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MASTER OF ARTS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

THE EFFECT OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION ON PROJECT SUCCESS: THE MODERATING ROLE OF TOP MANAGEMENT SUPPORT EVIDENCE FROM NGOS.

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The Effect of Monitoring and Evaluation on Project Success: The Moderating Role of Top Management Support Evidence from NGOs.

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In Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements For The Master Of Arts In Project Management

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STATEMENT OF DECLARATION

I declare that the research thesis entitled "**The Effect of Monitoring and Evaluation on Project Success: The Moderating Role of Top Management Support Evidence From NGOs**", submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts In Project, is my original work and it hasn't been published or submitted for any kind of qualification elsewhere. All sources of material used for the work have been duly acknowledged.

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This is to certify that **Oliyad Jarso** has conducted the research project entitled "**The Effect of Monitoring and Evaluation on Project Success: The Moderating Role of Top Management Support Evidence From NGOs**" in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Master of Arts in Project Management at Addis Ababa University School of Commerce, is an original work and not submitted earlier for any Degree either at this university or any other university.

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List of Abbreviations

ACSO Authority for Civil Society Organizations

M&E Monitoring and Evaluation

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PMI Project Management Institute

RBM Results-Based Management

SPSS Statistical Package for Social Sciences

TMS Top Management Support

ToC Theory of Change

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

Abstract

This study sought to examine how monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices affect project success in NGOs operating in Addis Ababa, while also considering whether top management support moderates the relationship between M&E practices and project success. The study adopted an explanatory research design and employed a quantitative research approach. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires containing closed-ended questions. The research was conducted among project managers, monitoring and evaluation officers, project coordinators, and senior project staff from three selected NGOs: Water for Good, Action for Integrated Sustainable Development Association, and Dorcas Aid Ethiopia. Out of 145 distributed questionnaires, 134 valid responses were returned and used for analysis, representing a response rate of about 92%. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 27, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and moderation analysis using Hayes PROCESS macro Model 1. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent information and study variables, while inferential statistics were used to test the research hypotheses. The regression result showed that M&E planning, technical skill and staffing, budget allocation, and stakeholder engagement jointly explained 40.7% of the variation in project success ($R^2 = .407$). The findings revealed that M&E planning, technical staff skills, budget allocation, and stakeholder engagement have a positive and statistically significant effect on project success. The moderation analysis further showed that top management support significantly strengthened the relationship between M&E planning and project success ($B = .3325$, $t = 3.0885$, $p = .0025$, $\Delta R^2 = .0594$), technical skill and staffing and project success ($B = .2925$, $t = 3.0050$, $p = .0032$, $\Delta R^2 = .0573$), and stakeholder engagement and project success ($B = .2452$, $t = 2.4858$, $p = .0142$, $\Delta R^2 = .0379$). However, top management support did not significantly moderate the relationship between M&E budget allocation and project success ($B = .1008$, $t = 1.0190$, $p = .3101$, $\Delta R^2 = .0071$). The research findings show that M&E practices are important factors contributing to project success, while top management support enhances the effectiveness of selected M&E dimensions.

Keywords: Monitoring and Evaluation, Top Management Support, Project Success, NGO, Addis Ababa

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Since the mid-2000s, the international development sector has increasingly emphasized results-oriented management, aid effectiveness, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. As a result, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has gained strategic importance in development practice. Donors and implementing partners increasingly require reliable evidence on project performance, impact, organizational learning, and the efficient use of resources (OECD, 2005; United Nations Development Programme, 2009). Consequently, M&E has gradually shifted from being mainly a compliance-oriented reporting activity to becoming an important management function that supports planning, implementation adjustment, accountability, and learning.

However, the adoption of global M&E standards does not automatically lead to improved project success, particularly in developing-country and resource-constrained contexts. In many development projects, especially within Sub-Saharan African NGO settings, organizations are required to balance donor reporting requirements with local implementation realities, limited resources, changing community needs, and sustainability concerns. In such contexts, M&E systems may generate data, reports, and performance indicators, but these outputs may not always be effectively translated into corrective action, organizational learning, or improved project outcomes. This creates a gap between the technical existence of M&E systems and their practical contribution to project success.

NGOs play a critical role in supporting development efforts in least developed countries such as Ethiopia, particularly in sectors such as health, education, livelihoods, humanitarian response, and community development. These organizations often operate in complex environments where project success depends on effective coordination, stakeholder involvement, resource availability, and continuous learning (Workneh & Aga, 2022). In Ethiopia, Addis Ababa serves as a major center for many national and international NGOs, making it an important setting for examining how M&E practices contribute to project success. Although many NGOs have formal M&E systems, challenges such as limited staff capacity, inadequate planning of M&E activities, insufficient budget allocation, weak stakeholder participation, and poor use of M&E data for decision-making continue to affect project implementation and outcomes.

Monitoring and evaluation are therefore essential components of project management. Through M&E, organizations can collect, analyze, and use information to determine whether project activities are being implemented as planned and whether intended objectives are being achieved. Monitoring starts from the beginning of a project and continues throughout the project life cycle, while evaluation assesses the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and results of an intervention. Effective M&E practices help organizations track progress, identify implementation challenges, improve accountability, and support evidence-based decision-making (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

Nevertheless, the translation of M&E practices into tangible project success is not automatic. While the technical generation of M&E data is important, its use for improving project performance depends greatly on the organizational environment in which the data is produced and applied. In this regard, top management support becomes a critical operational factor. Senior management influences whether M&E findings are taken seriously, whether adequate resources are allocated, whether corrective actions are implemented, and whether a culture of evidence-based decision-making is developed. Without strong managerial commitment, M&E reports may remain as documentation for compliance rather than becoming tools for learning and project improvement.

Therefore, this study places top management support at the center of the relationship between M&E practices and project success. In resource-constrained NGO environments, particularly where M&E is often driven by donor requirements, leadership commitment may determine whether M&E contributes meaningfully to project results. Top management support can strengthen the effect of M&E planning, staff technical skills, budget allocation, and stakeholder engagement by providing direction, resources, authority, and institutional commitment. Accordingly, this study examines the effect of M&E practices on project success in selected NGOs operating in Addis Ababa, with particular emphasis on the moderating role of top management support.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Monitoring and evaluation, commonly referred to as M&E, is widely recognized as an important project management tool that improves project performance, strengthens accountability, and supports evidence-based decision-making in development work. In Ethiopia, non-governmental organizations play a major role in implementing development projects across key sectors. However, despite the adoption of M&E frameworks by many organizations, several NGO-

implemented projects continue to face performance challenges, including delays, cost overruns, underachievement of planned objectives, and weak sustainability outcomes (Workneh & Aga, 2022; Shiferaw, 2024).

The effectiveness of M&E practices is often affected by several challenges, including inadequate planning, insufficient technical capacity of M&E personnel, weak stakeholder participation, and limited budget allocation. As Kusek and Rist (2004) and UNDP (2009) explain, effective M&E should support continuous learning, improve accountability, guide management decisions, and help organizations track whether projects are progressing toward their intended results. Therefore, the quality of M&E practices depends not only on the existence of formal systems, but also on how well these systems are planned, staffed, financed, and used during project implementation.

Previous studies indicate that M&E practices have a positive effect on project performance and overall project success. For instance, Workneh and Aga (2022) and Shiferaw (2024) found that M&E practices are associated with improved results in NGO and humanitarian project contexts. However, the conditions under which M&E practices become more effective are not fully explained, particularly in studies involving multiple NGOs. Specifically, the role of top management support in strengthening the relationship between M&E practices and project success has received limited attention.

Top management support is important because senior management has the authority to allocate resources, provide strategic direction, strengthen accountability, and encourage the use of M&E information for decision-making. Studies by Young and Jordan (2008), Boonstra (2013), and Fareed and Su (2022) indicate that management support can improve project performance by creating an enabling organizational environment. However, limited empirical evidence exists on how top management support influences the relationship between specific M&E practices and project success, particularly in the Ethiopian NGO context.

Based on the available evidence, there remains a gap in Ethiopian empirical research that examines the specific dimensions of M&E practices, their direct relationship with project success, and the moderating role of top management support within one analytical framework. Although the direct effects of M&E practices are often discussed, the organizational conditions under which these effects become stronger or weaker remain insufficiently examined. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the effect of core M&E practices on project success and testing the

moderating role of top management support in selected NGOs operating in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective is to examine the effect of monitoring and evaluation practices on project success in NGOs.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To evaluate the direct effect M&E planning on project success in selected NGOs.
2. To determine the direct effect of M&E staff technical skills on project success in selected NGOs.
3. To measure the direct effect of stakeholder engagement in M&E to project success in NGOs.
4. To evaluate the direct effect of M&E budget allocation on project success in selected NGOs.
5. To analyze the moderating effect of top management support on the relationship between M&E planning and project success in selected NGOs.
6. To analyze the moderating effect of top management support on the relationship between M&E staff technical skills and project success in selected NGOs.
7. To analyze the moderating effect of top management support on the relationship between M&E budget allocation and project success in selected NGOs.
8. To analyze the moderating effect of top management support on the relationship between stakeholder engagement in M&E and project success in selected NGOs.

1.4 Research Questions

1. To what extent does monitoring and evaluation planning influence project success in selected NGOs?
2. To what extent does M&E staff technical skills influence project success in selected NGOs?
3. To what extent does stakeholder engagement in monitoring and evaluation influence project success in selected NGOs?
4. To what extent does budget allocation for M&E influence project success in selected NGOs?

5. How does Top Management support moderate the relationship between M&E practices and Project Success in selected NGOs?

1.5 Significance of Study

This study contributes significantly to the field of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) by expanding the body of knowledge on how M&E practices influence the performance of non- governmental projects. By examining the roles of M&E planning, technical skills, budget allocation and stakeholder engagement, along with the moderating effect of the top management support, this research provides empirical insights that can inform best practices in project management within the NGOs. The findings will enhance understanding of effective M&E dimensions offering valuable knowledge for scholars, researchers, and practitioners seeking to improve project performance through structured evaluation mechanisms. Furthermore, the research contributes to theory development by examining the interaction among M&E practices and managerial support in influencing project performance.

The research can contribute to the existing knowledge on M&E in NGOs, providing a foundation for further studies on improving project success in the organizations. By identifying the relationship between M&E and project success, this study will help improve project delivery in Ethiopia's development projects. All parties involved in success factors will find this research significant because prior research in Ethiopia has been scarce in the development sector. Raising awareness M&E practices would also benefit different stakeholders in the sector. Because it provides light on the difficulties occurring in the past.

The findings of this study are expected to be benefiting different stakeholders. For NGOs, the study provides practical insights into which monitoring and evaluation practices most strongly contribute to project success, thereby supporting improvements in planning, capacity development, and evidence-based decision making. Donors and development partners might also end up benefitting from better, somewhat clearer insight into how M&E practices really shape project outcomes; so that later on it can guide funding decisions and accountability mechanisms, depending on what they need..

Academically, the study is believed to bridge the limited empirical literature on the practice of monitoring and evaluation and project success in the Ethiopian NGO context. The findings may

also serve as a reference for future researchers interested in project management and M&E practices

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the effect of monitoring and evaluation practices on project success, with particular emphasis on the moderating role of top management support. Conceptually, the study is limited to four major dimensions of monitoring and evaluation practices: M&E planning, M&E staff technical skills, M&E budget allocation, and stakeholder engagement in M&E. Project success is examined in relation to the achievement of project objectives, timely implementation, effective resource use, quality of project outputs, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Geographically, the study is limited to selected NGOs operating within Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. More specifically, this study zooms in on NGOs that keep active coordination going, or have an operational presence, somewhere within the Addis Ababa administrative area. The organizations that were selected are Water for Good, Action for Integrated Sustainable Development Association, and Dorcas Aid Ethiopia. accordingly the results really should be read in that specific frame of reference, meaning they apply to those selected NGOs not to the full NGO sector across Ethiopia, as a whole.

Methodologically, the study is kind of limited to a quantitative research approach, using structured questionnaires. The respondents include project managers, monitoring and evaluation officers, project coordinators, and also senior project staff, who are directly involved in project planning implementation , plus monitoring and evaluation activities. The study zeroes in on the perceived quality of M&E practices, the level of top management support, and project success, based on what these internal project personnel reported.

In terms of time and project scope, the study focuses on current and active project implementation experiences rather than closed or fully completed projects. This is because the relationship between M&E practices, management support, and project success is better assessed when respondents are actively involved in ongoing project monitoring, decision-making, and implementation processes. As a result, the study does not cover post-project impact evaluation or long-term sustainability assessment after project closure.

1.7 Organization of the study

This study is arranged in five chapters. The first chapter comprises of study's background, problem statement, fundamental research questions, general and specific research objectives, significance, scope, organization, and definitions of key terms. The second chapter reviewed the literature, understanding the works of various scholars that pertains to the topic. The methodology section of the study, which states the design of the research, the approach, the sampling procedures, methods, and tools used for data collection purpose, and data analysis, has been discussed in the third chapter of this research. The fourth chapter focused on data analysis, presentation, and discussion. The fifth and final chapter presented the study's main findings, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for the next steps and further studies on the topic.

1.8 Potential Limitations of the Study

Regardless of its contributions, the findings of this study should be interpreted in consideration of several limitations.

First, the geographical extent of the study is enclosed to NGOs operating in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. While the capital hosts a notable concentration of national and international NGOs, the day to day dynamics, donor links and management practices, can end up being different here than for organizations that work mostly in regional states or, remote areas. So, the findings might not be completely suitable for every NGO working across Ethiopia, depending on how their local reality, is shaped.

Second, the research uses a cross sectional approach, compiling data at just one time point. It is efficient yeah, but it also makes it harder to say for sure what causes what, or to see how the interplay between M&E practices, the top management support, and project success really shifts across the project life course, or even as the organization becomes more mature. If there was a longitudinal study instead, tracking these same variables over multiple projects, it would offer more convincing evidence about causal links, and the kind of evolving connections that basically don’t show up in a snapshot.

Third , the study leans on a quantitative approach, using structured questionnaires. The main

strength of this method is that it lets researchers do a statistical analysis and move toward broader generalizations, but it might not really seize the nuanced depth tied to context, conduct, and other qualitative factors that actually shape how M&E is carried out, or how top management support gets enacted and perceived, all within particular organizational cultures. In other words the numbers could tell you what's going on, yet not fully explain why or how it's happening. A mixed-methods design, with interviews or focus group discussions , could surface more substantial insights into the "how" and "why" that sit behind those statistical relationships.

Fourth, using self-reported data from project professionals could bring in kind of a common method bias, you know. In other words, respondents may overstate how mature their M&E practices really are, or how strong the senior management support is in practice . That can quietly inflate what we end up seeing in the relationships.

So, in the end the study leaned mostly on internal organizational stuff, like how M&E is handled day to day and the backing from the top management, ok. It does n't really reach into external contextual things in depth , for example the precise donor expectations, the sectoral differences, or even the steadiness of the operating environment that can still tilt whether the project works out or not. Next, future work could fold these elements in as control variables, so the results stay a bit more grounded and less "floating" around the core assumptions.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Evaluation: A systematic, objective appraisal of a project's relevance, how well it works, the efficiency, the impact, and also the long-term staying power, it's done in practice to judge if the intended objectives have actually met, and to help steer what happens next for future decisions.

M&E Planning: The process of designing monitoring and evaluation frameworks, incorporating indicators, and then data gathering methods, plus the timelines , and the way results get reported, so everything stays on track systematically, and to make sure project progress and outcomes are really followed through.

Monitoring: Ongoing tracking of project activities and what comes out, compared to the planned objectives, and sharing fairly quick, or timely info with managers plus stakeholders, about how it's going, what's blocking things, and also where the resources are being used.

PMI (Project Management Institute): is a global, U.S.-based not-for-profit professional

organization dedicated to advancing the field of project management

Project Management: This term pertains to the implementation of certain knowledge, skills, instruments, and techniques to create something worthwhile for people. It includes planning, arranging, and directing resources in order to finish a distinctive project under stated limitations, say time, budget, and scope.

Project Success: The level to which a project meets stakeholder expectations, accomplishes its stated goals, and produces the desired results in a sustainable manner.

RBM (Results-Based Management): A management approach that uses M&E systems to inform decision-making and emphasizes performance and outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

Stakeholder Engagement: The active participation of the relevant actors, like the beneficiaries, donors, and partners, in the project's planning, watching, and assessment steps, so that ownership, responsibility and long term viability take root.

Top Management Support: The commitment and hands on involvement of senior leadership in providing the needed resources, giving strategic direction and also legitimacy to the project management approach and the monitoring & evaluation, (M&E) systems, overall.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the existing literature along with what experts say and also empirical findings to figure out what happens when Monitoring and Evaluation, or M&E and Top management support is practiced consistently inside non-governmental organizations in Addis Ababa. The review is meant to look at the effects of M&E arrangements on overall project success, but also to see the links between what is claimed in theory and what the evidence actually shows. In other words, the goal is to bring together theoretical perspectives and real observations, so it becomes kind of a whole picture of how M&E works to improve project outcomes, in practice not just on paper.

2.2 Theoretical Review

Project management is basically a kind of systematic application of know-how, plus methods and instruments, to hit certain objectives for a project while still staying inside given constraints. As the Project Management Institute notes, it means you go through steps like initiating , planning , executing , monitoring , controlling , and closing. And all of that has to happen while respecting time cost and scope as limiting factors (PMI, 2001). But in real development settings, it kind of goes past only technical delivery, it's also about managing stakeholder relationships , encouraging learning, and driving a social shift. (Atkinson, 1999; (Ika, 2009). So, this broader angle really shows how important M&E becomes for dealing with complexity and making sure the results are not just produced, but actually meaningful.

In NGO-led development projects, project management is often closely tied to accountability to donors and beneficiaries mainly. Weak project management practices tend to result in cost overruns, delays, and failure to achieve intended outcomes. This has increased the need for institutionalized project management systems that integrate monitoring and evaluation as a core function rather than a support activity.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of initiatives advance efficiency in planning projects, management and enactment and therefore various projects are started with the only goal of changing positively the sociopolitical and economic status of the residents of a given region. (Estrella, 2000). While evaluation is the objective and analysis assessment of a continuing or

already executed project, program or policy, it's mostly about its design , enactment, and results.It is an objective and somewhat organized appraisal of an ongoing or executed policy, program , or project— including its design, execution, and results. The purpose is to give timely reviews of the relevance, efficiency effectiveness, impact and durability of the interventions and the overall progress, relative to the original objectives.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) has become a central component of project management and development practice over the past two decades, particularly within the context of results-based management and increased accountability in development interventions. It is widely believed that effective M&E systems play a critical role in enhancing project success by supporting evidence-based decision-making, promoting learning, and ensuring accountability to donors, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders. In least developed countries, where resources are often limited and development needs are high, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) rely heavily on projects as vehicles for social and economic change. In this context, M&E is expected not only to track activities but also to ensure that projects deliver meaningful and sustainable results .(United Nations Development, 2009; World, 2013)

Across least developed and lower-income countries, studies portray that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strongly and positively affects NGO project performance, but only when it is properly planned, resourced, and actually used for learning and decision-making.

Despite the increasing attention given to monitoring and evaluation, many development projects still face problems in achieving their planned objectives, completing activities on time, and delivering quality outputs.(United Nations Development, 2009; World, 2013). emphasize that effective M&E is important because it helps organizations track results, identify what is working, and improve accountability in development interventions. This has created more concern about how M&E systems are actually designed and implemented within organizations, especially NGOs. Because of this, recent studies have started to focus more on specific M&E practices, instead of treating monitoring and evaluation as one general concept. For example, Workneh and Aga (2022) looked at how different M&E approaches help or hurt the success of development projects carried out by non-governmental organizations. Therefore, this chapter kind of reviews the theoretical, conceptual and empirical literature on M&E, and how it relates to project success, with extra attention on NGO settings and developing-country contexts, too.

Institutionalization of Project Management

Institutionalization of project management is basically about how deeply project management practices get put into an organization's structure, its official policies, and also those daily routines people actually follow, not just "on paper" (Kerzner, 2003). It kind of implies that if project management is adopted in a steady way, organizations often end up with planning and follow-up activities, and then some kind of control mechanisms that are more arranged, and more standardized too, which then can help the projects do better. In development organizations , especially NGOs, if the institutionalization is weak, it might lead to fragmented project execution, and in the same breath, monitoring systems that aren't really used in a consistent manner across teams or across different periods. In this setting, bringing in precise definitions and shared understandings for monitoring and evaluation.

2.2.1 Theoretical Perspectives on Monitoring and Evaluation

From a theoretical viewpoint, the idea behind M&E has been conceptualized and defined in a varied way. And several theoretical perspectives give a foundation for understanding the connection between monitoring and evaluation practice, and project success in general. These theories also explain how projects are supposed to reach results and how M&E supports learning, accountability, plus performance uplift, all of which really matters in the long run.

2.2.2 Historical Development and Evolution of Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation has changed a lot over the years. In the early days, M&E was mostly about financial accountability and compliance, expenditure tracking more than what actually happened in terms of results (OECD, 2002) Then in the nineties, and into the early 2000s, the aid effectiveness agenda kind of pushed, things around so the attention moved toward outcomes and broader consequences, plus that whole value for money angle (OECD, 2005).

This evolution led to the adoption of results-driven monitoring and evaluation systems, where the M&E part is used not only to report, but also to steer management choices and for learning, (Kusek & Rist, 2004.). In project management, M&E gradually shifted from being a peripheral activity to becoming a strategic management tool integrated throughout the project life cycle(Project Management, 2001).

2.2.3 Evolution of M&E and Project Management Dynamics

Project management practice, development monitoring and evaluation process development sort

of work together toward a shared understanding. You can see it in how the rising complexity of modern projects pushes organizations to put M&E systems in place that actually connect with their planning and implementation, and also the decision-making process. The finding shows that M&E acts as both a kind of reporting role and also a necessary part of successful project management. Organizations now also need workable monitoring and evaluation systems, because these systems It helps them to track the project progress, while also noticing obstacles, and improving overall project results maybe even more than expected. (Kusek, (2004).; Project Management, 2001). From this, it can be argued that the M&E planning part, the staff technical skills, and stakeholder involvement really are key factors for whether a project actually succeeds, especially when it is an NGO doing the implementation, and yes in development projects too..

2.2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation, Accountability, and Governance

Accountability and governance cannot be enhanced without appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. M&E provides information on resource utilization and achievement of outcomes. Therefore, it eventually fosters transparency and trust with stakeholders (OECD, 2005). Adequate M&E systems ensure both upward accountability of NGO to their donors and also downwards accountability to project beneficiaries. Weak M&E leads to poor governance, since transparency is limited, and credibility of project outcomes gets undermined.

2.3 Understanding Monitoring and Evaluation System on Project

Monitoring is an ongoing process it basically keeps on going, and it depends on the systematic gathering of data on specific indicators, to get a sort of continuous snapshot into how things are shifting. It's mostly about watching, but in a more organized sense, to trace progress, appraise outcomes and then tune actions when needed, instead of only guessing later on. management and the main stakeholders involved in a continuing development intervention and well indications of where progress is at, along with achievement of objectives, plus how things are moving with the allocated funds usage, like the actual progress in spending and the way resources are being used overall, so sort of a view into execution and results, not really clean though.(OECD, 2002) According to (United Nations Development, 2002) Monitoring is a continuing function that tries mainly to provide project management and the principal stakeholders, plus a sort of ongoing view on how things are progressing, in a day to day manner of an ongoing program or project with early

indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of program or project objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are defined as a systematic process through which data is acquired, analyzed and interpreted with an objective of determining the development, efficiency, impact and effect of interventions, programs, policies or initiatives. It is a key component of project management as it provides stakeholders with reliable information to facilitate informed decisions and enhance accountability.(In-depth Research Institute, (2023, June 16).)

Monitoring refers to systematic and continuous gathering of data and information to measure the progress and performance of a project or program (Practitioner's Manual on M&E of Development Projects). Evaluation can be defined as a systematic assessment of a project, program or policy to determine its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability(In-depth Research Institute, (2023, June 16). M&E systems provide an organization with the ability to conduct self-assessment and manage performance to ensure necessary improvements are made.

2.4 Project Success

Project success is a multidimensional idea that extends beyond limited view of completing projects on time, within budget, and according to specifications. While the so called "iron triangle" of cost, time, and quality remains basic, modern literature emphasizes the achievement of project objectives, stakeholder satisfaction, and long-term benefits as key indicators of success.(Atkinson, 1999)

According to PMBOK, project success is measured by product and project quality, timeliness, budget compliance, and the degree of customer satisfaction.

In development and NGO contexts, project success is often defined in terms of the extent to which projects achieve their intended social impact and put up to sustainable change.(Ika, 2009) argues that development project success should be assessed not only by efficiency measures but also by effectiveness and impact. Similarly (Shenhar et al., 2001))emphasize that project success evolves over time and should be evaluated based on time frame of both short-term performance and long-term value creation. These perspectives suggest that effective monitoring and evaluation practices play a significant role in ensuring that projects achieve meaningful and sustainable success.

2.5 Types of Monitoring and Evaluation

According to various studies there exist different types of monitoring. Three major types of monitoring as identified by (Tache, 2011) include: baseline monitoring, impact monitoring and compliance monitoring. Monitoring according to (Kusek & Rist, 2004) is categorized into activity-based monitoring, results based monitoring and implementation monitoring. According to (IFRC, 2011), there exist different types of monitoring including: results monitoring, process (activity) monitoring, compliance monitoring, context (situation) monitoring, beneficiary monitoring, financial monitoring and organizational monitoring.

Concerning types of evaluation, (Tache, 2011) and (Gudda, 2011) describe the most common three time-based types of evaluation as follows: ex-ante evaluation, mid-term (interim) evaluation and final evaluation. The mid-term evaluation is formative in nature and may be undertaken severally depending on need whereas the final evaluation is usually summative and undertaken by external evaluators. IFRC (2011) identifies five types of evaluations undertaken using various methodologies as follows; a real-time evaluation, meta-evaluation, thematic evaluation, cluster or sector evaluation and impact evaluation. The ex-post evaluation, referred as evaluation after the final evaluation, done to measure sustainability or impact of a project on the beneficiary community (IFRC, 2011). As well as additional identifies participatory evaluation as of which it is conducted alongside the involvement of beneficiaries and all other key stakeholders with the aim to empower, build capacity, ownership and support for the project.

2.5.1 Approaches to Monitoring

2.5.1.1 Progress Monitoring

This approach of monitoring evaluates the progress made during the execution of a project towards its target goals and milestones. Progress monitoring should be conducted simultaneously alongside the implementation of the project so as to ensure its success. This involves collecting data on the outcome level or even output level indicators of the project in order to gauge the extent to which the project is likely to deliver its intended results.

2.5.1.2 Process Monitoring

This involves adopting a method that would ensure that the quality of implementation is considered rather than just the end objectives or even milestones that are being attained. The first step in conducting the process includes listing the processes that need to be put in place in order to implement the project successfully. In other words, the ideal process and the sequence through which implementation is conducted should be such that it leads to the achievement of the intended

results. This can be achieved through process intensive approaches that ensure quality and sustainability of project results through use of a process checklist that identifies all the activities involved in the process implementation.

2.5.1.3 Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

It involves engagement of all project stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation of a project or a particular initiative. Participatory monitoring and evaluation involve the participation of all stakeholders in the project right from formulation of the monitoring and evaluation framework to decision-making process at the end of the M&E exercise. Contrary to conventional monitoring and evaluation, participatory monitoring and evaluation require that all stakeholders in the project participate in the process including the donors, implementing agencies, beneficiaries or the primary stakeholders and others. The core of participatory M&E is that it considers the project beneficiaries as active participants and not just as information providers. In addition, all parties are engaged in all aspects of M&E including formulation of the framework, information gathering, analysis and finally decision-making.

2.6 Theoretical frameworks supporting the study

2.6.1 Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (Toc) is one of the most widely used frameworks in monitoring and evaluation, especially in development and NGO settings. The system describes needed changes through its detailed explanation of all causal connections which link project activities to their resulting outputs and subsequent outcomes and final impacts. The theory shows that organizations need to find their underlying beliefs while they must track if their actual processes match their planned transformation method.(Weiss, 1995)

From an M&E perspective, the Theory of Change highlights the role of planning, data collection, and reflection. Monitoring entails the process of identifying whether the project activities yield the expected outputs, whereas evaluation aims at assessing whether these outputs are translated into desired outcomes. In cases of NGO projects, where the interventions tackle complicated social problems, adequate M&E systems allow organizations to test the hypotheses, draw lessons from experience, and modify the strategy accordingly. Consequently, inadequate M&E undermines the ability of projects to achieve any meaningful transformation and success. (United Nations Development, 2009)

A Theory of Change should clearly describe how changes are achieved by outlining causal linkages in the initiative. In doing so, it can be viewed as a chain rather than a list of actions, with short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes linked together. The changes identified are structured into an "outcomes pathway" whereby each outcome is logically linked to one another and also represents the chronological flow and potential feedback loops. The connections between outcomes are explained via “rationales” or statements about why one outcome is seen as a kind of prerequisite for another. The innovation in Theory of Change is that it (1) draws a clear line between the outcomes people want and what actually happens and also (2) pushes stakeholders to sketch out or map their desired results first before they pick the types of intervention they think will help reach those results.(Belcher & Palenberg, 2018)

A Theory of Change can start at any point in a project, really, mostly depending on what it’s meant to do later. If it’s built one right at the beginning, it tends to be best for steering the planning of the initiative. Once the change model is worked through, the project team can then make more informed choices about both strategy and tactics. When information is available from monitoring and evaluation exercises, it is possible to modify the ToC based on the findings. The theory of change can also be constructed through retrospective analysis, which entails studying the program’s documents, engaging in discussion with stakeholders, and conducting data analysis. This process takes place mostly when doing evaluations based on what has been learned about the past and present.

2.6.2 Results-Based Management Theory

Results-Based Management (RBM) theory has been traced back to when the theory emerged with initiatives of the government of Australia during the mid-1980s. This theory gained increasing prominence during the 1990s with contributions from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). As can be deduced from its name, the RBM theory is results-oriented. In a paper, the Results Based Management Group (RBMG) discussed the development of the results-based theory that succeeded other theories such as Public Sector Management during the 1960s, Program Management by activity during the 1970s and 1980s, MBO and LFA during mid-1970s, NPM and TQM during the 1980s.

Results-Based Management (RBM) is another key theoretical framework underlying modern M&E systems. RBM focuses on achieving clearly defined results rather than merely completing

activities. According to Kusek and Rist (2004), RBM integrates monitoring and evaluation throughout the project life cycle to support performance measurement, learning, and accountability.

RBM monitoring delivers periodic progress updates to assess results achievement while evaluation measures effectiveness and efficiency and relevance and impact. The implementation of RBM principles in projects leads to improved performance because managers can identify execution deficiencies at an early stage and implement corrective measures. The theory demonstrates that effective project execution requires proper M&E planning together with reliable data because inadequate information will lead to incorrect decisions.(World, 2013).

2.6.3 Utilization-Focused Evaluation Theory

Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE), developed and proposed by(Patton, 1997) emphasizes that evaluations should be judged by their usefulness and actual use by intended users. According to this theory, evaluation findings only contribute to project success when they are actively used for decision-making, learning, and improvement, rather than being produced solely for reporting purposes. UFE exists as a response to traditional evaluation methods which assess program results instead of helping programs to develop.

The evaluation method known as Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) establishes assessment value through assessments which deliver practical benefits to involved parties who need assessment results. The evaluation process needs stakeholder involvement because it begins with planning and continues through to the final stage which presents results. Stakeholders need to be involved in all aspects of the evaluation process because they should provide input on evaluation design and basis elements and methods used for assessment and on how results will be interpreted and used.

This perspective highlights the importance of human resource capacity and stakeholder participation in M&E. In NGO contexts, where multiple actors are involved, utilization-focused evaluation reinforces the need for participatory and capacity-driven M&E systems.(Workneh & Aga, 2022). Engaging the stakeholders in UFE ensures relevance and credibility of the evaluation, as well as its utility to those people whose interests will be influenced by the outcome of the program under study. Through stakeholder engagement at all stages of UFE, a degree of ownership is sought by involving people in the use of the evaluation findings.

2.6.4 Systems Theory

According to systems theory projects operate as dynamic systems which consist of interconnected components that function throughout their organizational and environmental settings. From this perspective monitoring and evaluation functions as a tool which enables organizations to track their progress through various stages of implementation. The project system experiences performance declines because one component suffers from two problems which include inadequate data quality and restricted personnel resources. Applying systems theory to M&E suggests that project success depends on the interaction of multiple M&E practices rather than a single factor. This supports the examination of several M&E dimensions together, as effective planning, skilled personnel, reliable data, and stakeholder engagement collectively influence project outcomes.(Workneh & Aga, 2022)

2.7 Empirical Review of Monitoring and Evaluation and Project Success

Existing empirical research suggests a generally positive association between M&E practices and project success across various sectors. For instance, (Nisa et al., 2015) in a study of NGOs in Pakistan, found that project performance measurement systems (PPMS) significantly influenced project success in Pakistan. Their findings indicated that M&E practices had a stronger effect on project success than some traditional project management variables. Similarly, (Kissi et al., 2019) indicated that effective M&E practices had a positive influence on the success of construction projects in Ghana, mainly when it comes to cost, time, and quality performance.

However, a lot of studies treat M&E as if it's one single thing, more or less, and that gives pretty limited view into how the particular pieces planning, capacity, resourcing, or participation each one and also together affect success. This absence is even more clear in the Ethiopian NGO setting, where solid and consistent evidence still stays scarce...

In resource- constrained LDC environments, weak or basically absent monitoring and evaluation is often tangled up with low goal attainment, delays, budget overrun s and also inability to meet the beneficiary needs (Murorunkwere & Munene, 2022; Uwera & Wanjiku, 2023)

Reports from international development organizations also say, in a kind of roundabout way, that weak M&E systems poor data quality, and the limited use of findings keep on eroding project effectiveness in developing countries (United Nations Development, 2009; World, 2013). This is

especially noticeable in NGOs, where the capacity for M&E and its institutionalization are still low, and also unevenly put into practice, sometimes more in some offices than others.

2.8 Dimensions of Monitoring and Evaluation Practices in this study

Based on the reviewed literature, monitoring and evaluation is somewhat understood as a multidimensional concept, more or less. In this study, we zoom in on four key dimensions that keep coming up in theory as well as in everyday practice.

2.8.1 Monitoring and Evaluation Planning

M&E planning involves determining the indicators, setting targets, planning the timing of monitoring activities, and allocating the resources for the M&E process. Several studies note that the projects with a well-formulated M&E plan are significantly better at measuring the progress, identifying problems, and adjusting the implementation strategy. If the planning stage is poorly managed, inconsistent data collection occurs, the process of performance monitoring becomes fragile, and it affects the project success negatively.((Kusek & Rist, 2004) (Nisa et al., 2015)).

A study, excuted by (Mackay, 2007) in Washington , indicated that planning for monitoring and evaluation was quite important to make project performance better, especially on government projects.

2.8.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Skill of M&E Staff

Studies also show that the technical competency, of staff who are in charge of M&E, helps with reaching project aims in a more solid way. Skilled M&E people are usually better at choosing relevant indicators, gathering dependable information, and decoding the findings that then they can channel back into project choices, or course corrections. Although some studies find mixed effects in specific contexts (like the Rwandan roads case), the general trend supports competence as an enabler of performance outcomes.

Providing support and strengthening of the M&E team plays a key role in ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation team adds value to the organizations' operations (Naidoo, 2011).

An M&E team, with proper training and experience, is needed for the delivery of solid results. Moreover, it is imperative to have an efficient M&E workforce in terms of both its quality and quantity. Naturally, management is supposed to ensure a stable pool of M&E personnel in the

organization, despite the simplicity of this recommendation. Otherwise, the results become messy.

2.8.3 Stakeholder Participation in Monitoring and Evaluation

Stakeholder involvement in M&E includes the engagement of beneficiaries, donors, implementing partners, and community members in the M&E process. Participatory approaches contribute to improving the ownership, relevance, and usability of the findings. According to literature, projects with high levels of stakeholder engagement in the M&E process are more likely to achieve sustainable results and satisfaction of stakeholders (Patton, 1997).

2.8.4 Budget Allocation for M&E

Budgetary allocation for M&E is a critical enabling condition for effective M&E systems. It guarantees the provision of sufficient funds for crucial M&E activities including the collection of data, usage of technology, M&E training, stakeholders' forums, and conducting evaluations. Without proper budget, the M&E process cannot be implemented, the data quality is compromised, and the evaluations are either given low priority or omitted entirel.

Empirical research offers considerable support to the role of budget in the success of the projects. Workneh and Aga (2022) established a direct positive relationship between the M&E budget allocation and project success. Namely, the adequate M&E financing increases the likelihood of achieving the project goals. The researchers also reported that projects with sufficient budget for the M&E activities usually have better success status, and vice versa. The reason is that sufficient financing allows to hire and train qualified M&E personnel, implement appropriate technologies, and engage stakeholders throughout the project period.

Theoretically speaking, the concept of the Resource-Based View (RBV) is the foundation for this M&E component. According to the RBV, the internal resources and financial allocation are considered important factors in determining the performance and competitive advantage of the organization (Jurevicius, 2013). Applied to M&E, RBV means that sufficient financing of the M&E process creates the internal capability, thus improving the implementation, learning, and achievement of outcomes.

In the context of Ethiopian NGOs, which work in the conditions of scarce resources,

adequate budgeting for M&E is extremely important. The problem is that many organizations view the M&E process as an unfunded mandate and a peripheral activity, thus creating poor M&E systems which are unable to provide useful information for the management. Thus, this research highlights M&E budget allocation as an individual dimension in order to measure its particular contribution to project success, separate from planning, staff competencies, and stakeholder involvement.

2.8.5 Top Management Support

The top management is the highest level of executives within the organization such as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and others that have powers over the strategic decisions. Within the sphere of projects, the notion of Top Management Support (TMS) can be regarded as the degree of commitment and resources allocation by the upper level of leaders to the particular project and to its manager (Holland & Light, 1999). This kind of backing is not just symbolic or "nice to have" . It becomes a true facilitator that sets up the conditions for project success , because it helps by setting the strategic boundaries, choosing capable teams, and smoothing the path through internal organizational limits and constraints (Staehr, 2010; Bryde, 2008).

The importance of TMS is, well established in project literature where it is repeatedly placed among the most critical success factors, and it helps separate genuinely successful project outcomes from just sticking to project management timetables (Boonstra, 2013). In addition, its role does not end at start-up, top management provides a kind of enabling climate and it also shapes key stakeholders via negotiation and persuasion, motivating influential actors so they can move in the direction of the project aims (Liu et al., 2010; Bryde, 2008). Overall, TMS is often treated as a crucial enabler for the workable enactment of organizational strategies through projects, because it links project targets with the bigger organizational vision, mission, and aims.

Boonstra (2013) contributed to the understanding of TMS as a multi-dimensional construct. Such conceptual model is particularly useful in terms of measurements and provides deeper insight on how the support is presented in reality. Dimensions of the TMS concept include:

1. **Providing Resources:** Allocating enough financial, human, and material assets that really count
2. **Structural Arrangements:** Setting up supportive reporting lines, policies, and governance

mechanisms, so things run smoother

3. **Communication**: Promoting the project and communicating why it matters strategically.
4. **Expertise**: Bringing strategic guidance, plus offering decision input when it's needed
5. **Power:** Applying authority, to push past obstacles and make sure cooperation happens.

Basically, TMS is the level of top management devotion to the project which can be expressed in their readiness to allocate valuable organizational resources and to assume responsibility for the project outcomes (Holland & Light, 1999). Devotion is essential in effective risk management and its importance becomes even higher in complex organizational environment.

While the influence of TMS on the success of the project is already well-documented , its function as a moderator of the other factors of the project success, such as Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system , is one of the most serious gaps in the research field and it tends to be neglected. In this regard, the efficiency of M&E activities such as planning, proper staffing and stakeholder involvement could be critically dependent on TMS. For example, M&E findings cannot just simple avail because they need resources for implementation, clear structural pathways so they can influence decisions, and messages communicated in an authoritative way so that it is actually taken seriously in practice, all of which are dimensions supported by TMS. So, this study argues that TMS does not only add to project success, it also strengthens the favorable bond between robust M&E practices and successful project outcomes, acting as an essential moderating factor.

2.9 Summary of Literature and Research Gaps

From the reviewed literature, it is apparent that monitoring and evaluation has great contribution in improving the success of a project. Nevertheless, some gaps exist. Some of the existing gaps include the following: First, in most researches monitoring and evaluation is taken as an integrated concept. This makes it difficult to get information regarding the impacts that monitoring and/or evaluation has on project success. Second, there is little empirical evidence about the subject matter in NGO context particularly in Ethiopia. Third, few studies look at multiple M&E dimensions at the same time, even though theoretical arguments say project success is shaped by the interaction of several monitoring components. Most critically, the conditional role of organizational leadership, especially how Top Management Support moderates the link between M&E practices and project success remains underexplored, and this creates a big theoretical and empirical gap in understanding, when and why M&E systems translate into tangible project outcomes. In response

to these gaps, this study examines the effect of selected monitoring and evaluation practices M&E planning, staff technical skill, M&E budget allocation, and stakeholder

participation on project success in NGOs operating in Ethiopia, with specific attention to the moderating role of Top Management Support. By doing so, the study aims to contribute to both academic knowledge and practical improvement of M&E systems in the NGO sector

2.10 Conceptual Framework of the study

Based on the empirical reviews conducted in this chapter and in alignment with the objective of the study, the following conceptual framework is developed. In the conceptual framework Monitoring and evaluation is set to be independent variable and project success is dependent variable.

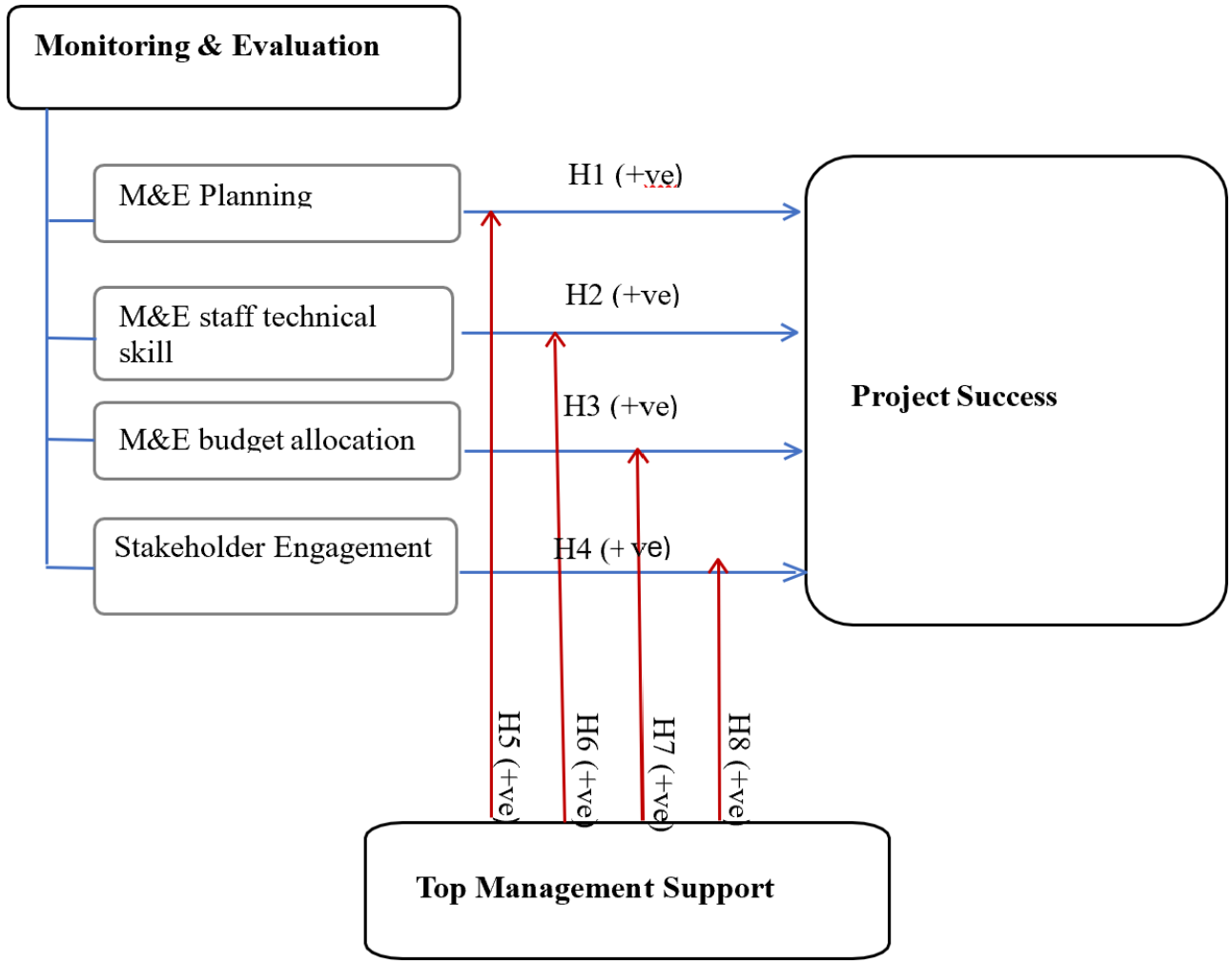


Figure 1Conceptual Framework

Source: Survey Data, 2026

2.11 Research Hypothesis

Based on the empirical evidence reviewed in the preceding sections of this chapter, the following hypotheses are forwarded.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Monitoring and evaluation planning has a **positive and significant effect** on project success in non-governmental organizations.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Monitoring and evaluation staff technical skills has a **positive and significant effect** on project success in non-governmental organizations.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Monitoring and Evaluation Budget Allocation in monitoring and evaluation has a **positive and significant effect** on project success in non-governmental organizations.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): M&E Stakeholder engagement has a **positive and significant effect** on project success in non-governmental organizations.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): The effect of M&E planning on project success is **statistically significant and positive** when TMS is in place.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): The effect of M&E staff technical skills on project success is **statistically significant and positive** when TMS is in place.

Hypothesis 7 (H7): The effect of M&E budget allocation on project success is **statistically significant and positive** when TMS is in place.

Hypothesis 8 (H8): The effect of Stakeholder engagement on project success is **statistically significant and positive** when TMS is in place.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the research methodology used in this study. It outlines the research design and approach, description of study variables, study area and population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, as well as issues related to reliability, validity, and ethics. It implies clear outline relevant with the objectives of the study and the conceptual framework developed in the previous chapter.

3.2 Research Design

The study utilized a combination of descriptive and explanatory research design in a cross-sectional study design. The purpose of the descriptive design is to provide a systematic representation of the current levels of Monitoring and Evaluation practices and Top management support also to assess the present status of project Success of randomly selected NGOs in Addis Ababa. The explanatory design is employed to investigate the cause-effect relationship between Monitoring and Evaluation and project success, particularly to discover the role of Top management support as a moderator and its impact on the strength of this relationship.

3.3 Research Approach

This study employed a combination of descriptive and explanatory research designs within a cross-sectional survey framework. The descriptive design was used to summarize the current status of monitoring and evaluation practices, top management support, and project success among selected NGOs operating in Addis Ababa. This helped the researcher describe respondents' perceptions regarding M&E planning, M&E staff technical skills, M&E budget allocation, stakeholder engagement, top management support, and project success.

The explanatory design was used to examine the predictive relationship between monitoring and evaluation practices and project success, as well as to analyze the moderating role of top management support in this relationship. Since the study was cross-sectional and data were collected at a single point in time, the research does not claim to establish definitive causality. Instead, it evaluates the extent to which variations in M&E practices explain variations in project success under different levels of top management support.

Although a longitudinal design would be more appropriate for tracking long-term project performance and post-implementation outcomes, a cross-sectional design was adopted due to time and resource constraints. This design was considered suitable because it allowed the researcher to collect data from relevant project personnel within selected NGOs and apply statistical techniques, including multiple linear regression and moderation analysis, to test the proposed relationships among the study variables.

3.4 Description of Study Variables

The study consists of one dependent variable and four independent variables, and one moderating variable.

- **Independent Variables:**
    - Monitoring and Evaluation Planning
    - Monitoring and Evaluation Staff Technical Skill
    - Monitoring and Evaluation Budget Allocation
    - Stakeholder Engagement in Monitoring and Evaluation
- **Dependent Variable:**
    - Project Success
- **Moderating variable**
    - Top management support

Independent variables

I. **Monitoring and Evaluation Planning:** refers to the detailed design of M&E activities at the initial stage of the initiatives, including indicators, data sources, and roles to track project progress and results.

II. **M&E Staff Technical Skill:** associates with the knowledge and competencies of M&E staff in data collection, analysis, reporting, and use of M&E tools to support informed project decision-making.

III. **Stakeholder Engagement in M&E** refers to the involvement of different parties in M&E activities, like beneficiaries, project staff, and partners enhance accountability, learning, decision making, and project success.

IV. **M&E Budget Allocation**: refers to the dedicated financial resources allocated for M&E activities, including data collection, tools, training, reporting, and stakeholder involvement, ensuring the M&E system is adequately resourced

Dependent variable

Project success: Project success refers to the extent to which a project achieves its intended objectives within the planned time, cost, quality and satisfaction of beneficiaries while meeting stakeholder expectations and delivering desired outcomes.

3.5 Description of Study Area and Target Population

The study was conducted among selected non-governmental organizations operating in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Addis Ababa was selected because it serves as a major administrative, coordination, and operational center for many development and humanitarian NGOs in the country. The city also provides access to relevant project personnel who are directly involved in project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation activities.

The target population of this study is strictly bounded to active, registered development and humanitarian NGOs that maintain functional project coordination or operational offices within the Addis Ababa administrative area and are registered under the Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO). The study will not be aimed at generalizing the results of the sample of CSOs in Ethiopia. This is because civil society organizations differ in size, financing structure, mandate, management structure, and M&E practice. Thus, the boundaries of the population for the study include selected NGOs which have project implementation and monitoring and evaluation function

The organizations chosen for the study include Water for Good, Action for Integrated Sustainable Development Association (AISDA), and Dorcas Aid Ethiopia. The respondents chosen include project managers, monitoring and evaluation officers, project coordinators and senior project staff in the selected organizations. These respondents were chosen since they have knowledge about the process of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, management support, and project success.

The unit of analysis in the study includes project success at organizational project level. However, the data collection in the study is done through individual professional respondents who acted as key informants and institutional proxies for their organizations/projects. In other words, data was collected regarding project-level practices and outcome using perceptions of the professionals who are directly involved in project-related activities. This was an appropriate choice since the respondents were positioned to make sound judgment about the M&E practices, top management

support, and project success.

Table 1 Target population and sample size for the study

No.	Organization	Eligible Staff (N)	Final Responses Analyzed
1	Water For Good	120	59 Respondents included in analysis
2	(AISDA)	65	40 Respondents included in analysis
3	Dorcas Aid Ethiopia	43	35 Respondents included in analysis
	Total	228	134

Source: Survey Data, 2026

3.6 Sampling Technique/Methods and Sample Size

The sample was collected using a two-stage simple random sampling method. The use of probability sampling was deemed appropriate because the study used a quantitative methodology to test the statistical relationship between monitoring and evaluation practices, top management support, and project success.

In the first stage, the sampling frame was constructed using NGOs working in Addis Ababa and registered with the Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO). From this sampling frame, three NGOs were randomly chosen to be part of the research. The sampled NGOs include Water for Good, Action for Integrated Sustainable Development Association (AISDA), and Dorcas Aid Ethiopia.

In the second stage, a list of potential participants was obtained from each of the selected NGOs. The criteria for selecting potential respondents included project managers, M&E officers, project coordinators, and senior staff of the projects who were responsible for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating projects. The eligibility criteria were meant to specify the target audience and not as a form of purposive sampling. After establishing a list of eligible participants, numbers were allocated to each participant and the respondents were randomly chosen using Excel random number generator.

Sample size

The sample size calculation of this study has been worked out by using Yamane's formula. It is important to have a statistically representative choosing of employees from the targeted population, so that results are not just guesswork and remain somewhat solid. (Yamane, 1967):

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

Where;

n = is the required sample size
N= is the total population
e= is the estimated standard error which is 5% for 95% confidence level.

$$n = \frac{228}{1+228(0.05^2)} = 145$$

3.7 Data Collection

Data source

The data utilized in this study was primarily collected from the respondent through the structured questionnaire. Primary data was considered appropriate due to the need for first-hand information from professionals associated with the project in terms of M&E activities and top management's support.. The respondents included project managers, monitoring and evaluation officers, project coordinators, and senior project staff who were directly involved in project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation activities.

The use of primary data was also suitable for the quantitative and explanatory nature of the study, as it enabled the researcher to collect measurable responses on the study variables and statistically examine the relationships among them. Since the study focused on the perceived quality of M&E practices, the level of top management support, and project success, collecting data directly from relevant NGO professionals provided the necessary information to address the research objectives.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used for the data collection. Data was collected through a self-administered, closed-ended questionnaire based on five-point likert scale to get perceptual data on Monitoring & Evaluation practices, Top Management Support and project success outcomes. The questionnaire items for M&E practices and project success

were adapted from Workneh and Aga (2022), while the items for Top Management Support were adapted from Zureehan and Lee (2022).

3.8 Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected from respondents were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, mostly mean an d standard deviation, were applied to capture the respondents' views about monitoring evaluation practices, top management support, and the overall project success. The mean was used to show the central tendency of responses, while the standard deviation was used to show the level of variation among respondents' views.

Inferential statistical analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables and to test the research hypotheses. Correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to evaluate the predictive effect of M&E planning, M&E staff technical skills, M&E budget allocation, and stakeholder engagement on project success.

3.9 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Validity Test

Validity refers to the ability to measure what one actually wants to measure. Hence, the measurement tool should be valid in the present study. The study made use of previously tested tools from past studies on similar constructs.

Reliability test

Reliability of the measures employed in this study was established through the use of pilot testing whereby the researcher determined the alpha value of each questionnaire item. For an alpha value of 0.7 or higher, the scale would be considered to be reliable, thus, can be employed. (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Table 2 Cronbach's alpha value

Variable	Cronbach's alpha
M&E Planning	0.857
M&E staff technical skill	0.854
Budget Allocation	0.877
Stakeholder Engagement	0.877
Top Management Support	0.808
Project Success	0.876

Source: Survey Data, 2026

3.10 Ethical Consideration

The researcher provided study participants with complete information about the research goals and objectives which they could choose to join or decline. Research consent required participants to give their permission before the study began. The study used data security measures which included data anonymity and secure storage to protect all participant information. Truthfulness of the data was maintained by preventing fabrication or misrepresenting the facts. The research maintained academic integrity through both original content and proper source citation. Additionally, respondents were informed that the data collected would only be used for scholarly research.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The current chapter displays the outcomes which result from the data analysis performed to study how monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices impact project success while top management support acts as a moderating variable in this relationship. For primary data collection, structured survey questionnaires were designed and handed to NGO's professionals by the researcher. Descriptive statistics were used to gather some basic information about the participants and variables related to the research problem. In addition, the researcher used inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis) to test the research hypotheses. In this case, the results of statistical testing provided numerical evidence and interpretation of how each dimension of M&E activities (planning, technical capacity, staffing, funding and stakeholder involvement) affect the project success. Overall, the study's results provide valuable insights into the factors that influence project success, which can be useful for future project planning and management.

4.2 Response rate

The structured questionnaires were distributed to 145 selected participants. Out of these, 134 participants completed and returned their responses within the scheduled time. This means that the research achieved a response rate of about 92%, which is considered highly satisfactory for survey-based research.

4.3 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 3 Respondents' sex

	Frequency	Percent
Female	62	46.2
Male	72	53.8
Total	134	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2026

Table 3 presents the gender distribution of respondents. The study found that females made up 46.2% of the sample while males accounted for 53.8% of the sample. The composition shows the distribution of male and female workers throughout the entire workforce.

Table 4 Respondents' age

	Frequency	Percent
21-25 years	39	29.1
26-30 years	30	22.3
31-38 years	41	30.5
>38 years	24	17.9
Total	134	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2026

Table 4 displays the age distribution of the study participants. The age distribution shows that the majority of respondents were between 31–38 years, accounting for 41 individuals (30.5%). The 21–25 years category had 39 respondents who made up 29.1 % of the total, while the 26–30 years group had 30 respondents who made up 22.3% of the total, above 38 years, comprising 24 respondents (17.9%). The results show that most respondents match the active workforce found in non-governmental organizations. This suggests that the study captured the views of a relatively young and economically active workforce engaged in NGO projects.

Table 5 Respondents' educational level

	Frequency	*Percent*
Diploma	4	2.9
Bachelors	63	47.7
Masters or above	67	50
Total	134	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The above table shows that most study participants have either bachelor's degree programs which 63 respondents (47.7%) completed or master's degree programs which 67 respondents (50%) completed. Only 4 respondents (2.9%) confirmed their possession of a diploma. The sample demonstrates higher educational attainment because almost all participants are bachelor's degree holders. The study benefits from this respondents profile since their educational background helps them to apprehend and employ the monitoring and evaluation methods.

Table 6 Respondents' experience level

	Frequency	Percent
Up to 5 years	54	40.2
6 to 10 years	28	20.8
11 to 15 years	24	17.9
above 15 years	28	20.8
Total	134	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2026

Table 6 presents an overview of the respondents' professional background. The work experience analysis showed that 54 respondents (40.2%) had up to 5 years of experience, while 28 respondents (20.8%) had between 6–10 years. A total of 24 respondents (17.9%) reported having 11–15 years of experience, while 28 respondents (20.8%) possessed more than 15 years of experience. The study benefits from diverse experience levels because it combines new viewpoints with established expertise in monitoring and evaluation methods.

Table 7 Respondents' Organizational roles

	Frequency	Percent
Project Manager	15	11.1
Project coordinators	29	21.6
Senior project staff	15	11.1
M&E staff	47	34.8
Other	28	20.8

Source: Survey Data, 2026

In terms of organizational roles, the most common organizational role among respondents was held by Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) staff members whose group of 47 people accounted for 35 percent of all respondents. This was followed by project coordinators, 29 individuals, which is 21.6%. The project team's other staff members accounted for 20.8% of the total while project managers made up 11.1% and senior project staff members constituted 11.1% of the team. The study uses data from M&E staff members because they represent the views of professionals who work directly in monitoring and evaluation activities. The sample represents a wider range of people because project managers and coordinators bring their managerial viewpoints to the study while other staff members contribute their perspectives.

Descriptive Statistics

This section shows the descriptive statistics for the major study constructs: M&E planning, M&E staff technical skills, stakeholder engagement, M&E budget allocation, top management support, and project success. The mean and standard deviation values will be considered for this analysis in order to understand the general perceptions and degree of agreement among respondents.

The mean scores are utilized in identifying the overall inclination of the respondents, while the standard deviation values indicate the level of agreement or dispersion among respondents. Low standard deviation value means high agreement level while high standard deviation indicates disagreement among respondents in terms of perceptions about the issue. Interpretation does not simply involve the identification of the high or low mean value, the agreement level among respondents must also be noted especially in terms of similarity in the perceptions regarding the selected NGOs.

According to Sözen & Güven (2019), any mean value ranging from 1.00 to 1.80 refers to Strongly Disagree, 1.81 to 2.60 refers to Disagree, 2.61 to 3.40 refers to Neutral, 3.41 to 4.20 refers to Agree, and 4.21 to 5.00 refers to Strongly Agree. Tables below show the descriptive statistics grouped according to the constructs, followed by the overall analysis of the results.

M&E Planning

Table 8 Descriptive Statistics of M&E Planning

	N	Mean	SD
M&E planning activity was completed before the implementation of the project	134	3.81	.799
M&E Plan is linked to the Strategic Plan and Work plan	134	3.78	.819
The time and effort given to M&E planning was adequate	134	3.78	.772
Project staffs and stakeholders are involved in designing and planning M&E activities.	134	3.78	.835
The M&E plan is shared among project staffs and stakeholders.	134	3.79	.757
The M&E plan has been updated regularly.	134	3.81	.824
The M&E plan has output, outcome and impact indicators to measure achievements.	134	3.83	.800

M&E Planning Grand Mean	**134**	**3.797**	**.800**

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The table above displays the descriptive statistics that show results for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Planning dimension assessment. M&E Planning result indicate a grand mean score of 3.797 which had a standard deviation of 0.800. According to the interpretation scale provided by Sözen and Güven (2019), where a mean value between 3.41 and 4.20 is categorized as "Agree" this means that the respondents reached a general agreement about M&E planning activities because they believed that these activities were sufficiently organized and executed by their respective NGOs. The organizations under study have established a functional foundation for M&E research which shows in their ability to complete project plans before beginning work and their practice of connecting M&E activities to strategic objectives and their process of involving necessary stakeholders in system design.

The standard deviation measurement of 0.800 shows that respondents provided answers with limited variation. The 134 respondents showed agreement about how M&E planning functions in their organizations which leads to the conclusion that all organizations treat M&E planning as a fundamental method that they use throughout their project management process.

Overall, the **Grand mean of 3.797 (SD = 0.800)** reveals that respondents generally agree with the existence and practice of M&E planning within their organizations. This suggests that M&E planning is fairly well established and that key elements such as early preparation, alignment with strategic plans, stakeholder involvement, sharing of plans, regular updating, and inclusion of indicators are reasonably practiced. The result obtained implies that M&E planning is recognized as an important component of project management and provides a foundation for effective project monitoring and eventual success.

Technical Skill & M&E Staffing

Table 9 Descriptive Statistics of Technical Skill M&E Staffing

	N	Mean	SD
The project has staff well trained in M&E, data collection and analysis techniques.	134	3.77	.784
Project staff are well trained in M&E.	134	3.76	.768

Project M&E training and development is encouraged in the organization to improve expertise.	134	3.75	.782
The project has full-time M&E staff.	134	3.76	.777
The project has an adequate number of M&E staff.	134	3.77	.765
Project M&E staff has a clear job description.	134	3.72	.752
Technical Skill & M&E Staffing Grand Mean	**134**	**3.755**	**0.771**

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The table above displays the descriptive statistics that show results for Technical Skill & M&E Staffing dimension assessment. Technical Skill & M&E Staffing result indicate a grand mean score of 3.755 which had a standard deviation of 0.771 According to the interpretation scale provided by Sözen and Güven (2019), where a mean value between 3.41 and 4.20 is categorized as "Agree" this means that the respondents reached a general agreement about Technical Skill & M&E Staffing. The organizations under study have established a functional foundation for M&E research which shows in their ability to complete project plans before beginning work and their practice of connecting M&E activities to strategic objectives and their process of involving necessary stakeholders in system design.

The standard deviation measurement of 0.771 shows that respondents provided answers with limited variation. The 134 respondents showed agreement about how M&E staff technical skills in their organizations which leads to the conclusion that all organizations treat M&E skills as a fundamental method that they use throughout their project management process.

The table shows that respondents generally agree that technical skill and M&E staffing are adequate in their projects, as indicated by the grand mean of **3.755 (SD = 0.771)**. This implies that project staff have the necessary knowledge and capacity to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities effectively.

M&E Budget Allocation

Table 10 Descriptive Statistics of M&E Budget Allocation

	N	Mean	SD
The organization allocates sufficient funds for M&E activities.	134	3.77	.822
There is a separate budget allocation for M&E.	134	3.81	.790

The budgetary decisions are independent for the monitoring and evaluation unit.	134	3.78	.762
The organization ensures there is the timely provision of funds for M&E.	134	3.79	.805
Funds allocated are used for M&E activities only.	134	3.78	.808
Donors give due emphasis to make sure that applicants propose an adequate budget for M&E before approving any proposals for funding.	134	3.78	.817
M&E Budget Allocation Grand Mean	**134**	**3.785**	**0.800**

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The table above provides the complete descriptive statistics for M&E Budget Allocation. The results demonstrate that the grand mean score for M&E Budget Allocation is 3.785 (SD = 0.800). The respondents' assessment of their organization's financial resources which they allocate for Monitoring and Evaluation purposes resulted in an "Agree" rating according to the Sözen and Güven (2019) interpretation scale which designates "Agree" to mean values between 3.41 and 4.20.

The sampled organizations for thestudy show that their M&E systems base financial priorities on established critical M&E functions. The result suggests that financial constraints are not perceived as a primary barrier to M&E activities within these organizations.

The standard deviation value of 0.800 shows that the response distribution around the mean exhibits moderate variation. The 134 participants reached a common understanding about budget availability however their individual responses showed different views on how budget decisions should be made independent of existing funds. The financial data indicates that all surveyed projects maintain consistent financial support for their M&E operations.

The table indicates that respondents generally agree that sufficient budget is allocated for monitoring and evaluation activities, with a grand mean of **3.785 (SD = 0.800)**. This suggests that financial resources are reasonably provided to support M&E implementation in the organization.

Stakeholders Engagement

Table 11 Descriptive Statistics of Stakeholder Engagement

	N	Mean	SD

Key stakeholders were identified and defined clearly at the beginning of the project.	134	3.79	.801
Stakeholder analysis (interest and influence) conducted.	134	3.78	.808
Stakeholder engagement plan developed.	134	3.76	.777
Stakeholders are adequately involved in designing and planning M&E activities.	134	3.72	.781
Mechanisms (for example review meetings) for stakeholders to reflect on the project implementation were in place.	134	3.79	.814
Stakeholders feedback is sought during M&E processes.	134	3.78	.844
M&E results and findings are disseminated to the stakeholders.	134	3.79	.805
Stakeholders Engagement Grand Mean	**134**	**3.77**	**.8042**

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The table table above provides descriptive statistics of stakeholder engagement in detail. The results show that the grand mean score for stakeholder engagement is 3.77 (SD = 0.8042). The respondents' views on how their organizations involve stakeholders in Monitoring and Evaluation activities resulted in an "Agree" rating based on the Sözen and Güven (2019) interpretation scale, where values between 3.41 and 4.20 indicate agreement.

The results reveal that the surveyed organizations usually engage stakeholders in vital activities such as planning, implementation, and feedback of M&E process. This means that the participation of stakeholders in project success is acknowledged and satisfactorily practiced in the selected organizations.

As seen in the table, a standard deviation value of 0.8042, the variance is moderate. Although the perceptions of most participants concerning the practice of stakeholder participation are almost the same, yet there is some degree of difference in their perceptions regarding the level of stakeholder involvement.

The table shows that respondents generally agree that stakeholders are involved in monitoring and evaluation activities, as reflected by the grand mean of **3.770 (SD = 0.8042)**. This implies that stakeholder engagement is fairly practiced during project planning, implementation, and review phases.

Top Management Support

Table 12 Descriptive Statistics of Top Management Support

	N	Mean	SD
Top management is very capable of performing its task.	134	3.80	.848
Top management has much knowledge about the work that needs to be done.	134	3.80	.783
Top management has specialized capabilities that can increase our performance.	134	3.80	.793
Top management actions and behaviours are very consistent.	134	3.78	.817
Top management is well qualified.	134	3.75	.829
Top management has a strong sense of justice.	134	3.78	.798
I never have to wonder whether top management will stick to its word.	134	3.81	.842
Top management tries hard to be fair in dealing with others.	134	3.80	.783
Top management looks out for what is important to me.	134	3.79	.842
I feel confident about top management skills.	134	3.76	.842
Top Management Support Grand Mean	**134**	**3.787**	**.8177**

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The table above provides the complete descriptive statistics for top management support. The results show that the grand mean score for top management support is 3.787 (SD = 0.8177). The respondents' perception of the role and involvement of top management in supporting Monitoring and Evaluation activities resulted in an "Agree" rating based on the Sözen and Güven (2019) interpretation scale, where values between 3.41 and 4.20 indicate agreement.

The findings reveal that respondents strongly agree that the top management of the organization is capable, knowledgeable and qualified enough to carry out its responsibilities (Mean values are in the range of 3.75 and 3.81). Respondents also strongly agree that top management displays fairness, consistency and reliability in its actions/behavior. It can be concluded that the organization's top management creates a favorable environment for the conduct of M&E activities.

Standard deviations' values for items (ranging from 0.783 to 0.848) indicate moderate variability of responses. So, despite the fact that respondents mostly have the same positive opinion about top management support, there are some differences in perception of management actions/behaviors. Some respondents might receive greater support than other.

Overall, The table reveals that respondents generally agree that top management provides support

for monitoring and evaluation practices, with a grand mean of **3.787 (SD = 0.8177)**. This suggests that management commitment exists and helps facilitate effective M&E implementation.

Project Success

Table 13 Descriptive Statistics of Project Success

	N	Mean	SD
The project was completed on time	134	3.70	.756
The project was completed according to the planned budget	134	3.74	.765
The project met its intended goals and objectives	134	3.73	.767
The project meets the required scope and quality standards	134	3.73	.737
The target beneficiaries were satisfied with the results of the project	134	3.79	.726
The project has made a visible positive impact on the target beneficiaries	134	3.72	.760
Donors and other stakeholders was satisfied with the outcomes of the project	134	3.76	.758
Project Success Grand Mean	**134**	**3.738**	**.7527**

Source: Survey Data, 2026

As shown in the table above, respondents agree that projects are completed on time (Mean = 3.70, SD = 0.756), within the planned budget (Mean = 3.74, SD = 0.765), and achieve their intended goals and objectives (Mean = 3.73, SD = 0.767). They also agree that projects meet the required scope and quality standards (Mean = 3.73, SD = 0.737). These results reflect the key elements of project success, often described by the traditional “iron triangle” of time, cost, scope, and quality.

Respondents agree that target beneficiaries are satisfied with project results (Mean = 3.79, SD = 0.726), and that donors and other stakeholders are also satisfied with project outcomes (Mean = 3.76, SD = 0.758). This shows that stakeholder satisfaction is an important part of how project success is viewed in these organizations.

It should be pointed out that projects have created a noticeable impact on target beneficiaries, which suggests that besides delivering the planned objectives, projects have been producing desirable results (Mean = 3.72; SD = 0.760)..

Standard deviations ranging from 0.726 to 0.767 suggest that while the majority of respondents agree that projects are successful, there are moderate variations in responses. Therefore, there are some discrepancies in respondents' perceptions regarding aspects such as project time, cost and impact.

Grand mean of 3.738 (SD = 0.7527) shows that projects have been successful because they deliver their objectives and produce satisfactory results.

4.4 Correlation analysis

According to Saunders et al. (2009), correlation analysis helps to evaluate the degree of the relationship between variables in linear form. Pearson correlation coefficient (r) can be used to find out whether the variables are positively or negatively correlated and how much. However, correlation analysis does not test for cause-and-effect relationship but only shows the presence of a relationship between variables.

According to Kotrlik et al. (2011), the degree of correlation is classified into five categories as follows: negligible (.01-.09), low (.10-.29), moderate (.30-.49), substantial (.50-.69) and very strong (>.70). With respect to this classification, the current research employed Pearson correlation analysis to determine the linear relationships between M&E planning, M&E staff technical skills, M&E budget allocation, stakeholders involvement, top management support and project success.

This section is intended to define the baseline relationships between the research variables before moving to regression and moderation analysis. In other words, the correlation analysis findings will show whether the M&E components and project success are positively and significantly related, and then in the following part regression analysis will show the degree of their predictive ability over the project success while moderation analysis will test whether there is any impact of top management support.

The correlation coefficients, level of significance, and sample size are shown in the following table.

Table 14 Correlation Analysis

Correlations						
		PL	TS	BA	SE	PS
PL	Pearson Correlation	--				
	N	134				
TS	Pearson Correlation	.006	--			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.949				
	N	134	134			
BA	Pearson Correlation	-.137	-.069	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.115	.428			
	N	134	134	134		
SE	Pearson Correlation	.033	-.028	.000	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.703	.746	.999		
	N	134	134	134	134	
PS	Pearson Correlation	**.308****	**.301****	**.270****	**.332****	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	**.000**	**.000**	**.002**	**.000**	
	N	134	134	134	134	134
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Source: Survey Data, 2026

As shown in Table 14, the correlation results reveal strong and statistically significant positive relationships among all study variables.

The M&E Planning and Project Success correlation coefficient r=.308 (p<.01) is classified as moderate. This means that planning of monitoring and evaluation procedures has a significant contribution to project success.

Technical Skills and Project Success: The strongest correlation was observed here (r = .301, p < .01), classified as moderate. This result confirms that staff capabilities and competencies have the highest magnitude on project success.

Budget Allocation and Project Success: The relationship was low (r = .270 p < .01), It means that sufficient budget for monitoring and evaluation activities significantly correlates with project success.

Stakeholder Engagement and Project Success: A moderate correlation was found (r = .332, p <

.01), underscoring the importance of involving stakeholders in planning, implementation, and evaluation processes to ensure accountability and sustainability.

Overall, the correlation analysis demonstrates that all four dimensions of M&E practices planning, technical skills, budget allocation, and stakeholder engagement are positively and significantly associated with project success.

4.5 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to determine the extent to which the identified dimensions of monitoring and evaluation account for the differences in project success. In line with the correlations, multiple regression was performed to evaluate the predictive importance M&E planning, M&E staff technical skills, M&E budget allocation, and stakeholder engagement.

The first step of the regression analysis was to find out whether each of the identified M&E dimensions significantly predicted project success. The model summary, ANOVA results, and regression coefficients were analyzed to determine the explanatory value of the model and significance of predictors.

In order to determine whether top management support moderates the effects of the M&E dimensions on project success, Hayes PROCESS Macro Model 1 was run. For the purposes of moderation analysis, particular attention should be paid to the interaction term between each of the identified M&E dimensions and top management support. Only in case of the significance of interaction effect, moderation will be accepted as proved.

The results of moderation analysis will be analyzed based on the value of interaction coefficient and its significance level as well as change in explained variance. Conditional effects analysis will also be employed.

4.5.1 Assumptions and tests

Normality test

For regression analysis to be valid, the linear assumption of normality of residuals must be satisfied. This was examined both graphically and statistically.

The histogram of standardized residuals (Figure 4.1) shows a bell-shaped curve, suggesting that the standardized residuals have normal distribution. At the same time, the normal probability plot (Normal P-P Plot) of regression standardized residuals illustrates that the probability values coincide with the straight line, proving that the residuals' distribution is normally distributed.

In addition, the Shapiro–Wilk test was conducted to statistically assess the distribution of residuals. The results show that the residuals' distribution is normally distributed since the p-value is higher than 0.05. Thus, the normality assumption is met.

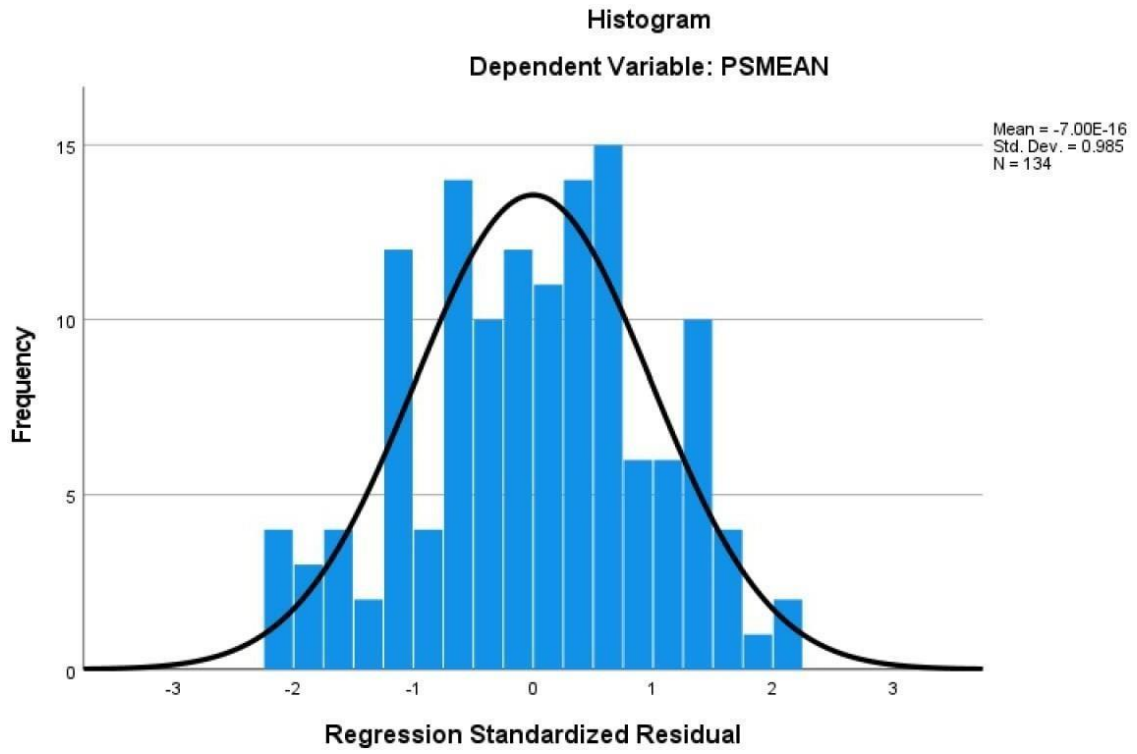


Figure 2 Histogram

Source: Survey Data, 2026

Table 15 Normality Test

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Unstandardized Residual	.046	134	.200*	.988	134	.275
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.						

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Source: Survey Data, 2026

As illustrated by Table 15, the value of Shapiro-Wilk test equals 0.275 and exceeds the critical level of 0.05. Therefore, the sample residuals can be considered normally distributed.

Linearity test

For regression analysis to be valid, the assumption of linearity must be satisfied. Linearity refers to the condition where the dependent variable (project success) varies consistently with changes in the independent variables (M&E planning, technical skills, budget allocation, stakeholder engagement, and top management support).

The linearity assumption is examined by plotting the scatter plot between standardized residual and standardized predicted values. Based on Figure 3, residuals follow a random pattern around the straight horizontal line whose Y-axis value equals zero. The randomness of residuals shows that there exists a linear relation between independent variables and project success.

From the scatter plot, it is evident that there were no trends or curvatures that would reveal the lack of linear association captured by regression analysis. Therefore, the assumptions of linearity were satisfied, and hence regression analysis is appropriate.

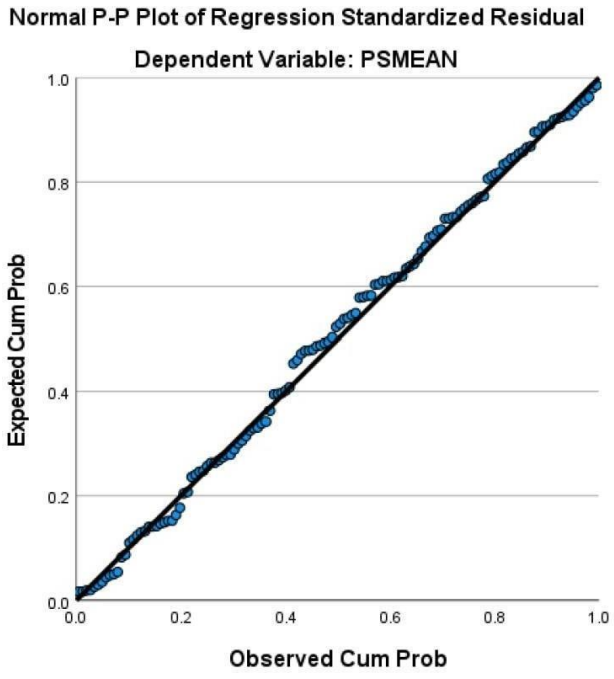


Figure 3 Normal P-P plot

Source: Survey Data, 2026

Multi collinearity test

To verify the degree of multicollinearity among the independent variables, a collinearity diagnostic test was conducted the tolerance values for every variable ranged from 0.977 to 0.998, as seen in Table 16, which is far greater than the critical threshold of 0.20. In the same way, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are far below the crucial threshold of 10.

These findings rather suggest that there are no serious issues with multicollinearity among, the independent variables, as overall it seems quite steady. In other words, the predictors M&E planning, technical skills and staffing, budget allocation, stakeholder engagement, and top management support are sufficiently independent of one another to be included in the regression model. This ensures that the regression coefficients can be interpreted reliably without distortion from overlapping variance among predictors.

Table 16 Multi-collinearity test

	Tolerance	VIF
M&E Planning	.980	1.020
Technical Skill & M&E Staffing	.994	1.006
M&E Budget Allocation	.977	1.024
Stakeholders Engagement	.998	1.024

Source: Survey Data, 2026

Autocorrelation (Durbin Watson Test)

The assumption that residuals are independent (or uncorrelated) can be tested using the Durbin Watson statistic, which ranges from 0 to 4. The acceptable range for the Durbin-Watson test is 1.5 to 2.5, where a Durbin-Watson value closer to 2 indicates a lower level of autocorrelation (Turner, 2020). Problematic and concerning values are those that are less than 1 and greater than 3. We must examine the Model Summary box that is shown below in order to verify this assumption.

Table 17 Durbin Watson statistics

Model Summary	
Model	Durbin-Watson
1	1.899
a. Predictors: (Constant), Top Management support, M&E Planning, M&E Budget Allocation, Stakeholders Engagement, Technical Skill & M&E Staffing	
b. Dependent Variable: Project Success	

Source: Survey Data, 2026

As shown in Table 17 the Model Summary box shows that this study measured the Durbin-Watson statistic at 1.899. The independence is evidenced because the value falls between 1.5 and 2.5 indicating acceptable range values. The reliability is confirmed by the model fulfilling independence requirement and depicting good fit of the data when examining the impact of project management maturity on project sustainability.

Skewness and Kurtosis Test

Table 18 Skewness and Kurtosis test

	N	**Mean**	**Skewness**		**Kurtosis**	
	Statistic	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Std. Error**	**Statistic**	**Std. Error**
M&E Planning	**134**	**3.797**	-.157	.209	-.341	.416
Technical Skill & M&E Staffing	**134**	**3.755**	-.347	.209	.674	.416
M&E Budget Allocation	**134**	**3.785**	-.029	.209	-.673	.416
Stakeholders Engagement	**134**	**3.77**	-.013	.209	-.625	.416
Valid N (listwise)	**134**					

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The skewness and kurtosis measurements show that all variables display values which range from -0.347 to -0.013 for skewness and -0.673 to 0.674 for kurtosis. According to Hair et al. (2010), the ranges created indicate ability to carry out a parametric test where values within ±2 for skewness and ±7 for kurtosis show normal distribution. In this regard, the distribution of data has a near-zero value for skewness meaning symmetry of the graph due to very little distortion at either negative or positive extremes. The findings reveal that the participants applied Likert scale in assessment of dimensions of project management maturity and project sustainability.

The kurtosis values for all measurements fall between the acceptable boundaries of ±3 for medium sized samples, as noted by Kline (2016) and George & Mallery (2010). The slightly negative kurtosis values indicate that the distributions are marginally flatter than a normal curve, while the positive values suggest slight peak. All the data points keep their status inside the normality testing limits, essentially. The overall distribution is roughly normal, so that allows researcher to use parametric statistical techniques like correlation, regression and moderation analysis across the entire study.

Checking the assumption Model Summary for Regression Analysis

Table 19 Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.638[a]	.407	.389	.51472
a. Predictors: (Constant), M&E Planning, M&E Budget Allocation, Stakeholders Engagement, Technical Skill & M&E Staffing				
b. Dependent Variable: Project Success				

Source: Survey Data, 2026

From the R value 0.638, it's basically shown that there is a positive relationship between the independent variables (M&E planning, technical skills and staffing, budget allocation, stakeholder engagement) and the dependent variable (project success) . So, it kind of suggests a strong overall connection between the predictors and project success as well, you know. In other words, it implies that project success is determined by the independent variable called M&E, or rather by its different sides. Then from the R Square number 0.407, it can be seen that the overall effect of these variables looks like it accounts for about 40.7% of the variance in project success. That means the

differences in project success can be connected , and yes mostly explained, through the combined influence of the M&E dimensions, all together, basically as a whole.

The Adjusted R Square value of **0.389** further refines this measure by accounting for the number of predictors within the model. This suggests that after tuning for the inclusion of multiple independent variables, **38.9%** of the variance in project success is explained by the model. The adjusted value also confirm that the model has a explanatory capacity, and it is not being inflated by the sheer number of predictors.

In Summary, the regression model indicates that monitoring and evaluation dimensions, are quite crucial determinants of project success. The R and R Square values show that these components clarify a substantial share of project outcomes, collectively. this outcome also matches the theoretical view that a well run M&E system, with by strong leadership, substantially improves project performance in NGOs.

ANOVA summary interpretation

Table 20 ANOVA table

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.449	4	5.862	22.127	<.001[b]
	Residual	34.177	129	.265		
	Total	57.627	133			
a. Dependent Variable: Project Success						
b. Predictors: (Constant), M&E Planning, M&E Budget Allocation, Stakeholders Engagement, Technical Skill & M&E Staffing						

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The results in the ANOVA table further show that the regression model, which uses M&E planning, technical skills and staffing, budget allocation, and stakeholder engagement as the predictor variables, is statistically significant for explaining project success. The F value of 22.127 quite tells us that the model covers a pretty large portion of variance in project success, compared to the variance from the error. This suggests that monitoring and evaluation practices are strong predictors for project success.

The F statistic 22.127 compares the regression mean square of 5.862 with the residual mean square of 0.265, shows a strong fit between the model and the data. Since the significance value is p =

.000, and that number is smaller than 0.05 the model is statistically significant, somewhat clear really. It also suggests that at least one of the independent variables has a meaningful relationship with project success, not just noise.

The robustness of the prediction model is evident due to the high F-statistic, confirming that the combined effect of M&E practices and top management support makes a meaningful contribution to project success predictions. Further examination of the regression coefficients (t-tests) provides insight into which specific variables contribute most strongly to this statistical significance.

4.5.2 Result of Multiple Regression

Parameter estimation and interpretation

After completing the necessary assumption tests, parameter estimation and interpretation were undertaken to examine the direct effects of the Monitoring and Evaluation dimensions on project performance. The subsequent sections present the results, along with their interpretation and discussion.

The effect of Monitoring and Evaluation Planning on project success

Table 21 Regression Result Showing the effect of M and E Planning on project success

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	LLCI	ULCI
(Constant)	-.988 (.506)		-1.953	.053	-1.990	.013
M&E Planning	.319 (.064)	.342	4.991	<.001	.193	.446

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The regression results shows that **M&E Planning** has a ***statistically significant (p =< 0.001*** and the confidence interval does not include zero) and ***positive effect (β = .342)*** on ***project success.*** This means that the more effectively monitoring and evaluation activities are planned, the better the performance of projects will be. Careful preparation of M&E frameworks, indicators, and stakeholder involvement ensures that projects are implemented with clarity and accountability,

ultimately improving outcomes. Hence, ***Hypothesis 1 [The effect of M&E planning on project success is statistically significant and positive] was supported.***

The empirical finding shows that M&E planning has a strong and significant positive impact on project success, it does align with Atkinson (1999) who said that "success" shouldn't stop at only the usual cost time, and quality stuff, but rather, should also include wider planning and management considerations. In summary, thus, the findings somewhat seem to indicate that the more the broader aspects are considered, the better the results of the projects become, according to the findings from that point of view. Also, according to Estrella (2000), the process of participatory monitoring and evaluation planning enhances organizational learning and responsiveness and therefore positively influences project results. In the same way, Gudda (2011) and IFRC (2011) emphasize that the proper design of monitoring and evaluation activities acts as an agenda for accountability and transparency that guarantees projects are well managed and yield the desired results.

Moreover, Kissi et al. (2019) revealed that M&E planning substantially contributes to the success of projects in the construction industry and, at the same time, underpin the importance of planning as a predictor of success. It appears to be congruent with the findings from Gorfu (2024) and Shiferaw (2024) that also identified M&E planning as a crucial determinant of project success in Ethiopian NGOs. Further, the World Bank (Kusek & Rist, 2004; Mackay, 2007) emphasizes the importance of results-based M&E systems starting from proper planning that ensures the measurability and achievement of objectives.

Thus, the empirical result proves the significance of M&E planning as not only an essential procedure but also a practical means of driving project success in organizations. With the help of M&E planning, NGOs can improve their effectiveness in achieving the objectives and satisfying stakeholders.

The effect of Monitoring and Evaluation Staff Technical Skill on project success

Table 22 Regression Result Showing effect of M and E Staff Technical Skill on project success.

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	LLCI	ULCI
(Constant)	-.988 (.506)		-1.953	.053	-1.990	.013

Technical Skill & M&E Staffing	.311 (.064)	.332	4.887	<.001	.185	.437

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The regression results shows that ***Technical Skill*** & M&E Staffing has ***a statistically significant (p <.001*** and the confidence interval does not include zero) and ***positive effect (β =.332)*** on **project success.**

This means that the more skilled and expert the monitoring and evaluation staff, the better the performance of the project. The staff contributes to the precision and accuracy of the process by ensuring efficient data gathering, processing, analyzing and reporting; thus increasing the performance of the projects. Hence, ***Hypothesis 2 [The effect of technical skill and M&E staffing on project success is statistically significant and positive] was supported.***

The empirical finding demonstrates that the effect of technical skill and staffing capacity is strongly and positively correlated with the success of the projects. This is in accordance with Kerzner (2003), who states that successful management of a project greatly relies on the competencies of the staff working. Likewise, Field (2009) states that statistical and analytical skills are necessary in generating reliable evidence that increases project performance through proper monitoring and evaluation. Further, it is important to note the views of Gudda (2011) and IFRC (2011) regarding the need for trained M&E staff.

Besides, according to Kissi et al. (2019), the existence of competent M&E staff plays an integral role in the success of projects. Similarly, Gorfu (2024) and Shiferaw (2024) found out that there is a positive relationship between technical skills and the performance of NGOs in Ethiopia. Moreover, Mackay (2007) and Kusek & Rist (2004) emphasize on building M&E capacity through human resources.

Therefore, from the above literature review, it can be confirmed that the result of this study supports the empirical fact that technical skill and staffing are important aspects of achieving success in project execution.

The effect of Monitoring and Evaluation Budget Allocation on project success

Table 23 Regression Result Showing the effect of M and E Budget Allocation on project success.

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	LLCI	ULCI
(Constant)	-.988 (.506)		-1.953	.053	-1.990	.013
M&E Budget Allocation	.319 (.065)	.340	4.951	<.001	.192	.447

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The regression results shows that **M&E Budget Allocation** has a ***statistically significant (p <.001*** and the confidence interval does not include zero) and ***positive effect (β = .340)*** on **project success.**

It means that the more the adequacy and timeliness of the allocation of financial resources for carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities are increased, the performance of projects is positively improved. Adequate budgeting is essential in order to implement M&E processes properly since there should be enough financial resources to collect data, analyze it, report on findings, and engage with all stakeholders. Hence, ***Hypothesis 3 [The effect of M&E budget allocation on project success is statistically significant and positive] was supported.***

The empirical evidence shows that budget allocation had a highly significant and positive effect on project success. It corresponds to Atkinson (1999) who states that project success cannot be determined merely based on three dimensions: cost, time, and quality but resource adequacy and planning are needed as well. In turn, Gudda (2011) and IFRC (2011) state that financial resources are essential since only through having an adequate amount of them, M&E systems can function effectively, and under-budgeted projects usually do not meet their objectives. In its turn, Kissi et al. (2019) prove that the budgeting for monitoring and evaluation practices has a highly significant effect on project success in the construction industry in Ghana..

Moreover, Murorunkwere and Munene (2022) and Uwera & Wanjiku (2023) state that well-financed M&E systems in NGOs result in high accountability and efficient project execution. This statement confirms the ideas of Mackay (2007) and Kusek & Rist (2004) according to which results-based M&E systems require enough investment to achieve sustainability and desired impact. In addition to that, Gorfu (2024) and Shiferaw (2024) also agree that poor budget allocation

reduces project success, and adequate finances promote better M&E processes.

Overall, it can be said that the results provide a confirmation that budget allocation has a highly significant positive effect on M&E process. NGOs can strengthen accountability, improve efficiency, and achieve sustainable development outcomes.

The effect of Stakeholder Engagement on project success

Table 24 Regression Result Showing the effect of M and E Stakeholder Engagement on project success.

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	LLCI	ULCI
(Constant)	-.988 (.506)		-1.953	.053	-1.990	1.413
Stakeholders Engagement	.302 (.062)	.330	4.864	<.001	.179	.424

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The regression results show **Stakeholder Engagement** has a ***statistically significant (p <.001*** and the confidence interval does not include zero) and ***positive effect (β = .330)*** on **project success.**

This means that the more stakeholder participation in planning, monitoring and evaluation processes, the higher project performance is likely to be. Effectiveness of stakeholders' involvement ensures that there is accountability, transparency, and ownership, and all that makes the project successful. Hence, hypothesis 4 The effect of stakeholder engagement on project success is statistically significant and positive was supported.

According to Estrella (2000), participatory monitoring and evaluation improves learning and responsiveness in development projects. Patton (1997) underlines that utilization-focused evaluation is highly dependent on stakeholders' involvement since only through it conclusions can be implemented. In its turn, according to the recommendations of Gudda (2011) and IFRC (2011), the engagement of stakeholders in M&E practices promotes trust and accountability, which are vital for sustainable project operation..

Moreover, Murorunkwere & Munene (2022) and Uwera & Wanjiku (2023) revealed that the participation of stakeholders in NGO projects in Rwanda positively influenced the project outcome. That finding is supported by Kissi et al. (2019),

who noted that stakeholder participation in monitoring and evaluation practices leads to meeting criteria for project success. Furthermore, according to Gorfu (2024) and Shiferaw (2024), stakeholder engagement is an important determinant of project performance in Ethiopian NGO contexts. In conclusion, the empirical result proves that stakeholder engagement is not a supporting measure but a factor that drives projects forward.

4.5.3 Moderating Effect of Top Management Support

Moderating role of Top Management Support in the M&E Planning of projects and the project success relationship

Table 25 Moderating role of Top Management Support in the M&E Planning of projects and the project success relationship

Variable	Coefficient (B)	t-value	p-value	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.7231 (0.520)	71.5302	.0000	3.6201	3.8260
M&E Planning	.2441 (.0746)	3.2747	.0014	.0966	.3916
Top Management Support	.1901 (.0715)	2.6582	.0088	.0486	.3317
MP × TMS (Int_1)	.3325 (.1077)	3.0885	.0025	.1195	.5455
R^2= .1900, R^2 change=.0594, F=9.5390					

Source: Survey Data, 2026

As shown in the moderation result, top management support had statistically significant and positive moderating effect on the relationship between M&E planning and project success. The interaction term (MP × TMS) shows a positive (B = .3325) and statistically significant effect (t= 3.0885 and p = 0.0025 and the confidence interval did not include zero). In other words, the positive impact of M&E planning on the success of projects increases as the level of top management support increases. From a practical standpoint, a sound plan for M&E will result in project success if there is active guidance and commitment from the senior management.. Therefore**,**

Hypothesis 5 [The effect of M&E planning on project success is statistically significant and

positive when TMS is in place] was supported.

From the above results, it is clear that the commitment of top management acts as a facilitator that enhances the effectiveness of the M&E planning process. Under such conditions, M&E planning becomes more useful as it is carried out efficiently and with due consideration of organizational goals.

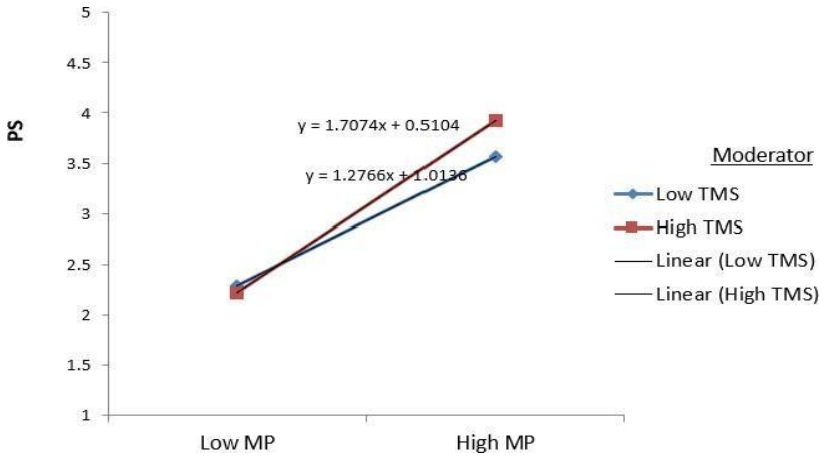


Figure 4 Moderating role of Top Management Support in the M&E Planning of projects and the project success relationship

Source: Survey Data, 2026

Moderating role of Top Management in the Technical Skill & M&E Staffing of projects and the project success relationship

Table 26 Moderating role of top management in the Technical Skill & M&E Staffing of projects and the project success

Variable	Coefficient (B)	t-value	p-value	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.7105 (.0532)	69.7929	.0000	3.6053	3.8157
Technical Skill & M&E Staffing	.2820 (.0767)	3.6763	.0003	.1303	.4338
Top Management Support	.1227 (.0735)	1.6692	0.975	-.0227	.2680
MTS × TMS (Int_1)	.2925 (.0973)	3.0050	.0032	.0999	.4850

R^2= .1744, R^2 change=.0573, F=9.0302

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The moderation analysis further revealed that top management support significantly and positively moderated the relationship between technical skill and staffing and project success. The interaction term MTS × TMS shows a positive (B = .2925) and statistically significant (t=3.0050, p = .0032) and the confidence interval did not include zero). This means that the contribution of technical skill and adequate M&E staffing to project success increases when top management support is strong. ***Accordingly, Hypothesis 6 [The effect of M&E staff technical skills on project success is statistically significant and positive when TMS is in place] was supported.***

This finding implies that competent staff and technical expertise brings better project outcomes when top management creates a supportive environment through recognition, resource provision, and encouragement of evidence-based practice. Even where staff are technically capable, the absence of strong leadership support may limit the extent to which their skills are fully translated into improved project performance. Hence, top management support amplifies the value of human and technical M&E capacity in NGOs.

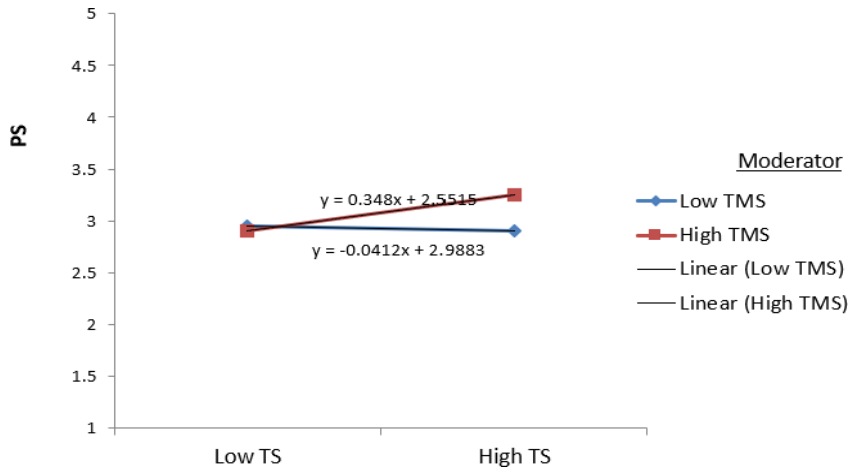


Figure 5 Moderating Top Management Support in the Technical Skill & M&E Staffing of projects and the project success

Source: Survey Data, 2026

Moderating role of Top management support on the M&E Budget Allocation of projects and the project success relationship

Table 27 Top management support on the M&E Budget Allocation of projects and the

project success relationship

Variable	Coefficient (B)	t-value	p-value	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.7336 (.0545)	68.5396	.0000	3.6258	3.8413
M&E Budget Allocation	.2225 (.0788)	2.8235	.0055	.0666	.3783
Top Management Support	.1707 (.0747)	2.2843	.0240	.0229	.3185
MBA × TMS (Int_1)	.1008 (.0989)	1.0190	.3101	-.0949	.2966
R^2= .1146, R^2 change=.0071, F=1.0384					

Source: Survey Data, 2026

As indicated, top management support did not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between M&E budget allocation and project success Although the interaction term (MBA × TMS) was positive (B = 0.1008), it was not statistically significant (p = 0.3101), and the confidence interval included zero).This shows that while M&E budget allocation and top management support each contributed positively in the model, their combined interaction did not significantly strengthen the effect of budget allocation on project success. Therefore, ***Hypothesis 7 [The effect of M&E budget allocation on project success is statistically significant and positive when TMS is in place] was not supported.***

This result implies that adequate budget allocation is important for project success on its own, but the strength of its effect does not appear to depend on the level of top management support in this case. One possible explanation is that once financial resources are made available for M&E activities, their influence may operate suffieciently through implementation processes rather than through managerial reinforcement. It may also suggest that other contextual factors, such as efficiency in fund utilization, donor conditions, or operational controls, are more critical than leadership support in determining whether M&E budgets improve project success.

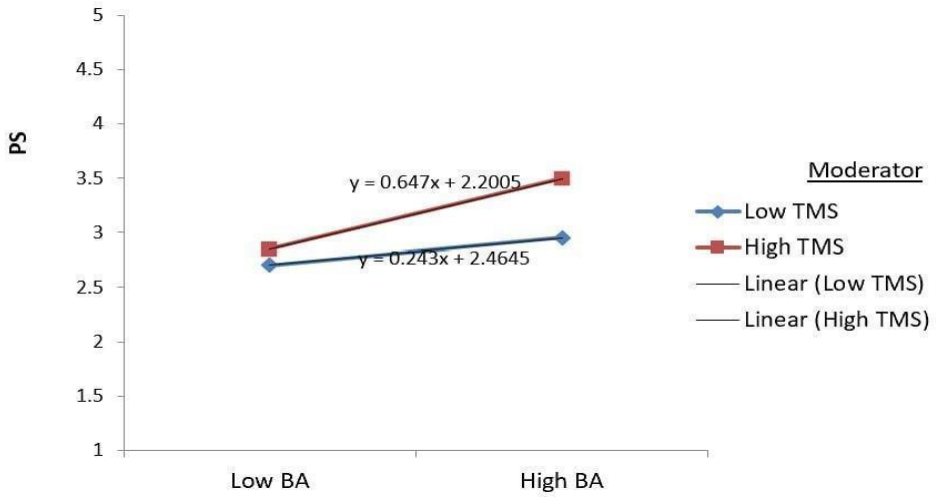


Figure 6 Moderating role Top Management Support in the budget allocation of projects and the project success

Source: Survey Data, 2026

Moderating role of Top management support on the stakeholder engagement of projects and the project success relationship

Table 28 Top management support on the stakeholder engagement of projects and the project success relationship

Variable	Coefficient (B)	t-value	p-value	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.7466 (.0514)	72.8949	.0000	3.6449	3.8483
Stakeholder engagement	.3207 (.0717)	4.4758	.0000	.1789	.4625
Top Management Support	.2037 (.0705)	2.8903	.0045	.0643	.3431
SE × TMS (Int_1)	.2452 (.0987)	2.4858	.0142	.0501	.4404
R^2= .2037, R^2 change=.0.379, F=6.1792					

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The results also show that top management support significantly and positively moderated the relationship between stakeholder engagement and project success. The interaction term (SE ×

TMS) shows a positive (B = 0.2452) and statistically significant effect (t= 2.4858, p = .0142, and the confidence interval did not include zero. These findings reveal that the impact of stakeholder engagement on project success increases with the level of top management support. Thus, ***Hypothesis 8 [The effect of Stakeholder engagement on project success is statistically significant and positive when TMS is in place] was supported.***

In other words, stakeholder engagement proves effective in achieving desired results when coupled with dedicated management efforts. TMS will legitimize stakeholder participation, respond promptly to feedback, and ensure that the views of stakeholders are considered in the planning, monitoring, and corrective measures. Therefore, organizations combining active

Stakeholder participation with effective management support will be able to ensure accountability and sustainable results.

Figure 29 Top management support on the stakeholder engagement of projects and the project success relationship

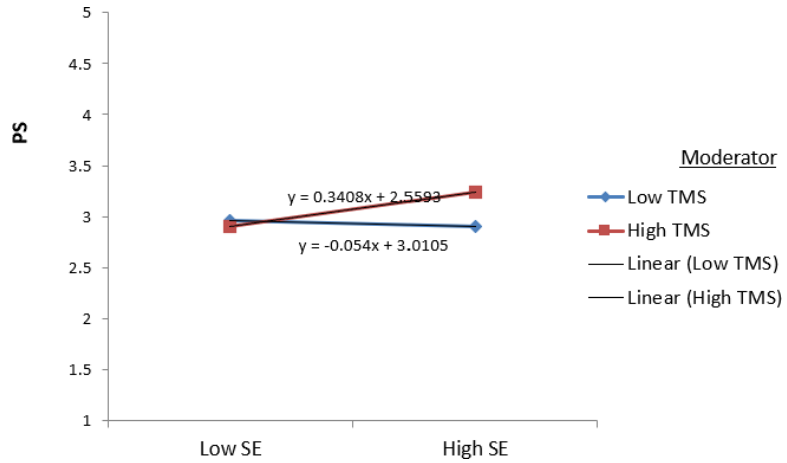


Figure 7 Moderating role of Top Management Support in the stakeholder engagement and the project success

Source: Survey Data, 2026

Regression Model:

Based on the regression and moderation analysis, the revised regression model equation for this study is expressed as follows:

$$Y = \beta 0 + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3 + \beta 4X4 + \beta 5X5 + \beta 6(X1X5) + \beta 7(X2X5) + \beta 8(X3X5) + \beta 9(X4X5) + \varepsilon$$

Where Y represents project success, X1 represents M&E Planning, X2 represents Technical Skill and M&E Staffing, X3 represents M&E Budget Allocation, X4 represents Stakeholder Engagement, and X5 represents Top Management Support. β0 is the constant term, while ε is the error term.

Substituting the estimated coefficients, the final revised model becomes:

$$Y = -0.988 + 0.3421X1 + 0.332X2 + 0.3409X3 + 0.330X4 + 0.333(X1X5) + 0.293(X2X5) + 0.245(X4X5) + \varepsilon$$

This indicates that M&E Planning, Technical Skill and M&E Staffing, M&E Budget Allocation, and Stakeholder Engagement all contribute positively to project success. In addition, Top Management Support significantly strengthens the effects of M&E Planning, Technical Skill and M&E Staffing, and Stakeholder Engagement on project success, while its moderating effect on M&E Budget Allocation was not statistically significant.

4.5.4 Summary of Hypothesis

Table 30 Summary of Hypothesis

Hypothesis	**Result**	**Decision**
H1: The effect of M&E Planning on project success is statistically significant and positive.	Significant (p = .000), positive (β = .691)	Hypothesis Accepted
H2: The effect of Technical Skill & M&E Staffing on project success is statistically significant and positive.	Significant (p = .000), positive (β = .744)	Hypothesis Accepted
H3: The effect of M&E Budget Allocation on project success is statistically significant and positive.	Significant (p = .000), positive (β = .698)	Hypothesis Accepted
H4: The effect of Stakeholder Engagement on project success is statistically significant and positive.	Significant (p = .000), positive (β = .722)	Hypothesis Accepted

H5: The moderating effect of Top Management Support strengthens the relationship between M&E Planning and project success.	significant ($p < 0.05$), positive interaction effect	Hypothesis supported
H6: The moderating effect of Top Management Support strengthens the relationship between Technical Skill & Staffing and project success.	significant ($p < 0.05$), positive interaction effect	Hypothesis supported
H7: The moderating effect of Top Management Support strengthens the relationship between Budget Allocation and project success.	Not significant ($p > 0.05$),	Hypothesis not supported
H8: The moderating effect of Top Management Support strengthens the relationship between Stakeholder Engagement and project success.	significant ($p < 0.05$), positive interaction effect	Hypothesis supported

Source: Survey Data, 2026

Based on the results of hypothesis testing, the M&E practices have proven to be significant determinants of project success in the selected NGOs. As the hypotheses about M&E planning, technical skill and staffing, budget allocation, and stakeholder engagement have been accepted, it becomes clear that project success is influenced by such factors as structured planning, competent personnel, availability of sufficient funds, and participation of stakeholders. In particular, M&E practices will become successful in the situation when the NGOs in question will have planned M&E activities, provided competent M&E personnel with necessary skills, allocated sufficient resources for M&E, and involved the stakeholders. In other words, such results confirm the review of the literature presented in Chapter Two as the findings are consistent with the arguments presented by Kusek and Rist in regard to the necessity of having structured M&E system, Naidoo on the importance of having competent M&E personnel, and Patton's utilization-focused evaluation theory according to which the stakeholders' participation is extremely important in order to make the evaluation findings useful for decision-making process.

Furthermore, the results of moderating effect testing proved that the influence of M&E practices on project success is strengthened by the support of top management of organizations. It means that such M&E practices as planning, technical skill and staffing, and stakeholder engagement are more successful under such conditions when senior managers give directions and resources, provide accountability and commitment to implementing findings of M&E practices in order to make corrections. In the case of selected NGOs from Addis Ababa, it is particularly important since M&E practices in NGOs can turn into just donors' report requirements without being used as a real management tool in case there is no active involvement of management in M&E processes. Moreover, it was found that the moderation effect of top management support does not directly influence the realtionsip between M&E budget allocation on project success. It may indicate that budget availability is not enough unless it is released timely, managed correctly, and linked to actual M&E activities.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the components which include the findings, the conclusions, and the recommendations of the research study about monitoring and evaluation practices together with their impact on project success. The chapter aims to interpret Chapter Four results through the lens of research objectives and theoretical frameworks and existing literature.

5.2 Summary of findings

In this study, the impact of M&E practices on project success in selected NGOs was tested while top management support served as a moderator variable. It turned out that M&E practices had a positive impact on project success. In other words, it can be stated that the higher M&E practices (planning, technical skill and staffing, budget allocation, and stakeholder engagement) were, the better organizations could trace project progress, find implementation problems, improve accountability, and achieve project goals.

The findings of the study show that M&E planning is an essential precondition of successful project implementation. Indicators, reporting system, M&E schedule, and follow-up make it possible to evaluate the extent to which projects are being implemented according to plans. Moreover, technical skill and M&E staffing are also essential due to the fact that the competence of personnel makes the process of collecting and analyzing data, reporting, and applying the findings much more efficient. The same refers to budget allocation since M&E activities need proper finances. Finally, stakeholder engagement contributes to project success because of increasing participation, ownership, responsiveness, and sustainability of project results.

One should note that top management support turned out to be the key condition that improves the impact of M&E practices on project success. The results of moderation analysis revealed that top management support strengthened the relationship between M&E planning, technical skill and staffing, stakeholder engagement, and project success. This means that M&E practices become more efficient when top management provides direction, resources, encourages accountability, and uses M&E findings. In selected NGOs, such a kind of support turns out to be an organizational condition which helps to turn M&E into the tool for improving project performance.

However, it should be said that top management support did not strengthen the relationship between M&E budget allocation and project success. It can be explained by the fact that budget availability becomes more effective when the money is properly planned, released, and directly related to M&E activities.

5.3 Conclusion

This paper has established that the monitoring and evaluation practices constitute one of the most useful institutional mechanisms of achieving success of projects implemented in selected NGOs in Addis Ababa. However, the more general conclusion is that having M&E systems in place does not mean the guaranteed success of the projects because their effectiveness depends on whether M&E processes are well-planned, staffed, funded, managed, and employed for making decisions about the project.

It has been demonstrated that M&E planning, development of technical skills and expertise, budget allocation, and engagement of all the relevant parties into the process positively influence the success of projects. These results confirm Results-Based Management theory according to which organizational performance increases when organizations pay attention to their results, evidence, and continuous learning. The conclusions made in this paper also support Utilization-Focused Evaluation theory according to which the usefulness of M&E practice depends on whether its findings are used by project managers and other decision-makers. Hence, project success is not achieved as a result of collecting information and creating reports and measuring certain indicators but as a result of employing this information for improving project implementation and coping with challenges.

One of the most interesting conclusions made during the course of this research is that top management support acts as an institutional factor that makes M&E practices more valuable. In particular, senior managers have an opportunity to allocate resources, promote accountability, involve staff members in the process of evaluation, and use M&E findings for making project-related decisions. It means that when top management treats M&E as a strategic management function rather than just a compliance activity, M&E planning, development of technical capacities, and stakeholder engagement become more valuable. This conclusion confirms the Resource-Based View of the organization, which argues that internal organizational capabilities are valuable only when they are properly managed and coordinated.

Furthermore, it has been established that the budget plays an instrumental role in supporting the project success directly while the impact of the leader's support on the budget-success relation is not statistically significant. Hence, it means that funding for M&E activities is necessary, but its contribution depends mainly on whether these funds are available and allocated to the right M&E purposes. In general, the conclusions made during the course of this research show that the project success in NGOs is achieved not only through technical M&E infrastructure but through a leadership culture. For NGOs in Addis Ababa and elsewhere, improvement of M&E systems and commitment of executives to these systems can be treated as two sides of one coin.

5.4 Theoretical implication

- Planning, technical expertise and personnel, budget allocation, stakeholder participation, and top management support all play a significant role in the direct relationship between M&E practices and project performance. The research's conclusions align with previous conceptual frameworks that demonstrate how these characteristics serve as distinct but related components that propel gains in development project performance. (Atkinson, 1999; Shenhar et al., 2001; Ika, 2009).
- The research shows that top management support acts as a strong moderator between M&E practices and project success. This finding adds to the existing body of knowledge by showing that leadership commitment plays a critical role in enhancing the impact of M&E dimensions. The research shows that managerial support enables organizations to develop their strategic planning and resource allocation and stakeholder engagement processes which results in improved project outcomes (Kerzner, 2003; Kusek & Rist, 2004; Mackay, 2007).
- The research shows that M&E practices function as strategic drivers of project success because they serve more than basic compliance requirements. The project success multidimensional framework which includes accountability, learning, and sustainability extends beyond traditional success measures of cost, time, and quality (Atkinson, 1999; Belcher & Palenberg, 2018).

5.5 Practical Implication

- The research established a substantial moderating relationship between M&E practices and

project success which proves that top management support enhances these two factors. NGOs should obtain leadership commitment to achieve maximum efficiency from their M&E systems (Naidoo, 2011; Gorfu, 2024; Shiferaw, 2024).

- Organizations need to ensure that adequate financial resources are allocated to M&E activities while also investing in skilled personnel and structured planning approaches. Organizations need to update their M&E practices because this process helps them maintain operational efficiency while enabling access to vital current data which can be used for decision-making (Gudda, 2011; IFRC, 2011; Kissi et al., 2019).
- The research established that M&E practices determine performance results while top management support increases this relationship, which provides resource-limited NGO practitioners with practical benefits. Organizations that enhance their M&E systems together with their leadership capabilities will produce better outcomes that prioritize the needs of people. (Estrella, 2000; Workneh & Aga, 2022; Uwera & Wanjiku, 2023).
- The practical application of this concept requires NGOs to establish M&E as a fundamental part of their organizational culture, which should include active stakeholder engagement and effective management through their leaders. The proposed actions will enhance project execution while simultaneously improving accountability and sustainability in all development projects (OECD, 2002; UNDP, 2009).

5.6 Recommendations

The study findings lead to multiple recommendations which will improve monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices and help non-governmental organizations achieve their project goals:

- **Strengthen M&E Planning:** Non-governmental organization executive board members, project managers, and M&E officers should develop an M&E plan before starting the project implementation. M&E plans should clearly articulate project objectives, indicators, reporting period, people responsible, and feedback process. Improved M&E planning can help organizations to better track project progress, identify implementation gaps, improve project timeline efficiency, budget control, and achieve planned objectives.
- **Invest in Technical Skills and Staffing:** NGOs should have competent personnel in M&E units with appropriate skills in data collection, data analysis, reporting, and digital M&E tools usage. NGOs' country directors, human resource management, and project managers should organize training, mentoring, and refreshment sessions for M&E officers and

project staff. It will enhance the accuracy of project data, evidence based decision making, and improve project quality and performance.

- **Ensure Adequate Budget Allocation for M&E:** NGOs should allocate adequate budget for M&E activities at the project planning phase. Project managers and finance officers should make sure that the M&E budget includes funding for data collection, field monitoring visits, staff training, reporting tools, stakeholders consultation and evaluation. Sufficient and timely financing of M&E activities can help to avoid implementation delays, weak follow-up, improve budget utilization and accountability to donors and beneficiaries).
- **Promote Stakeholder Engagement in M&E:** NGOs should engage beneficiaries, donors, project staff, local partners, and community representatives in monitoring and evaluation activities. Project managers and M&E officers should create feedback channels such as review meetings, beneficiaries feedback forms, field consultations, and stakeholders validation sessions. It will improve project ownership, responsiveness to community needs, increase beneficiary satisfaction and improve the sustainability of project outcomes.
- **Strengthen Top Management Support for M&E Use:** NGO executive boards, country directors, and senior managers should not perceive M&E as merely a reporting and compliance activity. Instead, they should establish regular strategic review meetings where M&E findings are reviewed and used for project decision-making. Senior management should analyze monitoring reports, approve corrective actions, allocate resources for urgent implementation gaps, and monitor follow-up by project teams. It will help to convert M&E information into practical decisions that will improve project performance, avoid implementation delays, and control project scope and cost.
- **Institutionalize M&E as a Core Management Function:** NGOs should institutionalize M&E into their project management systems and processes instead of treating M&E as an isolated administrative activity. Organizations can do this through developing shared M&E dashboards, linking M&E reports with management decisions, and obliging project teams to use information collected in monitoring reports in planning and implementation reviews. It will help to transform M&E into a practical learning tool that will enable adaptive management, donors' confidence, beneficiary satisfaction, and long-term project success.

5.7 Suggestions for Future Research

The research indicates essential findings about how monitoring and evaluation practices contribute to project success, but there's still the need for additional research in multiple domains.

- **Quality and relevance of M&E practices:** the study confirmed that M&E dimensions positively influence project success, but future research needs to pay more attention to the issues related to delivery of quality and relevant evaluation. In other words, the approach of creating M&E metrics and reporting system, as well as availability of M&E data for further use will impact organizations' performance results.
- **Geographical Scope:** The study results are applicable to NGOs operating in Addis Ababa but not to NGOs operating in other geographical locations. In other words, what was observed here is not necessarily applicable elsewhere. Future research in this regard should replicate the current model in different regions to see if the effect of M&E practices on project success is of similar nature.
- **Moderating Role of Leadership**: The study confirmed that top management support mainly determines the level of M&E practices' strength necessary to achieve project success. Nevertheless, additional research is needed to explore how the leadership teams demonstrate their commitment to this process. Comparative studies in this regard should focus on examining if leadership styles, governance arrangements, or organizational culture impact the moderating effect of M&E practices on project success. These factors are suggested because the effectiveness of top management support may depend on the internal organizational environment. Leadership style can influence how managers encourage the use of M&E findings, governance arrangements can determine whether M&E information is linked to accountability and decision-making, and organizational culture can shape whether staff use M&E for learning or only for compliance. Therefore, examining these factors in future studies would provide a deeper explanation of how top management support strengthens the relationship between M&E practices and project success
- **Stakeholder Engagement Dynamics**: The research confirmed that stakeholder engagement ensures positive outcomes, though future studies should explore how the different levels of stakeholder engagement affect project outcomes and performance. For example, it will be interesting to see if the projects involving participatory approaches, community-driven evaluation, and donor engagement, result in different project outcomes.

- **Longitudinal Studies:** studies should use longitudinal designs by measuring M&E practices, top management support, and project success at different stages of the project life cycle. This would help reduce common method bias because all variables would not be measured from the

same respondents at one point in time. It would also provide stronger evidence on how M&E practices and management support influence project success over time.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF COMMERCE

PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Dear Participants

The following questionnaire is crafted to gather data as part of the fulfillment of the MA Degree in Project Management in Addis Ababa University, School of Commerce, Department of Project Management with the topic "**The Effect Of monitoring and Evaluation on Project Success: The moderating role of top management support."** Therefore, I am respectfully asking you to participate in this research by answering all the questions honestly and clearly, which will assist me in achieving the objectives of the research. I will really appreciate your honesty and participation in answering the questions presented. The information that you provide me with will be solely for academic purposes, and your information will be handled in confidence, and will never be used for publicity

Should you need any clarifications regarding any of the statements contact me via the following Email addresses: oliyadjarso20@gmail.com

Thank you very much in advance for your cooperation.

Yours respectfully

Oliyad Jarso

Part I: Demographic Information

Please put "√" on the appropriate option

Name of the Organisation: _____

No.	Personal Details	Response	No.	Personal Details	Response
1.	**Sex**		**4**	**Years of Experience**	
	Male			Up to 5 years	
	Female			6 to 10 years	
2.	**Age**			11 to 15 years	
	21-25 Years			Above 15 years	
	26-30 Years		**5**	**Position**	
	31-38 Years			Project Manager	
	> 38 Years			Project coordinators	
3	**Educational Level**			Senior project staff	
	Diploma			M&E staff	
	Bachelor's			Other (Specify):	
	Masters or Above				

Part II: Measurement for Monitoring and Evaluation

The following items relate to your observation of the Monitoring and Evaluation in your organization. Please read through the lists in the table below and make a √ on a scale of one to five, where one means strongly disagree and five means strongly agree. Please select only one response per item.

NB: 1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree3=Neutral4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

1:	**M&E Planning**					
No.		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

1	M&E planning activity was completed before the implementation of the project					
2	M&E Plan is linked to the Strategic Plan and Work plan					
3	The time and effort given to M&E planning was adequate					
4	Project staffs and stakeholders are involved in designing and planning M&E activities.					
5	The M&E plan is shared among project staffs and stakeholders					
6	The M&E plan has been updated regularly					

7	The M&E plan has output, outcome and impact indicators to measure achievements					
2:	**Technical Skill & M&E Staffing**					
1	The project has staff well trained in M&E, data collection and analysis techniques.					
2	Project staff are well trained in M&E.					
3	Project M&E training and development is encouraged in the organization to improve expertise.					
4	The project has full-time M&E staff.					
5	The project has an adequate number of M&E staff.					
6	Project M&E staff has a clear job description.					
3:	**M&E Budget Allocation**					
1	The organization allocates sufficient funds for M&E activities.					
2	There is a separate budget allocation for M&E.					
3	The budgetary decisions are independent for the monitoring and evaluation unit.					
4	The organization ensures there is the timely provision of funds for M&E.					
5	Funds allocated are used for M&E activities only.					
6	Donors give due emphasis to make sure that applicants propose an adequate budget for M&E before approving any proposals for funding.					
4:	**Stakeholders Engagement**					

1	Key stakeholders were identified and defined clearly at the beginning of the project.					
2	Stakeholder analysis (interest and influence) conducted.					
3	Stakeholder engagement plan developed.					
4	Stakeholders are adequately involved in designing and planning M&E activities.					
5	Mechanisms (for example review meetings) for stakeholders to reflect on the project implementation were in place.					
6	Stakeholders feedback is sought during M&E processes.					
7	M&E results and findings are disseminated to thestakeholders.					

1	The project was completed on time					
2	The project was completed according to the planned budget					
3	The project met its intended goals and objectives					
4	The project meets the required scope and quality standards					
5	The target beneficiaries were satisfied with the results of the project					
6	The project has made a visible positive impact on the target beneficiaries					
7	Donors and other stakeholders was satisfied with the outcomes of the project					

Part III: Project Success

Source: Workneh, E. Y., & Aga, D. A. (2022).

Part IV: Top Management support

1	Top management is very capable of performing its task.					
2	Top management has much knowledge about the work that needs to be done.					
3	Top management has specialized capabilities that can increase our performance.					
4	Top management actions and behaviours are very consistent.					
5	Top management is well qualified.					
6	Top management has a strong sense of justice.					
7	I never have to wonder whether top management will stick to its word.					
8	Top management tries hard to be fair in dealing with others.					
9	Top management looks out for what is important to me.					
10	I feel confident about top management skills.					

Source: Zureehan, M. Z. F. M., & Lee, K. L. (2022).

Thank you for your time and response!

Appendix 2: Research Schedule

Research Schedule

The study is projected to be completed within a period of five months (20 weeks).

Phase	Activities	Duration
Phase I	Proposal submission and pilot testing	Weeks 1–4
Phase II	Data collection through structured questionnaires.	Weeks 5–8
Phase III	Data cleaning, SPSS coding and analysis.	Weeks 9–14
Phase IV	Drafting results, discussion, and full report writing	Weeks 15–18
Phase V	Final editing, proofreading, and Thesis Defense preparation	Weeks 19–20

Table 30 Time schedule for the study

Research Budget

The estimated budget for the research is approximately 14,950 ETB, covering operational costs and professional services.

Budget Category	Description	Estimate ETB
Stationery	Printing questionnaires and binding	2,500
Internet & Comm.	Data packages for online surveys and coordination	1,000
Transportation	Local travel to NGO hubs in Addis Ababa hub	3,000
Thesis Production	Final high-quality printing and hard binding	1,500
Contingency	15% allowance for unforeseen expenses	1,950
Total		**9,950**

Table 31 Budget required