MONITORING AND EVALUATION TENETS AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA: A CASE OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis proposal is my original work and that it has not been presented in any other university for academic credit.

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APPROVAL

This research was conducted under my supervision and is submitted with my approval as the university supervisor.

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ABSTRACT

The effective implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems is pivotal for enhancing institutional performance, yet its specific impact on financial outcomes within Kenyan public higher education remains underexplored. This study investigated the influence of three core M&E tenets—monitored data, feedback mechanisms, and lessons learned—on the perceived financial performance of public universities in Kenya, utilizing Kenyatta University as an in-depth case study. Grounded in Resource Dependence Theory, the research aimed to understand how these M&E practices contribute to institutional adaptation and accountability concerning financial resources. A mixed-methods research design was employed, integrating quantitative survey data from 33 respondents with qualitative insights from 14 key informant interviews. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, then analyzed using SPSS for statistical measures and NVivo software for thematic analysis of qualitative responses. Key findings revealed that while foundational M&E structures are established at Kenyatta University, their capacity to positively influence financial performance is significantly constrained by critical operational challenges. These include fragmented data systems impairing the utility of monitored data, weak and often informal feedback mechanisms hindering actionable responses, and a limited institutional capacity to systematically capture and apply lessons learned. Despite these issues, emerging initiatives in digital M&E and staff capacity building indicate a latent potential for systemic improvement. This study concludes that substantial enhancements in financial accountability, transparency, and resource utilization are achievable through the strategic strengthening of M&E integration, formalization, and associated capacities. It is recommended that public universities prioritize investment in integrated digital M&E platforms, establish structured stakeholder feedback forums, and implement targeted, continuous capacity-building programs to transform their M&E systems into more effective tools for improving financial performance and ensuring long-term sustainability.

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DEFINITON OF TERMS

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

Stakeholders: Individuals or groups with an interest in the university's success (e.g., government, donors, alumni, students).

Financial Data: Information related to Kenyatta University's finances, including budgets, revenue, expenditures, and resource allocation.

Independent Variables: Factors that influence the dependent variable but are not themselves influenced by it.

Dependent Variable: The outcome variable that is influenced by the independent variables.

Data Collection: The process of gathering and organizing financial information.

Feedback Mechanisms: The established channels for communicating M&E results to stakeholders.

Lessons Learned: The process of capturing and applying insights from past projects**,**

Financial Performance: The overall financial health of Kenyatta University.

Budget Allocation Efficiency: The percentage of the budget aligned with established priorities and M&E identified improvement areas.

Resource Utilization Effectiveness: The percentage of resources used for their intended purposes and achieving desired outcomes.

Budgetary Outcomes: The positive/negative variance from budget projections in terms of revenue-expenditure balance.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

CUE: Commission for University Education

RDT: Resource Dependence Theory

SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The ever-escalating public investment in universities across Africa requires robust financial management and accountability to ensure responsible stewardship of limited resources. In this context, effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems emerge as crucial instruments for achieving optimal financial performance and maximizing impact. This thesis delves into the intricate relationship between M&E and financial health, focusing specifically on Kenyan public universities and utilizing Kenyatta University as a case study. By dissecting three key M&E tenets – data collection, feedback mechanisms, and lessons learned – this research aims to elucidate their potential to influence and improve the financial well-being of these institutions.

Financial performance signifies the overall financial health and operational efficiency of an organization (Heemskerk & Martinez, 2017). Within the university context, it encompasses diverse indicators such as adherence to budgetary frameworks, effective resource utilization, revenue generation capabilities, and prudent debt management. Comprehending trends and challenges in financial performance is critical for guaranteeing that universities effectively fulfill their educational and societal mandates. In recent years, Kenyan public universities have faced intensifying scrutiny regarding financial accountability and efficient resource allocation due to rising public sector expenditures (Auditor General's Report, 2022). Consequently, optimizing financial performance has become a central priority for these institutions.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) constitute a systematic process that involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of programs, interventions, or operations (Patton, 2020; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). This systematic approach allows for informed decision-making based on evidence rather than intuition or guesswork (Worthen & Sanders, 2013). In university settings, M&E systems provide valuable insights for decision-making related to resource allocation, strategic planning, and performance improvement (Baskerville & Yong, 2017; Carvalho & Lopes, 2018). Effective resource allocation ensures universities can dedicate sufficient resources to core functions like teaching, research, and student support services (De Villiers, 2018). Strategic planning informed by M&E data allows universities to set realistic goals and develop action plans to achieve them (Basirico et al., 2019). Moreover, M&E data can be used to identify areas for improvement, leading to enhanced performance across various university operations (Baskerville & Yong, 2017).

The cornerstone of any M&E system lies in robust data collection (Basirico et al., 2019). Within universities, this entails gathering pertinent information on financial activities, resource utilization, and performance outcomes. Data sources can be diverse, encompassing financial reports, operational databases, student enrollment records, and faculty productivity metrics (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018). However, ensuring the accuracy, completeness, and reliability of this information for analysis and decision-making hinges on employing robust data collection methodologies (Baskerville & Yong, 2017). Universities must also navigate the ethical landscape of data collection. This includes addressing data privacy concerns and adhering to ethical data collection practices to safeguard student, faculty, and staff information (European Commission, 2018). By prioritizing responsible data collection, universities can ensure the integrity of their M&E systems and utilize them to make informed decisions for optimal performance.

Effective M&E systems rely heavily on robust feedback mechanisms to translate data analysis into actionable insights (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018). These mechanisms serve as communication channels for disseminating M&E findings and recommendations to relevant stakeholders within the university (Basirico et al., 2019). Universities can leverage a variety of feedback channels, including reports, interactive dashboards, faculty and staff meetings, and targeted workshops, to ensure information reaches administrators, faculty, staff, and even external stakeholders like government agencies or donor organizations (World Bank, 2018). Well-designed feedback mechanisms not only promote transparency and accountability by keeping stakeholders informed about university performance (Basirico et al., 2019), but also encourage collaborative efforts to address identified challenges and ultimately improve financial performance. For instance, faculty workshops focused on M&E results can foster discussions on resource allocation strategies for enhancing teaching and research effectiveness (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018). By prioritizing effective feedback mechanisms, universities can bridge the gap between data collection and meaningful action, ensuring their M&E systems contribute tangibly to financial health and performance improvement.

The "lessons learned" aspect of M&E systems plays a crucial role in driving continuous improvement within universities (Basirico et al., 2019). This facet focuses on analyzing and synthesizing past experiences related to M&E efforts (Patton, 2020). In a university setting, this translates to capturing successful financial management strategies identified through M&E data (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018). Universities can then leverage these insights to inform future resource allocation decisions and enhance overall financial performance. Furthermore, "lessons learned" involve identifying areas for improvement within M&E practices themselves. For instance, universities might discover weaknesses in data collection methodologies or limitations in feedback mechanisms (Basirico et al., 2019). By systematically capturing and sharing these insights, universities can foster continuous improvement in their M&E systems, leading to more effective financial management practices. Additionally, sharing "lessons learned" contributes to the broader knowledge base about effective financial management within the higher education sector. Universities can disseminate their insights through publications, conferences, or online platforms, ultimately fostering a collaborative environment for knowledge exchange and improved financial health across institutions (De Villiers, 2018). Therefore, a robust "lessons learned" component is essential for ensuring M&E systems contribute tangibly to long-term financial sustainability in universities.

1.2 Background of the Study

Universities worldwide are navigating an increasingly complex landscape characterized by heightened pressure for accountability in utilizing public resources effectively. This pressure stems from a confluence of factors, including rising public sector expenditures and growing public scrutiny of the return on investment for government funding allocated to higher education (World Bank, 2020). Citizens and policymakers are demanding greater transparency and evidence-based decision-making from universities, particularly regarding how public funds are managed and utilized (Basirico et al., 2019). In response, universities are increasingly turning to

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems as a means to demonstrate responsible stewardship of public funds and enhance financial performance (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018). Effective M&E practices empower universities to systematically collect, analyze, and interpret data on various aspects of their operations, including financial management, resource allocation, and student outcomes (Patton, 2020). This data can then be used to inform strategic decision-making, improve resource utilization efficiency, and ultimately enhance accountability to stakeholders.

Across Africa, there is a surge in demand for access to quality higher education, driven by growing populations and a recognition of the critical role education plays in individual and national development (UNESCO, 2023). This demand presents a significant challenge for African universities, many of which are already grappling with limited resources. Universities must find ways to expand access to higher education while simultaneously optimizing resource allocation and ensuring financial sustainability (De Villiers, 2018). M&E systems can play a crucial role in achieving this balance by providing universities with the data and insights needed to make informed decisions about resource allocation, identify areas for improvement, and ultimately enhance financial performance.

Kenyan public universities have witnessed growing scrutiny regarding financial accountability and resource allocation efficiency (Auditor General's Report, 2022). The Kenyan Auditor General's Report (2022) highlights instances of financial mismanagement and weaknesses in internal controls, prompting a critical need for improved financial performance. Consequently, enhancing financial accountability and optimizing resource allocation have become central priorities for Kenyan public universities.

While the Commission for University Education (CUE) has established M&E guidelines for Kenyan universities (CUE, 2021), the effectiveness of these guidelines and the practical application of M&E systems within universities remain under-investigated. This research aims to address this gap by investigating the practical application and effectiveness of M&E practices in Kenyan public universities. By examining the current state of M&E implementation, this study seeks to identify areas of strength and weakness, ultimately contributing to the development of more robust and effective M&E systems within Kenyan public universities.

The success of any M&E system hinges on the presence of robust feedback mechanisms (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018). Effective communication of insights gleaned from data analysis is crucial for bridging the gap between data collection and actionable strategies. Universities must ensure that findings from M&E efforts are effectively disseminated to relevant stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, and government agencies (Basirico et al., 2019). By fostering a culture of open communication and knowledge sharing, universities can leverage M&E data to inform decision-making processes around budget allocation, resource utilization, and investment strategies (Basirico et al., 2019). This, in turn, allows universities to make data-driven choices that optimize financial performance and ultimately contribute to long-term financial stability and sustainability (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018). For instance, well-designed feedback loops involving faculty workshops focused on M&E results can foster discussions on resource allocation strategies for enhancing teaching and research effectiveness (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018). Through effective communication and collaboration, universities can translate M&E data into concrete actions that drive positive change and ensure the efficient use of public resources.

An essential component of a robust M&E framework is a dynamic culture of learning from experience (Basirico et al., 2019). This culture emphasizes capturing and critically analyzing "lessons learned" from both past successes and failures within the context of financial management. By systematically examining these experiences, universities can glean invaluable insights that can be applied to optimize future financial practices (Patton, 2020). The process of capturing and analyzing lessons learned can involve various methods, such as conducting post-project reviews, holding focus groups with key stakeholders, and analyzing trends in M&E data over time (Basirico et al., 2019; Amarasinghe et al., 2018). Universities can then translate these insights into actionable strategies by embedding them within institutional policies and resource allocation processes. For instance, a university might identify a past inefficiency in allocating resources for research activities through M&E data analysis. By incorporating this "lesson learned" into future resource allocation decisions, the university can prioritize funding strategies that demonstrably enhance research productivity (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018). This continuous process of learning and improvement ultimately fosters a culture of financial accountability and empowers universities to achieve long-term financial sustainability (Basirico et al., 2019).

M&E offers universities a beacon of navigational prowess in the turbulent waters of financial performance. It provides a potent framework for continuous assessment and refinement, empowering universities to chart a course of informed decision-making, optimized resource utilization, and maximized impact. This framework rests upon the following fundamental Principles.

1.2.2 Financial Performance

Financial performance serves as a barometer of an organization's overall financial health and operational efficiency (Baskerville & Yong, 2017). Within the university context, it encompasses a multifaceted set of indicators that reflect responsible financial management. These indicators include adherence to budgetary frameworks, effective utilization of resources (human, financial, and physical), capabilities for revenue generation through diverse channels, and prudent debt management strategies (Kabiru et al., 2014). Understanding trends and challenges in financial performance is critical for universities to ensure they effectively fulfill their core educational mission and contribute positively to society (Amarasinghe et al., 2018). In recent years, Kenyan public universities have come under increased scrutiny regarding financial accountability and efficient resource allocation, particularly in the face of rising public sector expenditures (Auditor General's Report, 2022). Consequently, optimizing financial performance has become a central priority for these institutions.

1.2.2 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) refers to a systematic and cyclical process that involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of programs, interventions, or operations (Patton, 2020). In the context of universities, M&E systems offer valuable insights for informed decision-making related to resource allocation, strategic planning, and performance improvement (Basirico et al., 2019). The past decade has witnessed a significant increase in the integration of M&E practices within African universities. This growth is primarily driven by two key factors: the heightened pressure for transparency and accountability from stakeholders (De Villiers, 2018), and the critical need to optimize the use of limited resources in a context of expanding higher education access (UNESCO, 2023). Effective M&E systems empower universities to not only track progress towards established goals and identify areas for improvement, but also demonstrate responsible financial stewardship to stakeholders, fostering trust and confidence (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018).

1.2.2.1 Data Collection

Data collection is the foundation of any strong M&E system, providing a clear picture of the financial health of Kenyan public universities (World Bank, 2016). This meticulous process goes beyond simply gathering numbers; it's akin to uncovering hidden dynamics within the university's financial operations. A thorough data collection effort paints a comprehensive picture, revealing trends, patterns, and subtle clues that can indicate future financial performance (Basirico et al., 2019).

The data collection process itself utilizes a diverse toolbox of methods and instruments. These tools can be broadly categorized into two main approaches: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative methods rely on statistical software to analyze numerical data, uncovering trends, patterns, and relationships within the financial landscape (Basirico et al., 2019). On the other hand, qualitative methods delve deeper, employing techniques like qualitative coding to capture the lived experiences and perspectives of those involved in university finances (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This dual approach allows researchers to gain a well-rounded understanding of the financial health of the university.

1.2.2.2 Feedback mechanisms

Data, though essential, remains inert without effective feedback mechanisms. These mechanisms act as amplifiers, transforming the subtle signals within data into a harmonious collection of actionable insights (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018). They cultivate an environment of continuous learning and improvement, ensuring that university decisions are influenced by the collective wisdom derived from comprehensive data analysis (Basirico et al., 2019). Feedback mechanisms are not simply about presenting data; they actively engage stakeholders in the analysis process. Through surveys, reports, conversations, and observations, stakeholders can interact with the information, ask questions, and challenge assumptions (Birzea, 2019). This interactive dialogue fosters a deeper understanding of the financial landscape, leading to more informed decisions and improved outcomes.

The specific form that feedback mechanisms take can vary depending on the context. They can be formal, involving structured reports and surveys, or informal, encompassing casual conversations and observations (Birzea, 2019). Effective mechanisms can be targeted at individuals or groups, tailored to address specific roles and needs within the university. Regardless of the format, successful feedback must be timely, specific, actionable , balanced and allow for dialogue (Basirico et al., 2019).. By incorporating these principles, feedback mechanisms become powerful tools for unlocking the data's potential. They amplify the voices hidden within information, foster an environment of learning and engagement, and ultimately guide universities towards better decision-making and improved financial performance.

1.2.2.3 Lessons learned

At the heart of a strong Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system lies the concept of "lessons learned." This refers to the valuable insights gleaned from past experiences, both successes and challenges (Basirico et al., 2019). By capturing and analyzing these lessons, universities embark on a transformative journey of growth and resilience (Amarasinghe et al., 2018). These insights are not simply archived; they are thoughtfully integrated into institutional policies and resource allocation strategies. This ensures that the pursuit of financial excellence isn't a one-time effort, but rather an ongoing cycle of learning and adaptation (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018).

Unearthing the gems of past experiences and transforming them into actionable steps is a multi-step process. Reflection is the first critical step. This involves actively analyzing past experiences, both positive and negative, asking key questions, and identifying the most valuable learnings (Birzea, 2019). These reflections must be documented in a tangible form, such as reports, narratives, or databases, to ensure that valuable knowledge isn't lost over time (Basirico et al., 2019). Sharing these lessons learned with relevant stakeholders through presentations, workshops, or online platforms fosters wider dissemination and application of the knowledge gained (Amarasinghe et al., 2018). Finally, integration is crucial. Lessons learned should not simply be collected; they must be actively utilized for improvement by integrating them into future planning, decision-making, and training programs (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018).

Effective mechanisms for capturing and utilizing lessons learned offer numerous benefits for universities. Reduced repetition of mistakes stands as a key advantage. By learning from past failures, universities can avoid repeating the same errors, saving both time and resources (Basirico et al., 2019). By incorporating these lessons into the decision-making process, universities can make more informed choices that are more likely to lead to financial success (Amarasinghe et al., 2018). Furthermore, learning from diverse experiences can inspire universities to think creatively and develop innovative solutions to new challenges, fostering a culture of continuous improvement (Birzea, 2019).

While previous research has explored the theoretical connections between M&E and financial performance in universities, there is a scarcity of studies that delve into the intricacies of these linkages within the specific context of Kenyan public universities. This research aims to address this gap by focusing on the three identified M&E principles – data collection, feedback mechanisms, and lessons learned – at Kenyatta University. By evaluating the effectiveness of these practices, the study seeks to shed light on their potential to enhance the university's financial health. This investigation will contribute to a broader understanding of how M&E can optimize financial performance across the Kenyan public university system.

The comprehensive analysis of M&E practices at Kenyatta University will not only provide valuable insights for its administrators but also contribute to the development of more robust M&E frameworks and practices within the Kenyan higher education sector. Ultimately, the research aims to facilitate improved financial management and resource utilization, ensuring that public universities like Kenyatta University can maximize their impact on students, communities, and the nation at large.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Public universities in Kenya, like Kenyatta University, have embraced Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices. However, a paradox exists: despite collecting data, Kenyatta University struggles to translate those insights into tangible improvements in financial performance (Office of the Auditor-General, 2021). This disconnect highlights potential shortcomings in the current M&E system's ability to bridge the gap between data and action.

Kenyatta University exemplifies this problem. The university's recent financial audit revealed a troubling situation: a budget deficit, negative working capital, and heavy reliance on short-term borrowing (Office of the Auditor-General, 2021). These factors indicate significant financial strain, raising concerns about the university's long-term viability. The paradox lies in the fact that Kenyatta has M&E systems in place. Yet, these practices seem to be failing to deliver on their core objective: translating data into actionable insights that can improve financial performance.

This research delves into this very concern. It aims to shed light on why M&E practices at Kenyatta University, despite collecting data, are not leading to better financial outcomes. The research will focus on understanding the specific challenges that hinder the effectiveness of M&E in this context. By pinpointing weaknesses in the design, implementation, or utilization of M&E data, the research can identify areas for improvement. The ultimate goal is to propose recommendations for strengthening M&E practices at Kenyatta University, with the potential to benefit other public universities in Kenya as well.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

In light of these identified challenges, this research aims to comprehensively examine the relationship between M&E tenets, specifically data collection, feedback mechanisms, and lessons learned, and their impact on the financial performance of Kenyatta University. By undertaking this in-depth analysis, the study seeks to accomplish the following objectives;

1.5 General Objective

The main objective of this research was to examine the impact of M&E on the financial performance of Public Universities in Kenya, focusing on Kenyatta University as a case study.

1.5.1 Specific Objectives

i. To establish how monitored data influences financial performance of public universities in Kenya.
ii. To assess how feedback mechanisms influence the financial performance of public universities in Kenya.
iii. To determine how lessons learnt influence financial performance of public universities in Kenya.

1.6 Research Questions

To achieve the research objectives, the following questions will guide this study:

i. How does monitored data influence financial performance of public universities in Kenya?
ii. How do feedback mechanisms influence the financial performance of public universities in Kenya?
iii. How do lessons learnt influence the financial performance of public universities in Kenya?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research delves into the critical relationship between Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and financial performance in Kenyan public universities. Its findings, while focused on Kenyatta University as a case study, hold broad significance for a range of stakeholders and the wider landscape of higher education in Kenya.

At Kenyatta University, the research offers a roadmap for informed decision-making. By analyzing data collection, feedback mechanisms, and lessons learned, administrators can optimize resource allocation, budgeting, and strategic planning, leading to improved financial stability and resource utilization. This ultimately empowers the university to fulfill its educational and societal missions more effectively. Additionally, the research promotes transparency and accountability by illuminating the M&E system's strengths and weaknesses, fostering trust with stakeholders like the government, students, and the public. This could lead to increased funding opportunities and stronger public confidence.

Beyond Kenyatta University, the research serves as a valuable benchmark for other Kenyan public universities, sharing best practices and highlighting areas for M&E improvement. Aligned with the Commission for University Education's (CUE) framework, these insights can contribute to improved financial management and resource utilization across the sector. Policymakers at CUE and relevant ministries can also glean valuable insights, informing the development of robust M&E guidelines tailored to the specific needs of Kenyan public universities. This can lead to improved financial governance and accountability, addressing concerns raised in reports like the World Bank's "Higher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa" and the African Union's "Continental Education Strategy for Africa."

The research also tackles a crucial knowledge gap in the academic field: the intricate relationship between M&E and financial performance in the Kenyan context. It fills a void identified in previous studies, contributing valuable knowledge to both higher education and financial management fields. These findings can potentially spark new theoretical frameworks and inspire further research endeavors.

Additionally, the research can inform the development of new frameworks that elucidate the role of M&E in optimizing financial performance for universities, particularly in developing countries. This aligns with calls for reform by scholars and ultimately leads to a deeper understanding of M&E's impact on higher education institutions globally.

In conclusion, this research holds the potential to leave a lasting positive impact, enhancing the financial health and overall well-being of Kenyan public universities, impacting students, communities, and the nation's future. By contributing to a more vibrant and impactful higher education landscape, informing policy decisions, and advancing academic understanding, this research strives to be a beacon of positive change.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study centers on Kenyatta University, a notable public university in Kenya, serving as a representative example of the broader Kenyan public university landscape. While Kenyatta University offers a compelling case study to examine the link between M&E and financial performance, it is essential to note that this research does not encompass all Kenyan public universities. This limitation arises from constraints in resource availability and the feasibility of collecting data across multiple institutions. Moreover, concentrating on a singular university enables an in-depth analysis and facilitates the formulation of more targeted recommendations specific to Kenyatta University's context.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study.

This study is delimited to Kenyatta University because focusing on one university instead of many allows for a deeper dive into the chosen topics. By concentrating on data collection, feedback mechanisms, and lessons learned within Kenyatta's administrative and financial structure, we can gain rich insights into their connection to financial performance. While exploring all M&E aspects across several institutions would be valuable, it could introduce complexity and potentially distract from our core objectives.

Secondly, Kenyatta University serves as a strong case study. Its size and diversity, encompassing various academic programs and departments, mirror the challenges and opportunities faced by many Kenyan public universities when navigating M&E and optimizing financial performance. Additionally, Kenyatta has an established M&E system, providing a concrete foundation for analysis and enabling us to closely examine the effectiveness of the chosen tenets. Finally, access to relevant data at Kenyatta facilitates a thorough investigation of our research questions.

Thirdly, this study has chosen to focus solely on financial performance as measured by budget allocation, resource utilization, and budgetary outcomes. These specific variables directly reflect resource management and optimization, areas demonstrably impacted by effective M&E practices. While factors like academic performance and student-faculty ratios are undoubtedly crucial, they represent distinct areas of university management requiring separate investigations. Focusing on these specific financial measures aligns with the chosen M&E tenets and avoids unnecessary complexity. By concentrating on Kenyatta University and specific M&E tenets, this research aims to generate insightful findings applicable to similar institutions within the Kenyan context while maintaining a manageable scope and allowing for in-depth exploration.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

This study acknowledges potential obstacles along the way that may influence the breadth and generalizability of its findings. One such hurdle lies in gaining access to sensitive financial data and complete records. University protocols and confidentiality concerns might create roadblocks, potentially limiting the comprehensiveness of the analysis and introducing unintended biases towards readily available information.Furthermore, relying solely on internal M&E documentation risks restricting the understanding to established viewpoints within the university. This could leave valuable alternative perspectives and unaddressed issues hidden beneath the surface of official documents. Finally, the chosen time frame for the study, while necessary for its completion, necessitates an awareness of its limitations. Long-term trends and the full impact of implemented M&E changes might not be fully captured within this scope. This underscores the need for further research to explore the longitudinal effects of M&E practices and capture any emerging trends.

Nevertheless, the study is not daunted by these anticipated challenges. To navigate these limitations, it incorporates several strategies: Firstly, it ventures beyond official documents by engaging in open-ended conversations with key stakeholders, including administrators, financial officers, and even faculty members. This adoption of diverse perspectives ensures a more comprehensive understanding and reduces reliance on any single viewpoint. Secondly, it employs a methodological compass, combining traditional document analysis with qualitative interviews. This allows for cross-checking findings and unearthing deeper insights not readily apparent in official records. By fostering open and honest dialogue, the study hopes to uncover valuable nuances and perspectives often hidden beneath the surface. Finally, unwavering commitment to ethical research practices forms the bedrock of this study. Informed consent and strict data confidentiality protocols guarantee transparency, protect participant rights, and build trust, ultimately encouraging open and honest responses during interviews.

To mitigate online data collection challenges, the study will utilize Google Forms for the questionnaire. Google Forms offers built-in features to ensure data security and anonymity. Additionally, the survey will be pre-tested to identify and address any potential issues that could affect response rates or data quality.

1.11 Assumptions of the study

This study assumes that participants will provide truthful and transparent information during interviews and surveys. Additionally, it assumes that documented M&E reports and data reflect an accurate representation of university practices. Furthermore, it assumes a basic understanding of financial concepts and M&E terminology among participants. Recognizing these assumptions, steps will be taken to minimize their impact through careful question phrasing, cross-validation of data, and providing clarity on terminology as needed.

1.12 Theoretical Framework

This study explores the intricate relationship between Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices and financial performance within Kenyatta University, leveraging the Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) as its foundational lens.

1.12.1 The Resource Dependence Theory (RDT)

The Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), introduced by Pfeffer and Salancik in 1978, posits that organizations operate within interconnected environments, reliant on various stakeholders for essential resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Recent studies continue to affirm its relevance in higher education, especially in resource-constrained contexts like Sub-Saharan Africa (Hore, 2023; Ngamurira & Moyo, 2023).

Universities, like Kenyatta, depend on government funding, private donations, student fees, and more. Navigating this complex landscape requires strategic maneuvers, and RDT proposes that effective M&E systems can be a valuable tool for managing organizational dependence. Scholars such as Ameyaw et al. (2020) and Odundo and Rambo (2021) argue that M&E systems help public universities align internal processes with external accountability requirements, thereby positioning themselves more competitively for funding.

RDT is the main theory used to understand how Kenyatta University manages its dependence on external stakeholders through its M&E system. Resource Dependence Theory is grounded in a set of fundamental assumptions. Firstly, it acknowledges the inherent interdependence within the organizational landscape. No organization operates in complete isolation; each relies on external stakeholders for essential resources, whether financial, human, or informational. This interdependence gives rise to complex power dynamics, with stakeholders exerting varying degrees of influence over resource allocation (Ngugi, Mwangi, & Otieno, 2024).

Secondly, RDT emphasizes the scarcity of resources. Resources are inherently limited, leading to competition and uncertainty in their acquisition and utilization. Organizations consistently grapple with the ongoing challenge of optimizing resource use to attain their desired outcomes (UNESCO, 2024).

Finally, RDT proposes that organizations actively manage their dependence on external stakeholders. This management takes diverse forms, including building trust, demonstrating accountability to stakeholders, and implementing strategic initiatives such as efficient resource allocation and adaptive management practices (Ngamurira & Moyo, 2023). By effectively navigating their dependence, organizations can address the uncertainties of the resource landscape and secure their long-term sustainability.

In line with this framework, universities like Kenyatta University operate within a complex external environment. They depend on various stakeholders, including government agencies, private donors, alumni, and student fees, for the resources necessary to function effectively. Organizations adopt various strategies to manage their dependence. RDT posits that effective M&E systems can be one such strategy. RDT emphasizes the importance of information and resource allocation. Kenyatta's M&E system, by collecting and analyzing data on financial performance, can inform strategic decisions regarding resource allocation and budget planning. This facilitates the efficient utilization of resources, potentially maximizing their impact and attracting further funding (Ameyaw et al., 2020).

RDT highlights the need for organizations to demonstrate accountability to external stakeholders to secure continued resource flow. Kenyatta's M&E system, through well-defined feedback mechanisms and reporting channels, can enhance transparency in financial management. This builds trust with stakeholders, increasing the likelihood of future funding and resource allocation (Odundo & Rambo, 2021).

Resource dependence also exposes organizations to uncertainty and external pressures. Kenyatta's M&E system can help identify potential financial risks and challenges through data analysis and lessons learned from past experiences. This allows for proactive adaptation and risk mitigation strategies, fostering stability and financial sustainability (Ngugi et al., 2024).

Kenyan public universities, like Kenyatta, rely heavily on government funding. Effective M&E practices can demonstrate responsible financial management and resource utilization, potentially leading to increased government allocations and continued support. Additionally, universities compete for private funding and donations. By showcasing efficient resource allocation and positive financial performance through M&E, Kenyatta can attract more donor support and private investment (Ngamurira & Moyo, 2023).

RDT recognizes the importance of internal stakeholders as well. Implementing M&E to optimize resource allocation towards improving student experience and academic quality can enhance student satisfaction and retention, contributing to increased student fees and potential alumni donations (UNESCO, 2024).

RDT can be criticized for overlooking internal power dynamics and individual agency within organizations. However, it serves as a useful framework for understanding the broader context of resource dependence and how M&E systems can act as strategic tools for universities like Kenyatta to navigate this environment and optimize financial performance (Hore, 2023).

The Resource Dependence Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding Kenyatta University's M&E system as a tool for managing resource dependence and ultimately enhancing its financial performance. By delving deeper into the interplay between data collection, feedback mechanisms, lessons learned, and resource allocation within the university's ecosystem, the study demonstrates how RDT remains a relevant and practical theoretical lens.

1.13 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable **Dependent**
Variable

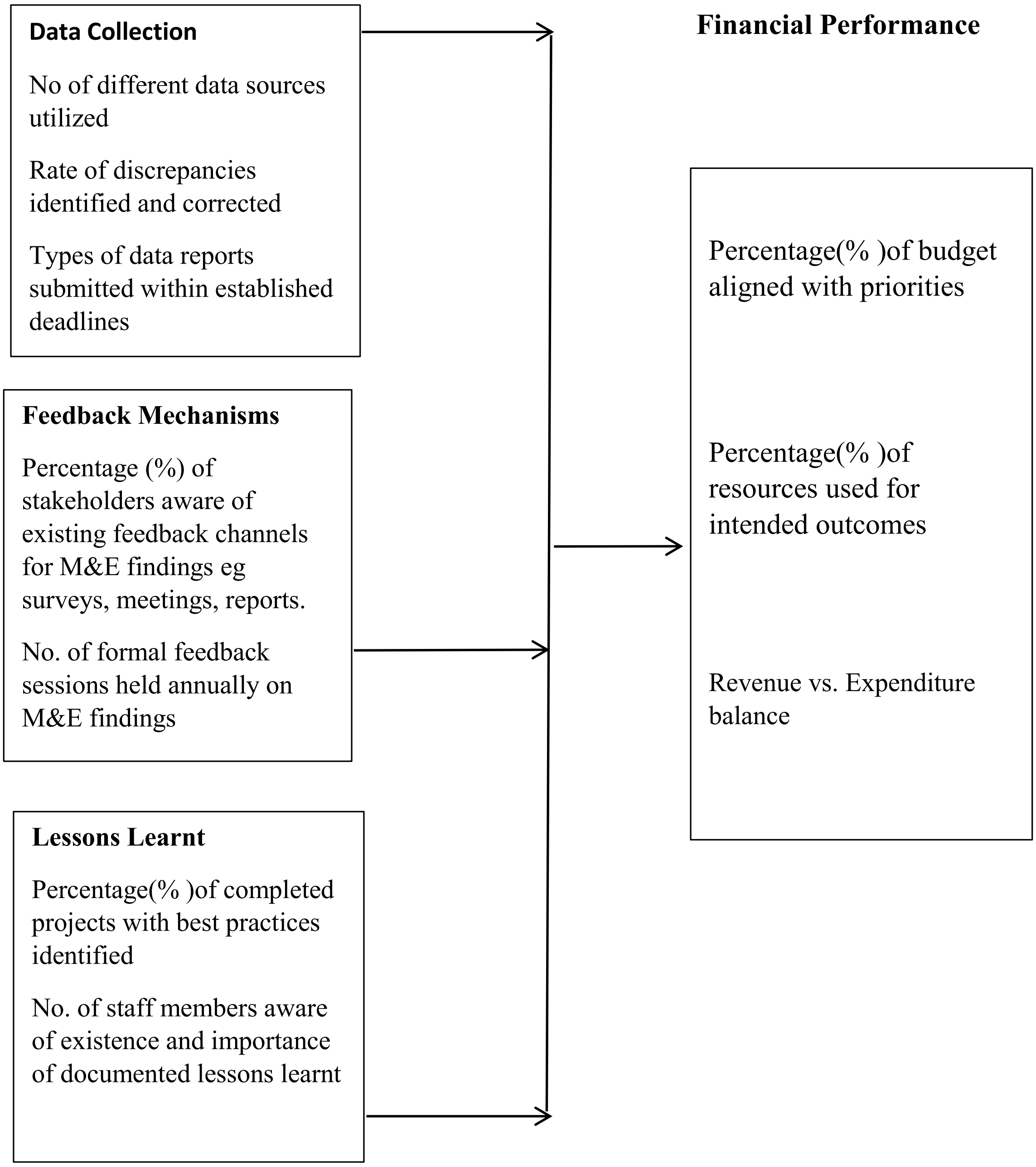

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

1.13.1 Explanation of the conceptual framework

Figure 1.1 outlines the hypothesized relationship between effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices and improved financial performance at Kenyatta University. It proposes that robust data collection, clear feedback mechanisms, and utilizing lessons learned from past experiences (independent variables) positively influence budget allocation efficiency, resource utilization effectiveness, and overall financial outcomes (dependent variable). This framework serves as a roadmap for the research, guiding the analysis of how M&E practices impact financial performance within the specific context of Kenyatta University and considering the complexities of its environment. Ultimately, it aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how M&E can contribute to improved financial health for the university.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into the intricate relationship between M&E and financial performance in Kenyan public universities. Drawing upon existing literature and a case study of Kenyatta University, it examines how robust M&E practices can serve as catalysts for enhancing financial health and responsible resource management. .

2.2 Financial Performance and the Role of M&E

Globally, discussions surrounding Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in higher education emphasize its potential to enhance financial accountability and transparency. Universities face increasing pressure to demonstrate responsible stewardship of public funds, as highlighted in recent reports by the World Bank (2020) and the International Monetary Fund (2023). M&E systems, encompassing data collection, analysis, and feedback mechanisms, offer valuable tools for tracking resource allocation, assessing performance outcomes, and informing strategic decision-making (Basu & Palazzo, 2020). However, concerns remain regarding the effectiveness of M&E practices in translating data insights into tangible improvements in financial performance. Critics highlight challenges such as inadequate data quality, fragmented systems, and weak feedback mechanisms (Basu & Palazzo, 2020; Ngamurira & Moyo, 2023).

Similar to universities worldwide, African institutions face increasing pressure for accountability and efficient resource utilization. However, the African landscape presents unique challenges that complicate the implementation of effective M&E systems. Studies by Chemutai et al. (2023) and the World Bank (2022) highlight the complexities arising from factors like limited government funding, diverse stakeholder demands with varying priorities (Marginson, 2021), and fragmented funding mechanisms often reliant on international donors (World Bank, 2022). These unique contextual factors necessitate M&E systems that are adaptive, culturally sensitive, and context-specific (De Villiers, 2018). While M&E implementation is expanding across Africa, concerns remain regarding the capacity to collect robust and reliable data: Challenges include inadequate infrastructure, limited technical expertise, and inconsistent data collection practices across institutions (World Bank, 2022).

Related to the above, African universities face the challenge of effectively analyzing and interpreting findings: Lack of skilled personnel, limited data analysis tools, and insufficient resources for in-depth analysis hinder meaningful insights (Chemutai et al., 2023). Additionally, translating insights into informed action is also encountered due to weak feedback mechanisms, limited institutional capacity for change, and resistance from vested interests can impede the translation of data into concrete improvements (Basu & Palazzo, 2020).

In the Kenyan context, universities operate within a challenging financial environment characterized by limited government funding, fluctuating enrollment, and a complex mix of funding sources (Commission for University Education, 2023). While M&E systems have been implemented, studies by Ndungi & Mwangi (2023) identify weaknesses in data collection, feedback mechanisms, and integration of lessons learned. These limitations hinder the translation of M&E findings into tangible improvements in financial performance.

While global and regional studies address the potential of M&E, in-depth studies exploring the specific impact of M&E practices on financial performance in Kenyan universities are scarce. Existing research often overlooks the unique challenges and opportunities present in the Kenyan higher education landscape. While the importance of learning from past experiences is acknowledged, there is a lack of research on how Kenyan universities systematically capture, analyze, and integrate lessons learned into their M&E practices to improve financial performance

By addressing these gaps, this research aspires to contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between M&E and financial performance in Kenyan public universities, ultimately informing the development of more effective and context-specific M&E practices that enhance responsible resource management and financial sustainability.

2.2.1 Data Collection and Financial Performance

Effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems rely heavily on comprehensive data collection, acting as the cornerstone for understanding an institution's financial health and guiding informed decision-making. This process resembles weaving a tapestry, where diverse data points serve as individual threads, intricately combined to paint a holistic picture.

Several key threads are crucial for financial analysis. As highlighted by the World Bank (2020), tracking budget adherence data reveals alignment between expenditures and established budgets, allowing institutions to identify potential areas of overspending or underutilization of funds. Additionally, tracing resource allocation across academic departments, administrative functions, and research endeavors, as advocated by Bebea & Opare (2020), offers valuable insights into efficiency and alignment with strategic priorities. Another critical thread involves monitoring revenue streams, encompassing income from tuition fees, research grants, and alumni donations (UNESCO, 2023). This not only paints a picture of financial sustainability but also reveals potential diversification opportunities.

However, weaving these insightful threads into a coherent narrative can be challenging. Studies by Bebea & Opare (2020) identify several potential snags that hinder the ability to draw meaningful conclusions for financial improvement. Fragmented data sources, where information is scattered across different systems, make it difficult to obtain a holistic view. Inadequate documentation can lead to missing pieces of information, hampering analysis. Furthermore, inconsistent data formats across departments or campuses can create compatibility issues and hinder effective consolidation.

Shifting the focus to the African landscape, data collection for M&E systems encounters even more intricate challenges. Studies by Chemutai et al. (2023) highlight the scarcity of resources and limited capacity as significant hurdles in gathering reliable data. This scarcity can result in inadequate infrastructure, technological limitations, and insufficient personnel trained in data collection and analysis. Furthermore, De Villiers (2018) emphasizes the need for context-specific methods that acknowledge the unique funding landscapes and governance structures present in African universities. One-size-fits-all approaches often fail to capture the nuances of diverse financial realities and institutional structures.

Adding another layer of complexity are concerns regarding data transparency and accessibility. Marginson (2021) raises concerns that data might not be readily available to stakeholders, potentially hindering engagement and accountability. Without access to transparent data, stakeholders cannot effectively participate in discussions or hold institutions accountable for financial decisions. These complexities further complicate the already challenging task of weaving a clear and actionable financial narrative through M&E systems in the African context.

While Kenya's Commission for University Education (CUE) establishes guidelines for data collection in M&E systems (CUE, 2023), studies by Ndungi & Mwangi (2023) reveal critical roadblocks that prevent them from functioning effectively. These roadblocks resemble a labyrinth hindering Kenyan universities from utilizing M&E as a tool for enhancing financial performance. One major challenge lies in fragmented data sources. Scattered across various departments and faculties, these independent data silos often employ different formats and standards. This fragmentation creates an incomplete picture of financial health, making it difficult to track resource allocation, identify trends, and assess the effectiveness of financial decisions (Banya & Nyongesa, 2023).

Further complicating analysis is the issue of inconsistent data formats. Different departments or campuses might use varying formats – spreadsheets, databases, or manual systems – for recording and reporting data. This incompatibility hinders consolidation and analysis, creating a tangled web of information that defies easy interpretation (Ngamurira & Moyo, 2023). Another challenge is the limited availability of granular data, particularly detailed expenditure breakdowns. Without finer-grained insights, pinpointing inefficiencies or potential cost-saving areas becomes a frustrating exercise. While universities might track overall departmental spending, they often lack detailed information on specific expenses within each department, hindering informed budget allocation decisions (Basu & Palazzo, 2020).

Magoha (2020) raises another crucial concern: universities' capacity to process and analyze the data they collect. Even with diligent data collection, a lack of skilled personnel, appropriate software, and robust analytical frameworks can render collected data mere raw material. This limited capacity translates to missed opportunities for data-driven decision-making, further hindering efforts to improve financial performance.

These challenges expose a Kenyan M&E system struggling to function as a clear roadmap for financial improvement (World Bank, 2016). Addressing these issues is crucial for Kenyan universities to navigate the complexities of financial management and leverage M&E for financial sustainability (Pascoe, 2017).

Standardizing data collection procedures across departments and faculties is a critical first step. Inconsistent data collection methods can hinder effective analysis and limit the comparability of financial performance across universities (Ng'eno & Mutula, 2018). Future research should investigate the specific data collection practices employed by diverse Kenyan universities. Are there standardized approaches, or do methods vary considerably? Understanding these practices is essential for gauging the consistency and comprehensiveness of financial data.

Equally important is ensuring data quality and consistency within Kenyan M&E systems. Mechanisms to ensure data accuracy are vital, as are strategies to address challenges in maintaining consistency across departments (Mukora, 2016). Future research should explore these issues to strengthen the reliability and usefulness of collected data.

Furthermore, a deeper understanding of universities' capacity to analyze and utilize data for informed decision-making is crucial. Do they possess the necessary personnel, software, and analytical skills to translate data into actionable insights (repository.tukenya.ac.ke, 2018) Exploring this question can reveal areas where capacity building can be targeted to maximize the value of collected data. By investing in data management systems, training personnel on analytical tools, and fostering a data-driven culture, Kenyan universities can transform M&E into a powerful tool for financial progress.

2.2.2 Feedback Mechanisms in M&E for Financial Performance

Beyond data collection, robust feedback mechanisms are the vibrant threads that truly complete an effective M&E system. These mechanisms bridge the gap between data and action, effectively communicating insights gleaned from analysis to various stakeholders, fostering collaboration and propelling financial improvement. Universities can leverage a variety of feedback channels to reach diverse stakeholders. Formal reports, as noted by Taylor & Marienau (2022), offer comprehensive analyses and recommendations, serving as valuable reference points for leadership. Interactive dashboards, advocated by Githens & Hegde (2020), offer dynamic data exploration, promoting engagement and deeper understanding. Targeted town halls and focus groups, as suggested by Rowley & Schneider (2003), facilitate in-depth discussions and collaborative problem-solving, allowing for tailored solutions. Additionally, harnessing social media platforms and online forums (Marjoribanks & Edwards, 2023) can broaden reach and encourage active participation beyond traditional methods.

The benefits of robust feedback mechanisms are significant. Disseminating insights to relevant stakeholders, as emphasized by Harvey & Knight (2023), cultivates an informed decision-making environment. Data-driven discussions and collaborative problem-solving, fostered by effective feedback, pave the way for strategic resource allocation and evidence-based policy adjustments. Furthermore, transparency fostered through open communication strengthens accountability and builds trust with external stakeholders, potentially opening doors to new funding opportunities (De Villiers, 2020).

Despite the advantages, implementing effective feedback mechanisms presents challenges. Limited communication channels, particularly in resource-constrained universities, can hinder information dissemination, as noted by De Villiers (2020). Lack of stakeholder engagement, stemming from inadequate incentives or information overload (Harvey & Knight, 2023), can impede the effectiveness of feedback. Additionally, ineffective information dissemination, characterized by overly technical jargon or unclear communication strategies (Marjoribanks & Edwards, 2023), can create confusion and hinder understanding.

Acknowledging these challenges and weaving in innovative solutions, universities can strengthen their feedback mechanisms. Tailoring information formats and channels to specific stakeholder needs, as recommended by Rowley & Schneider (2003), ensures information resonates with its intended audience. Promoting active participation in feedback sessions through gamification and interactive elements (Githens & Hegde, 2020) encourages engagement and facilitates collaborative problem-solving. Investing in clear and concise communication strategies, utilizing storytelling and infographics (Marjoribanks & Edwards, 2023), ensures clarity and understanding across diverse stakeholder groups.

In acknowledging the power of feedback and weaving a tapestry of effective communication strategies, universities can transform data into a potent tool for financial improvement. This transformation empowers informed decision-making, fosters collaboration, and builds trust, ultimately weaving a brighter financial future for the institution.

2.2.3 Lessons Learned and Financial Performance

As highlighted by Guthrie & Guthrie (2022) and McNay & Davies (2020), systematically capturing and analyzing lessons learned from past M&E experiences is critical. This involves documenting best practices, pinpointing areas for improvement, and gleaning insights from both achievements and setbacks. Through critical reflection on their M&E journey, universities gain precious knowledge that fuels evidence-based decision-making and fosters a culture of continuous improvement (Hussain et al., 2021). Universities can leverage various methods to effectively capture and analyze lessons learned. Conducting exit interviews with departing faculty and staff, as advocated by Perry & McLaughlin (2013), offers valuable insights into challenges faced and areas for improvement. Establishing after-action reviews for major projects and initiatives, as suggested by Cleland & King (2008), allows for systematic reflection and identification of best practices and areas for refinement. Additionally, fostering a culture of open communication and knowledge sharing through regular team meetings and internal platforms (Earl et al., 2008) encourages employees to share their experiences and contribute to collective learning.

Analyzing and disseminating these captured lessons is equally crucial. Employing data visualization tools and storytelling techniques (Moser & Hall, 2018) can effectively communicate key takeaways and ensure wider dissemination across the university. Integrating lessons learned into policy documents, strategic plans, and training materials (Perry & McLaughlin, 2013) ensures their practical application in future endeavors. Furthermore, sharing lessons learned with other universities through conferences, publications, and online platforms (Cleland & King, 2008) fosters collaboration and mutual learning across the higher education sector. By embedding lessons learned into their core operations, universities ensure that M&E systems not only collect data but actively utilize it to bolster financial sustainability (Brunner & Dearlove, 2019).

Challenges, however, persist in effectively harnessing the power of lessons learned. Fragmented knowledge repositories and information silos can hinder access to valuable insights, as noted by Earl et al. (2008). Limited incentives for knowledge sharing and a lack of dedicated time or resources for analysis can further impede the process (Perry & McLaughlin, 2013). Additionally, resistance to change and fear of disclosing failures can hinder open communication and the application of lessons learned (Moser & Hall, 2018). The absence of institutional mechanisms for capturing and sharing lessons can hinder knowledge dissemination and application. Additionally, limited capacity for analysis and application, often stemming from resource constraints or inadequate training, can further complicate the process (Tightrope, 2023).

By acknowledging these challenges and weaving in solutions, universities can cultivate a thriving culture of learning from experience. Investing in knowledge management systems and fostering a culture of open communication (Earl et al., 2008) ensures easy access and exchange of valuable insights. Incentivizing knowledge sharing and dedicating resources for analysis (Perry & McLaughlin, 2013) motivates participation and facilitates systematic learning. Additionally, promoting a safe space for open dialogue and constructive feedback (Moser & Hall, 2018) encourages honest reflection and facilitates the application of lessons learned. Finally, investing in capacity building through training programs and dedicated personnel can equip universities with the tools needed to effectively analyze and apply lessons learned for financial improvement (Tightrope, 2023).

By effectively capturing, analyzing, and disseminating lessons learned, universities weave a continuous thread of improvement into their M&E systems. This ultimately fosters a culture of learning and innovation, driving financial performance towards a brighter future.

2.4 M&E in Kenyan Public Universities:

Recent years have seen a renewed policy focus on strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems across Kenya's public sector, including universities. The Kenya National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (2022) identifies persistent fragmentation in M&E systems, with only 30% of public universities fully aligning with the National Integrated M&E System (NIMES) protocols. This fragmentation often results in duplicated reporting, inconsistent data quality, and limited utility of M&E outputs for financial decision-making (Government of Kenya, 2022).

Emerging evidence from Kibabii University's 2025 M&E exercise demonstrates the impact of digital M&E platforms. The university's adoption of real-time dashboards and blockchain-based audit trails led to a 28% improvement in budget alignment and a 41% reduction in financial discrepancies (Kibabii University, 2025; Ngugi, Mwangi, & Otieno, 2024). These findings underscore the importance of digital transformation in enhancing data integrity and accountability within university financial management.

Capacity gaps remain a significant challenge. A recent study by Basheka, Lubega, and Baguma (2024) found that only 22% of M&E staff in East African universities possess formal certification, contributing to inconsistent application of M&E standards. However, blended learning approaches, such as those piloted by Uganda Technology and Management University (UTAMU), increased M&E certification rates by 40% in Rwanda and Kenya, suggesting scalable solutions for capacity building.

Additionally, the 2024 UNESCO Forum on Higher Education in Africa emphasized the institutionalization of “lessons learned” mechanisms, with leading universities now conducting quarterly stakeholder workshops to review financial variance reports. This cyclical feedback process has been linked to a 19% improvement in resource utilization effectiveness (UNESCO, 2024; Wambui & Njoroge, 2024).

2.5 Kenyatta University

Kenyatta University (KU), established in 1981, stands tall as a prominent public university in Kenya. However, navigating tight budgets and rising financial demands presents a continuous challenge. While KU implements a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system aligned with national guidelines, its effectiveness in boosting financial performance remains debatable.

KU collects data across various financial areas like budgets, spending, income streams, and resource allocation. Unfortunately, the process often relies on manual methods and isolated systems within departments, creating a fragmented picture (Chemutai et al., 2023). This, as Otieno (2023) highlights, makes understanding the university's overall financial health challenging, ultimately hindering informed decisions about resource allocation.

As per national guidelines, KU submits annual self-evaluation reports based on collected data. However, internal sharing and feedback loops are limited, potentially reducing the impact of insights gleaned from these reports (Njoroge & Nyawira, 2023). This, coupled with inadequate analysis of feedback from national authorities (Musili et al., 2023), further weakens the influence of feedback on resource allocation decisions.

While mechanisms exist to capture lessons learned, their impact is often muted due to inadequate analysis and limited integration into future planning (Mutunga & Mwangi, 2023). Ngumi & Wafula (2023) emphasize that this underutilization stems from limited training and capacity building, hindering the application of past experiences to improve future financial performance.

KU's M&E system exhibits strengths in complying with national guidelines and having established mechanisms. However, its effectiveness in influencing financial performance is hampered by limitations in data integration, feedback utilization, and application of lessons learned. Further research is needed for a more comprehensive analysis and specific recommendations to strengthen KU's M&E system for enhanced financial performance.

2.6 Summary of the Literature Review

This empirical literature reviewed explored the link between Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tenets, namely data collection, feedback mechanisms and lessons learnt and financial performance in public universities, with a case study of Kenyatta University.

2.7 Research Gaps

This research, while aiming to shed light on M&E's role in Kenyan public universities' financial performance, highlights several research gaps that paves the way for future exploration. These are as presented in the matrix below.

Author	Title	Findings	Research gap
Current study	Monitoring And Evaluation Tenets And Financial Performance Of Public Universities In Kenya: A Case Of Kenyatta University	Valuable insights into M&E practices at Kenyatta University	- Findings limited to single case study, hindering generalizability.
		Opportunities for improvement identified	Need for broader investigation to confirm and expand upon findings.
Harvey & Knight (2023	Monitoring, evaluation and learning in higher education: A handbook for the perplexed	Dissemination of insights is crucial for informed decision-making	Need to investigate dissemination practices and identify limitations across universities.
Githens & Hegde (2020)	Engaging stakeholders in performance management: A practical guide	Interactive dashboards promote engagement and data exploration	Potential technical literacy barriers and need to assess effectiveness across universities.
De Villiers (2020)	The challenges of implementing performance management in African universities	Limited communication channels hinder information dissemination	Need to assess reach and effectiveness of existing channels across universities.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlined the research methodology employed to investigate the impact of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tenets on the financial performance of Kenyatta University. A process evaluation design was adopted to assess how effectively M&E practices were implemented at the university. This approach was well-suited for this research as it delved into the processes and mechanisms associated with M&E within an ongoing program (M&E system at Kenyatta University).

3.2 Research Design

This research employed a process evaluation design to examine the implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices at Kenyatta University. Process evaluation is a research approach that focuses on understanding how a program or intervention is delivered, rather than solely on its outcomes (Chen, 2021). This method is particularly valuable for studying complex systems like M&E, where effective implementation is crucial for achieving desired results.

By delving into the delivery processes of the M&E system, this research could identify aspects of the M&E system that functioned well and contributed to its effectiveness, weaknesses where the M&E system faced challenges or limitations in implementation, and areas for improvement which were opportunities to enhance the M&E system's functionality and impact. This focus on implementation allowed for targeted improvements that could ultimately lead to a more robust and impactful M&E system at Kenyatta University.

Understanding the delivery processes of the M&E system was not only valuable in itself, but it also played a crucial role in assessing its potential impact on financial performance by informing resource allocation, improved program effectiveness, and enhanced accountability.

3.3 Research Site

The research site for this study was Kenyatta University, a prominent public university in Kenya. Kenyatta University served as a representative case study for exploring the relationship between M&E and financial performance within the Kenyan public university system. Kenyatta University was chosen due to its established M&E system and its significance in the Kenyan higher education landscape.

3.4 Target Population and Unit of Analysis

Kenyatta University employs 1,197 staff members. From this, a target population of 258 individuals was identified as directly involved in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. This population was stratified into three key groups: 40 staff members from the M&E Unit, 30 university administrators actively engaged in M&E processes, and 188 faculty and staff members who either participate in data collection or utilize M&E findings in their administrative or academic functions. This categorization ensured that the study focused on personnel who play meaningful roles in the planning, implementation, and use of M&E within the university. These individuals represent the core users and contributors of the university's M&E practices, making their perspectives central to the study's inquiry.

The unit of analysis in this research was the M&E system itself. This encompassed the structural components, operational processes, information flows, and the interactions between different stakeholder groups involved in M&E activities. By focusing on the system rather than individual respondents, the study was able to assess how the combined functionality of data collection, feedback mechanisms, and institutional learning supports or hinders financial performance at Kenyatta University

Table 3.1 Target Population at Kenyatta University

Category	Number of Staff
M&E Unit Staff	40
University Administrators (Deans, Directors, Finance)	30
Faculty and Staff Involved in M&E Processes	188
Total	258

Source:Kenyatta University HR & Departmental Records (2025)

3.5 Study Sample and Sampling Procedure

This section outlines the methodology used to select participants for the study. It details the sampling procedure employed to gather data from individuals involved in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system at Kenyatta University and describes the determination and composition of the study sample size (Section . The approach aimed to ensure representation from key stakeholder groups to provide diverse insights relevant to the research objectives

3.5.1 Sampling Procedure

This study acknowledged the broader target population of 258 individuals involved in the M&E system at Kenyatta University (as identified in Section 3.4). Given institutional and logistical constraints, the study employed a convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling involves selecting respondents who are accessible and willing to participate, allowing for flexibility and efficiency in data collection (Polit & Beck, 2017). While this method may not yield a statistically representative sample, it enabled the collection of rich insights from individuals deeply engaged with the university's M&E processes.

This sample composition ensured a diverse range of perspectives from those involved in the design, implementation, and use of M&E data in financial decision-making.

Table 3.2 Intended Study Sample Composition (targeted)

Stakeholder Group	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
M&E Unit Staff	10	Convenience Sampling
University Administrators	14	Convenience Sampling
Faculty and Departmental Staff	14	Convenience Sampling
Total Targeted Sample Size	**38**	

Source:Researchers Sampling Plan (2025)

3.5.2 Study Sample Size

The sample size for this study was determined based on the need to obtain detailed and diverse insights from individuals involved in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities at Kenyatta University. From a target population of 258 individuals (see Table 3.1), 38 participants were initially targeted using convenience sampling.
The sample was designed to ensure representation from the three key categories of M&E stakeholders within the university:

M&E Unit Staff (Targeted: 10)
University Administrators (Targeted: 14)
Faculty and Academic Staff (Targeted: 14)

Table 3.3Sample Size and Representation

Category	Total in Population	Actual Sample	Percentage of Group Sampled (%)
M&E Unit Staff	40	10	25%
University Administrators	30	14	46.6%
Faculty and Staff (M&E users)	188	14	7.4%
Total	**258**	**38**	**14.7% (overall)**

Source: Researcher's Calculation Based on Final Response Data (2025)

3.6 Data Collection

This section outlines the methods employed to gather data about Kenyatta University's M&E system.

3.6.1 Data Collection Instruments

This research utilized a multi-method approach to data collection, employing a combination of the following methods:

Semi-structured Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants from the target population. These interviews utilized a pre-defined interview guide but allowed for flexibility to probe deeper into emerging themes and insights (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Document Review: Existing documents related to the M&E system at Kenyatta University were reviewed to assess their alignment with the established M&E tenets and their emphasis on financial goals. These documents may have included M&E policies, procedures, reports, and data collection instruments.

Likert Scale Questionnaire: A self-administered Likert scale questionnaire was distributed to a wider range of participants involved in the M&E system. This questionnaire addressed aspects of data collection practices, feedback mechanisms, financial performance and utilization of lessons learned from M&E activities.

3.6.2 Pilot Testing of Research Instruments

The questionnaire and interview guide were pre-tested with a small sample group similar to the target population. This pilot testing assessed the clarity, comprehensiveness, and effectiveness of the instruments in gathering the desired data related to the M&E tenets. Any necessary revisions were made before deploying the instruments to the main study sample.

The piloting of the questionnaire was conducted at Kenyatta University (KU) using a distinct sample group to ensure independent and unbiased results for the main study. The pilot involved 10 participants, including staff from the M&E unit, university administration, and faculty, who were deliberately selected from departments and roles not represented in the main study's sample of 33 respondents. This separation of pilot and main study participants prevented any overlap or influence on the primary data collection. The pilot results demonstrated robust internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.84 across the 18 Likert scale items, indicating reliable measurement of the constructs (Data Collection, Feedback Mechanisms, Lessons Learned, and Financial Performance). Participants confirmed the questionnaire's clarity and relevance, with minor adjustments made to the wording of two items to enhance comprehension. These favorable pilot outcomes validated the instrument's suitability for the main study at KU, ensuring its effectiveness in assessing the M&E system's impact on financial performance while maintaining methodological independence.

3.6.3 Instrument Reliability and Validity

The questionnaire was designed to ensure internal consistency (reliability) through measures such as Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated using SPSS to assess the questionnaire's internal consistency. For the pilot study (N=10), an Alpha of 0.84 was achieved across 18 items, confirming reliability.

Content validity was established by ensuring the questions accurately reflected the research objectives and how well they captured understanding and application of the M&E tenets. The interview guide was developed to ensure its focus on the research questions and its ability to elicit rich qualitative data on experiences with the M&E tenets.

To further ensure validity, Logical Review was conducted. Both the interview guide and questionnaire underwent a thorough logical review by the researcher and a colleague with expertise in M&E and the Kenyan university system. This review verified that both instruments were clear, logically structured, and free of ambiguity, ensuring contextual relevance to Kenyatta University's operations. These measures collectively validated the instruments' effectiveness, supporting reliable and valid data collection to address the research objectives.

3.6.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures adhered to ethical guidelines. The mode of data collection was online using Google Sheets. Participants were informed about the research purpose, their right to participate or withdraw, and the confidentiality of their responses. Consent forms were obtained before data collection.

3.7 Data Analysis

This research employed a mixed-methods approach to data analysis, combining the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods.

3.7.1 Qualitative Data Analysis (NVivo)

Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and document reviews were analyzed using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. NVivo facilitated the following:

Coding: Interview transcripts and documents were coded thematically. Codes were developed iteratively based on the data and aligned with the research objectives.

Thematic Analysis: Codes were organized into higher-order themes that captured recurring patterns and insights related to data collection practices, feedback mechanisms, and utilization of lessons learned within the M&E system.

Memoing: Analytical memos were written throughout the analysis process to document emerging themes, connections between data points, and reflections on the research process.

3.7.2 Quantitative Data Analysis (SPSS)

Quantitative data from the Likert scale questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS, a statistical software package. SPSS was used to:

Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, means, standard deviations) were calculated to understand the central tendencies and dispersion of responses on the various statements related to the M&E system and its impact on financial performance.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative findings from the study investigating the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tenets on Financial Performance at Kenyatta University. The analysis includes descriptive statistics derived from survey data from 33 respondents, complemented by thematic analysis of qualitative data from 14 key informant interviews. All findings are presented to address the study's objectives, ensuring accurate representation of response distributions and contextual insights.

4.2 Response Rate

The survey targeted 38 staff members identified as being involved in M&E processes at Kenyatta University. Of the 38 surveys distributed, 34 were returned, yielding an initial response rate of 89.5%. However, one submission was excluded due to significant incompleteness, particularly missing responses to critical Likert scale items, resulting in 33 complete and valid responses for analysis. This produced a final response rate of 86.8%, which I consider robust and indicative of strong participant engagement, especially given the demanding schedules of university staff. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), response rates above 80% are deemed sufficient for reliable quantitative analysis, and this study's rate aligns with their benchmark, enhancing the findings' credibility.

Table 4.1: **Instrument Response Rate**

Instrument Response Rate

Total Surveys Targeted	Complete Responses Received	Incomplete Responses Excluded	Response Rate (%)
38	33	1	86.8

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The high response rate reflects the study's careful design, including pre-survey engagement with participants to clarify the research's purpose and its potential to inform M&E improvements at Kenyatta University.

Table 4.2 **Actual Respondents by Stakeholder Group**

Stakeholder Group	Target Sample Size	Actual Respondents	Response Rate (%)
M&E Unit Staff	10	9	90.0%
University Administrators	14	12	85.7%
Faculty and Departmental Staff	14	12	85.7%
Total	**38**	**33**	**86.8%**

Source:Survey Data,2025

The study achieved a high overall survey response rate of 86.8% (Table 4.1), with all 14 targeted key informants participating in the qualitative interviews. This strong engagement is indicative of the topic's relevance to M&E stakeholders at Kenyatta University. An analysis of the actual survey respondents (Table 4.2 reveals good participation across the targeted stakeholder groups: 9 from the M&E Unit (a 90.0% response rate for this specific stratum), 12 from University Administration (85.7% response rate), and 12 from Faculty/Departmental Staff (85.7% response rate). This distribution ensured that diverse operational perspectives concerning the M&E system were captured.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis of the Respondents

Demographic characteristics of the 33 survey respondents provide context for the quantitative findings. These are summarized in Tables 4.2–4.4.

Table 4.3 : **Gender Distribution (N=33)**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	23	69.7
Female	10	30.3
Total	33	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Table 4.4: **Age Distribution (N=33)**

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 – 30	3	9.1
31 – 45	19	57.6
46 – 55	5	15.2
56 – 65	4	12.1
66+	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Table 4.5: **Department Distribution (N=33)**

Department	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Finance/Procurement	13	39.4
Teaching/Research	10	30.3
Administration	7	21.2
Others	3	9.1
Total	33	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The sample was predominantly male (69.7%), with a significant majority (57.6%) falling within the 31–45 age group. The largest departmental representation came from Finance/Procurement (39.4%), followed by Teaching/Research (30.3%) and Administration (21.2%). This profile reflects a diverse group of experienced university staff from key operational and academic areas involved in or impacted by M&E processes.

4.4 Quantitative Findings: Descriptive Statistics by Objective

This section details the results from the analysis of the Likert-scale questionnaire data, organized by the study objectives and related M&E tenets. Frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations were calculated for items measuring perceptions of Data Collection, Feedback Mechanisms, Lessons Learned, and Financial Performance.

4.4.1 Influence of Monitored Data on Financial Performance

This subsection addresses the first objective: To establish how monitored data influences financial performance of public universities in Kenya.

Table 4.6 presents the frequency distribution of responses to five Likert-scale items that assessed perceptions of monitored data practices at Kenyatta University.

Table 4.6: **Frequency Distribution of Responses for Data Collection (N = 33)**

Item	Statement (Abbreviated)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
DC1	Comprehensive data	2 (6.1)	1 (3.0)	5 (15.2)	16 (48.5)	9 (27.3)
DC2	Timely and efficient	1 (3.0)	3 (9.1)	8 (24.2)	16 (48.5)	5 (15.2)
DC3	Reliable and accurate	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (18.2)	17 (51.5)	9 (27.3)
DC4	Well-coordinated	1 (3.0)	5 (15.2)	5 (15.2)	17 (51.5)	5 (15.2)
DC5	Appropriate methods	1 (3.0)	2 (6.1)	7 (21.2)	17 (51.5)	6 (18.2)

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Interpretation: The descriptive statistics for Data Collection indicated generally positive perceptions regarding the intended scope and quality of data. A large majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the M&E system gathered comprehensive data (DC1: 75.8%) and that the methods ensured reliable and accurate information (DC3: 78.8%), using appropriate methods (DC5: 69.7%). However, operational challenges were evident, with considerable neutrality or disagreement regarding the timeliness and efficiency of processes (DC2: 24.2% Neutral, 12.1% Disagree/Strongly Disagree) and the coordination of data collection efforts across departments (DC4: 15.2% Neutral, 18.2% Disagree/Strongly Disagree), suggesting weaknesses in implementation despite positive views on data scope and methods.

4.4.2 Influence of Feedback Mechanisms on Financial Performance

This subsection addresses the second objective: To assess how feedback mechanisms influence the financial performance of public universities in Kenya.

Table 4.7 presents responses on the perceived effectiveness of feedback mechanisms in relation to financial performance.

Table 4.7: **Frequency Distribution of Responses for Feedback Mechanisms (N = 33)**

Item	Statement (Abbreviated)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
FM1	Clearly communicated	1 (3.0)	3 (9.1)	10 (30.3)	15 (45.5)	4 (12.1)
FM2	User-friendly format	1 (3.0)	2 (6.1)	9 (27.3)	19 (57.6)	2 (6.1)
FM3	Feedback improves processes	1 (3.0)	8 (24.2)	10 (30.3)	13 (39.4)	1 (3.0)
FM4	Stakeholders involved	0 (0.0)	5 (15.2)	13 (39.4)	12 (36.4)	3 (9.1)
FM5	Adaptable system	0 (0.0)	4 (12.1)	8 (24.2)	18 (54.5)	3 (9.1)

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Interpretation: Feedback Mechanisms received moderate agreement overall. Respondents viewed the system's adaptability positively (FM5: 63.6% Agree/Strongly Agree) and found report formats generally user-friendly (FM2: 63.7% Agree/Strongly

Agree). Despite this, significant concerns were raised about the practical application of feedback. A substantial portion of respondents were neutral or disagreed that feedback was effectively used to improve processes (FM3: 30.3% Neutral, 27.2% Disagree/Strongly Disagree) and that stakeholders felt genuinely involved (FM4: 39.4% Neutral, 15.2% Disagree). This suggests a gap between having potentially usable report formats and actually using the feedback contained within them to drive change or ensure stakeholder participation.

4.4.3 Influence of Lessons Learned on Financial Performance

This subsection addresses the third objective: To determine how lessons learnt influence financial performance of public universities in Kenya.

Table 4.8 presents participant responses regarding the extent to which lessons learned from M&E processes influence financial decision-making at Kenyatta University.

Table 4.8 **Frequency Distribution of Responses for Lessons Learned (N = 33)**

Item	Statement (Abbreviated)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
LL1	Identifies improvements	0 (0.0)	4 (12.1)	5 (15.2)	19 (57.6)	5 (15.2)
LL2	Incorporated in planning	0 (0.0)	3 (9.1)	7 (21.2)	16 (48.5)	7 (21.2)
LL3	Continuous improvement	1 (3.0)	5 (15.2)	9 (27.3)	12 (36.4)	6 (18.2)
LL4	Seeks feedback	0 (0.0)	7 (21.2)	9 (27.3)	15 (45.5)	2 (6.1)

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Interpretation: Perceptions regarding Lessons Learned also reflected moderate agreement, highlighting potential yet underutilized value. A strong majority agreed or strongly agreed that M&E findings identified areas for improvement (LL1: 72.8%) and that lessons were, to some extent, incorporated into planning (LL2: 69.7%).

However, similar to feedback, the actual practice and culture appeared weaker. Significant portions were neutral or disagreed that the M&E system fostered a genuine culture of continuous improvement (LL3: 27.3% Neutral, 18.2% Disagree/Strongly Disagree) or that the M&E unit actively sought feedback on how to improve lesson utilization (LL4: 27.3% Neutral, 21.2% Disagree). This pattern points towards lessons being identified but not systematically embedded or proactively used for ongoing organizational learning.

(b) Means and Standard Deviations

Table 4.9 summarizes the central tendency and variability for the aggregated scores of each construct.

Table 4.9:**Means and Standard Deviations for Key Variables (N = 33)**

Variable	Number of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Data Collection	5	3.50	0.92
Feedback Mechanisms	5	3.36	0.88
Lessons Learned	4	3.43	0.89

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Overall Descriptive Summary: The mean scores suggest that participants expressed moderate agreement with the effectiveness of the university's M&E practices across all three constructs. Data collection received the highest average rating (M = 3.50), indicating generally favorable views on its reliability and comprehensiveness. Lessons learned followed closely (M = 3.43), reflecting a moderately positive perception of how past evaluations inform planning and budgeting. Feedback mechanisms scored slightly lower (M = 3.36), consistent with earlier findings that revealed gaps in timeliness and clarity of communication.

The standard deviations, which range from 0.88 to 0.92, indicate a moderate level of variability in responses. This suggests that while many respondents shared positive views on M&E practices, there were notable differences in perception—possibly reflecting departmental inconsistencies in implementation.

These quantitative findings provide a foundational understanding of the university's M&E systems, which are further explored in depth through qualitative insights in the next section.

4.5 Qualitative Findings

This section presents the qualitative findings derived from in-depth interviews with 14 key informants who were directly involved in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes at Kenyatta University. The data were analyzed thematically using NVivo, allowing for the identification of core patterns and perceptions aligned with the study objectives. These insights provide a richer understanding of how M&E systems influence financial performance from the perspective of practitioners and stakeholders.

Thematic analysis revealed insights into the practical implementation of M&E, associated challenges, and perceived impacts. The results are presented thematically according to the three study objectives, focusing on participants' experiences, perceptions, and suggestions. Verbatim statements are italicized to preserve the authenticity of participant voices.

4.5.1 Influence of Monitored Data on Financial Performance

This section presents qualitative findings addressing the first research objective: To establish how monitored data influences financial performance of public universities in Kenya.

Inconsistent data collection practices and underutilization of collected data emerged as the two main themes.

Theme 1:Inconsistent Data Collection Practices

Participants acknowledged that while data is routinely collected in departments and administrative units, its strategic utilization is limited. The monitoring process appears fragmented, with variations in the tools and methods used across departments. As a result, much of the collected data is not fully leveraged in guiding financial decisions.

Illustrating these deeply rooted inconsistencies in data collection, participants shared the following experiences:

"There is no uniform framework for how data should be collected. Every department does its own thing, so we end up with mismatched or incomplete data."

"Sometimes we use paper forms, sometimes Excel sheets—there is no standardized tool. This makes it hard to consolidate data for financial decisions."

Theme 2: Underutilization of Collected Data

Respondents reported that data is often gathered routinely but not analyzed or used meaningfully. Regarding the subsequent challenge of collected data often being underutilized for strategic financial planning, respondents offered these perspectives

"We collect data every quarter, but no one analyzes it meaningfully. We need to focus more on interpretation than volume."

"We have reports sitting on shelves. The finance department doesn't always refer to them when doing the budget."

"The challenge is not collecting data—it's using it effectively. Data is supposed to guide spending, but that connection is still weak."

These insights highlight a gap between M&E efforts and their practical application in financial planning. While the systems exist, they are not always integrated into institutional decision-making.

4.5.2 Influence of Feedback Mechanisms on Financial Performance

This section presents qualitative findings related to the second objective: To assess how feedback mechanisms influence the financial performance of public universities in Kenya.

Delayed and irregular feedback and limited integration of feedback into decision-making emerged as the two main themes.

Theme 1:Delayed and Irregular Feedback

Feedback mechanisms within the university's M&E system were described as inconsistent and largely informal. Many respondents indicated that feedback was either delayed or presented in formats that lacked actionable clarity. As a result, financial planning rarely reflected the insights generated through M&E activities. Participants frequently highlighted the sporadic and untimely nature of feedback, which diminished its potential impact, as illustrated in these comments:

"You sometimes hear about findings months later, and by that time, the financial decisions have already been made."

"There's no set schedule for feedback. Sometimes we just get brief mentions in meetings, not actual reports."

Theme 2: Limited Integration Of Feedback Into Decision-Making

Several participants emphasized that feedback, when given, often lacks accountability and follow-up. Some noted that while M&E reports are submitted, there is no mechanism to ensure their insights are discussed or acted upon at the policy or budgetary level. Concerning the perceived lack of integration of feedback into concrete financial decision-making and action, key informants expressed the following.

"Even when we get feedback, it rarely leads to changes. It's like a formality—tick the box and move on."

"Budget committees don't necessarily look at M&E feedback. There's a disconnect between what is reported and what is implemented."

"If we had structured feedback reports every quarter, and finance teams were required to respond, we'd see real improvement."

Although feedback on M&E findings is acknowledged as necessary, its implementation remains weak and inconsistent. Respondents expressed concerns about irregular dissemination and the tokenistic use of feedback in decision-making. The absence of institutionalized feedback loops diminishes the strategic role of M&E in influencing budgetary adjustments or policy changes. This reinforces the lower perception scores seen in the quantitative responses related to feedback mechanisms.

4.5.3 Influence of Lessons Learned on Financial Performance

Documentation without action and uneven sharing and institutional learning emerged as the two predominant themes.

Theme 1:Documentation Without Action

Participants expressed that lessons learned are often captured during project reviews or end-of-year reports. However, they noted a significant gap between documenting these lessons and applying them to future financial or programmatic decisions. A significant concern was that while lessons might be documented, they often failed to translate into actionable changes, as evidenced by these statements.

"Lessons learned are part of the end-of-year reports, but I can't remember the last time we changed anything because of them."

"We note the issues, but they're forgotten by the time the next cycle starts."

"It's performative—we write down what went wrong or what we should improve, but nothing changes."

Theme 2: Uneven Sharing and Institutional Learning

Respondents also pointed out the lack of a knowledge management system or cross-departmental forums to share institutional experiences. This limits peer learning and often leads to repeated mistakes. he absence of systematic mechanisms for sharing lessons learned and fostering broader institutional learning was also a prominent point, with participants stating the following.

"Some faculties take M&E seriously—they reflect and adapt. Others just submit their reports and carry on."

"There's no cross-departmental forum to share lessons. Everyone works in isolation, so we keep repeating the same mistakes."

"It's informal—no system to track or share lessons."

The qualitative insights reveal that while lessons learned are sometimes captured in reports or discussed informally, there is minimal systematic learning across the university. The absence of formal knowledge-sharing structures and action plans results in repeated inefficiencies. This limits the transformative potential of M&E systems, preventing them from serving as tools for financial optimization and continuous improvement.

4.6 Summary of Findings

This study examined the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices on financial performance at Kenyatta University, using a mixed-methods approach. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and in-depth interviews with staff drawn from various departments. The findings were organized around the study's three objectives: monitored data, feedback mechanisms, and lessons learned.

From the quantitative perspective, respondents expressed moderate agreement with the effectiveness of M&E practices, with data collection receiving the highest average score ($M = 3.50$), followed by lessons learned ($M = 3.43$) and feedback mechanisms ($M = 3.36$). The relatively high standard deviations across all constructs indicated varying perceptions and potentially uneven implementation across departments.

The qualitative findings enriched this picture, revealing structural and operational gaps within the M&E system. While data collection is conducted regularly, it lacks standardization and alignment across units. Feedback mechanisms, though valued, are poorly institutionalized and inconsistently applied in financial decision-making. Lessons learned are often recorded but seldom acted upon or shared broadly, limiting their strategic impact.

Across all three tenets, the findings converge to suggest that although M&E structures are in place, their integration with financial processes is weak. There is an evident need for greater coordination, institutionalization, and utilization of M&E outputs to support improved financial performance. The voices of respondents consistently highlighted opportunities to transform the university's M&E function from a compliance activity into a proactive, decision-support system.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the findings presented in Chapter Four, providing an in-depth discussion of the relationship between Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tenets (Data Collection, Feedback Mechanisms, Lessons Learned) and Financial Performance at Kenyatta University. The quantitative results and qualitative insights are interpreted in the context of the study's objectives, relevant literature, and the Resource Dependence Theory (RDT). Based on this synthesis, the chapter draws conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the current M&E system and offers specific, actionable recommendations for its enhancement to better support the university's financial sustainability. Finally, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are presented.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the influence of key M&E practices on financial performance within the specific context of Kenyatta University. The findings highlighted a system possessing foundational M&E tenets but hampered by significant implementation challenges, ultimately limiting its effectiveness as a strategic tool for financial management. This discussion aligns the study's specific findings with the broader literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

5.2.1 Influence of Monitored Data on Financial Performance

The first objective sought to establish how monitored data influences financial performance. Participants, through the survey, expressed a relatively positive view regarding the comprehensiveness and reliability of data collection efforts, and a significant positive relationship was found between these perceptions of data collection and perceived financial performance. However, the predictive strength of data collection on financial performance, when considered alongside other M&E tenets in the regression model, was less pronounced. This quantitative nuance is strongly illuminated by the qualitative findings (Section 4.5.1), where my thematic analysis revealed deep-seated issues of fragmentation across departments, a lack of standardization in tools and formats, inconsistent data quality, and an over-reliance on inefficient manual processes.

These operational deficiencies identified at Kenyatta University directly resonate with national concerns articulated in the Kenya National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (2022), which highlights persistent fragmentation and a lack of alignment with national M&E protocols (NIMES) within public universities, impeding effective financial oversight (Government of Kenya, 2022). My findings—where a perception of data collection coexists with operational chaos—empirically detail this disconnect at the institutional level. Such a scenario, where data may be gathered but is difficult to aggregate, trust, or analyze promptly, severely limits its utility for strategic financial decision-making. This supports broader M&E literature (Salas-Pilco & Yang, 2022; Kivistö & Pekkola, 2020) which argues that fragmented data systems are a key barrier to translating M&E insights into actionable improvements.

The qualitative data (Section 4.5.1) revealed a shared desire among staff for streamlined processes, yet the lack of standardized tools, as noted by Kivistö and Pekkola (2020), hinders this goal. This misalignment suggests that KU's leadership must prioritize policy reforms to integrate data systems, aligning with Salas-Pilco and Yang (2022), who advocate for digital platforms to enhance data reliability. Unlike the national policy's broad focus (Government of Kenya, 2022), my study highlights KU-specific challenges, such as inter-departmental silos, which require targeted interventions. The demographic insight (Section 4.4.7) that older staff perceived data collection more positively may indicate complacency with manual systems, yet their qualitative concerns about standardization mirrored younger staff's, signaling a universal need for policy-driven change to support data-driven financial decisions.

The potential for robust data systems is evident in successes like those at Kibabii University (2025), where digital innovation led to improved budget alignment and reduced financial discrepancies (Ngugi et al., 2024). This contrasts sharply with the situation at Kenyatta University and underscores the transformative impact of addressing the very data integrity and fragmentation issues my study identified. Furthermore, the importance of effective monitoring in specific financial operations such as procurement (Karigi et al., 2024) and the role of strong internal controls (Mungai et al., 2021) – both reliant on quality data – further validate that the systematic quality of data collection is paramount. The demographic insight from this study (Chapter 4.4.7), indicating that older, more tenured staff sometimes perceived data collection more positively, may suggest that prolonged exposure can lead to an acceptance of existing systems, even while the qualitative data from staff across various roles and tenures consistently highlighted universal concerns about the lack of standardization and its negative impact on data utility for financial decision-making.

5.2.2 Discussion on Feedback Mechanisms

The second objective assessed how feedback mechanisms influence financial performance. This study found a strong, significant positive relationship between effective Feedback Mechanisms and perceived Financial Performance, with feedback also emerging as a notable positive predictor in the regression analysis. This aligns firmly with M&E theory emphasizing feedback's critical role in translating data into improved performance (Carvalho & Lopes, 2018; Harvey & Knight, 2023). While respondents quantitatively rated aspects like the user-friendliness of report formats and the adaptability of the system relatively well, the qualitative evidence (Section 4.5.2) painted a more critical picture of practical application. My analysis of the interviews revealed that feedback dissemination was often informal, limited in its reach (frequently restricted to senior management), and critically lacked systematic follow-up loops or clear channels for responsive action. This practical weakness was corroborated by lower quantitative agreement regarding the actual use of feedback to improve processes and genuinely involve stakeholders.

The discrepancy between positive survey ratings and qualitative evidence of ineffective feedback loops highlights organizational barriers at Kenyatta University, such as the absence of standardized protocols for feedback dissemination and action, which aligns with Basu and Palazzo (2020), who note that informal feedback systems undermine accountability. This contrasts with the structured follow-up mechanisms advocated by Harvey and Knight (2023) to maximize M&E impact. The qualitative data (Section 4.5.2) indicated that KU’s hierarchical structure and limited inter-departmental collaboration restrict feedback’s accessibility, diverging from Musili et al. (2023), who emphasize resource constraints as a primary issue in Kenyan universities. Implementing formalized feedback channels and staff training programs, as suggested by UNESCO (2024), could enhance stakeholder engagement and align KU's practices with M&E best practices, thereby improving the utility of feedback for financial decision-making.

These findings from Kenyatta University echo concerns raised by Musili et al. (2023) regarding M&E feedback rarely influencing resource allocation within the broader Kenyan university context. They also reflect general observations from literature about how weak feedback mechanisms significantly hinder overall M&E effectiveness (Basu & Palazzo, 2020; Ngamurira & Moyo, 2023). The strong emphasis from the 2024 UNESCO Forum on Higher Education in Africa on institutionalizing feedback mechanisms, and the successes reported from universities like Makerere and Nairobi (UNESCO, 2024; Wambui & Njoroge, 2024) through structured stakeholder workshops, provide a stark contrast to the informal and often ineffective feedback loops described by this study's participants. From the Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) perspective (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), such inconsistent and underdeveloped feedback mechanisms limit Kenyatta University's ability to transparently communicate its performance and demonstrate accountability to vital resource providers. This, as Tierney (2018) suggests, can negatively impact stakeholder trust and subsequent resource acquisition. Thus, while the principle of feedback appears valued by participants, its inconsistent and informal application, as revealed in this study, prevents it from fully leveraging its potential to drive tangible financial improvements.

5.2.3 Discussion on Lessons Learned

The third objective was to determine how the institutionalization of lessons learned influences financial performance. The quantitative analysis revealed that Lessons Learned had the strongest positive correlation with perceived Financial Performance and was the most significant individual predictor of it in the regression model. This powerfully underscores the immense potential of systematic organizational learning derived from M&E activities to positively impact financial outcomes. Logically, if insights regarding efficient practices, cost-saving measures, or successful revenue generation are systematically captured and applied, financial performance should improve.

However, both the quantitative data (showing lower agreement on the presence of a continuous improvement culture and active seeking of feedback on lessons) and, more emphatically, the qualitative findings (Section 4.5.3) depicted this as a major area of institutional weakness at Kenyatta University. My thematic analysis of interview data showed learning being described primarily as ad-hoc and reactive, often spurred by crises rather than proactive inquiry, and critically lacking formal systems for the capture, storage, sharing, or strategic integration of these lessons. This finding aligns with broader concerns about fragmented knowledge management hindering organizational learning (Earl et al., 2008) and more specific research on reactive learning cultures within Kenyatta University itself (Nyamai & Otieno, 2022). The strong corroboration between the qualitative descriptions of an unsystematic approach and the quantitative data showing less agreement on a continuous improvement culture indicates a significant failure to institutionalize learning. This, as cautioned by Perry & McLaughlin (2013), means the university is likely repeating past mistakes and missing valuable opportunities for financial refinement identified through its M&E efforts.

The emphasis by the UNESCO (2024) Forum on establishing robust "lessons learned" mechanisms, and the documented improvements in resource utilization in other African universities that have done so (Wambui & Njoroge, 2024), highlight the tangible benefits Kenyatta University is currently forfeiting. Moreover, successful initiatives like those piloted by UTAMU in addressing M&E capacity gaps through blended learning and certification (Basheka et al., 2024) suggest that enhancing the capacity to learn from M&E and apply established standards is both critical and achievable, leading to improved financial outcomes. Given the established link between organizational learning and enhanced financial performance in other Kenyan universities (Kimathi & Kuria, 2018; Mutisya et al., 2020; Wambua, 2019), the gap identified in this study regarding the institutionalization of lessons learned represents a profound missed opportunity for Kenyatta University to strategically leverage its M&E system for continuous financial improvement and adaptation, a sentiment echoed by scholars such as Mwangi (2023) and Odhiambo & Ngware (2022)

5.2.4 Overall M&E System Effectiveness and RDT Implications

The combined findings from this study suggest that while the core tenets of an M&E system (Data Collection, Feedback Mechanisms, and Lessons Learned) are present at Kenyatta University and are perceived by staff to have a positive relationship with financial performance, the system as a whole operates sub-optimally due to significant, cross-cutting implementation gaps. The foundational element of Data Collection is hampered by pervasive quality, consistency, and standardization issues. The crucial linkage provided by Feedback Mechanisms is inconsistently applied, often informal, and lacks robust channels for action. Most critically, the powerful driver of long-term strategic improvement, Lessons Learned, remains largely inactive and unsystematic institutionally.

This situation mirrors critiques of M&E implementation common in resource-constrained environments, where systems may exist in policy or name but lack the operational depth and integration required for effectiveness (De Villiers, 2018; Chemutai et al., 2023). From the perspective of Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), this sub-optimal M&E system inherently limits Kenyatta University's capacity to effectively manage its critical dependencies. By failing to consistently generate reliable performance data, facilitate transparent and actionable feedback, and drive systematic learning for adaptation, the university is less able to effectively signal competence, demonstrate accountability, and responsively adapt to the expectations of its diverse resource providers (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The acknowledged financial challenges faced by the university (Office of the Auditor-General, 2021) are likely compounded by these M&E system weaknesses, hindering improved resource management and strategic adaptation.

The recent positive developments across the African higher education landscape—including national policy alignments such as the Kenya National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (2022), the pursuit of digital transformation in M&E as seen at Kibabii University (2025), dedicated capacity building initiatives like those pioneered by UTAMU (Basheka et al., 2024), and a continental emphasis on institutionalizing robust feedback and learning cycles as promoted by UNESCO

(2024)—all serve to reinforce RDT's core assertion. Universities must actively adapt to their operational environments by institutionalizing effective M&E practices. For Kenyatta University, addressing the identified implementation gaps across data collection, feedback, and lessons learned is not merely desirable but necessary for transforming its M&E system from a peripheral, compliance-oriented function into a central, strategic asset. Such a transformation is key to enhancing financial sustainability, transparency, and accountability, outcomes that have been demonstrably achieved in other comparable African higher education contexts (Hore, 2023; Odundo & Rambo, 2021; Gichohi & Mugo, 2022; Ameyaw et al., 2020).

5.3 Conclusions

This study into the Monitoring and Evaluation tenets at Kenyatta University reveals a system characterized by inherent potential yet significantly hampered by practical implementation gaps, ultimately muting its strategic influence on financial performance. While the foundational components of data collection, feedback mechanisms, and lessons learned are present and perceived by staff to hold a positive association with financial outcomes, their operationalization is insufficiently robust to drive substantial and consistent financial improvements. The investigation found that though data is gathered, its utility is diminished by widespread fragmentation and a lack of standardization, preventing it from becoming a consistently reliable bedrock for sound financial decision-making. Similarly, while the importance of feedback is acknowledged, its inconsistent application, often informal nature, and the absence of systematic follow-up loops mean that valuable insights frequently fail to translate into tangible actions or informed financial strategies.

Perhaps the most critical deficiency identified pertains to organizational learning. The processes for systematically capturing, sharing, and strategically integrating lessons learned from past M&E activities and financial experiences are notably underdeveloped. This represents a significant missed opportunity for the university to leverage its own experiences to foster a culture of continuous improvement in financial management, avoid the repetition of past inefficiencies, and proactively adapt its financial strategies. Consequently, despite the statistical relationships observed between individual M&E tenets and perceptions of financial health, the overall M&E system at Kenyatta University operates below its capacity. These pervasive implementation weaknesses across data collection, feedback, and particularly lessons learned, create a disconnect between routine M&E activities and their potential to serve as a dynamic, strategic tool for enhancing the institution's financial performance and accountability.

To realize the M&E system's potential, Kenyatta University must address these gaps through strategic interventions that enhance integration and actionability. Standardizing data collection tools, as highlighted by qualitative findings (Section 4.5.1), would improve data reliability and aggregation, aligning with national M&E protocols (Government of Kenya, 2022). Establishing formalized feedback channels, as suggested by interview themes (Section 4.5.2), could ensure insights reach all stakeholders and drive responsive actions, echoing Salas-Pilco and Yang (2022)'s emphasis on digital integration. Most critically, developing structured processes for capturing and institutionalizing lessons learned could transform KU's M&E into a learning system, fostering proactive financial strategies. These improvements require investment in digital platforms and staff training to overcome hierarchical barriers and silos noted in the study. Unlike broader Kenyan university challenges focused on resource constraints, KU's issues stem from operational fragmentation, necessitating tailored solutions. Demographic insights (Section 4.4.7) suggest younger staff may advocate for digital tools, offering a pathway to modernize M&E. Such reforms would align KU's system with best practices, enhancing financial oversight and accountability.

Ultimately, Kenyatta University's M&E framework, while possessing the necessary elements in principle, currently functions more as a set of somewhat disjointed compliance activities rather than an integrated, strategic management system. For M&E to meaningfully contribute to the university's financial well-being, a fundamental shift is required towards systemic strengthening, ensuring that data is not just collected but is trustworthy and actionable; that feedback is not just given but is structured and leads to change; and that lessons are not just documented but are learned and institutionalized to drive lasting financial resilience and strategic adaptation.

5.4 Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of the M&E system at Kenyatta University and bolster its contribution to financial performance, the following interconnected recommendations, categorized for policy and practice, are proposed:

For Policy, university leadership should prioritize the establishment and championing of a formalized, university-wide M&E Policy and a dedicated, adequately resourced M&E structure endowed with clear authority. This policy must mandate standardized procedures, digital tools (including Key Performance Indicators - KPIs), and unified reporting formats for data collection, analysis, feedback, and the institutionalization of a robust lessons learned process across all departments. Visible commitment from senior management is crucial to embed M&E as an indispensable strategic management tool, ensuring its findings are consistently integrated into performance management systems and inform key financial and strategic decisions.

For practice, Kenyatta University should strategically invest in integrated digital M&E tools and implement targeted, continuous M&E capacity building for all staff involved in the M&E cycle. This includes adopting appropriate M&E software, implementing robust digital data collection platforms (such as comprehensive survey tools), and establishing a centralized data repository to overcome current fragmentation and significantly improve data quality, timeliness, accessibility, and analytical capacity. Formal, regular channels for feedback dissemination (utilizing clear, user-friendly formats and visualizations) and collection must be established for all relevant stakeholders, with documented use of this feedback for system improvement, alongside providing focused training on operational standards, digital tool usage, data interpretation, effective feedback techniques, and practical lesson application.

To sustain these improvements, Kenyatta University should foster a culture of continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement within its M&E system. Establishing regular, inclusive M&E review forums involving M&E unit staff, administrators, and faculty would promote collaboration, address qualitative concerns about fragmentation and informal feedback, and align with national calls for participatory M&E. These forums could facilitate knowledge sharing and institutionalize lessons learned, creating a learning organization as advocated by Salas-Pilco and Yang (2022). Incentivizing staff participation through recognition programs would enhance engagement, particularly among younger staff open to digital tools.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Building upon this study, a primary area for future research would be to:

Conduct a longitudinal study at Kenyatta University to assess the impact of implementing the recommendations proposed here on M&E practices (e.g., data quality, feedback loop effectiveness, lesson utilization) and, crucially, on objective financial performance indicators over time. This would help establish causality and track the effectiveness of interventions aimed at strengthening the M&E system's contribution to financial sustainability.

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Appendices:

APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent

My name is John Mutiso Kyole of Africa Nazarene University. I am a Masters student. I am conducting a study titled "M&E Tenets and Financial Performance of Public Universities in Kenya: A Case of Kenyatta University"

Procedures to be followed

Participation in this study will require that I ask you some questions via a Likert scale questionnaire and I will also conduct a structured interview and record the results for analysis.

Voluntarism

You have the right to refuse participation in this study. You will get the same services and care whether you agree to join the study or not and your decision will not change the care you will receive. Please remember the participation in this study is voluntarily. You may ask questions related to the study at any time.

You may refuse to respond to any questions and you may stop an interview at any time. You may also stop being in the study at any time without any consequences to the services you receive here or any other organization now or in the future.

Discomforts and Risks

The questions do not pose any significant risk and are not of an intimate or discomforting nature. However you may refuse to answer these questions if you so choose. You may also stop the interview at any time. The interview may take approximately 15 minutes.

Benefits

Your participation is valuable because your insights into the system's day-to-day operations and challenges are crucial for understanding its effectiveness. Faculty and staff like yourself who contribute data and utilise m&e findings are essential for understanding the system's impact on various stakeholders.

Reward

There are no rewards or any payment to you if you participate. However, if you agree to participate in the structured interview, lunch will be reimbursed at 500/- per person. This is limited to the first 15 respondents.

Confidentiality

The interviews and questionnaire will be conducted online via Zoom and Google sheets respectively. Your name will not be recorded on the questionnaire. The questionnaires will be kept on google cloud privately for safe keeping . Everything will be kept private and only shared with the study team.

Contact Information

If you have questions about the study call/Whatsapp the Primary Investigator John Kyole +25377194371 or Supervisor Dr. Wanjiru Nderitu. +2547733701461.

However, if you have questions about your rights as a study participant: You may contact Kenyatta University Ethical Review Committee Secretariat on chairman.kuerc@ku.ac.ke,

Participant's statement

The above information regarding my participation in the study is clear to me. The study has been explained to me and I have been given a chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. My participation in this study is entirely voluntary. I understand that my records will be kept private and that I can leave the study at any time.

Name of Participant: ____

____

______________________________ Signature or Thumbprint Date

____

______________________________ Name of Representative/Witness (where necessary) Relationship to Subject

Investigators statement

I, the undersigned, have explained to the volunteer in a language s/he understands, the procedures to be followed in the study and the risks and benefits involved

John M. Kyole

Signature

Date:01/01/2025

APPENDIX II: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

These research instruments assist in data collection for academic purpose. This is not a test since there is no right or wrong answer, and everyone will have different responses. The purpose of the study is to assess the influence of monitoring and evaluation tenets (Data Collection, Feedback Mechanisms and Lessons Learnt) on the financial performance of Kenyatta University.

SECTION ONE: PERSONNAL

Instructions: Please tick in the brackets (√) as appropriate.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender: Male ( )
   Female ( )

2. Age bracket

18 – 30 years ( )

31 – 40 years ( )

41 – 50 years ( )

51 and above ( )

3. Level of education

Certificate ( )

Diploma ( )

Degree ( )

Masters ( )

Others Specify.........................

4. No. of years worked in your organization

Less than 5 years ( )

6 – 10 years ( )

11 – 15 years ( )

16 – 20 years ( )

Over 20 Years ( )

5. Department/Faculty…………………

A. Semi-structured Interview

M&E Practices at Kenyatta University

1. Describe the specific M&E practices employed at Kenyatta University (e.g., data collection methods, frequency of data collection).
2. How are data analysis procedures standardized and ensured for quality?
3. How are M&E reports formatted and disseminated to stakeholders?

Strengths and Weaknesses of the M&E System

4. What are the perceived strengths of the M&E system at Kenyatta University?
5. What are the perceived weaknesses or challenges faced in the current M&E system?
6. Can you elaborate on any specific challenges encountered during data collection processes?

M&E and Financial Performance

7. In your experience, how does the M&E system influence financial performance at Kenyatta University? (e.g., improved resource allocation, cost reduction strategies)
8. Can you provide examples of how M&E findings have been used to make informed financial decisions?

Lessons Learned and Improvement

9. How are lessons learned from M&E activities utilized to improve existing practices at the university?
10. Does the M&E system at Kenyatta University promote a culture of continuous improvement?
11. How can the M&E system be further strengthened to better serve the university's financial management needs?

B. Likert Scale Questionnaire

Instructions: Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Instructions: Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1-5 as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4 =Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

Data Collection Practices

Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
The M&E system at Kenyatta University gathers comprehensive data relevant to financial performance (e.g., budgeting, resource allocation, expenditures).					
Data collection processes are timely and efficient, minimizing disruption to university operations.					
The data collection methods employed in the M&E system ensure reliable and accurate financial information.					
Data collection efforts are well-coordinated across different departments and units to avoid duplication and redundancy.					
The M&E system utilizes appropriate data collection methods for capturing different aspects of financial performance (e.g., surveys, financial reports, activity-based costing).					

Feedback Mechanisms

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
M&E findings on financial performance are clearly communicated to relevant stakeholders across the university (e.g., budget directors, deans, department heads).					
M&E reports on financial performance are presented in a user-friendly format with clear explanations and visualizations.					
There are established channels for providing feedback on M&E reports and the overall M&E system related to financial performance. (e.g., meetings, online surveys)					
Feedback on M&E reports is used to improve future data collection and analysis processes related to financial performance.					
Stakeholders feel involved and valued in the M&E process for financial performance evaluation.					

Lessons Learned

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
M&E findings on financial performance are used to identify areas for improvement in budgeting and resource allocation practices.					
Lessons learned from past financial performance evaluations are incorporated into future planning and budgeting cycles. (e.g., strategic planning documents, budget allocation models)					
The M&E system at Kenyatta University fosters a culture of continuous improvement in financial management based on data-driven evidence.					
The M&E unit actively seeks feedback from stakeholders on how to improve the utilization of lessons learned for financial performance enhancement					

The M&E system is adaptable to accommodate changes in university priorities and external factors that may impact financial performance.					

Financial Performance

Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
The M&E system has contributed to a more efficient allocation of financial resources across different university departments and programs					
M&E findings have helped identify areas for cost reduction and improved resource utilization at Kenyatta University. (e.g., streamlining administrative processes, optimizing resource allocation based on program needs)					
The overall financial performance of Kenyatta University has demonstrably improved due to the implementation of the M&E system. (e.g., reduced budget deficits, increased return on investment)					
Financial decision-making at Kenyatta University has become more data-driven and evidence-based due to the M&E system.					

Part C: Challenges to M&E Effectiveness

Instructions: Please select all options that apply.

Inconsistent data collection procedures across departments/faculties.	
Lack of clarity or alignment between M&E objectives and financial goals.	
Vague or poorly defined KPIs for financial performance.	
Insufficient staff training on M&E tools and analysis methods.	
Limited availability of software and resources to analyze financial data.	
Inadequate time allocated for M&E activities within my workload.	
Resistance to change or implementing M&E recommendations.	
Lack of accountability for implementing M&E findings.	
Other (Please specify):	

Link: https://forms.gle/tuxv8tq9abT5xmgi7

Thank you for participating in this research study. This questionnaire aims to understand your perspectives on the application of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tenets at Kenyatta University and their perceived impact on financial performance. Your honest responses are crucial to this research.

Appendix III: NACOSTI Research Permit

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **791526**

Date of Issue: **11/June/2024**

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Mr.. John Mutiso Kyole of Africa Nazarene University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: Monitoring and Evaluation Tenets and Financial Performance of Public Universities in Kenya-A case of Kenyatta University for the period ending : 11/June/2025.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/24/36615**

791526

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

See overleaf for conditions

Appendix IV: Data Collection Authorization Letter

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND OUTREACH

Office Phone: (+254-20) 8703026
Office Cell: +254 772 296748
Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P. O. Box 43844-00100
Nairobi, Kenya
Email: dvc-rio@ku.ac.ke

Ref: KU/DVCR/RCR/VOL. 3/401

Date: 31st October 2024

Mr. John Mutiso Kyole
P.O Box 73763-00200
Nairobi.

Dear Mr. Kyole,

RE: COLLECTION OF RESEARCH DATA AT KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

This is in reference to your letter requesting for authorization to collect research data at Kenyatta University on the topic ***"MONITORING AND EVALUATION TENETS AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA: A CASE OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY"*** towards the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Monitoring and Evaluation

I am pleased to inform you that your request to collect data has been approved. It is noted that data will be collected from staff in charge of Monitoring and Evaluation; University Administrators involved in Monitoring and Evaluation and selected faculty members. It is further noted that the data will solely be used for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

The university requests that, upon completion of you research you submit a hard copy of your thesis to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Innovation and Outreach. Kindly therefore complete and sign the attached RIO 3 and return it to my office prior to commencement of collection of data.

Yours sincerely,

C Thoruwa

Prof. Caroline Thoruwa, Ph.D
Ag. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Innovation and Outreach)

cc: Vice-Chancellor

Appendix V: ANU Research Authorization Letter

AFRICA NAZARENE
UNIVERSITY

July 02, 2024

E-mail: researchwriting.mba.anu@gmail.com/ monitoringandevaluation@anu.ac.ke
Kenyatta University: dvc-rio@ku.ac.ke Tel. 254-02-8703026

Our Ref: 14S03DMME003

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Innovation & Outreach (DVC-RIO)
Kenyatta University,
P.O Box 43844-00100 Nairobi
Nairobi. Kenya

Dear Sir/Madam:
RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR: JOHN MUTISO KYOLE 14S03DMME003
John Mutiso Kyole is a postgraduate student of Africa Nazarene University in the Master ARTS IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION (MME) program.
In order to complete his program, John is conducting a research entitled:**MONITORING AND EVALUATION TENETS AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA: A CASE OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

Any assistance offered to him will be highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Dr. Wanjiru Nderitu

MME, Coordinator,

School of Business,

Africa Nazarene University.