado County, where mobile money usage stands at over 80%, DT-SACCOs face difficulty in attracting and retaining younger, tech-savvy members who prefer digital convenience over traditional SACCO services. The challenge is further compounded by limited technological infrastructure and digital innovation among many SACCOs, restricting their ability to scale and compete in a fast-evolving financial landscape (Ngatia, 2020).

Profitability is another significant challenge affecting DT-SACCOs, often due to high operational costs, loan defaults, and limited diversification of income streams. Many SACCOs rely heavily on interest from loans as their primary source of income, making them vulnerable to risks such as loan delinquency and borrower defaults (Lesiamito & Ombui, 2024). According to the SASRA Annual Supervision Report 2023, the average loan default rate across DT-SACCOs stood at 12.7%, up from 10.4% in 2021, indicating growing credit risk. Furthermore, only 35% of DT-SACCOs reported profits exceeding KES 10 million, while a significant number struggled to break even due to poor cost control and lack of modern risk management systems. This profitability challenge limits SACCOs' ability to reinvest in technology, staff training, and product innovation—factors crucial for long-term sustainability and growth (Jamaal, 2020).

Customer satisfaction among SACCO members has also been a growing concern, with many members expressing dissatisfaction related to delays in loan processing, poor communication, and lack of digital access (Sifunjo, 2021). A 2022 survey by the Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives (KUSCCO) found that only 54% of SACCO members were "very satisfied" with the services provided, while 23% reported regular frustrations with responsiveness and service turnaround times. In regions like Kajiado County, where SACCOs serve a diverse population—including pastoralists, small business owners, and salaried employees—the inability to tailor services to specific member needs contributes to member attrition. Without consistent feedback mechanisms and customer-focused innovations, SACCOs risk losing their competitive edge to more agile and customer-centric financial institutions (Kathongo & Kamau, 2021).

Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a critical function that directly influences organization performance (Ngatia, 2020). M&E enables SACCOs to systematically track the progress of their initiatives, assess the effectiveness of their operations, and make evidence-based decisions. According to the Sacco Societies Regulatory Authority (SASRA) Annual Report 2023, DT-SACCOs in Kenya had a combined asset base of over KES 800 billion, with more than 5.7 million active members. However, only 45% of SACCOs reported having structured M&E frameworks, and those with established M&E systems showed up to 30% higher loan repayment rates and 25% better financial performance indicators compared to those without (Lesiamito & Ombui, 2024). Various studies have been conducted in different parts of the word on influence of project monitoring and evaluation on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies. For instance, Jamaal (2020) researched on the effects

of project monitoring and evaluation on project performance in Marine and Fisheries, Kathongo and Kamau (2020) examined the influence of project monitoring and evaluation on performance of public secondary schools projects and Waiyaki and Muchelule (2023) examined the influence of project monitoring and evaluation on performance of non-governmental organizations projects. However, none of these studies focused on M&E planning and M&E team capability on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies. To fill the highlighted gaps, the current study sought to determine the influence of project monitoring and evaluation (M&E planning and M&E team capability) on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in in Kajiado County, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

This research study was guided by both the general and specific objectives as discussed below;

General Objective

The general objective of the study was to establish the influence of project monitoring and evaluation on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya

Specific Objectives

i. To determine the influence of M&E planning on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya
ii. To establish the influence of M&E team capability on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya

Theoretical Review

Results-Based Management (RBM) Theory

Results-Based Management (RBM) theory, influenced by UN Secretariat's introduction of results-based budgeting (RBB) (2000), is a strategic framework that emphasizes the importance of achieving predefined results in an organization's operations (Rangsipaht & Thaipakdee, 2020). Originating from development practices and public sector management, RBM aims to improve accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness by focusing on the outcomes rather than just the activities or outputs. The RBM cycle includes four key stages: setting clear and measurable objectives, defining indicators to track progress, monitoring activities, and evaluating the results to inform future decision-making. By embedding these components into daily operations, RBM helps organizations adapt their strategies based on performance data, ensuring continuous improvement (Niwagaba & Mulyungi, 2020).

RBM theory operates on the premise that outcomes and impacts are the ultimate measures of success (Rumenya & Kisimbi, 2020). It emphasizes the importance of creating logical frameworks or results chains, where resources and activities are aligned with desired outcomes. For SACCOs, this means that financial goals, such as profitability, loan repayment rates, and member satisfaction, should be linked to specific activities like loan processing, member engagement, and financial literacy programs. By ensuring that each activity contributes to measurable results, RBM allows organizations to track progress, identify challenges, and refine strategies in a more structured and systematic manner.

For Deposit-Taking SACCOs in Kajiado County, RBM offers a valuable approach to improving their performance (Mbiti & Kiruja, 2020). The ability to monitor and evaluate progress toward specific goals provides SACCOs with the necessary data to make evidence-based decisions, improve service delivery, and meet regulatory requirements. By adopting RBM principles in their M&E systems, SACCOs can more effectively measure financial

health, member growth, loan repayment rates, and other key performance indicators. Furthermore, RBM fosters a results-oriented culture within the organization, ensuring that SACCOs remain focused on outcomes that matter most to their members and stakeholders (Olima & Mungai, 2024). The theory was used to determine the influence of M&E planning on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in in Kajiado County, Kenya.

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, developed by Jay Barney (1991), posits that organizations derive competitive advantage not from the market or external factors but from their internal resources and capabilities (Mahdi, 2023). According to this theory, valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources—often referred to as VRIN resources—are the key drivers of an organization's performance. These resources can include physical assets, financial capital, and most notably, human capital such as knowledge, skills, and expertise. By focusing on these internal capabilities, RBV emphasizes the importance of developing, nurturing, and strategically deploying resources to sustain organizational performance over time (Uwera & Wanjiku, 2023).

In the context of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), RBV highlights the critical role of human resources (Kinyanjui, Gakuu & Kidombo, 2020). The M&E team's capabilities—such as expertise in data collection, analysis, and interpretation—are vital to the effectiveness of the M&E system. An M&E team with a high level of competence and experience is an invaluable resource that can directly impact the organization's ability to assess its progress, identify issues, and implement corrective actions. Moreover, the capacity to use M&E data effectively to inform strategic decisions and improve organizational performance is a key element of a SACCO's competitive advantage (Mohamud & Pedo, 2022).

For Deposit-Taking SACCOs in Kajiado County, applying RBV means investing in the development of a highly capable M&E team that can generate quality performance data, facilitate stakeholder engagement, and provide actionable insights (Rumenya & Kisimbi, 2023). The more skilled the M&E team is, the better the SACCO will be at making informed decisions that enhance operational efficiency, financial sustainability, and member satisfaction. By leveraging these internal resources, SACCOs can continuously improve their service offerings and maintain their competitive edge in the financial services sector (Mahdi, 2023). The theory was used to establish the influence of M&E team capability on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in in Kajiado County, Kenya.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a diagram showing the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. In this study, the independent variables are M&E planning and M&E Team capability while dependent variable is performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in in Kajiado County, Kenya

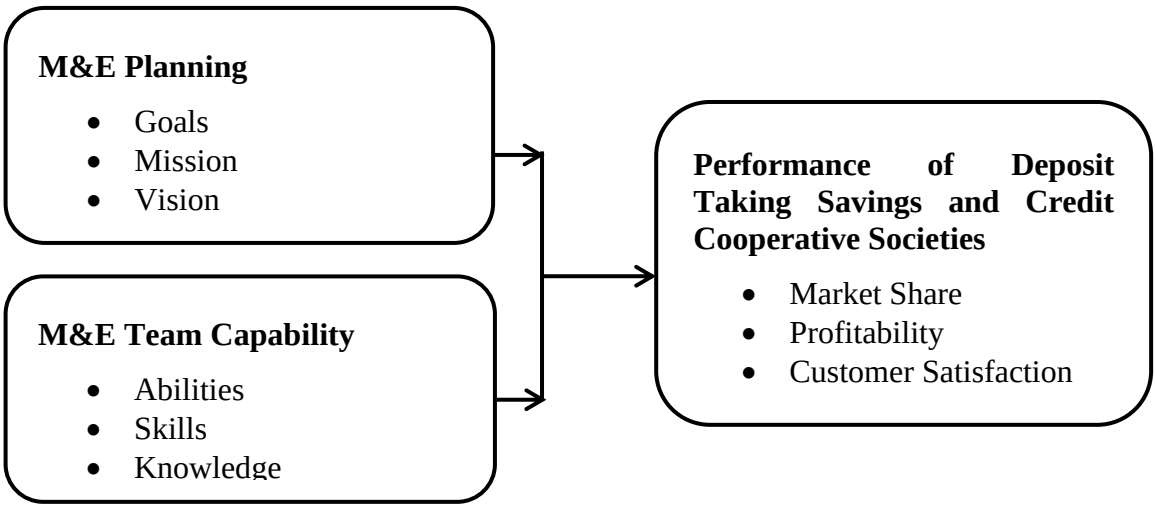

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

M&E Planning

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) planning is a structured process that outlines how the progress and effectiveness of a project or program will be tracked and assessed over time (Rangsipaht & Thaipakdee, 2020). It involves setting clear objectives, defining key performance indicators (KPIs), and establishing data collection methods to measure success against the project's goals. A strong M&E plan specifies what data will be collected, how and when it will be gathered, who will be responsible, and how the results will be analyzed and reported. This ensures accountability, facilitates learning, and supports decision-making by providing evidence of what works and what needs improvement. Goals are specific, measurable, and time-bound objectives that support the mission and move the organization toward its vision (Rumenya & Kisimbi, 2020). They break down the broader mission into achievable steps, providing a roadmap for implementation. Goals help to track progress, allocate resources effectively, and evaluate performance. Well-defined goals are essential for accountability and for guiding teams toward successful outcomes in both the short and long term (Mbiti & Kiruja, 2020).

The mission defines the organization's core purpose and overall intention (Olima & Mungai, 2024). It outlines what the organization does, who it serves, and how it delivers its services or products. A mission statement is action-oriented and helps align the daily work of the team with the broader goals of the organization. It serves as a foundation for decision-making and strategy development, ensuring that all activities remain focused on fulfilling the central purpose (Rangsipaht & Thaipakdee, 2020). The vision represents the long-term aspiration of an organization or project — the ideal future it seeks to create (Niwagaba & Mulyungi, 2020). It serves as an inspirational guide, painting a picture of the world as it would exist if the organization fully achieved its purpose. A strong vision statement motivates stakeholders by expressing a clear and compelling future, often going beyond immediate outcomes to reflect lasting change or societal impact (Rumenya & Kisimbi, 2020).

M&E Team Capability

The capability of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team is crucial to the success of any M&E system (Mahdi, 2023). A well-equipped M&E team should possess a combination of technical, analytical, and communication skills to effectively design, implement, and manage M&E activities. Team members should be proficient in developing logical frameworks, selecting appropriate indicators, designing data collection tools, and using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Abilities refer to the inherent traits and developed capacities that enable an individual or team to perform tasks effectively (Kinyanjui, Gakuu & Kidombo, 2020). These include cognitive, physical, and interpersonal capabilities such as critical thinking, problem-solving, adaptability, and collaboration. In a professional context, strong abilities allow individuals to respond to challenges, learn from experience, and perform consistently across different situations. Abilities often underpin the successful application of both skills and knowledge (Mohamud & Pedo, 2022).

Skills are the practical competencies acquired through training, education, or experience, enabling individuals to carry out specific tasks efficiently and accurately (Rumenya & Kisimbi, 2023). These may be technical (such as data analysis, report writing, or software proficiency) or soft skills (like communication, leadership, or time management). Knowledge refers to the information, concepts, theories, and facts that a person understands and applies in their field of work (Uwera & Wanjiku, 2023). This includes both theoretical understanding and practical awareness of specific domains. In M&E, essential knowledge areas include evaluation methodologies, data quality standards, statistical tools, and sector-specific indicators. A strong knowledge base allows professionals to make informed decisions, ensure compliance with best practices, and contribute to strategic planning and learning processes (Kinyanjui, Gakuu & Kidombo, 2020).

Empirical Review

M&E Planning and Organization Performance

Niwagaba and Mulyungi (2020) conducted a study on the influence of monitoring and evaluation planning on project performance in Rwanda: a case of selected non-governmental organizations in Gasabo district. Descriptive survey design was used; the targeted population of the study was 72 NGOs based in Gasabo district, Kigali. From each NGO two respondents (M&E Specialist & Finance Manager) was picked purposively hence the total target population was 144 respondents. A sample size of 106 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula. The study used both primary and secondary data where questionnaires were used for data collection. Findings indicated that all participating institutions were privy to the M&E plans developed by AVU. The respondents gave plausible reasons why they thought M&E planning influences project performance in reference to the projects under study. Spearman correlation showed a positive significant correlation coefficient M&E planning and project performance. The study concluded that without an M&E plan it would be very difficult to conduct any meaningful project monitoring and evaluation tasks, as there would be no organized way of doing that, no identified key performance data to collect, no schedule to collect data, no delegated responsibilities and no agreed upon method of data analysis.

Mbiti and Kiruja (2020) conducted a study on the role of monitoring and evaluation on performance of public organization projects in Kenya: a case of Kenya meat commission. The study adopted a descriptive survey and targeted 427 employees at Kenya Meat Commission Head Office. A sample of 81 respondents of the target population was considered by use of stratified sampling method. Study findings showed that all independent variables significantly and positively influenced performance of Kenya Meat commission projects. The study concluded that the aspects of human resource on monitoring and evaluation contributed a lot to performance of KMC projects such as staff entrusted with monitoring and evaluation had no

technical skills, staff working on monitoring and evaluation are not dedicated to the function, roles and responsibilities of monitoring and evaluation personnel had not been specified at the start of the projects.

Olima and Mungai (2024) conducted a study on the effect of monitoring and evaluation tools and project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive research design. This study was conducted at the ministry of health. According to MOH (2023) report, ministry of health has a total of 630 employees comprising of 105 top managers, 210 middle level managers and 315 lower level managers. The study revealed that M&E partnership has a positive and significant influence on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya. In addition, the study concluded that M&E plans have a positive and significant influence on project performance in the ministry of health in Kenya.

M&E Team Capability and Organization Performance

Mahdi (2023) conducted a study on effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation team capability system in NGOs operating on the Syrian response. This study aims to explore the underlying factors contributing to the partial implementation and evaluate the overall effectiveness of M&E systems in ensuring the efficient allocation of development cooperation funds. The research aims to contribute to the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation team capability systems in NGOs to implement humanitarian projects in Syria. The study will adopt the case study methodology as the research design for the thesis to answer the defined problem statement. The anticipated findings of this research endeavor are expected to yield valuable insights that can inform future strategies for the institutionalization of monitoring and evaluation team capability systems in humanitarian projects conducted in Syria

Uwera and Wanjiku (2023) conducted a study on the effect of monitoring and evaluation team capability and performance of non-government organizations in Rwanda: a case study of income-generating activities project by health relief and development organization. A descriptive research design was used within this study, and the study population is comprised of 165 employees working on the project and beneficiaries. The sample size of 117 respondents was established through calculations carried out using Slovin's Formula. The study found that there is a positive and significant relationship between monitoring and evaluation team capability and project performance. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation team capability affects performance of non-government organizations.

Mohamud and Pedo (2022) conducted a study on monitoring and evaluation team capability and performance of health projects in Isiolo County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target was 61 county staff from the Department of Health and census technique was used in sampling all the target staff. The study found that a strong significant relationship between monitoring and evaluation team capability and health projects performance. The study concluded that project performance is positively influenced by monitoring and evaluation team capability.

Rumenya and Kisimbi (2023) conducted a study on the influence of monitoring and evaluation team capability on performance of projects in non-governmental organizations: a case of education projects in Mombasa County, Kenya. A descriptive research design was used in this study and structured questionnaires were used to collect the study data and 69 participants were required. The study found that the performance of projects in education sector significantly and positively correlated with monitoring and evaluation team capability. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation team capability has a positive significant influence over the performance of projects in education sector

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, a descriptive research design was employed. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2019), descriptive research is suitable due to its specialized nature and the ease with which it aids in broad comprehension and interpretation of the issue. The issue with descriptive research, according to Ghauri and Granhaug (2019), is structure and how well it is comprehended. Giving details on a population's or phenomenon's characteristics is the main goal of descriptive writing.

Target Population

This study targeted deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya. According SASRA report (2023) there is a total of 35 SACCOs licensed for deposit-taking business in Kajiado County, Kenya. This study targeted the management employees working in these deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya. The total target population was therefore 280 respondents comprising of 35 top managers, 105 middle managers and 140 lower level managers.

Table 1: Target Population

Category	Target Population
Top Managers	35
Middle Managers	105
Lower Level Managers	140
Total	**280**

Sample and Sampling Technique

Lavrakas (2019) postulates that sampling technique is the method used to identify a subset of relevant elements from the target population; thus in a case where the study collects too much data, it is considered as being wasteful. According to Eric and Marko (2020) sampling is the process of selecting a few individuals for a study in such a way that the individual represents a larger group from which they are selected. A sample is a small group obtained from accessible population (Mugenda & Mugenda 2019). The Yamane formula was adopted to calculate the study sample size as follows;

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

Where n is the sample size, and N is the population size, e- acceptable sampling error (0.05)

$$= \frac{280}{1+280\ (0.05^2)}$$

$$= \frac{280}{1.7} = 165$$

$n \approx 165$

Therefore, the study sample size was 165 respondents.

Table 2: Sample Size

Category	Target Population	Sample Size
Top Managers	35	21
Middle Managers	105	62
Lower Level Managers	140	82
Total	**280**	**165**

The stratified random sampling method was adopted to select the study sample size. Stratified random sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller sub-groups known as strata.

Data Collection Instruments

This study relied on primary data. The primary data was collected from the management employees in the organizations using a semi structured questionnaire. A questionnaire is defined as a document that consists of a number of questions printed in a definite order or a form or a set of forms (Kothari, 2019). This study employed quantitative data collection method whereby data was gathered by use of close ended questionnaires this is because they work best with standardized questions that are interpreted the same way by all respondents (Coopers &Schindler, 2019).

The questionnaire is a research instrument based on different set of questions for the purpose of gathering information from the respondents across various fields (Kabir, 2019). Azer (2019) argues that questionnaires are a useful data gathering tool that provides a high degree of data standardization and adoption of generalized information amongst any population. They are typically designed to collect the data from a large number of respondents. Questionnaires are advantageous since they are comparatively easier to plan, construct and administer. It does not require much technical skill or knowledge. They are filled up by the respondents in their own comfort whereby the respondents can answer at their own pleasure, and they also facilitate the collection in large amount of data in a relatively short time (Malott & Kohler, 2021).

Pilot Study

A pilot test was conducted to determine validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. A pilot study is a small experiment designed to test logistics and gather information prior regarding a larger study, in order to improve the latter quality and efficiency. A pilot study can reveal deficiencies in the design of proposed experiment and procedure and these can be addressed before time and resources are expended on large scale studies. The responses from respondents were used to adjust and refine questionnaire accordingly. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) the pretest sample should be between 1% and 10% depending on the sample size. Therefore, 17 (10% of study sample) questionnaires were pilot tested

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data obtained from the field was coded, cleaned, and entered into the computer for analysis using the SPSS version 25. The data was summarized in order to see emerging trends and issues around specific themes, which are dependent on the variables and objectives. Presentation of data was done in form of quantitative and qualitative reports which were presented in forms of tables and essay. For the quantitative reports, the tables consisted of mean and standard deviation values that were used to make interpretation of the analysis. Percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to show the frequency of responses. Tables were used to display the rate of responses and to facilitate comparison.

Descriptive statistical included frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistical analysis comprised of multiple regression and correlation analysis. The significant of each independent variable were tested at a confidence level of 95%. The multiple regression model that was utilized as shown below:

$$Y = \beta + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\text{(i)}$$

Where:

Y represents dependent Variable (performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya),

β represents a constant or Intercept

β_1, β_2, represents the estimated regression coefficients

X_1 represents M&E planning

X_2 represents M&E team capability

ε represents error term (represents the effect of the variables that were not covered by the equation)

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive statistics

M&E planning and Organization Performance

The first specific objective of the study was to determine the influence of M&E planning on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to M&E planning and performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya. The results were as shown Table 3.

From the results, the respondents agreed that M&E activities support the SACCO's main goals (Mean= 3.781, SD= 0.826). The respondents agreed that their M&E plan follows the SACCO's mission (Mean=3.770, SD=0.625). Further, the respondents agreed that the M&E plan is updated to match their goals (Mean=3.768, SD=0.615). The respondents agreed that M&E results help them work toward their vision (Mean=3.654, SD= 0.828). The respondents also agreed that staff knows how M&E links to their mission (Mean=3.608, SD=0.731). The respondents also agreed that the involvement of local authorities ensures that their goals guide the indicators in the M&E plan (Mean=3.591, SD=0.502).

Table 3: M&E planning and Organization Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
M&E activities support the SACCO's main goals.	3.781	0.826
Our M&E plan follows the SACCO's mission.	3.770	0.625
The M&E plan is updated to match our goals.	3.768	0.615
M&E results help us work toward our vision.	3.654	0.828
Staff knows how M&E links to our mission.	3.608	0.731
Our goals guide the indicators in the M&E plan.	3.591	0.502
Aggregate	**3.716**	**0.688**

M&E Team Capability and Organization Performance

The second specific objective of the study was to establish the influence of M&E team capability on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya.The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to M&E team capability and performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya. The results were as shown Table 4.

From the results, the respondents agreed that the M&E team has the necessary abilities to track the SACCO's performance effectively (Mean=3.852, SD=0.704). Further, the respondents agreed that members of the M&E team possess the skills required to analyze data and provide actionable insights (Mean=3.845, SD=0.658). In addition, the respondents agreed that the M&E team's knowledge of financial systems improves decision-making in the SACCO (Mean=3.788, SD=0.552). The respondents agreed that the M&E team is adequately trained to carry out their responsibilities efficiently (Mean=3.773, SD=0.730). Further, the respondents agreed that M&E staff uses their skills to identify performance gaps and suggest improvements (Mean=3.695, SD=0.805). The respondents also agreed that the team's abilities and knowledge help the SACCO meet its financial and operational goals (Mean=3.651, SD=0.632).

Table 4: M&E Team Capability and Organization Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The M&E team has the necessary abilities to track the SACCO's performance effectively.	3.852	0.704
Members of the M&E team possess the skills required to analyze data and provide actionable insights.	3.845	0.658
The M&E team's knowledge of financial systems improves decision-making in the SACCO.	3.788	0.552
The M&E team is adequately trained to carry out their responsibilities efficiently.	3.773	0.730
M&E staff uses their skills to identify performance gaps and suggest improvements.	3.695	0.805
The team's abilities and knowledge help the SACCO meet its financial and operational goals.	3.651	0.632
Aggregate	**3.767**	**0.680**

Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics such as correlation analysis and regression analysis were used to assess the relationships between the independent variables (M&E planning and M&E team capability) and the dependent variable (performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya).

Correlation Analysis

This research adopted Pearson correlation analysis determine how the dependent variable (performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya) relates with the independent variables (M&E planning and M&E team capability). The findings were as depicted in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlation Coefficients

		Organization Performance	M&E Planning	M&E Team Capability
Organization Performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	141		
M&E Planning	Pearson Correlation	.813**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		
	N	141	141	
M&E Team Capability	Pearson Correlation	.823**	.437	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.020	
	N	141	141	141

From the results, there was a very strong relationship between M&E planning and performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya (r = 0.793, p value =0.001). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.001 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the findings of Niwagaba and Mulyungi (2020) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between M&E planning and organization performance.

Moreover, there was a very strong relationship between M&E team capability and performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya (r = 0.803, p value =0.000). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.000 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the findings of Uwera and Wanjiku (2023) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between M&E team capability and organization performance.

Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between independent variables (M&E planning and M&E team capability) and the dependent variable (performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya).

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.884[a]	.781	.782	.10381

Predictors: (Constant), M&E planning and M&E team capability

The model summary was used to explain the variation in the dependent variable that could be explained by the independent variables. The r-squared for the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was 0.781. This implied that 78.1% of the variation in the dependent variable (performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya) could be explained by independent variables (M&E planning and M&E team capability).

Table 7: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90.037	2	45.019	489.337	.000[b]
	Residual	12.645	138	.092		
	Total	102.682	140			

a. Dependent Variable: performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya

b. Predictors: (Constant), M&E planning and M&E team capability.

The ANOVA was used to determine whether the model was a good fit for the data. F calculated was 489.337 while the F critical was 3.062. The p value was 0.000. Since the F-calculated was greater than the F-critical and the p value 0.003 was less than 0.05, the model was considered as a good fit for the data. Therefore, the model can be used to predict the influence of M&E planning and M&E team capability on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya

Table 8: Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.334	0.096		3.792	0.000
M&E Planning	0.358	0.099	0.357	3.616	0.003
M&E Team Capability	0.365	0.099	0.366	3.687	0.001

The regression model was as follows:

$$\mathbf{Y = 0.334+0.358X_1 +0.365X_2 + \varepsilon}$$

According to the results, M&E planning has a significant effect on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya (β_1=0.358, p value= 0.003). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.003 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the findings of Rumenya and Kisimbi (2020) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between M&E planning and organization performance

The results also revealed that M&E team capability has a significant effect on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya (β1=0.365, p value= 0.001). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.001 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the findings of Uwera and Wanjiku (2023) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between M&E team capability and organization performance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study concludes that M&E planning has a significant effect on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study findings revealed that goals, mission and vision influences performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya.

In addition, the study concluded that M&E team capability has a significant effect on performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study findings revealed that abilities, skills and knowledge influences performance of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Kajiado County, Kenya.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the management of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies should prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive M&E plans that are directly aligned with their strategic goals, mission, and vision. These plans should include clear performance indicators, realistic timelines, and designated responsibilities to guide ongoing monitoring activities.

In addition, the study recommends that the management of deposit taking savings and credit cooperative societies should invest in building the technical skills, knowledge, and competencies of their M&E personnel. This can be achieved through targeted training, professional development programs, and exposure to modern monitoring tools and data analysis techniques.

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