MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT AGRICULTURAL AFFORDABLE INPUTS PROGRAM IN LILONGWE DISTRICT, MALAWI.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work, and it has not been submitted to any university for academic work.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my work to my late mother, who worked tirelessly for me to get this far. I would also like to express my gratitude to my family for their emotional support throughout my studies and the entire thesis writing process.

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ABSTRACT

Monitoring and evaluation practices are critical to the performance of program implementation. Several studies' findings have established a link between M&E practices and program success. This study aimed to assess the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on the performance of the government's Agricultural Affordable Inputs Program (AIP) in Lilongwe district Malawi. The study had four objectives: to establish the influence of M&E stakeholder engagement, to assess the influence of M&E planning, to investigate the influence of M&E budgetary allocation and to examine the influence of M&E technical expertise on the performance AIP in Lilongwe district Malawi. The theoretical framework included program theory, results-based management theory, resource-based theory, and expertise theory. The study adopted quantitative research methodology. The research site was Lilongwe district, Malawi. The study engaged 60 participants comprising of AIP staff, Ministry of Agriculture extension officers and stakeholders. Census method was used to select respondents. The study used a closed ended questionnaire self-administered by the respondents at their convenient time. The researcher sought for authorization from Africa Nazarene University, the Ministry of Agriculture through the Agricultural Development Division, and all respondents to perform the study. Descriptive data analysis technique was used to address the study objectives. The study's conclusion and recommendations were based on the data analysis results. The researcher facilitated pilot test to measure data collecting tool reliability and validity with support from Catholic Relief Services MEAL department colleagues. SPSS version 23 software was used for data analysis to draw mean, standard deviation and make inferences of the findings. The study's findings revealed both support and contradictions from previous studies. In relation to the study's findings Stakeholder analysis and program plan development should involve all necessary stakeholders. A comprehensive and realistic AIP program plan should be developed with logic framework details. For the successful implementation of M&E activities that track program progress and performance, an independent M&E budget is required. The study recommends that the Malawian government develop a stakeholders engagement strategy and policy that will provide guidelines for stakeholder participation in the AIP program from design to evaluation. To accommodate the program's start and end dates, a realistic and comprehensive plan should be developed. A separate M&E budget should be set aside for the effective implementation of the program's M&E system. The program team must be equipped to conduct M&E activities that support the AIP program. A comparative study on non-state Agricultural Affordable Input Programs would be ideal for drawing conclusions on effective M&E practices used by the government and other implementing agencies to assess AIP performance.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Monitoring and Evaluation – It is project management function that compares project progress and performance against expected results and plans.

Monitoring – It is an on-going process of collecting regular data to aid checking progress of a project.

Evaluation - It is a periodical collection of data to measure the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.

Stakeholders - are individuals, groups or organizations that collaboratively work together to realize the program goals.

Stakeholder engagement - Stakeholder engagement refers to the degree to which all project partners collaborate from the design stage to the project's completion processes.

Program evaluation - Is an assessment that aims to measure the credibility of program towards its intended outcomes.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACB	Anti-Corruption Bureau
AIP	Affordable Input Program
AU	African Union
CADDP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development
DIP	Detailed Implementation Plan
FAO	Food Agricultural Organization
GAFSP	Global Agricultural and Food Security
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
SGDS	Sustainable Development Goals
RBM	Results Based Management
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UN	United Nation

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the government's Agricultural Affordable Inputs Program, as well as monitoring and evaluation practices that influence programs performance. Among the specific practices evaluated are M&E stakeholder engagement, M&E budgetary allocation, M&E planning, and M&E expertise. The chapter presents the research background, objectives, and questions to justify the research study. This section also discusses the scope, limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and theoretical framework.

1.2. Background of the study

Monitoring and Evaluation is critical for guaranteeing program effectiveness. The adoption of M&E practices in programs contributes to achievement of measurable developmental milestones. Globally, the involvement of stakeholders is key M&E practice to measure the success and performance of both private and public projects (Otundo, 2021). Africa in its developmental works has demonstrated one effect of growth in M&E which is a shift from accounting for budget expenditure to a focus on the achievement of development results (Fraser and Morkel, 2020). Malawi's integration of M&E plans in various programs, according to Millennium Challenge Account (2018), serves as a guide for implementation and realization of national objectives.

Several agricultural subsidy input programs with well-established M&E practices have been launched around the world to combat hunger. According to the World Economic Forum (2023) the programs involve small-scale farmers, who contribute significantly to one third the of world's food. The 2020 World Investment reports indicated that, progress on investment in the SDGs from all sources; domestic and international, private, and public is huge among the six of 10 SDGs sectors, food, and agriculture inclusive. In the wake of the global response, the G20 launched Global Agricultural and Food Security (GAFSP) program. According to World Bank (2023) USD $220 Million in new agricultural investments grants for 15 countries was announced by GAFSP, a global multilateral fund dedicated to reducing food insecurity and poverty in low-income countries. The African Union (AU) announced the US$251 billion Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program in 2001 program with priority goals of sustainable agriculture

growth and poverty reduction reaching out to 35% of African population reported to be chronically hungry (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2003). The agricultural programs have continued to be implemented across the AU member states. According to ACB (2021), the Malawian government launched Affordable Input Program (AIP) with the main goal to improve food security attain food security through provision of subsidized farm inputs. The accrued investments towards these programs are to be complemented with designing results-based programs.

1.2.1 Program performance of Agricultural Input Programs

A program demonstrates the connections between the activities of program designers, implementers, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. Harrin (2022) described a program as a collection of connected projects and activities that are managed in a coordinated manner and within a culture that allows for the achievement of objectives and benefits. This suggests that the effectiveness of a program is dependent on the participation of important groups in the program's labor force. Each of the groups involved plays a critical role to realize the intended program goals. The success of the program is determined by measuring its performance. According to Kilmer and Cook (2021), the prime role of evaluation is providing information to improve programming. The most important aspect of developmental programs is that they are implemented, and their objectives are met. Program performance validates its relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency in meeting the needs of the target group. To effectively measure program success, the government as program implementing agency must adopt program performance measures.

1.2.2 Monitoring and Evaluation practices.

In program management the M&E plays different but inter-related functions to track program success throughout its lifetime. Monitoring is an on-going process of collecting regular data to aid checking progress of a project. On the contrary evaluation is a periodical collection of data to measure the project’s relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. A good monitoring system must be live and strategic as such adequate skills and management attention is required. Program team must actively conduct monitoring activities to identify program challenges and consequently work on making timely actions to improve implementation towards achieving the program goals. In program management not adhering to the standards of M&E hinders achievement of the desired program outcomes and targets. Monitoring and Evaluation practices

are hallmark to program performance. The M&E practices displays program logic and demonstrates cause of program performance.

1.2.2.1 M&E stakeholder engagement

To ensure successful program implementation, all stakeholders must work together towards achieving the program goals. According to Matu (2020) stakeholder involvement create a platform of collaborative learning by a thorough review of the program progress and performance. It is therefore beneficial in drawing management decisions hence enhancing teamwork among program staff and stakeholders. William et al (2020) stated that stakeholders include government authorities, NGOs, and program target groups.

1.2.2.2 M&E planning

The planning process in program management displays the details of the implementation process in relation to the program goals, outcomes, outputs, and inputs. According to Ahoranayeze and Nyambane (2021) in relation to program performance, Effective planning is a critical process that ensures project completion within the time, scope, and budget. Toladata (2019) stated that aligning project intervention planning and M&E strategy design should ensures a rigorous process of monitoring project interventions and activities as well as their success. Mathias, et al (2021) pointed that M&E plan makes use of benchmarks, which are programming goals, to assist program employees in improving activities with more concentration and efficiency. Developing program plans must engage all stakeholders contributing to the success of the project. Toladata (2019) pinned that in the planning stage, the goal is to identify possibilities and impediments as a team, with a focus on problem resolution and optimizing impact.

1.2.2.3 M&E budget Allocation

In program management, resource allocation is a critical process. The prior processes require the program team to understand the program outputs before assigning funds. Wanjiru and Alex (2022) highlighted that budgetary allocation offers financial resources to finance a program's or project's M&E operations. Funding for M&E activities must be prioritized during the design and planning phases.

1.2.2.4 M&E expertise.

M&E system implementation for a program is dependent on knowledge and skills, which corresponds to continuous adaptation of M&E practices and influences program performance. To effectively track program performance, the program team's knowledge and skills in all capacities related to M&E activities must be strengthened. Valadez and Bamberger (2021) stated that the program team's M&E capacity must be strengthened through trainings, workshops, and ongoing orientation.

1.2.2.5 Government Agricultural Affordable Inputs Program

The Malawi government launched the Agricultural Affordable Inputs Program in 2020. The program is being implemented in all 28 districts. The implementation of the AIP is overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture. Extension Planning Areas, on the other hand, coordinate AIP activities in collaboration with program stakeholders. The government also works with international companies which supply subsidized farm inputs.

The program's goal is to improve national food security and reduce poverty. Since its inception, the program has aimed to provide low-cost, affordable fertilizers and seeds to 4.3 million small-scale farmers. The AIP primarily supports rain-fed crops but skewed towards Maize production which is Malawi's staple food. A positive outcome of the AIP is improved household economic status, which allows farmers to engage in commercial farming to generate income.

1.2.2.6 Malawi Agricultural Status

Malawi's economy is primarily agricultural. According to JICA (2022) The sector is dominated by small scale farmers. Despite the potential for higher output and productivity, the agriculture sector remains underutilized. The Malawi government through its fiscal year budgets has continued supporting small scale farmers through agricultural inputs subsidy programs. According to Nyirenda et al. (2021), the government's Affordable Input Program aims to improve food security and nutrition at the household and national levels, as well as reduce poverty, by increasing farmers' access to improved inputs such as two bags of fertilizer and hybrid Maize seeds at a fixed price.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Agricultural Inputs Program has helped to address food security and poverty among small-scale farmers. However, implementation issues have plagued the programs, affecting their overall

performance. Kambewa (2020) noted that the subsidy programs still fail to address the questions about their effectiveness, efficiency, broader impact and sustainability. Wise (2020) shared an account of failure of Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) which represents a significant monitoring issue for a program that has devoured resources while also driving the region's agricultural development policies with its narrative of technology-driven, input-intensive agricultural development. In Malawi, Kalumpha (2021) reported irregularities of the 2020/2021 AIP, equating the failures to ineffective strategies for implementation of the program. According to Letsolo (2022), the best practice in project management advocates for active M&E of projects to promote transparency and accountability. Consequently, institutionalization of M&E practices in government led programs is relevant to track progress and performance.

Various studies have been conducted by different researchers on the impact of M&E practices on the performance of projects or programs. The studies emphasized the importance of M&E planning, M&E stakeholder engagement, M&E budgetary allocation, and M&E expertise as program performance influencers. A study by Nteziyareme and Muiruri (2022) showed that M&E stakeholder involvement and M&E budget had strong positive relationship and contributed to performance. Barendsen et al (2021) however pinpoints that External communication is hampered by a lack of distinction between project stakeholder management and project communication. A study by Oryem et al (2021) stressed on skills and competence of project team as considerable crucial factor influencing project implementation success. Traditional project delivery methodologies, according to Walker et al (2022), fail to achieve desired end cost reliability, whereas integrated project delivery generates a considerably more dependable and resilient project delivery plan and outturn time cost objectives. This means that integrated elements influence program performance rather than a single M&E aspect. The study was a driving force behind the current study in Malawi, where M&E competence was evaluated as a factor influencing the performance of the AIP program. Similar study by Byegon et al (2022) established the impact of M&E planning on performance of health center outreach programs funded by NGOs. The study recommended policy interventions from the grant providers targeting health centers outreach programs and other stakeholders such as governments through NGOs coordination dimensions of M&E activities, and particularly M&E planning as strategy to improve the impact made by such programs in Kenya. Despite an indication of stakeholder engagement in the program performance, the study did not highlight other planning contributing factors relevant for program performance.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The study's overarching goal was to assess the influence of monitoring and evaluation practices on the performance of the government's Agricultural Affordable Inputs Program in Lilongwe district Malawi.

1.5 Specific objectives

1. To establish the influence of M&E stakeholder engagement on performance of government Agricultural Affordable Inputs Program in Lilongwe district Malawi
2. To assess the influence of M&E planning on performance of government Agricultural Affordable Inputs Program in Lilongwe district Malawi.
3. To investigate the influence of M&E budget allocation on performance of government Agricultural Affordable Inputs Program in Lilongwe district Malawi
4. To examine the influence of M&E technical expertise on the performance of government Agricultural Affordable Inputs Program in Lilongwe district Malawi.

1.6 Research questions

1. How does stakeholder engagement influence the performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program in Lilongwe district Malawi?
2. How does M&E planning influence the performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input program in Lilongwe district Malawi?
3. How does M&E budget allocation influence the performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program in Lilongwe district Malawi?
4. How does technical expertise influence the performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program in Lilongwe district Malawi?

1.7 Significance of the study

The study's findings serve as foundation for understanding the link between M&E practices and program performance. The generalization might make a significant contribution to the government of Malawi and civil service staff implementing public programs. The study's outcomes and recommendations are valuable in developing implementation strategies that adhere to key aspects of M&E to achieve program objectives. The shared experience of research participants at both the higher and lower levels create a learning platform to improve the design and delivery of similar services.

The study is crucial in establishing the effectiveness of M&E practices in relation to the success of the AIP program by identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement. The research results improve program accountability among stakeholders who are actively involved in program implementation. The study also improved program staff knowledge and skills in M&E practices.

The study creates a propound basis of evaluation of agricultural related programs that benefits smallholder farmers. Furthermore, the study generates new knowledge, which stimulate other researchers and intellectuals to undertake future research.

1.8 Scope of the study

The study was based on Malawi's Agricultural Affordable Inputs Program, which is being implemented in 28 districts. The study examined four independent variables namely, M&E stakeholder engagement, M&E planning, M&E budgetary allocation and M&E technical expertise and their influence on the program performance. The study was restricted on the government monitoring and evaluation measures on agricultural affordable input program. The study engaged MoA Extension Officers, AIP staff and stakeholders who actively participated in the implementation of the AIP.

1.9 Delimitation of the study

The study was restricted to the government's Affordable Inputs Program in Lilongwe district Malawi. For definitive results, the study would have been conducted in all 27 districts where the program is being implemented. However, due to budget and logistical constraints, it was unmanageable.

The government's agricultural Affordable Inputs program is viewed as a political initiative. This posed a risk to respondents' participating in a study evaluating the performance of the government-led program. However, the study assumed that the AIP program, which is led by the government through the Ministry of Agriculture, serves as the foundation for establishing M&E practices that will help similar future programs perform better.

1.10 Limitations of the study

The study concentrated on the government's Agricultural Affordable Inputs Program. This entailed relying on AIP staff, Agriculture Extension workers and stakeholders as study respondents. Setting up interviews with MoA and AIP staff as source of data resulted in the creation of a political sphere

and bias. Engaging them as research participants on their convenient schedules, on the other hand, was a limiting timing factor for the study. Literature review covered varied M&E practices theories. This limited findings directly addressing the programs monitoring and evaluation measures.

1.11 Assumptions of the study

The study assumed that participants from AIP, Ministry of Agriculture, and stakeholders would willingly participate and provide honest responses that would be valid and reliable once collected. The research study was thought to be relevant to the Malawian government, particularly the MoA and AIP implementers. The findings would be used to improve the design of Malawi's future agricultural program.

1.12 Theoretical framework

The research concentrated on the relevant theories to monitoring and evaluation practices, as well as their impact on program performance. These theories were carried out in the context of program theory, which was pioneered by Bickman in 1985, results-based management theory which was introduced by Peter Drucker in 1954, resource-based pioneered by Barney in 1991 and expertise theory firstly advocated by Anderson Ericsson in 1991.

The cited theories supported the study's variables and deep dived into M&E stakeholder engagement, M&E budgetary allocation, M&E planning, and M& expertise all of which can influence the performance of Agricultural Input Programs.

1.12.1 Program Theory

Bickman (1985) was the first proponent of program theory. Hamza et al. (2020) defined program theory as the anticipated impacts of a change or intervention and then systematically maps elements that contribute to a chain of projected short- and long-term results.

According to Hamza et al (2020) The program theory serves as a framework for the creation of a program evaluation strategy that may deliberately investigate input processes, results, and effect. Institute of Development Studies (2020) argued that external events to the program create a challenging environment that’s its acknowledged that at the outset. It would be difficult to gather evidence of systematic change, and the program's contribution to change would not be clear given

the various overlapping change factors and the long and indirect road to impact. The logic model should incorporate outcomes assumptions or hypotheses, as well as components that impact process and outcome implementation.

Robert (2021) stated that program rests on the assumption that new program, products, and initiatives should be developed and implemented to address specific problems needs or communities. The presentation of program theory aspects in a logic model aids the process of designing, planning, implementing, and evaluating the overall program performance. In the current study, the research deep dived on cause and effects of M&E stakeholder engagement, M&E planning, M&E budgetary allocation and M&E expertise and how they influence the performance of the AIP. The program theory further guided the researcher to draw relationships of other external factors that affected the performance of the AIP.

1.12.2Results Based Management Theory

Results based Management Theory can be traced back to Peter Drucker as early as 1954 (Bhattari, 2020). According to UNFPA (2019) RBM is a management strategy by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of results, ensure that their processes, products, and services contribute to the achievement of desired results. Evidence based results are required to make decisions concerning the design, allocation of resources, and execution of programs and activities. According to the Council of Europe (2021), RBM maturity is measured by evidence from five management pillars: strategic, operational, accountability and learning, change, and partnership management.

The theory predicated on assumption that implementing agencies and stakeholders collaborate to achieve the program's intended impacts and outcomes. Furthermore, any developmental program must be designed to improve performance. The researcher used the theory's distinguishing features and constructive critiques to develop a basis for assessing M&E stakeholder engagement in the AIP's performance.

1.12.3 Resource Based View Theory

The Resource-based View Theory is advocated by Barney (1991), Mahoney and Pandian (1992), and Peteraf (1993). According to Sabourin (2020) The resource-based view theoretical approach derives from strategic management, and it shows how identifying and possessing essential internal

resources contributes to a firm's capacity to build and retain a competitive edge and enhance performance. Ronoh and Kirui (2020) stated that in project management, the theory emphasizes on the project budget as its source of competitive advantage. Osore (2019) asserted that through budget development objectives are formulated and activities executed to realize project objectives.

Bhandari et al, (2020) argued that resources alone are not sufficient for sustainable performance as they are other key moderating factors. This link was examined by studying the needs of enterprises to balance their exploration and exploitation efforts, referred to as relative exploration, which is impacted by Chief Executive Officers' attention to entrepreneur orientation and market orientation as moderators. Kraaijenbrick et al, (2010) stated that explanations both critiques and emerging theories still assumes resources to be critical component for explaining the existence of firms and their difference.

The theory considers the resources as the denominator of performance. It assumes availability of resources should aid the execution of programs operations and activities. The theory was relevant to the study as it responded to the research question of influence of M&E budgetary allocation to performance of the AIP. The researcher maximized the original concepts of the theory and supplementary literature to develop M&E budget allocation questions which collected relevant data that showed the relationship of M&E budgetary allocation to AIP performance.

1.12.4 Expertise Theory

Anderson Ericsson (1991) is the proponent of the expertise theory. The theory supports the relevancy of skills as an attribute to performance. Attri (2019) stated that Expertise development is regarded as a journey in which learning, and skill acquisition play an indisputable part in achieving the needed performance, that is, task performance and job performance.

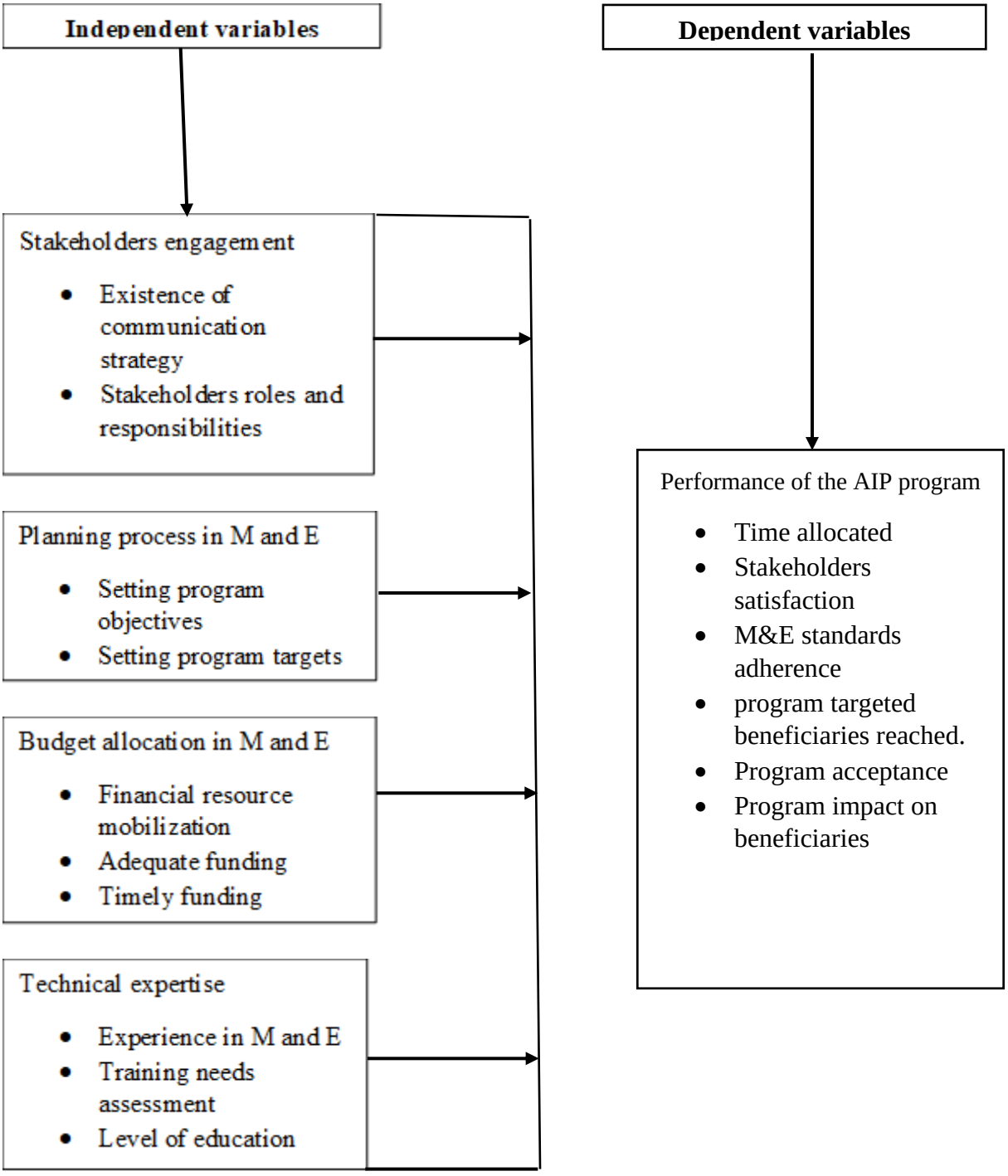
Since its development by Anderson in (1991), the expertise theory has been critiqued of its relationship to job performance According to Hetmanski (2020), social elements such as learning educational institutions and traditions impact aims, intents, and rules regulating practice (expertise); the capacity to apply rules is the outcome of practice. As a result, it is debatable if competencies and abilities are just habits. Attri (2019) argued that the road toward expertise is never-ending; even individuals who have gained the knowledge, strategic talents, and interests that are indicative of expertise cannot sit idly by while the domain transforms beneath their feet. Formal

training, in-service training, mentorship, coaching, and internships are all necessary for developing M&E human potential.

The expertise theory laid a foundation of establishing the influence of M&E expertise on the AIP. Its distinguishing feature assumes that the program team must have knowledge and skills necessary for job performance. The theory therefore was applied on AIP program staff, Ministry of Agriculture officers, and agricultural extension workers who have direct experience with AIP tools. The current study incorporated both the theory's original cause and its critiques by developing questions that will address the need to assess the influence of M&E expertise on program performance.

1.13 Conceptual framework

The independent variables in the study included M&E stakeholders' engagement, M&E planning, M&E budget allocation, and M&E technical expertise, while program performance of the government Agricultural Input Program was the independent variable. The connection between the independent and dependent variables are summarized in the figure below:



CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter includes empirical reviews from previous researchers who worked on similar studies. The chosen studies were based on their relevance to the current study. The chapter's goal was to identify empirical reviews of M&E stakeholder engagement, M&E project planning, M&E budget allocation and M&E expertise as M&E practices that influence program performance. Individual M&E aspects were presented in the reviewed literature and studies. The literature review depicted the impact of M&E practices on other programs and projects. Reference was made to other scholar's work and journals published at global, regional, and country level. The study therefore identified and filled the knowledge gap in the context of government Agricultural Affordable Inputs program.

2.1 Empirical literature review

According to Rodger et al (2022) Stakeholders are critical to project success when their individual and collective engagement and commitment are supported by a common aim. Chepngeno and Kwasira (2020) stated that stakeholders participation strengthens their commitment to project objectives and processes, as well as the credibility of project outcomes. Karimi's study in (2020) established that stakeholders collaboration influenced performance of Literacy and Numeracy education program in Kenya through setting the objectives, developing and implementation of M&E plans. Zalewa's findings in 2019, postulated that failure to identify key stakeholders, not addressing their needs and expectations and not engaging them in project planning are barriers to effective stakeholder management.

Phullsunder (2019) stated that project planning process includes all of the steps used to determine the overall scope, identify objectives, and build a plan of action. Irfan et al study findings in 2021 on public sector projects success showed that adequate preliminary planning enhances project implementation and assists in monitoring and regulating. A study by Khan et al (2019) in Pakistan on IT projects revealed that principally, project planning is primarily related to project success and overall risk significantly moderates the relationship.

According to Chepkeimo and Otieno (2020) budget allocation on M&E in development projects likely increases the probability of implementation of M&E system significantly (Chepkemoi and

Otieno, 2020). Masvaure and Tebogo (2022) asserted that the justification for the push and investments is based on the notion that M&E capability is crucial for improving project design and execution, progress, impact, and learning. A study by Mbogo and Mirara (2022) indicated that budget allocation for M&E activities had direct impact on humanitarian project planning. Mbithi (2020) discovered a substantial association between project success and M&E budget allocation.

Monitoring and Evaluation is a skill intensive endeavor (Oryem et al, 2021). Consequently, it is necessary to build capacity of M&E staff with skills related to data collection, M&E approaches and data analytics (Mbithi, 2020). Effective implementation of M&E systems therefore requires M&E human capacity with adequate skills and knowledge attained through formal trainings and on-going on-job orientations. Masvaure and Tebogo (2022) argued that M&E capacity building is mainly an obligation in NGOs which are required to follow stringent accountability requirements. Sufficient training and hands-on experience are required for delivering M&E outcomes and improving project performance.

2.2 Monitoring and Evaluation practices

Monitoring and evaluation practices are crucial in achieving the desired program outcomes. Adoption of these practices has resulted in the successful implementation of numerous programs. Stakeholders who participate in M&E activities effectively provide direct input and feedback on the design, implementation, and performance of projects. According to Ayoma and Mokomo (2023), M&E planning provides the major arrangement course of action required to set up and execute an M&E structure in project implementation and evaluation. M&E procedures must be implemented with adequate resources in order to be carried out effectively. Danforth et al. (2023) asserted that limited resources challenges in tracking the implementation and impact. To carry out M&E activities effectively, the team involved must have the necessary knowledge and skills.

2.2.1 M&E stakeholder engagement and performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of stakeholder engagement on the performance of government agricultural affordable input program. Stakeholder engagement is the process of collaborating with project partners from the project's designing stage through its completion. Karimi et al (2020) stated that the success of any project derives from a combined effort from within the organization and project stakeholders. Kimatu (2020) emphasized that

stakeholder's engagement is one of the monitoring and evaluation practices and it is also an ingredient for transparency and accountability. This suggests that program or project performance and M&E stakeholder engagement are mutually dependent.

According to UNDP (2020), a stakeholder analysis is required to identify key groups and individuals to be included in project development. Stosch et al. (2022) expressed that the process evaluates disparities among stakeholders, such as their engagement in decision-making, as well as investigates links among them. According to Dwivedi & Dwivedi (2021), it is critical to address the role of stakeholders at many crucial stages of the project, including scope management, work breakdown structure, schedule management, and requirement analysis. Mohamadian et al (2022) argued that stakeholder analysis is associated with power, position and interest which affects assigning of roles among stakeholders. Balane et al (2020) in their study of health policy in Low Income Countries (LICs) proposed the development of frameworks as practical tool to address stakeholder analyses. However, the researcher noted that, the limitation factor of using frameworks as proposed by Balane (2020) was that it was assessed on health program. The researcher filled the knowledge gap in the current study.

UNDP (2020) emphasized that stakeholder Engagement Plan should include mechanisms for inclusion of key stakeholders in monitoring project implementation. Matu et al (2020) stated that the planning process requires full participation of stakeholders. According to Magassouba et al (2019) project planning is generally suitable for project performance. Karimi (2020) stated that integrating stakeholders during the planning stage enables project managers to improve the project implementation process or its outcome. Pascal (2020) advocated a stakeholder engagement plan as a management tool to ensure effective stakeholder participation in the design, planning, and implementation phases of a Sixaola river basin project study. It is along the backdrop that this current study seeks to ascertain M&E stakeholder's influence on the performance of the AIP program.

According to Karimi et al, (2020), the participatory monitoring and evaluation process is crucial in ensuring that M&E activities accomplish project outcomes and gauging project performance. Claude and Didace (2020) asserted that stakeholder engagement and feedback add value to the monitoring and evaluation process. Kaula (2020) stated that consented participation of different stakeholders influences projects success. Karimi et al (2020) asserted that detailed analysis

conducted in collaboration with stakeholders has an influence on the performance of the project. According to Nsengiyumva and Ogbe (2022), effective stakeholder engagement in project monitoring and evaluation should be emphasized because they assist in preventing project costs overruns hence cost efficiency.

M&E Stakeholder engagement has been cited as critical factor on project performance across sectors. According to Zarewa (2019), it has been highlighted as one of the critical prerequisites for effective project delivery. Akinnola (2022) argued that risk level and unavailability of resources are among other significant gaps that if not carefully evaluated may lead to failure to deliver construction projects. However, Jackson et al. (2022) stated that involving stakeholders and communities is critical to project success and sustainability.

Walt (2020) pinpointed that managing stakeholders' expectations may be one of the biggest challenges as it is associated with dealing with individuals who have their own frames of references, agendas, and assumptions. Cram, et al (2019) stated that power dynamics among stakeholders and or between the evaluation and stakeholder can be hard to navigate. In addition, Freudenrech et al (2022) stressed that stakeholder activism influences organization activities negatively.

Numerous studies have provided insight on the influence of stakeholder engagement in relation to successful project performance. Stakeholder engagement in project planning had a good and considerable impact on the completion of urban road transport infrastructure projects in Kenya, according to Matu et al (2020). Nsengiyumva and Ogbe (2020), established that stakeholder involvement had impact on project quality and profitability for Prime Cement Ltd project in Rwanda. According to Kaula (2020), there is a considerable link between stakeholders' capacity and the performance of county government projects in Kenya. Other scholars asserted to this by highlighting key elements of stakeholder's engagement. Strategic planning and decision making (Freudenrech et al, 2022), learning and knowledge (Mitchel et al, 2022), accountability and reporting (Bohling et al, 2019). The researcher, however, was unable to find research studies that discussed stakeholder engagement in relation to government agricultural affordable input programs. As a result, the current study covered a knowledge gap and added to the body of information.

2.2.2 M&E planning and performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of M&E planning on performance of government agricultural affordable input programs. Sudha et al. (2020) defines planning as breaking down a project into measurable, observable, and recognized tasks or activities and then outlining their interdependencies. According to Muhammad (2021), a project is regarded successful when the projected outputs are of predetermined criteria, sustainable, and completed on schedule. (Odoagwu, 2022) stated that good plans prevent scope creep, overblown budgets and missed deadlines.

According to Matu et al (2020), comprehensive engagement of stakeholders is required during the planning phase. Lauk (2018) emphasized that engaging stakeholders in the early stages of planning can foster a sense of ownership over the program and its outcomes. Early and continuing engagement is critical to ensuring that needs are agreed upon and a delivery solution is established and supported by stakeholders. Waris et al (2019) however argued that this conflicts with their intentions, personal agendas and behaviours which work against prioritizing. The planning process involves maintaining the timetable, conducting reality checks, and providing for contingencies to meet the needs of stakeholders. Nicholas and Steyn (2019) stated that a project plan must have a clear Work Breakdown Structure which is the basis for assigning project responsibility and partner's needs. The benefit of stakeholder participation at the planning stage is that it enables project managers to improve the project's execution process or results.

According to Kusek and Rist (2019), managing projects for performance, strategic planning, yearly planning, and M&E planning are all related activities. According to Muhayimana and Kamuhande (2020), integrating the M&E plan with current systems reduces duplication or the inclusion of features that burden project control. USAID (2019) stated that, while such a relationship may appear to be an apparent need, the M&E plan is unique in that all work plan activities are pulled from particular strategic results and are measured by associated indicators. Monitoring actions must be carried out in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Smith (2021) postulated that, logic models have been found to improve planning by revealing theoretical and practical gaps, allowing for the establishment of relevant process indicators for tracking and assisting in both failures and successes. According to Yuliana (2019), assessment and

program planning are founded on the idea that evaluation and planning techniques and approaches transcend the bounds of specialized domains and relevant contributions to these fields. Rodriguez and Ortiz (2022) stated besides being a planning methodology tool, Logic Framework Approach hardly deals with risk management a topic typical of project management but rather works on objectives and assumptions. However, European Union (2020) in a PacWaste plus project indicated that value of project logic is prospective project planning, guiding evaluation and providing structural performance to stakeholders, decision makers and funders.

Researchers have demonstrated a correlation between fruitful project planning, budgeting and resource allocation and project performance in their works. According to Saeed and Shayan (2020), successful projects are defined as being completed within the budget and time schedule while fulfilling the intended function. Suresh and Sivakumar (2019) asserts that resource allocation is recognized in the planning stage to every project activity. Yuliana (2019) stated that the scheduling function is a guideline and control for the implementation of activities to meet the plan, as a foundation for calculating progress payment, preparing project cash flow, and establishing project finance strategy.

Various researchers have cited delay as a result of poor planning which largely compromises project quality and performance of construction. Khaled (2019) stated that poor project performance is associated with poor planning and estimation. According to Saeed and Shayan (2020), every inability to finish a project on schedule results in a scheduling delay. Dorji et al (2020) emphasized that delay is one of the most common phenomena and reasons for project failure. Delays in projects result in increased resources. These studies support the current study because they evaluated the effects of planning and its related aspects.

Studies carried out across sectors have indicated planning as a positive influencing factor on program or project performance. Oburu (2022) stressed that the process of creating program plans leads to increased effectiveness and efficiency to achieve program goals. Letsolo (2022) stated that project planning plays important role in improving the financial performance. Kinfe (2021) emphasized that project plans developed by stakeholders create opportunities of strategies that carry the project to a successful completion. Chengeno and Kwasira (2020) asserted that planning aids project team prepare work schedule to ensure effective project implementation.

According to Gil and Pinto (2018) project performance is a multidimensional construct. This suggests that project performance is not only dependent on planning. Meredith (2020) argued that project performance is due to project management, project ownership and project investment. Zwikael and Gilchrist (2021) indicated that planning theory does not provide information regarding how particular dimensions of performance are impacted by formal planning.

The value of planning and how it influences program performance has been addressed in several research publications from Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria, and Ethiopia. Reference was made to studies conducted by Chepngeno and Kwasira (2020), Oburu (2020), Kinfe (2021), Letsolo (2022) where all researchers emphasized the bilateral effect of planning and successful projects. Letsolo's (2022) study also revealed a link between project planning and the current study's two variables, budget allocation and stakeholder participation. The influence of planning on the performance of government agriculture affordable input programs has not yet been the subject of studies in Malawi. The present study therefore closed the knowledge gap and added to the body of reference material. The findings will be useful to the Malawian government and other organizations implementing the AIP program.

2.2.3 M&E budgetary allocation and performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of M&E budget allocation on performance of government agricultural affordable input program. Letsolo (2022) defined M&E budgetary allocation as the act of allocating funds for M&E operations. Mbogo highlighted that (2020), allocating clear and appropriate financial resources is critical for the successful implementation of M&E.

According to Nigussie (2022), M&E activities and costs should be evaluated and carefully planned for to secure enough funding. Chepkemoi and Otieno (2020), emphasized M&E specialists must rigorously examine the demands of a project throughout the design phase to guarantee adequate allocation and availability of funding for M&E jobs. Scott (2020) stated that project scheduling is just as critical as cost budgeting since it defines the timetable, resources needed, and reality of project delivery. The primary goal of M&E planning is to estimate the expenses of employing employees and making accessible the resources necessary for M&E activity.

According to Letsolo (2020), the M&E budget allocation effects project performance and serves as the foundation for monitoring performance and proactively managing risk. Sikhosana and Nzewi (2019) indicated that the rationale behind budget monitoring and assessment is that the notion acts as an indication of expenditures and revenues related to everyday operations and activities. World bank (2022) reported that linking resource with results can support in holding managers accountable for the delivery of specific targets and how the resources are deployed and used. Bundi (2020) emphasized that the M&E budget should be demarcated with overall budget to promote independence of the M&E function. Masvaure and Tebogo (2022) countered that M&E activities are process-oriented and constitute a minor component of the overall program cycle.

According to various researcher's budgetary restrictions prevent projects or programs from effectively operationalizing M&E systems. Kinyua and Nduta (2020) asserted that the under allocation of funds derails the M&E activities. A study conducted by FAO (2020) indicated that limited financial resources are not adequate to allow a real investment in proper evaluations. Rumenya and Kisimbi (2020) consequently suggested allocating 5-10% of total budget to Monitoring and Evaluation. Mushori (2020) however argued that M&E budget allocation remains subjective and there is no standard for assessing that adequacy as it depends on the nature of the project undertaken and risk managed. Tengan et al (2019) in their study; pointed that it is vital allocating sufficient funds for M&E; appropriate methods, scope, and activities in the project must be considered. According to Masvaure and Tebogo (2022), despite major investment in the African setting to improve evaluation capacity, both state and non-state entities lament a lack of evaluation capabilities inside their organizations, and the industry still relies on foreign evaluators. Chepkeimo and Otieno (2020) however emphasized that substandard M&E is usually the result of inadequate resources.

Researchers have highlighted the allocation of adequate budget for M&E as a positive influencing factor for project or program performance. Mbongo (2022) discovered that financial allocation in monitoring and evaluation activities had a favorable influence on humanitarian planning at a 5% level of relevance. Letsolo (2020) asserted that the success of M&E budgets effects the performance of socioeconomic empowerment projects. Chepkemoi and Otieno (2020) in their findings indicated that extra amount allocated for project M&E leads to an increase in the likelihood of M&E system implementation in development projects. Mbele (2022) underlined in

his study that the M&E budget should not be so minimal that it compromises the accuracy and reliability of the results, but it should also not drain project resources to the point that programming is hampered.

Allocation of the M&E budget and how it affects project performance has been emphasized by several researchers. Chepkeimo and Otieno (2020) in their study on influence of M&E system on performance of infrastructure projects in Kenya found out that M&E budget leads to adequate resources leading to good quality M&E. Niguissie (2022) study on determinants on effectiveness of M&E system in TVET project implemented by NGOs in Addis Ababa revealed that availability of funds is a predictor of effectiveness of M&E system. Mushori's (2020) study on determinants of effective M&E: pre-requisite for county government sponsored infrastructure improvements project in Kenya revealed that devoting funds to M&E activities will promote smooth running of the M&E process and training of stakeholders. However, Malawi has no records of research on the assessment of influence M&E budget allocation on the performance on Agricultural Affordable Input Program. The current study closed the knowledge gap and extended the investigation on the associated M&E budget allocation factors that influence the performance of the AIP.

2.2.4 M&E expertise and performance of Government Agricultural Affordable Input Program

The objective of the study was to examine the influence of M&E technical expertise on the performance of government agricultural affordable input program. According to UNDP (2021), a strong M&E system led by a team of specialists is critical for project management, cooperation, and general support. Kinyua and Nduta (2021) claimed that when a project is managed by M&E employees, Project Managers, and other project workers who have received enough training, the chance of project success is high.

Kirori and Karanja (2019) asserted that to operationalize and maintain the projects M&E plan requires strong sense of capacity building. Mulira (2019) underlined that working in the accountability sector necessitates M&E frameworks that are participative, beneficiary-driven, donor-compliant, employ varied methods of data collecting, promote sustainability, and increasingly foster learning and reflection as integrated features. Taffe, (2020) stated that increasing capacity improves organizational learning, use of informed decisions and strengthening planning and delivery of project interventions.

Simwaka (2020) pointed that M&E capacity assessment must be handled earlier during project planning to identify initial M&E capacity. Kinya and Nduta (2020) indicated that projects handled by M&E workers with adequate training have a high possibility of success. The program team must possess the necessary knowledge to abide by the M&E standards in order to achieve reporting on important factors that assist tracking and measuring program performance.

Some researchers have challenged M&E expertise as an influence on performance of projects. According to Kessler and Tarbun (2019), M&E practices are confined to administrative objectives, as the information gathered is merely utilized by the program manager to report on activities and justify the flow of funding. Twende Mbele's (2022) literature analysis and research revealed that, despite the adoption of M&E systems in many Sub-Saharan African nations, there is a significant underutilization of data and information from M&E operations. According to research conducted by Masvaure and Tebogo (2022), the advantages of M&E capacity are more non-state and do not cross over to the stateside because to a lack of platforms and interconnections.

Clear (2020) returned a moderating factor indicating that there is a widespread scarcity of resources at all levels for the development of M&E capacities, which jeopardizes the sustainability of such methods. According to Mleke and Dida (2020), most organizations do not use computerized M&E systems due to the high cost and insufficient competence, and those that do lack a systematic warning mechanism for project progress. According to Morkel and Mangwiro (2019), M&E capacity development programs have not resulted in the promotion of a better M&E culture inside systems but have resulted in minor improvements within a small number of local workers.

Scholars have highlighted M&E expertise as an influencing factor to project or program performance in various sectors. Kinyua and Nduta's (2021) findings demonstrated a substantial association between M&E team capacity building and health project performance. Idoro (2019) agrees that the capacity of M&E workers is crucial to achieving project objectives in his study on the effect of M&E practices in Nigeria construction enterprises. Kirori and Karanja (2019) stressed capacity building and resource mobilization as essential approaches to M&E operationalizations to improve project performance in their study on Monitoring and Evaluation practices and performance of youth programs in Kenyan NGOs. Masvaure and Tebogo (2022) found that the M&E capacity efforts target M&E practitioners and, to a lesser extent, decision makers on skills. The implication is that these methodologies' effectiveness and contribution to project performance

are constrained and challenging to evaluate. However, the researcher could not find records of studies on the influence of M&E expertise on the performance of Agricultural Affordable Input Program. The current study thus addressed a knowledge gap by examining the mentioned variable on AIP in Malawi.

2.3 Performance of Agricultural Input Program

Various agricultural programs have been implemented reaching out to a good percentage of the poor who depend on agrarian life. The Agricultural Input Programs among others have led to developmental milestones across the globe. The programs directly support the small holder farmers with farm inputs at subsidy rates. Wise (2020) reported that In Africa, through AGRA, 30 million small holder households have been supported.

The programs have faced implementation challenges that are directly related to beneficiary targeting, funding, transparency, and accountability According to Thomas (2018), ISPs in Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Ghana have been at least temporarily halted or considerably curtailed in recent years, typically due to governments' inability to commit cash to sustain the projects once foreign financing expired. Kambewa (2020) stated that in Malawi since the AIP launch, the program targeted to reach out to 4.3 million farming households in the 2020/2021 growing season and downsized to 2.5 million beneficiaries in the 2022/2023 growing season.

Thomas (2018) pointed out that while it seems feasible to design smart subsidies on paper, the well-designed features of the recent wave of ISPs in Africa have frequently been watered down or overturned during implementation. Adoption of M&E practices right from the program design stage to program closure can aid in ironing out the implementation challenges and failures.

2.4 Summary of Review of Literature Gap(s)

According to the literature reviewed, project or program performance is influenced by monitoring and evaluation procedures. M&E stakeholder engagement, M&E planning, M&E budgetary allocation, and M&E expertise were among practices emphasized by various academics as influence factors that affect program performance. The empirical review concentrated on the study’s variables and their causal relationship. Reference was made from scholarly work on construction, health, education, humanitarian, socio-economic empowerment and Information Technology projects from Pakistan, Kenya, Rwanda, Lesotho, Nigeria, Ghana and Ethiopia. The

researcher was unable to locate studies on the impact of M&E practices on the performance of the Agricultural Affordable Input Program. As a result, the current work covered the knowledge gap and added to the body of references.

Matu et al. (2020) conducted a study on a Transport Infrastructure project in Kenya, where M&E stakeholder engagement was identified as one of the key M&E practices that influence project performance. Nsengiyuma and Ogbe (2020) also mentioned M&E stakeholder engagement as a factor influencing the success of the Prime Cement project in Rwanda. The cause and effect of M&E stakeholder engagement illustrated in both studies related to the current research. However, it did not focus on the AIP program.

A study by Letsolo (2020), on Socio-Economic empowerment projects in Rwanda revealed M&E planning as critical M&E practice that influence the success of the stated projects. The researcher drew interrelated factors of M&E planning in the current research. However, the researcher could not find records of M&E planning on government agricultural Affordable Input program.

M&E budgetary allocation is another practice that has significantly contributed to the success of various projects. Studies by Nigguisse (2022) on TVET project in Addis Ababa and Mushori (2020) on infrastructure improvement project in Kenya respectively, availed M&E budgetary allocation as key aspect in performance of projects. The researcher, however, could not find a study of how M&E budgetary influence AIP program.

The researcher further reviewed work of other researchers on M&E expertise. According to Idoro (2019), M&E expertise contributed to the success of construction enterprise projects in Nigeria. Kirori and Karanja (2019) asserted that M&E expertise influence the performance of Youth programs in Kenya. The researcher, however, did not find records of how M&E expertise influence AIP program.

The researcher examined the significance of the M&E practices and ‘their contributory role to the success delivery and performance of projects across sectors. Further reviews were made on the underlying factors and distinctions as consultative processes on performance of projects. The

reviewed literature demonstrated that M&E practices form the cornerstone of numerous projects success. The researcher remarked that results from the studied literature could not be generalized to Malawi. By evaluating the influence of M&E practices on program performance in the context of Malawi, the current study thereby addressed the knowledge gap.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers an overview of the data collecting, analysis technique and data gathering instruments. The research adopted quantitative approach. The chapter also addressed the ethical, data analysis, and discussion points of the study.

3.2 Research Design

The research design presents how data in the study was collected and analyzed. The descriptive research design was used in the study. A structured questionnaire was distributed to research participants in order to collect quantitative data relevant to the research problem. According to Voxco (2021), descriptive research entails the collecting of quantitative and systematic data that may be utilized for statistical analysis. The advantage of utilizing descriptive research, according to Ahmed (2022), is that none of the variables are impacted in any manner. Hence, the nature of the variables or their behavior is not in the hands of the researcher. The descriptive research design was chosen to allow for the identification of patterns in data without drawing conclusions about cause-and-effect relationships between variables. Furthermore, descriptive research design allowed the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of the topic and its objectives.

3.3. Research Site

The research was carried out in Lilongwe district central region of Malawi. Malawi Plus (2023) stated that the district is an important economic and transportation hub. The researcher choice of study site was based on the factor that the district has small holders' farmers who are actively engaged in maize farming and are also beneficiaries of the AIP. The selection of the district as the study site increased the researcher's access to government institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agriculture Desk Division office (ADD), where the AIP is centrally managed and all influential decision makers, program staff, and stakeholders sit. The study location also gave the researcher greater access to program records, data, and reports that were utilized to support the research.

3.4 Target Population

The population of the study consisted of Ministry of Agriculture extension officers, AIP Program staff, and stakeholders representing the AIP community steering committee who were directly involved in the implementation of the AIP program across the six government Agricultural Extension Planning Areas.

Table 3.1 Breakdown of respondents 1

Description of respondents	**Population**	**Ratio**
AIP program staff	**10**	**0.166**
Ministry of Agriculture Extension Officers	**20**	**0.333**
Stakeholders (AIP program community steering committee members)	**30**	**0.5**
Total	**60**	**1**

3.5 Study Sample

This section discusses the study's sampling procedure and population size. The researcher provided rationale of the selected type of sampling procedure. Furthermore, a detailed explanation of the number of participants to be involved in the study.

3.5.1 Census Procedure

To recruit study participants, the researcher will use a census procedure. According to Neal et al (2022), census provide a 'gold standard' population by surveying every individual of the study population. The selection of census procedure will reduce bias and provide the researcher with broader range of soliciting information from group relevant for the study.

3.5.2 Study Population Size

The research engaged a total of 60 participants who included Extension Officers, AIP staff and stakeholders drawn from six Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) where the study was conducted as presented in table 3.1. The rationale for using purposive sampling was to select study participants who are familiar with the AIP and can provide information relevant to the study objectives.

3.6 Data Collection

This section provides an overview of the study's data collection instruments, pilot testing, instrument reliability, instrument validity, data collection procedures, data collection processing and analysis and legal and ethical considerations.

3.6.1 Data Collection Instruments

The study used closed ended questionnaire to collect primary data. According to Lu et al. (2021), questionnaire-based surveys may directly and swiftly acquire information on the attitudes, behaviors, traits, and views of study participants, all of which can be utilized as first-hand data for empirical research. Furthermore, the use of a questionnaire adhered to the recommended research ethical standards in which the confidentiality of research participants is paramount.

3.6.2 Pilot Testing of Research Instruments

As a preliminary to the real data gathering activity for the study, the researcher conducted a data collection test. The goal of the pilot testing was to assess the strengths and limitations of the study data collection instrument. Bundi (2020) stated that piloting helps refine the instrument thus eliminating redundancy of questions and simplifying complex questions. The pilot test also improved the accuracy of the questions used to capture the relevant and necessary data for the research. The researcher engaged Catholic Relief Service (CRS) Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability Learning (MEAL) department colleagues and students from Lilongwe University of Agriculture who are conversant with AIP and Monitoring and Evaluation practices. The pilot testing took place in a specific Extension Planning Area (EPA) where the AIP has already been implemented. Respondents in the pilot phase, however, were not included in the main study. The collected pilot testing feedback helped the researcher to improve the research instrument.

3.6.3 Instrument Reliability

To verify dependability, the researcher run a pilot test to assess the tool's strengths and drawbacks. According to Surucu and Maslaki (2020), reliability refers to the stability and consistency of the measurement device employed throughout time. To validate the pilot testing feedback, the researcher organized a review meeting with the research assistants and the CRS MEAL team. The review meeting functioned as a learning platform, with all pilot exercise participants given the

opportunity to provide feedback. To improve reliability and consistency, the preliminary questionnaire feedback was coded and analyzed.

3.6.4 Instrument Validity

To achieve validity, the researcher conducted data collection tool reviews to establish if the questions are addressing the research objectives. According to Surucu and Maslaki (2020), validity is defined by the relevant and suitable interpretation of data collected from measuring instruments as a consequence of analyses. The researcher will further incorporate the pilot testing feedback to improve the research tool.

3.6.5 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sought approval from African Nazarene University through department of Monitoring and Evaluation. The researcher further sought for authorization at Agriculture Development Division Office (ADD) and District Council in request of conducting the study in the district.

The researcher introduced herself and presented the ANU authorization letter to the participants to confirm identification. Before commencing the data gathering procedure, the researcher described the study's history and goal. The researcher then sought for consent from all research participants, which included the Ministry of Agriculture Extension Officers, AIP program staff, and AIP stakeholders.

Quantitative data was collected through the self-administered closed questionnaire. The study data collection tool was shared to respondents through email or delivered. The researcher engaged research assistants who primarily assisted with collection of completed questionnaires from respondents across the study sites.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

The first step in data analysis was to conduct a Data Quality Assessment (DQA). The data was cleaned and validated further by the researcher adhering to relevant data collection fields, variables, and codes. The researcher used frequencies and percentages to draw conclusions. To achieve comparative analysis and data visualization, classified tables were created.

Quantitative statistical technique was used to analyze the collected data. The researcher used SPSS version 23 data analysis software to draw results, that's frequencies and percentages to achieve comparative analysis and data visualization. According to Gogoi (2020), SPSS is basically a beneficial software that is meant to handle a big number of variables in a short period of time by employing various technological instructions to provide a set of relevant outputs. The researcher used descriptive statistics to analyze the collected data. To simplify presentation, analyzed data was presented in the form of tables.

3.8 Legal and Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought for approval from African Nazarene University through department of Monitoring and Evaluation. The researcher further sought for authorization at Ministry of Agriculture through Agriculture District Division Office (ADD) and District Council in request of conducting the study in the district. The researcher finally sought for consent from government extension officers, AIP program staff, and AIP stakeholders for their participation in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of data analysis through questionnaires from 60 respondents, including Extension workers, AIP staff, and stakeholders who were directly involved in the implementation of the government's Agricultural Affordable Inputs Program. The chapter also presents the introduction, characteristics of respondents and results that are aligned with specific research objectives.

4.1. Characteristics of Respondents

The researcher collected information on the characteristics of study participants. The data collected included respondents' gender, age, education, role in the AIP, engagement, and number of years of participation in the program. The responses are tabulated in the appropriate fields. Subsections provide details on demographic characteristics.

4.1.1 Analysis of Population Response Rate

The study targeted 60 respondents across six selected Extension Planning Areas (EPA) where the AIP is being implemented in Lilongwe district. The research sites included Chileka, Chitsime, Chiwamba, Mngwangwa, Nyanga and Ukwe. The study revealed a 100% return of respondents in all study sites. The researcher had made prior contact with study site authorities, who assisted with mobilization of respondents, resulting in a 100 percent response rate. Furthermore, the researcher discovered that the study topic was of interest to the respondents and EPA authorities, which contributed to full participation in the study.

Table 4.1 Population response rate

Extension Planning Area	Target	Response (%)	Non-Response and Incomplete Response (%)
Chileka	10	10(100)	0(0%)
Chitsime	10	10(100)	0(0%)
Chiwamba	10	10(100)	0(0%)
Mngwangwa	10	10(100)	0(0%)
Nyanga	10	10(100)	0(0%)
Ukwe	10	10(100)	0(0%)
Total	60	60(100)	0(0%)

4.1.2 Gender of respondents

The study included both males and females to assess gender distribution. The goal was to collect data from all program participants, regardless of gender. Males were the dominant group, accounting for 65 percent of the study population, according to the study results (table 4.2). Females, on the other hand, made up 35% of those who participated in the study.

Table 4.2 Gender of respondents

	f	%	Cumulative Percent
Female	21	35.0	35.0
Male	39	65.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Research data

4.1.3 Age of Respondents

In order to determine the age bracket of study participants, the age of respondents was also collected. The study findings showed that, 29 (48.3%) of respondents were between the ages of 41 and 50, while 28 (46.7%) were between the ages of 31 and 40. The youngest (3%) group was under the age of 30.

Table 4.3 Age of Respondents

	f	%	Cumulative Percent
<30	3	5.0	5.0
31 – 40	28	46.7	51.7
41 – 50	29	48.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Research data

4.1.4 Education Qualification of Respondents

The researcher sought the information of respondent’s education qualification. Collecting respondents' education qualification is important for relating their understanding of the study's concept. The study found that 40(66.7%) respondents had attended Tertiary College, 11(18.3%) attended secondary education 11(18.3%) and the least group 9(15%) attended up to university level.

Table 4.4 Education qualification of respondents

	f	%	Cumulative Percent
Secondary	11	18.3	18.3
Tertiary College	40	66.7	85.0
University	9	15.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Research Data

4.1.5 Role of Respondents in the AIP

The study sought information from respondents about their roles in the AIP to determine their level of responsibility. According to the study findings (table 4.5), 50 percent (30) were stakeholders, 33.3 percent (20) were Extension Officers, and 16.7 percent (10) were AIP staff.

Table 4.5 Role of respondents in the AIP

	f	%	Cumulative Percent
Stakeholder	30	50.0	50.0
Extension Officer	20	33.3	83.3
AIP Coordinator/Staff	10	16.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Research data

4.1.6 Engagement of Respondents from Program Inception

Considering engagement as an important factor in program success, respondents were asked if they were engaged at the inception of the AIP. The study results revealed that, 48 (80%) of the 60 respondents confirmed their engagement. While 12 (20%) stated that they were not engaged at the start of the program.

Table 4.6 Engagement of respondents from program inception

Engagement from AIP program inception	f	%	Cumulative Percent
Yes	48	80.0	80.0
No	12	20.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Research data

4.1.7 Number of years of Respondents Engagement in the AIP

The study further inquired from respondents the number of years they engaged in the AIP. The study found that 41(69.3%) of the respondents were engaged in the AIP for three years. The other 10 (16.7%) respondents stated to have been engaged for two years. The least group representing 15% of the study population reported being involved in the AIP for less to one year.

Table 4.7 Number of years of respondents engagement in the AIP

Years of Engagement in the AIP	f	%	Cumulative Percent
0 -1	9	15.0	15.0
2	10	16.7	31.7
3	41	68.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Research data

4.2. Presentation of Research Analysis, Findings, and Interpretation.

The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of monitoring and evaluation practices on the performance of the government's Agricultural Affordable Input Program. The study specifically sought to determine the influence of M& stakeholder engagement, M&E planning, M&E budget allocation, and M&E expertise on the performance of the AIP. To accomplish this, respondents were asked to rate the level of influence of the listed study's independent variables. Furthermore, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement and disagreement with statements related to the study's specific objectives.

4.2.1 Influence of M&E stakeholder engagement on the performance of the government Agricultural Affordable Input Program.

The study asked respondents if in their opinion M&E stakeholder engagement influenced the performance of the AIP. The study findings revealed that majority of the respondents who represented 98.3% of the study population agreed that M&E stakeholder engagement influences the performance of the AIP. One (1.7%) respondent, on the other hand, disagreed with the statement.

Table 4.8 Respondents opinion- M&E stakeholder engagement

	f	(%)	Cumulative Percent
Yes	59	98.3	98.3
No	1	1.7	100.0
Don't know	0	0.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Research data

The respondents were further asked to rate their level of satisfaction on the influence of M&E stakeholder engagement on performance of the AIP. According to the study findings, 31 (51.7%) respondents were satisfied, 15(25%) were neutral, and 14 (23.3%) were not satisfied.

Table 4.9 Satisfaction level of respondents – M&E stakeholder engagement

	f	%	Cumulative Percent
Satisfactory	31	51.7	51.7
Neutral	15	25.0	76.7
Unsatisfactory	14	23.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Research data

Respondents were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement with statements related to M&E stakeholder engagement on the performance of the government's Agricultural Affordable Input program. The level of agreement or disagreement was based on a numerical scale of one to five, with 1 representing Strongly Disagree, 2 representing Disagree, 3 representing Neutral, 4 representing Agree, and 5 representing Strongly Agree.

To determine the extent to which M&E stakeholders' engagement influences AIP program performance, three statements were developed. Table 4.10 displays the study findings in frequency, mean, and standard deviation.

Table 4.10 Analysis of M&E stakeholder engagement on performance of AIP

Statements		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	STD
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)		
B1	All necessary stakeholders participated in the thorough stakeholder analysis that was done	0(0)	7(11.7)	5(8.3)	48(80)	0(0)	4	0.676
B2	All internal and external stakeholders were included in the programs comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan	0(0)	35(58.3)	8(13.3)	17(28.3)	0(0)	2	0.889
B3	From high management to the lowest levels, stakeholders involvement took place at all levels	0(0)	11(18.3)	8(13.3)	41(68.3)	0(0)	4	0.792
	Composite Mean and STD						3.333	0.786

Source: Research data

Statement (B1), all necessary stakeholders participated in the thorough stakeholder analysis that was done. The study revealed that 48(80%) of the respondents agreed with statement, 7(11.7%) disagreed with statement and 5(8.3%) remained neutral. This item had a mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.676, which is greater than the composite mean of 3.33 and standard deviation of 0.786. This indicates that participation of all necessary stakeholders in thorough stakeholder analysis has a positive impact on the performance of the government's Agricultural Affordable Input program.

Statement (B2), all internal and external stakeholders were included in the programs comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan. A total of 35(58.3%) respondents disagreed with the

statement, 17(28.3%) agreed with the statement, while 8(13.3%) were neutral. The item had a mean rating of 2 and standard deviation of 0.889 which is lower than the composite mean of 3.33 and standard deviation of 0.786. This implies that not engaging internal and external stakeholders in programs comprehensive engagement plan negatively affects performance of the AIP.

Statement B (3), From high management to the lowest levels, stakeholders involvement took place at all levels. The study showed a return of 41(68.3%) respondents in agreement with the statement, 11(18.3%) disagreed and 8 (13.3%) remained neutral. The item had a mean of 4.00 and standard deviation of 0.792 which is higher than the composite mean of 3.33 and standard deviation of 0.786. This implies that engagement of high management to lowest level stakeholders positively influences performance of the AIP.

4.2.2 Influence of M&E planning on the performance of the government Agricultural Affordable Input Program.

The respondents were asked to express their opinion on whether M& planning influences AIP performance. The study findings indicated that all 60(100%) respondents agreed that M&E planning influences performance of AIP.

Table 4.11: Respondents opinion- M&E planning

	f	%	Cumulative Percent
Yes	60	100.0	100.0
No	0	0	100.0
Don't know	0	0	100.0

Source: Research data

The study sought to determine level of respondents satisfaction on influence of M&E planning on performance of AIP. The study results showed that 26(43.3%) of respondents were not satisfied, 19(31.7%) were neutral and 15(25) reported to be satisfied.

Table 4.12 Satisfaction level of respondents – M&E planning

	f	%	Cumulative Percent
Unsatisfactory	26	43.3	43.3
Neutral	19	31.7	75.0
Satisfactory	15	25.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Research data

In order to measure M&E planning on the performance of the government's Agricultural Affordable Input program, respondents were asked to state their level of agreement or disagreement on statements. The level of agreement or disagreement was based on a numerical scale of one to five, with 1 representing Strongly Disagree, 2 representing Disagree, 3 representing Neutral, 4 representing Agree, and 5 representing Strongly Agree.

Three statements were developed to assess how M&E planning affects AIP performance. Table 13 displays the study findings in frequency, mean, and standard deviation.

Table 4.13 Analysis of influence of M&E planning on performance of AIP

Statements		Strongly Disagree f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Neutral f (%)	Agree f (%)	Strongly Agree f (%)	Mean	STD
C1	The most important factor in program performance is program planning	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	36(60)	24(40)	4.4	0.49
C2	program plans play a role in tracking program progress and performance	0(0)	0(0)	1(1.7)	35(58.3)	24(40)	4.38	0.524
C3	Program plans are critical in improving resource allocation	2(3.3)	2(3.3)	1(1.7)	35(58.3)	20(33.3)	4.15	0.88
C4	An authorized project plan for the program specifies the scope and timeline	0(0)	0(0)	6(10.0)	47(78.3)	7(11.7)	4.02	0.469
C5	The program progress reports are developed monthly and shared with all stakeholders	5(8.3)	22(36.7)	10(16.7)	23(38.3)	0(0)	2.85	1.039
C6	There is a program logic model developed with inputs, outputs, and outcomes	1(1.7)	15(25)	5(8.3)	39(65)	0(0)	3.37	0.92

C7	The program team is well capacitated to develop and track the performance of the plan	2(3.3)	5(8.3)	4(6.7)	48(80)	1(1.7)	3.68	0.792
	Composite Mean and STD						3.83571	0.730571

Source: Research Data

Statement (C1), the most important factor in program performance is planning. According to the study results, majority of the respondents 36 (60%) agreed with the statement and 24 (40) strongly agreed. The item had mean rating of 4.4 and standard deviation of 0.49 which is higher than the composite mean of 3.83 and standard deviation of 0.73. This implies planning has a positive influence on the government's Agricultural Affordable Input Program's performance.

Statement (C2), program plans play a role in tracking program progress and performance. A total of 35(58.3%) respondents agreed with the statement. On the other hand, 24(40%) of respondents strongly agreed with the statement and 1(1.7%) were neutral. The item had a mean of 4.38 and standard deviation of 0.524 higher than the composite mean of 3.83 and standard deviation of 0.73. This signifies that program plans positively influences performance of program plans in terms of tracking program progress and performance.

Statement (C3), program plans are critical in improving resource allocation. The study showed that 35 (58.3%) of respondents agreed with the statement and 20(33.3%) strongly agreed. While 2(3.3%) disagreed, 2(3.3%) strongly disagreed and 1 (1.7%) remained neutral. On average the item had a rating of 4.15 and standard deviation of 0.88 greater than composite mean of 3.83 and 0.73. This implies that program plans have a positive impact on AIP performance in terms of resource allocation.

Statement (C4), an authorized plan for the program specifies the scope and timeline. The study results indicated that 47(78.3%) respondents agreed with statement and 7(11.7%) strongly agreed. On the other hand, 6(10%) remained neutral. None of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. The item's mean was 4.02 with a standard deviation of 0.469, which was higher than the composite mean of 3.83 with a standard deviation of 0.73. This implies that an authorized program plan with specific scope and timeline has a positive impact on the performance of the AIP.

Statement (C5), the program progress reports are developed monthly and shared with all stakeholders. The study findings showed that 23(38.3%) agreed with the statement, 22(36.7%) disagreed, 5(8.3%) strongly disagreed and 10(16.7%) remained neutral. The item had a mean of 2.85 and standard deviation of 1.039 which is lower than the composite mean of 3.83 and standard deviation of 0.73. This implies that not developing and sharing program progress reports negatively affects performance of the AIP.

Statement (C6), there is a program logic model developed with inputs, outputs, and outcomes. According to the study results, 39(65%) respondents agreed to the statement, 15(25) disagreed, 5(8.3%) remained neutral and 1(1.7) strongly disagreed. The item had a mean of 3.37 and standard deviation of 0.92 which lower than the composite mean of 3.83 and standard deviation of 0.73. This implies that program logic model developed with inputs, outputs and outcomes has a negative impact on the performance of the AIP.

Statement (C7) the program team is well capacitated to develop and track the performance of the plan. The study results showed a return of 48(80%) of respondents who agreed with the statement, 5(8.3%) disagreed, 4(6.7%) remained neutral, 2(3.3%) strongly disagreed and 1(1.7%) strongly agree. The item had a mean rating of 3.68 and standard deviation of 0.792 lower than the composite mean of 3.83 and standard deviation 0.73. This implies that program team capacity to develop and track performance of the plan negatively influences the performance of the AIP.

4.2.3 Influence of M&E budget on the performance of the government Agricultural Affordable Input Program.

The study asked respondents if in their opinion M&E budget influenced the performance of the AIP. The study found that 100% of respondents agreed that M&E budget influences performance of AIP.

Table 4.14 Respondents opinion - M&E budget

	f	%	Cumulative Percent
Yes	60	100	100
No	0	0	100
Don't know	0	0	100

Source: Research data

The study sought to determine level of respondents satisfaction on influence of M&E budget on performance of AIP. The results showed that 27(45%) of respondents were not satisfied, 18(30%) were satisfied, and 15(25%) remained neutral.

Table 4.15 Respondents level of satisfaction – M&E budget

	f	%	Cumulative Percent
Unsatisfactory	27	45.0	45.0
Satisfactory	18	30.0	75.0
Neutral	15	25.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: research data

Respondents were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement with statements aligning M&E budget measurement with the performance of the government's Agricultural Affordable Input program. The level of agreement or disagreement was based on a numerical scale of one to five, with 1 representing Strongly Disagree, 2 representing Disagree, 3 representing Neutral, 4 representing Agree, and 5 representing Strongly Agree.

Six statements were developed to investigate how M&E budget influences AIP program performance. The study findings as shown in table 4.16 were presented in frequency, mean, and standard deviation.

Table 4.16 Analysis of M&E budget on performance of AIP

Statements		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	STD
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)		
D1	M&E budget allocation was made for AIP program	8(13.3)	40(66.7)	12(20)	0(0)	0(0)	2.07	0.578
D2	M&E budget allocation led to the success of the AIP	5(8.3)	41(68.3)	14(23.3)	0(0)	0(0)	2.15	0.547
D3	M&E budget needs to be separated from other program budgets for success of the AIP	0(0)	2(3.3)	17(28.3)	27(45)	14(23.3)	3.88	0.804
D4	M&E budget allocation and timeous allocation are key success factors for successful delivery for the AIP	0(0)	0(0)	18(30)	27(45)	15(25)	3.95	0.746
D5	AIP success depends on adequate M&E budget allocation	0(0)	3(5)	17(28.3)	29(48.3)	11(18.3)	3.8	0.798
D6	M&E budget performance reports are key indicators of performance of the AIP	0(0)	4(6.7)	19(31.7)	29(48.3)	8(13.3)	3.68	0.792
	Composite Mean and STD						3.255	0.711

Source: Research data

Statement (D1), M&E budget allocation was made for AIP program. The study results indicated that 40(66.7%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 8(13.3) strongly disagreed and 12(20) remained neutral. The item had a mean of 2.07 and standard deviation of 0.578 lower than the composite mean of 3.255 and standard deviation of 0.711. This implies that not allocating M&E budget for AIP negatively influences performance of the program.

Statement (D2), M&E budget allocation led to the success of the AIP. The study findings revealed that majority of respondents 41(68.3%) disagreed with the statement and 5(8.3%) strongly disagreed. On the other hand, 14(23.3%) reported to be neutral. The statement had a mean rating of 2.15 with standard deviation of 0.547 which is lower comparing to the composite mean of 3.255 and standard of 0.711. This implies that M&E budget allocation negatively influences the performance of AIP.

Statement (D3), M&E budget needs to be separated from other program budgets for success of the AIP. According to the study results, 27(45%) agreed with the statement, 14(23.3%) strongly agreed and 17(28.3%) remained neutral. The item had a mean of 3.88 and standard deviation of 0.804 higher than the composite mean of 3.255 and standard deviation of 0.711. This implies that having an independent M&E budget from other program budget necessitates positive influence on the performance of the AIP.

Statement (D4), M&E budget allocation and timeous allocation are key success factors for successful delivery for the AIP. A total of 27(45%) respondents agreed with the statement, 15(25) strongly agreed and 18(30%) remained neutral. The item had a mean of 3.95 and standard deviation of 0.746 greater than composite mean of 3.225 and standard deviation of 0.711. The study findings indicates that M&E budget allocations and timeous allocation has a positive influence on the performance of the AIP.

Statement (D5), AIP success depends on adequate M&E budge allocation. The study found that 29(48.3%) of respondents agreed with the statement, 11(18.3%) agreed and 3(5%) disagreed. Among the respondents, 17(28.3%) reported to be neutral. The item had a mean of 3.8 and standard deviation of 0.798 higher than composite mean of 3.225 and standard deviation of 0.711. This implies that adequate M&E budget allocation has a positive impact on the performance of the AIP.

Statement (D6), M&E budget performance reports are key indicators of performance of the AIP. The study results revealed that 29(48.3%) agreed, 8(13.3%) strongly agreed and 4(6.7%) disagreed with the statement. The item had a mean rating of 3.68 and standard deviation of 0.798 higher than the composite mean of 3.225 and standard deviation of 0.711. This implies that M&E budget performance reports are key indicators that positively influences performance of the AIP.

4.2.4 Influence of M&E expertise on the performance of the government Agricultural Affordable Input Program.

The study asked respondents if in their opinion M&E expertise influenced the performance of the AIP. The study found that 100% of respondents agreed that M&E expertise influences M&E budget on performance of AIP.

Table 4.17 Respondents opinion - M&E expertise

	f	%	Cumulative Percent
Yes	60	100	100
No	0	0	100
Don't know	0	0	100

Source: Research data

The respondents were requested to rate their level of satisfaction on the influence of M&E expertise on performance of the AIP. According to the study findings, 26 (43.3%) of respondents were unsatisfied, 19 (31.7 %) were satisfied, and 15 (25 %) remained.

Table 4.18 Respondents level of satisfaction - M&E expertise

	f	%	Cumulative Percent
Unsatisfactory	26	43.3	43.3
Satisfactory	19	31.7	75.0
Neutral	15	25.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Source: Research data

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements that measure the program in relation to M&E expertise in order to examine the influence of M&E expertise on the performance of the government's Agricultural Affordable Input Program. The degree of agreement or disagreement was measured on a scale of one to five, with 1 representing

Strongly Disagree, 2 representing Disagree, 3 representing Neutral, 4 representing Agree, and 5 representing Strongly Agree.

Five statements were formulated to examine the extent to which the M&E expertise influences AIP program performance. The study findings are presented in frequency, mean, and standard deviation.

Table 4.19 Analysis of M&E expertise on performance of AIP

	Statements	Strongly Disagree f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Neutral f (%)	Agree f (%)	Strongly Agree f (%)	Mean	STD
E1	Government agricultural extension staff are trained to equip them with technical expertise necessary to carry out M&E	3(5)	53(88.3)	4(6.7)	0(0)	0(0)	2.02	0.344
E2	Technical skills are a huge determinant on how best M&E is done	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	45(75)	15(25)	4.25	0.437
E3	The program identifies skilled personnel to carry out M&E functions	1(1.7)	6(10)	19(31.7)	34(56.7)	0(0)	3.43	0.745
E4	The AIP design is flexible to achieve better program results	1(1.7)	51(85)	8(13.3)	0(0)	0(0)	2.12	0.372
E5	Program training need analysis is done to ensure the right skills are acquired to manage the M&E activities	0(0)	56(93.3)	4(6.7)	0(0)	0(0)	2.07	0.252
	Composite mean and STD						2.778	0.43

Statement (E1), government agricultural extension staff are trained to equip them with technical expertise necessary to carry out M&E. The study results showed that 53(88.3%) disagreed with the statement, 4(6.7%) remained neutral and 3(5%) disagreed. The item had mean of 2.02 and standard deviation of 0.344 lower than composite mean of 2.778 and standard deviation of 0.43. This implies that training government agricultural extension staff to equip them with technical expertise necessary to carry out M&E staff negatively influences performance of AIP.

Statement (E2), technical skills are a huge determinant on how best monitoring and evaluation is done. The study findings indicated 45(75%) agreed with the statement and 15(15%) strongly agreed. The item had mean of 4.25 with standard deviation of 0.437 greater than composite man of 2.778 and standard deviation of 0.43. This implies that technical skills on how monitoring and evaluation is done positively influences performance of AIP.

Statement (E3), the program identifies skilled personnel to carry out the monitoring and evaluation functions. The study found that 34(56.7%) agreed with the statement, 19(31.7%) remained neutral, 6(10%) disagreed, and 1(1.7%) strongly disagreed. The item had mean of 3.43 and standard deviation of 0.745 greater than composite mean of 2.778 and standard deviation of 0.43. This infers that program identified skilled personnel to carry out the monitoring and evaluation functions has positive influence on performance of AIP.

Statement (E4), the AIP design is flexible to achieve better project results. The study findings showed that 51(85%) respondents disagreed with the statement, 8(13.3%) remained neutral and 1(1.17%) strongly disagreed. The item had a mean rating of 2.12 and standard deviation 0.372 which is lower than composite mean of 2.778 and standard deviation of 0.43. This implies that the AIP design flexibility to achieve better project results has negative influence on performance of the AIP.

Statement (E5), program training need analysis is done to ensure the right skills are acquired to manage M&E activities. A total of 56(93.3%) respondents disagreed with the statement and 4 (6.7%) disagreed. The item had 2.07 mean rating with 0.252 standard deviation which is lower than composite mean of 2.778 and standard deviation of 0.43. This shows that training need analysis to ensure right skills are acquired to manage M&E activities negatively influences performance of AIP.

4.2.5 The performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program

Respondents were asked to express their level of success with the AIP to assess its performance. The degree of success was measured on a scale of one to five, with 1 representing the most unsuccessful, 2 representing unsuccessful, 3 representing neutral, 4 representing the least successful, and 5 representing most successful.

Five statements were formulated on stakeholder engagement standard, program acceptance and impact on program beneficiaries, delivery of AIP to targeted beneficiaries, delivering the AIP within timeframe, delivering the AIP within M&E standards. The study findings are presented in frequency, mean, and standard deviation as shown in table 4.20.

Table 4.20 Analysis of Performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input program.

Statements		Most unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Neutral	Least successful	Successful	Mean	STD
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)		
F1	Delivering the AIP according to stakeholder engagement standards	4(6.7)	35(58.3)	4(6.7)	9(15)	8(13.3)	2.7	1.212
F2	Program acceptance and impact on the program beneficiaries	3(5)	20(33.3)	19(31.7)	14(23.3)	4(6.7)	2.93	1.023
F3	Delivering the AIP to the targeted program beneficiaries	1(1.7)	24(40)	7(11.7)	9(15)	19(31.7)	3.35	1.358
F4	Delivering the AIP within timeframe	33(55)	21(35)	2(3.3)	3(5.0)	1(1.7)	1.63	0.901
F5	Delivering the program within the M&E principles	4(4.7)	33(55)	8(13.3)	6(10)	9(15)	2.72	1.209
	Composite mean and STD						2.67	1.141

Statement (F1), delivering the AIP according to stakeholder engagement standard. Out of 60 respondents who participated in the study, 35(58.3%) stated that the AIP was unsuccessful, 9(15%) least successful, 8(13.3%) successful, 4(6.7%) most unsuccessful and 4(6.7%) remained neutral. The item had mean of 2.7 with standard deviation of 1.212 which is higher than the composite mean of 2.67 and standard deviation of 1.141. This implies that delivering the AIP according to stakeholder engagement standard has a positive influence on the performance of the AIP.

Statement (F2), program acceptance and impact on the program beneficiaries. 20(33.3%) respondents reported that AIP was unsuccessful, 19(31.7) were neutral, 14(23%) least successful, successful 5(6.7) and 3(5%) most unsuccessful. The item had a mean rating of 2.93 and standard deviation of 1.023 which is greater than the composite mean of 2.67 and standard deviation of 1.141. This indicates that acceptance and impact on the program beneficiaries has a positive influence on the performance of the AIP.

Statement (F3), delivering the AIP to the targeted program beneficiaries. Of 60 respondents, 24(40%) stated it was unsuccessful, 19(31.7%) successful, 9(15%) least successful, 7(11.7%) neutral and 1(1.7%) most unsuccessful. The item had mean of 3.35% and standard deviation of 1.358 which higher than the composite mean of 2.67 and standard deviation of 1.141. This implies This implies that delivering the AIP to the targeted program beneficiaries has a positive effect on the AIP's performance.

Statement (F4), delivering the AIP within timeframe. 33(55%) respondents reported most unsuccessful, 21(35%) unsuccessful, 3(5%) least successful, 2(3.3%) neutral and 1(1.7%) successful. The item had mean of 1.63 and standard deviation of 0.901 which is lower comparing to the composite mean of 2.67 and standard deviation of 1.14. The study results infer that delivering the AIP within the timeframe has negative influence on the performance of the program.

Statement (F5) delivering the program within the M&E principles. 33(55%) respondents stated it was unsuccessful, 9(15%) successful, 8(13.3%) neutral, 6(10%) least successful, and 4(4.7) most unsuccessful. The item had a mean of 2.72 and standard deviation of 1.209 which is higher than the composite mean of 2.67 and standard deviation of 1.141. According to the study findings, delivering the program within the M&E principles positively influences the performance of the AIP.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations in relation to the study findings. The discussion includes a review of previous studies and their comparison to the current study. The conclusion present inferences on study findings. Recommendations will be made based on the findings of the study.

5.2.1 M&E Stakeholder Engagement on Performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program.

The first objective of the study was to establish influence of stakeholder engagement on performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program. The respondents agreed that M&E stakeholder engagement influences performance of AIP. However, majority of respondents reported unsatisfied with the management of M&E stakeholder engagement in the AIP. The findings agree with study conducted by Nsengiyumwa and Obge (2020). The study results are also supported by other scholars who however highlighted key elements of stakeholder engagement which include strategic planning and decision making (Freudenrech et al, 2022), learning and knowledge (Mitchel et al, 2022) and accountability and reporting (Bohling et al, (2019).

Further analysis showed that participation of all necessary stakeholders in stakeholder analysis positively influenced the performance of the government Agricultural Affordable Input Program. This agrees with a study by Karimi et al (2020) where collaboration of stakeholders in detailed analysis influences the performance of the project. Zarewa (2019) in his study pointed that despite its positive and significant influence on project performance, stakeholder engagement is affected by politics and budgetary constraints.

A detailed analysis of the inclusion of all internal and external stakeholders in the comprehensive stakeholder engagement revealed a negative influence on AIP performance. The current study results contradict with Letsolo's (2022) study findings, which found that including both stakeholders positively influenced the performance of socioeconomic projects in Rwanda. Mohamadian et al (2020) in their study stated that stakeholder engagement is associated with power, position and interest hence affecting assigning of roles among stakeholders. Dwivedi and

Dwivedi (2021) however recommended that, it is critical to address the role of stakeholders at many stages of the project, including scope management, work breakdown structure, schedule management and requirement analysis

The study also revealed that stakeholder involvement was lacking from the highest levels of management to the lowest levels, negatively impacting AIP performance. The study contradicts the findings of Kalua (2020) study, which found that participation of different stakeholders influences project success regardless of management level. According to Karimi et al (2020) confining stakeholder engagement on lower levels while neglecting participation at certain levels can compromise the value attached to the stakeholder engagement process.

Results Based Management Theory assumes that implementing agencies and stakeholders collaborate to achieve the programs intended impacts and outcomes. Study results by Kimatu (2020) emphasized that M&E stakeholder engagement is an ingredient towards projects success.

5.2.2 M&E Planning on Performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program.

The second objective of the study was to assess the influence of M&E planning on performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program. Most of the respondents agreed that M&E planning influences the performance of AIP. However, the study results indicated that majority were not satisfied. The study is supported by Magassauba (2019) who highlighted critical steps of planning as definition of the project's work requirements, quality and objective, the specification of resources needed and their allocation, the definition of schedule, evaluation of various risk and determination of delivering methods.

The study revealed planning as the most important factor in program performance hence positively influencing performance of AIP. The study findings agree with Chepngeno and Kwasira (2020) study results. The study is also supported by Nicholas and Steyn (2019) with an emphasis that a project plan must have a clear work break down structure which is the basis for assigning project responsibilities and partner’s needs.

Program plans play a role in tracking program progress and performance and positively influencing performance of the AIP. The study results by Oburu (2020) agrees with the current study findings. The results also agree with empirical findings by Kusek and Rist (2019) where managing project

for performance; strategic planning yearly and M&E planning are related activities. Muhayimana and Kamuhanda (2020) in their study stated timeliness, cost effectiveness and meeting measurable project deliverables are key moderating factors for project progress and performance.

According to the study findings, programs plans are critical in improving resource allocation and positively influences performance of the AIP. The study concedes with study findings of Saeed and Shayan (2020); successful projects are defined as being completed within budgets and time schedule while fulfilling the intended function. The study is further supported by findings of Letsolo (2020), where planning played an important role in proving financial performance of socio-economic projects. Dorji et al (2020) in their study stated that, resource allocation is affected by delay which is the most common phenomena that's results in increased resources.

The study results indicated that an authorized project plan for the program specifies the scope and timeline and positively influences performance of AIP. The study results agree with study findings of Muhammad (2021). The study is also supported by Odoagwu (2022) where is his empirical findings stated that good plans prevent scope creep and missed deadlines.

Program progress reports are developed monthly and shared with all stakeholders. The study findings revealed that this statement negatively influences performance of AIP. This contradicts with study results by Molaei (2019) who asserted that project reporting fosters stakeholder engagement while also enabling timely interventions to address possible bottlenecks during project implementation. According to Claude and Didace's (2020) research findings, stakeholder reports and feedback add value to the Monitoring and Evaluation process.

There is a program logic model developed with inputs, outputs, and outcomes. However, the study showed that this item negatively influences performance of AIP. This contradicts with study findings of McKee et al (2020) who found that logic model positively influences project performance. Empirical findings by Ortiz (2022) stated that besides being a planning methodology tool, logic framework approach hardly deals with risk management a topic typical of project management but rather works on objectives and assumptions.

The program team is well capacitated to develop and track performance of the plan, however, negatively influences performance of AIP. The current study results contradict with study findings by Letsolo (2020). Clear (2020) returned a moderating factor indicating that there is a widespread

scarcity of resources at all levels for the development of M&E capacities, which jeopardizes the sustainability of such methods.

This study's objective is supported by the program theory. The presentation of program theory aspects in a logic model aids the process of designing, planning, implementing, and evaluating the overall program. However, the logic model should incorporate outcomes assumptions or hypotheses as well as components that impact process and outcome implementation.

5.2.3 M&E budgetary allocation on Performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program.

The third objective of the study was to investigate the influence of M&E budgetary allocation on performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input program. Majority of respondents agreed that M&E budget influence performance of AIP. However, most of the respondents returned unsatisfied with M&E budget allocated for AIP. Mbogo and Alex (2022) study results back up the study findings. According to Mbithi (2020) the most important factor to consider is allocating financial resources for M&E during the project's planning stage.

The study findings on M&E budget made for the AIP showed that it negatively influences performance of the program. The study results contradict with findings of Mbogo (2020) who discovered that M&E budget allocation had a positive influence on humanitarian planning. Nigguise (2022) highlighted that allocating clear and appropriate financial resources is critical for the successful implementation of the M&E.

M&E budget allocation led to the success of the AIP. The study results indicated that this statement negatively influences the performance of the AIP. The current study contradicts with results by Mbithi (2020) whose study showed a significant positive relationship between budget allocation for M&E and project success. Njoronje (2018) empirical findings indicated that M&E budgeting among others is recognized to improve performance of interventions.

M&E budget needs to be separated from other program budgets for success of the AIP. The study results revealed a positive influence on the AIP. The study is further supported by Bundi (2020) who emphasized that M&E budget should be demarcated with overall budget to promote independence of M&E function. Masavaure and Tebogo (2020) pointed out that funding M&E function activities is clear in donor funded projects unlike programs run by the state.

M&E budget allocation and timeous allocation are key factors for successful delivery of the AIP. The research findings showed a positive influence on performance of AIP. The study results contradict with findings of Letsolo (2022). According to Mushori (2020), budget allocation and timeous allocation are threatened by the scarcity of the financial resources.

AIP success depends on adequate M&E budget allocation and positively influences performance of the program. The study results agree with findings by Tengan et al (2019). The study is further supported by Chepkeimo and Otieno (2020) who emphasized on rigorous examination of demands of a project throughout the project phase to guarantee adequate allocation and availability for M&E function. Kinyua and Nduta (2020) warns that under allocation of funds derail the M&E activities.

M&E budget performance reports are key indicators of performance of the AIP. The study found that this statement positively influences the performance of AIP. The study results agree with study findings of Mushori (2020). The study is further also supported by Nigguise (2022) who in his study highlighted that M&E budget is a predictor of effectiveness of M&E system.

The overarching theory for this objective is Resource Based View theory. The theory assumes that availability of resources should aid the execution of operations and activities. However, the functionality of M&E is dependent on the allocation of a significant M&E budget separate from the main program budget.

5.2.4 M&E expertise on Performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input Program.

The fourth objective of the study was to examine the influence of M&E expertise on performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input program. All respondents agreed that M&E expertise influence performance of AIP. The rating of their satisfactory level revealed that majority of them were not satisfied with management of M&E expertise for AIP. The study is supported by Oryem et al (2021) findings which indicated that skills and competence of M&E team is one crucial factor influencing project implementation success.

Government agricultural extension staff are trained to equip them with technical expertise necessary to carry out M&E. The study results showed that this item negatively influences performance of the AIP. The current study results contradict with findings by Idoro (2019). However, the study is supported by research findings by Masvaure and Tebogo (2022), which

indicated that M&E capacity are more non-state and do not cover to state side because of lack of platforms and interconnections. According to Morkel and Mangwiro (2019) M&E capacity development programs have not resulted in the promotion of better M&E culture inside systems but have resulted in minor improvements within a small number of local workers.

Technical skills are a huge determinant on how best Monitoring and Evaluation is done and positively influences performance of AIP. The study agrees with research findings by Kunyua and Nduta (2020) who demonstrated a substantial association between M&E skills and M&E operationalization. Masvaure and Tebogo (2022) however argued that M&E capacity efforts targets M&E practitioners and to a lesser extent other program implementers hence affecting effective delivery of M&E function.

The program identifies skilled personnel to carry out the Monitoring and Evaluation functions. The research findings showed that the item positively influences performance of AIP. The study is supported by Taffe (2020) who highlighted that increasing capacity improves organizational learning, use of informed decisions and strengthening planning delivery of project interventions. Kirori and Karnaja (2019) asserted that to operationalize and maintain projects M&E plan requires strong sense of capacity building.

Program training need analysis is done to ensure the right skills are acquired to manage M&E activities. The study results showed that this statement negatively influences performance of AIP. The study findings agree with study results of Simwaka (2020) who indicated that M&E capacity assessment must be handled earlier during project planning to identify initial M&E skills gaps.

The objective is supported by the expertise theory. Its distinguishing features assumes that the program theory must have the knowledge and skills necessary for job performance. According to Oryem (2021), M&E system cannot function without skilled people who effectively execute the M&E tasks for which they are responsible.

5.3 Summary of Main Findings

The study sought to assess the influence of monitoring and evaluation practices on the performance of the government's Agricultural Affordable Input Program. The study specifically established the influence of M&E stakeholder engagement, M&E planning, M&E budget allocation, and M&E expertise on AIP performance.

M&E stakeholder engagement was measured using three statements designed to assess the level of influence on AIP performance. The study's findings revealed that involving all necessary stakeholders has a positive impact on the program's performance of AIP. A detailed analysis of the inclusion of all necessary internal and external stakeholders in the program's comprehensive plan indicated a negative influence on the performance of AIP. From high management to the lowest levels, stakeholder involvement took place at all levels and positively influences performance of AIP.

M&E planning is the most important factor in program performance, and it has a positive influence on AIP performance. According to the study findings, program plans play a role in tracking program progress and performance, positively influencing AIP performance. A detailed analysis revealed that program plans are critical in improving resource mobilization and have a positive impact on AIP performance. An authorized program plan specifies the scope and timeline, which has a positive impact on AIP performance. The program progress reports are created monthly and distributed to all stakeholders; however, they have a negative impact on AIP performance. There is a program logic model developed with inputs, outputs, and outcomes that has a negative impact on AIP performance. The program team is well capacitated to develop and track the performance of the plan and that negatively influences performance of AIP.

M&E budget allocation was made for the AIP program and that however does not influence the performance of the AIP. M&E budget allocation led to the success of the AIP and negatively influence the performance of the AIP. M&E budget needs to be separated from other program budgets for the success of the AIP and positively influence performance of AIP. M&E budget allocation and timeous allocation are key success factors for successful delivery of the AIP which positively influence performance of the program. A detailed analysis revealed that AIP success depends on adequate M&E budget allocation, however, negatively influences performance of AIP. M&E budget performance reports are key indicators of performance of the AIP and does not influence performance of AIP.

Government agricultural extension staff are trained to equip them with technical expertise necessary to carry out M&E and that negatively influence performance of AIP. Technical skills are a huge determinant on how best monitoring and evaluation and positively influence performance of AIP. The program identifies skilled personnel to carry out monitoring and

evaluation functions and has a positive influence on the performance of AIP. A detailed analysis showed that program training need analysis is done to ensure the right skills are acquired to manage the M&E activities, however that negatively influences performance of AIP.

5.4 Conclusion

This section presents the conclusion of the study, influence of monitoring and evaluation practices on the performance of government Agricultural Affordable Input program in Lilongwe district Malawi. The study findings were drawn from the following independent variables, M&E stakeholder engagement, M&E planning, M&E budget allocation, and M&E expertise. While the dependent variable was the performance of the AIP with a focus on time allocated, stakeholder satisfaction, M&E standards adherence, program targeted beneficiaries reached, program acceptance, and program impact on beneficiaries.

The most important factor influencing AIP performance is the participation of all necessary stakeholders in the development of stakeholders analysis. The development of the program's comprehensive plan must involve all internal and external stakeholders. Program plans are necessary for program planning, tracking progress, and performance. The plans are also important for mobilizing resources. The plan must include a detailed scope as well as a realistic timeline in order to effectively implement the program. The M&E function must have its own budget in order to effectively support the implementation of M&E activities. Government agricultural extension personnel must be trained and equipped with the necessary technical knowledge to carry out M&E functions. Monitoring relies heavily on technical abilities.

5.5 Recommendations

The government, as the lead implementing agency, should develop a stakeholder engagement strategy that includes guidelines for stakeholder participation. Because AIP is a national program, all necessary stakeholders, both internal and external, as well as upper and lower management, must be provided with a platform for representation from program design to evaluation.

A realistic and comprehensive program plan must be developed to accommodate the program's start and end dates. To improve tracking progress and performance of AIP, the program plan must include specifics about the scope, inputs, outputs, and outcomes. The program team in charge of managing the program plan must be equipped to effectively monitor the implementation of the

program activities outlined in the plan. To achieve the best value for money, AIP M&E function must have independent budget that align expenditure and implementation.

5.6 Suggestion of Further Research

The study focused on government Agricultural Affordable Input Program in Lilongwe district. Its scope was restricted to one district even though AIP is a nationwide program. The researcher was limited due to time and financial constraints. A comparative study on non-state Agricultural Affordable Input program would be ideal to draw conclusion on effective M&E practices adopted by the government and other players on the performance of AIP.

The study also suggests further research into how monitoring and evaluation practices influence the performance of other thematic government-led programs implemented across Malawi. The findings will be useful in improving the management of a state-led programs by intensely monitoring progress and performance and incorporating key M&E practices. The findings will also be useful to other implementing agencies, such as NGOs and M&E researchers.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Reference

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Appendix II: Authorization Letter

AFRICA NAZARENE
UNIVERSITY

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Tel: +254 0703 970 520 / +254 728 257277

Ref: 18M03DMME026

11th May 2023

Director of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Agriculture Development Division Office

Private Bag 259

Lilongwe

Malawi

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORISATION FOR CONSTANCE HAUYA-18M03DMME026

CONSTANCE HAUYA is a postgraduate student at Africa Nazarene University, Kenya; in the Master of **ARTS MONITORING AND EVALUATION (MME)** program. In order to complete her program, Constance is conducting research entitled: **MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT AGRICULTURAL AFFORDABLE INPUT PROGRAM, IN LILONGWE DISTRICT MALAWI**.

Any assistance offered to her will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Dr. Wanjiru Nderitu

MME Coordinator, School of Business studies.

Africa Nazarene University.

Approved

LILONGWE DISTRICT
AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE (EAST)
11 MAY 2023
PRIVATE BAG 36
LILONGWE

Appendix III: Research Questionnaire

According to African Nazarene University's approval, this questionnaire is intended to gather data for academic research: **Monitoring and Evaluation practices and performance of Government Agricultural Affordable Input Program.**

Kindly respond by selecting one of the available alternate responses or by leaving a remark in the area provided. All given information will be treated with confidentiality and used only for the stated purpose. The respondent is exempt from having to reveal their identify.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This section seeks to establish demographic details of the research participants and their role in the government Agricultural Affordable Input program.

1. What is your gender? Male (1) Female (2)

2. What is your age bracket? (Tick as applicable) a)

(a) Under 30 years [1]

(b) 31 – 40 years [2]

(c) 41 – 50 years [3]

(d) Over 50 years [4]

3. What is your highest level of education qualification?

(a) Post graduate level [1]

(b) University [2]

(c) Tertiary College [3]

(d) Secondary [4]

(e) Primary [5]

4. Which government/department entity are you from? _____

(a) Ministry of Agriculture [1]

(b) Extension Officer [2]

(c) AIP Coordinator/Staff [3]

(d) Stakeholder [4]

(e) Other [99]

5. Were you engaged from the program inception?

(a) YES [1]

(b) NO [2]

6. No. of years of your engagement in the AIP

(a) 0 -1 [1]

(b) 2 [2]

(c) 3 [3]

7. Level of engagement in the AIP

(a) Decision / Policy maker [1]

(b) agricultural government staff [2]

(c) AIP staff [3]

(d) stakeholder [4]

SECTION B: THE INFLUENCE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT AGRICULTURAL AFFORDABLE PROGRAM

8. In your opinion, does the M&E stakeholder engagement influence the performance of the AIP?

(a) Yes [1]

(b) No [2]

(c) Don't Know [99]

9. How do you rate the level of influence of M&E stakeholder engagement on the performance of the current AIP?

(a) Satisfactory [1]

(b) Neutral [2]

(c) Unsatisfactory [3]

10. On a scale of 1 to 5, please assess your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement about M&E stakeholder engagement in the success of the government's Agricultural Affordable Input Program project.

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly Agree

STATEMENT	**1SD**	**2D**	**3U**	**4A**	**SA**
B 1 All necessary stakeholders participated in the thorough stakeholder analysis that was done.					
B 2 All internal and external stakeholders were included in the project's comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan.					
B 3 From high management to the lowest levels, stakeholder involvement took place at all levels.					

SECTION C: THE INFLUENCE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLANNING ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT AGRICULTURAL AFFORDABLE PROGRAM

11. In your opinion, does the M&E planning influence the performance of the AIP?

(a) Yes [1]

(b) No [2]

(c) Don’t Know [99]

12. How would you rank the impact of M&E planning on the effectiveness of the present AIP??

(a) Satisfactory [1]

(b) Neutral [2]

(c) Unsatisfactory [3]

13. On a scale of 1 to 5, please assess your agreement or disagreement with the following statement regarding M&E Project Planning on the performance of the government's Agricultural Affordable Input Program project.

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly Agree

STATEMENT	1SD	2D	3N	4A	5SA
C 1 The most important factor in program performance is program planning.					
C 2 Program plans play a role in tracking program progress and performance					
C 3 Program plans are critical in improving resource allocation					
C 4 An authorized project plan for the program specifies the scope and timeline.					
C 5 The program progress reports are developed monthly and shared with all stakeholders					
C 6 There is a program logic model developed with inputs, outputs, activities, outputs and outcomes					
C 7 The program team is well capacitated to develop and track the performance of the plan					

PART D: THE INFLUENCE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION BUDGETARY ALLOCATION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT AGRICULTURAL AFFORDABLE INPUT PROGRAM

14. In your opinion, does monitoring and evaluation budgetary allocation influence the performance of the AIP

(a) Yes [1]

(b) No [2]

(c) Don't Know [99]

15. How do you rate the level of influence of M&E budgetary allocation on the performance of the current AIP

(a) Satisfactory [1]

(b) Neutral [2]

(c) Unsatisfactory [3]

16. On a scale of 1 to 5, please assess your agreement or disagreement with the following statement regarding M&E budget allocation on the performance of the government's Agricultural Affordable Input Program project.

STATEMENT	**1 SD**	**2D**	**3N**	**4 A**	**5SA**
D1 M and E budget allocation was made for AIP program					
D 2 M and E Budget allocation led to success of the AIP					
D 3 M and E budget needs to be separated from other program budgets for success of the AIP					
D 4 M and E budget allocation and timeous allocation are key success factors for successful delivery of the AIP					
D 5 AIP success depends on adequate M and E budget allocation					
D 6 M and E budget performance reports are key indicators of performance of the AIP					

SECTION E: THE INFLUENCE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION EXPERTISE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT AGRICULTURAL AFFORDABLE PROGRAM

17. In your opinion, does the M&E expertise influence the performance of the AIP?

(a) Yes [1]

(b) No [2]

(c) Don't Know [99]

18. How do you rate the level of influence of M&E expertise on the performance of the current AIP?

(a) Satisfactory [1]

(b) Neutral [2]

(c) Unsatisfactory [3]

19. On a scale of 1 to 5, please assess your agreement or disagreement with the following statement regarding M&E expertise on the performance of the government's Agricultural Affordable Input Program project.

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly Agree

STATEMENT	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
E1. Government agricultural extension staff are trained to equip them with technical expertise necessary to carry out M and E					
E2. Technical skills are a huge determinant on how bets monitoring, and evaluation is done					
E3. The program identifies skilled personnel to carry out the monitoring and evaluation functions					
E4. Program training need analysis is done to ensure the right skills are acquired to manage the M and E activities.					

PART F: THE PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT AGRICULTURAL AFFORDABLE INPUT PROGRAM

20. What factors define performance for AIP Program? Most Unsuccessful, 2- Unsuccessful, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Least successful, and 5Successful

STATEMENT	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
F1. Delivering the AIP according to stakeholder engagement standards					
F2. Program acceptance and impact on the program beneficiaries					
F3. Delivering the AIP to the targeted program beneficiaries					
F4. Delivering the AIP within timeframe					
F5. Delivering the program within the M and E principles					