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The impact of an institutionalised Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) system on accountability in the public sector

Applied Research Project

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The purpose of this research report is to investigate the effect of an institutionalised monitoring and evaluation system on accountability and whether it has made any difference in strengthening accountability and transparency in the public sector. The aim is to assist programme managers to develop and have in place proper M&E systems to influence performance improvement, ethical compliance, and accountability.

Design/methodology/approach - The research study uses a quantitative research method using descriptive analysis on continuous variables measuring central tendency and measures of dispersion. The statistical concept of hypothesis testing is used. The research details five a priori hypothesis and subjects the hypothesis to empirical testing. This is a process of testing whether the research claims are using simple evidence. The research is to establish whether M&E influences accountability. Several propositions that relate to M&E and accountability objectives in relation to the research questions were formulated with each question being a statement of empirical testing.

Findings – The analysis of the hypothesis indicated that the hypothesis was rejected on three of the hypothesis testing and accepted on two on the hypothesis testing. The three rejected are Measurement Objectives Developed (MOD), Formulation of Indicators (FOI) and Reporting (R) meant that there was not enough evidence to support the hypothesis.

Research limitations/implications – Only the quantitative method was used which is limiting. The limitation is minimised by testing the validity and reliability of internal consistency. The sample size was based only on the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and rural Development which poses as a limitation and might not provide a comprehensive spread of evidence to infare the results to the whole population. Convenience sampling was used, the disadvantage are that the available data can be misleading, there is limited specificity and difficult to replicate the findings.

Originality/value - The institutionalisation of M&E is the first step in assisting managers to improve performance and accountability. This involves the development of sustainable

functional M&E systems in the public sector where reliable information is collected and used constructively by managers and the M&E unit.

Key words – Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Institutionalisation of M&E, Accountability, Reporting, Formulation of Indicators, Development of measurement objectives, Monitoring and Evaluation of performance information

Paper type - Research paper

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system was never an institutionalised culture until recently in the public sector (Louw, 1998). It has grown at an exponential level in recent years; this growth has largely been attributed to external pressures from multilateral or unilateral donor agencies, organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) including the World Bank (WB) (Wongtschowski, Oonk & Mur, 2016). There was a dire need of these organisations to request evidence of progress, achievements and challenges from those nations that receive financial and non-financial aid from them. The aid agencies started incorporating monitoring and evaluation into their programme design. As a result, most governments have recognised the need to incorporate monitoring and evaluation at programme and project implementation into the different levels of government to enhance public sector performance. To date, M&E has been recognised as a prominent discipline, it is relatively new in South Africa as a field of study with over 15 years in existence (Louw, 1998).

The Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) are the two regulatory authorities, in the Presidency are tasked with monitoring and evaluating government performance in South Africa. The DPME is led by a Minister in the Presidency, and it has developed a government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (GWM&E), it is a policy framework developed to guide government institutions in creating an M&E system. The GWM&E framework aim is to institutionalise a monitoring and evaluation system within public sector departments which works in tandem

with other management systems such as planning and budgeting systems (The Presidency, 2007). The policy framework in practice, has always focused ^^^ on monitoring than evaluations. The DPME has since developed a National Evaluation System, (NES) which entails implementation of evaluations at national and provincial departments with special emphasis on competencies, training and the standards required to set up the NES. Through the establishment of this system, it's been over a decade and there is a noticeable acceleration in evaluations including the capacity and value of evaluations undertaken (Abrahams, 2015).

As a prerequisite to a functional M&E system, the Presidency since the year 2000 has pronounced that all national and provincial departments in the Republic of South Africa establish their own M&E units focusing on performance information (Abrahams, 2015).

Bamberger (2009) states that the initial functions of M&E before the reform, focused on the managerial and accountability elements of the M&E process. The reforms have instead not only emphasised accountability as a governance principle but most importantly as a policy dialogue issue where M&E operates as a governance tool focusing on accountability and transparency which ultimately enhances the voice of society (Bamberger, 2009).

The government has not been able to measure the success of its policies, programmes and projects that are meant to improve the quality of people's lives (Abrahams, 2015). The need to measure arose from the fact that government money is spent by government departments through their budget allocations and there has not been accountability and transparency in project implementation(The Presidency, 2007).

Accountability emanates from the relevant authority elected as a representative body for the entire process. At each stage of accountability, regular and comprehensive reports are required. In addition to the entire stages of accountability, an organisation should be able to provide an enabling environment to measure whether the recommendations from M&E are able to effect decision making and learning. The institution's culture and capacity play a pivotal role in the institutionalisation of M&E functions therefore it is crucial that managers invest in such areas.

The results-based and evidence-based monitoring and evaluation was illuminated by the New Public Management (NPM) to influence public management and especially policy development. M&E has now been regarded as a high-level management function to a point where it is a profession and offered as a field of study in higher education. This is done to build capacity in the knowledge of policy assessment and its effectiveness. Capacity is a key requirement in assessing evidence-based policy measurements in public institutions (Cloete, 2009). This has resulted in M&E becoming an important feature of good governance.

The question of how to properly institutionalise M&E in an existing bureaucracy could reveal pre-existing problems in the administration which could in turn lead to some major public sector administration reforms (Iyayi, 2014).This research is meant to investigate the effect of an institutionalised monitoring and evaluation system on accountability and whether it has made any difference in strengthening accountability and transparency in the public sector.

The research study is made up of three sections, the first section provides an overview on the problem statement, background of the problem, research objectives followed by the aim of the research and its significance. The second section presents the literature review, which is the application of prior research and definitions. The third section is about data collection and its analysis.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

There have been numerous studies that agree that there is a huge contribution of monitoring and evaluation to project success (Ika, Diallo & Thuillier, 2012; Hwang & Lim, 2013). This contribution is mainly towards good governance in ensuring efficiency and effective use of public funds, participation in policy formulation including accountability and transparency (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). M&E has been recognised as a field of study and as a result is known as a prominent discipline globally. Since the year 2000 The Presidency has pronounced that all national and provincial departments in the Republic of South Africa establish their own M&E units concentrating on non-financial performance information (Abrahams, 2015). This has resulted in the institutionalisation of M&E across departments.

The role of an M&E unit in a department is to institutionalise M&E tools and compliance requirements by developing strategic objectives, formulating indicators to measure performance, set up reporting systems, develop data collection and analysis tools and using M&E information to inform decision making (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

It is the responsibility of managers to cascade the M&E tools and compliance requirements to their level. Managers have the responsibility for fostering administrative M&E. Administrative M&E is a continuous monitoring function of assessing expected results and providing early warning signals to management (Kusek & Rist, 2004). This includes highlighting any unintended outcomes whether positive or negative emanating from the implementation plans and its activities. Managers should always be the first line of defence during implementation and the M&E unit will only come in at the tail end to assess performance.

There has been a gap in the system of not assisting managers to strengthen their M&E function. This is evidenced by the recurring adverse audit findings by the Auditor General of South Africa of mismanagement of public funds right from national departments, provincial departments including municipalities (Auditor-General of South Africa, (2011b). The key problems identified include project implementation failures, poor management of finances, nepotism, and corruption. The root cause of these problems as cited by Faurie & Poggenpoel (2016) and AGSA(2011b) is that there are layers to these problems that impede service delivery, which include but are not limited to incompetent public servant managers, lack of accountability, weak human resource practices and a lack of leadership.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

An M&E is a vital part when assessing the performance of programmes and projects. However, there is an unintended consequence of having a M&E unit in the department where monitoring, is assumed to be the responsibility of an M&E unit and not of managers. (The Presidency, 2014). Monitoring is a management function and embedded into a manager's daily functions (The Presidency, 2014). However, managers do not think they should monitor the implementation of their projects thinking it's the responsibility of an M&E unit. This then shifts accountability to monitoring units that must take the lead in responding

to implementation challenges. If the problem is not addressed programme managers or implementers of service delivery will not be accountable for the performance of programmes and projects, they are responsible for. This will result in weakened application and ethical compliance of M&E frameworks on governance and accountability. In trying to resolve the problem, the study will investigate the role of M&E strengthening good governance through the implementation of M&E in the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). Moreover, political influence in the public sector is a major deterrent to M&E, good governance and project implementation (Atieno, 2017). The model used by politicians is to somehow control projects in a “scare crow model” where politicians or people holding positions of power in an organisation dictate projects to be selected for implementation and ultimately results in projects that are not aligned to the implementation plans (Asaka, Aila, Odera & Abongo, 2012). There are limited studies on this topic hence it will be prudent to be explored further in the future. The report can add value to managers in all government departments in understanding that M&E is not just a function of the M&E unit but part of their function as well.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this research report is to investigate the effect of an institutionalised monitoring and evaluation system on accountability and whether it has made any difference in strengthening accountability and transparency in the public sector. The focus was at national Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). Employees of the DALRRD were chosen to be part of the sample study. The study and the problems identified will be restricted to DALRRD employees located in the National office in Pretoria. The findings of this study will only apply to M&E at the DALRRD.

The main participants to include in the study is the programme managers responsible for implementing and reporting departmental interventions. These are participants with ranks from level 11 to level 14. A quantitative approach has been selected because the analysis is not based on a judgemental approach but on facts and figures. The research study uses a quantitative research method using descriptive analysis on continuous variables measuring central tendency and measures of dispersion. The statistical concept of hypothesis testing is used.

The research constructs and research study questions are extracted from already existing elements or features of an institutionalised M&E system. The features are stated “A checklist of institutionalised M&E features” (Kimaro et al., 2018, p. 210). This means, the features have been tested for validity and reliability. Similarly features that address accountability in the public sector are stated by van Acker & Bouckaert, (2017) p. 9

1.4 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim is to assess whether the existence of an institutionalised M&E system influences accountability in the DALRRD and to further assist programme managers to develop and have in place proper M&E systems to influence performance improvement, ethical compliance, and accountability.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research study intends to assess the effect of an M&E system on improving accountability in the public sector. The following research objectives are identified:

- To measure whether the development of measurement objectives influence accountability.
- To assess whether the formulation of indicators impact accountability.
- To establish if data collection and analysis affect accountability in the SA public sector.
- To investigate the degree on which M&E information affect accountability.
- To assess if reporting on performance information and its results can influence accountability.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are as follows:

- Does the development of measurement objectives influence accountability?
- Does the formulation of indicators impact accountability?
- Does data collection affect accountability in the SA public sector?
- Does the use of M&E information affect accountability?
- Is reporting on performance information and its results capable of influencing accountability?

1.7 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The DALRRD will benefit from the study by realising that M&E improves decision making emanating from the M&E findings and recommendations. There will be transparency and accountability in the use of government resources. The department will get to know about the risks and develop early warning systems.

The study will also benefit managers by creating a perceived feeling of competency, innovation and creativity. There will be increased commitment of employees to their responsibilities. This research will particularly tackle these unexplored areas of monitoring and evaluation by programme managers for concurrent functions. It will add value to the idea of having a proactive approach to good governance and intentional project success.

The benefit for South Africa is that there will be improvement in the management of public finances, leaders will help responsible for the actions and will be made to account. There will be less misconduct and misappropriation of public funds and this will ultimately reduce costs associated with investigating misconduct cases. There will be improved performance and quality service delivery to the people of South Africa.

1.8 HYPOTHESIS TESTING AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

A research hypothesis of a quantitative study refers to a statement that speculate that there is a relationship between two or more variables of the research (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The research details five a priori hypothesis and subjects the hypothesis to empirical

testing. The hypothesis testing is conducted to test whether a hypothesis about a population parameter is true or not (Hartwick & Barki,1994).

1.9 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

A random sample is selected from the population and the hypothesis test is performed on the sample data. A null and alternative hypothesis is used for the study. A null hypothesis is a statement about the value of the population mean or proportion and an alternative hypothesis is a claim to be tested, it is a opposite to a null hypothesis (Hartwick & Barki,1994).

In this research the null hypothesis is denoted as H0 and the alternative hypothesis denoted as H1

H1 – Measurement objectives developed

H0: The development of measurement objectives has a positive and a significant impact on accountability;

H1: The development of measurement objectives does not have a positive and a significant impact on accountability.

H2 – Formulation of indicators

H0: The formulation of indicators has a positive and significant impact on accountability;

H1: The formulation of indicators does not have a positive and significant impact on accountability.

H3 – Data collection and analysis

H0: Data collection has a positive and significant impact on accountability;

H1: Data collection does not have a positive and significant impact on accountability.

H4 - Reporting

H0: Reporting has a positive and significant impact on accountability;

H1: Reporting does not have a positive and significant impact on accountability.

H5 – Monitoring and Evaluation information

H0: Monitoring and Evaluation of performance information has a positive and significant impact on accountability

H1: Monitoring and Evaluation of performance information does not have a positive and significant impact on accountability.

1.10 ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions are events or circumstances that are out of your control and if not considered the research would be irrelevant (Simon, 2011). In the research study, the following assumptions determined the success of the research study.

a) DALRRD employees are willing to participate in the study. The reason is that respondents that end up participating in the study are willing and able.
b) There is honesty in the responses provided by participants, the data collection tool has been developed in such a way that it requests participants to be as honest as possible
c) Information provided is reliable including available data, this will be tested through the internal consistency scale
d) Availability of relevant M&E frameworks and policy documents, all the data needed on M&E in the public sector particularly in DALRRD is available
e) Permission is provided to conduct the study in the department, a letter of approval has been sourced from the department to conduct the research

1.11 LIMITATIONS

Limitations are certain weaknesses encountered in the research study that are out of your control (Simon, 2011). In the research study, the following limitations determined the success of the research study.

a) Reaching the acceptable sample size after cleaning the data and eliminating errors. The limitation will be minimised by ensuring that the total sample size of clean data is 50 and above. According to Javali et al., (2011), the strength or significance of coefficient of internal consistency reliability such as the Cronbach alpha, are comparable and consistent at n=50 with any calculation of scale with five, four or three points. Therefore, any sample size 50 and above will be acceptable.

b) The sample size will be based only on the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and rural Development which poses as a limitation and might not provide a comprehensive spread of evidence to infare the results to the whole population. The acceptable sample size as indicated above will be used as well as the right number of calculation scale.
c) Convenience sampling was used, the disadvantage are that the available data can be misleading, there is limited specificity and difficult to replicate the findings.

1.12 DELIMITATIONS

Delimitations is based on defining the boundaries as well as detailing the characteristics that limit the scope of the research study (Simon, 2011). Unlike limitation and assumptions, the researcher is in control of delimitation. In the research study, the following delimitations determined the success of the research study.

a) Employees of the DALRRD were deliberately chosen to be part of the sample study. The DALRRD is a concurrent function, meaning its functions are shared between provincial and national. Functions such as education, social welfare, agriculture, housing are shared at provincial and national level. Therefore, the implementation of policy making, M&E and legislation happen both at provincial and national. The DALRRD is at national and the reason it was chosen is because Monitoring and Evaluation systems are not at the same level across all provinces even across all national departments. The DPME has set out policy frameworks and guidelines however, its implementation may be at varying levels across because of leadership, its institutionalisation, and many other factors. The focus was at national and particularly the DALRRD. The study and the problems identified will be restricted to DALRRD employees located in the National office in Pretoria. The type of vigour, coordination, or strength an M&E system has at National, it affects the lower levels such as Provincial and even local government. The findings of this study will only apply to M&E at the DALRRD. This approach also assists in limiting the scope to give a philosophical framework.
b) The main participants to include in the study is the programme managers in the department responsible for implementing and reporting departmental interventions assigned to them according to the Annual Performance Plan. These are participants with ranks from level 11 to level 14. However the participants have

been extended to include level 10 and below because it would be interesting to get a wholistic understanding of whether the department has really institutionalised M&E, that can only be known when all ranks are involved in expressing their opinion in the department.

c) A quantitative approach has been selected because the analysis is not based on a judgemental approach but on facts and figures. Qualitative methods can be very subjective. Findings emanating from this study may also be used by other organisation to strengthen their M&E systems.

d) The research constructs were based on the hypothesis and research study questions emanating from already existing elements or features of an institutionalised M&E system. The features are stated "A checklist of institutionalised M&E features" (Kimaro et al., 2018, p. 210). This means, the features have been tested for validity and reliability. Similarly features that address accountability in the public sector are stated by van Acker & Bouckaert, (2017) p. 9

e) The research hypothesis of a quantitative study is used which refers to a statement that speculate that there is a relationship between two or more variables of the research (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). In the study, there are five constructs derived and it is speculated that all five constructs have a relationship or positive impact on accountability.

1.13 CONCLUSION

The study will contribute to literature by looking at how to bring about positive change towards reinforcing the important role of M&E by programme managers and to further demystify the perceived understanding that M&E is the responsibility of an M&E unit and has little to do with programme managers. Such a reinforcement will eliminate a lot of malicious compliance by managers and will assist in inculcating the culture of ethical compliance.

1.14 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 contains the background, research problem, purpose, aim, research objectives, research questions and the significance of the study. There is also limitations and delimitations while Chapter 2 is a review of the literature, conceptualisation of M&E in South

Africa, strengthening of government performance through M&E. Chapter 3 contains the methodology section

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section is looking at the in-depth understanding of the research topic. Past and current scholar articles and other sources are used. A literature review can be defined as a process of reading and understanding published background information and its relevance to the research topic in question (Bless et al, 2006). Critical examination of primary and secondary data will be done. This section will explain how the concept of M&E was introduced including an overview of M&E and good governance. It's important to also look at implementation of M&E within the DALRRD which is meant to improve good governance with accountability as one of the key elements of good governance. The literature review will also provide an indication of how a Monitoring and Evaluation System is institutionalised.

Coming from the premise that M&E has been recognised as a prominent discipline and that it is relatively new in South Africa as a field of study with over 15 years in existence (Louw, 1998). It is not a surprise that there is little to no empirical work available on the problem of the study. The problem that has been identified in the study has come about as an unintended consequence therefore might never have been recognised by researchers to be an existing and prominent challenge that could arise in setting up an M&E system.

According to Kusek & Rist (2004), an M&E system is a public management tool meant to track continuous progress to demonstrate the impact of a given project, programme or policy to decision makers. Literature review indicates that there has been poor performance of projects and programmes, regardless of the right technologies and funding supporting implementation, according to Hardlife & Zhou (1997), it could be because there has been failure to recognise the complementarities amongst M&E as a management function, funding and technologies. The management problem of thinking that M&E is the work on an M&E unit and not that of a manager has worsened over the years and negatively affected performance of policies, programmes and projects (Sivagnanasothy, 2007). It has been

further argued by the same author Sivagnanasothy (2007) that looking at Sri Lanka M&E system, it is widely accepted that M&E is a fundamental management tool and that poor performance has been as a result of management lapses. The authors in their case study by Hardlife & Zou (1997) agree with Sivagnanasothy, (2007) that there is a weakness by managers, where insufficient attention is given to the monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes during implementation. This is because monitoring and evaluation is conducted late way after implementation and therefore cannot contribute to strategic decision-making (Hardlife & Zhou, 1997).

In their article Cavill & Sohail (2007), it presents a conceptual framework for exploring International Non-Government Organisations (INGO). It is based on information gathered through literature review and semi-structured interviews. The authors found out from the 20 UK-based INGOs interviewed, that they use the M&E system as a quality assurance mechanism to achieve accountability. However, it has been noticed that this kind of accountability does not really enable INGOs to improve performance because for the M&E system to be effective and impact accountability, there are number of mechanisms that should be in place such as transparency, ethical compliance by managers including their role in using M&E findings to improve programme and project performance (Cavallin & Sohail, 2007).

It is further exemplified by Wongtschowski et al. (2016) in their working paper on “monitoring and evaluation for accountability and learning” that M&E systems that are institutionalised in close consultations with programme managers and other role players can improve performance. Therefore, that is why it is important for managers to take responsibility and be involved in the formulation of indicators in addition to data collection and analysis, the use of M&E data as well as reporting. According to Wongtschowski et al. (2016) managers do not consider M&E as a management tool and therefore a management function. Kusek and Rist (2004), adds on to say, managers consider an M&E function to be a duplicate of efforts, bureaucratic, very expensive and time-consuming exercise. Furthermore, Kusek and Rist (2004) indicates that consequence for bad performance by management is rare let alone incentives for good performance.

According to Wongtschowski et al. (2016) M&E systems that are well designed and implemented, are difficult to find. Managers need to first understand their role and how they contribute to good governance using the M&E system.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF M&E IN SOUTH AFRICA

The concept of M&E was introduced already early 1995 through the White Paper on Transformation in the Public Service. National departments and provincial counterparts had to come up with strategies tailored to encourage continuous performance improvement in the quality of service delivery (Goldman *et* al. 2014).

As indicated in the introduction, there were external pressures from multilateral and unilateral donor agencies. Organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) including the World Bank had the need to request evidence on programme and project performance. The aid agencies started incorporating monitoring and evaluation into their programme designs. As a result, most governments have recognised the need to incorporate monitoring and evaluation at programme and project implementation to enhance public sector performance.

Throughout the years to date, M&E has developed considerably, with the DPME as the custodian for M&E and planning. These developments were done with the purpose of promoting and fostering good governance (Abrahams, 2015). According to The Presidency, (2014), DPME developed a National Evaluation Policy with the aim of improving the following:

- policy and programme performance,
- accountability
- decision making and
- general knowledge for learning

According to Abrahams, (2015) an integrated M&E system was founded on an evidence-based philosophy, with the purpose to:

- improve the quality of government decision-making and

- the quality of implementation, outcomes and impacts in South Africa.

The most recent growth in M&E has been in governance (Mouton, 2010) and the ultimate aim is to see relevant and improved policies implemented including a responsive public service that provides high quality services to improve the quality of life for its citizens (Almqvist et al, 2013).

Proponents of an M&E System (M&ES) agree that enhancing the application of governance and accountability will improve service delivery outcomes in the public sector (Aucoin, 1990; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).Improved processes, policies and systems do not guarantee improved service delivery and accountability at the end (Ghobadian et al., 2009). It is in the application and ethical compliance of these legislation mandates that there is a chance to see progressive change. There has also been evidence that progress has been very slow, despite the good efforts and the kind of resources dedicated to such reforms (Ghobadian et al. 2009 and Lufunyo, 2013)

There is also another school of thought that has recognised that there are multiple actors involved in the production and provision of public goods, both the government from all spheres, business and non-government agencies (Lufunyo, 2013). This includes compliance to laws and regulations as well as having an influence in policy formulation reference. According to (Josh, 2017) the structures of accountability from all those actors who assist the government in the provision of public goods should be taken seriously, if not the market will be flooded actors who are unregulated providers and this poses a big threat to accountability and inclusion.

Political interference is also one other element affecting accountability and decision making. Political heads increasingly prioritise their own interests than those of the public (Lufunyo, 2013). In most cases political interests are not aligned to those of the public and the accountability agenda. The public has not gone without noticing this misalignment, hence there is this “unruly politics” where there is an increase in unruly and uncivil social action as a last resort by the desperate public (Joshi, 2017).

Leadership is another area that poses a challenge and has a huge influence in the performance of an organisation and the quality of public goods (Joshi, 2017). Leaders are the first line of defence when it comes to advocating the use of a results based Monitoring and Evaluation System (M&ES).

As indicated by (Faurie & Poggenpoel, 2016) public reform in South Africa and Africa at large has developed very slowly. According to Faurie & Poggenpoel, (2016) this is as a result of the developing country's attempt to introduce reforms that are specifically meant for developed countries. Introducing these universal reforms in developing countries, in some cases becomes a failure because some programmes and project designs are developed based on certain country specific demographics and culture. They may not be suitable in another developing country if the same programme and project designs are implemented without cultural and demographic considerations (Ohemeng,2010). Developing countries are driven by the informal economy with socio-economic and political environments that are skewed (Ohemeng,2010).

Based on the challenges above, according to Van de Walle, (2008) improving the performance of public institutions is not a clear process or there is no straight forward ideal benchmark. What works for a country may not work in some countries because of the dynamic social, economic, cultural and political environments that differ.

2.3 M&E SYSTEMS FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD

Introduction

This chapter will be looking at M&E systems from different parts of the world. The purpose is to critically compare the various M&E systems. Countries like Australia, Chile, Colombia, and the United States has been deemed successful government M&E Systems (Mackay, 2007). For the purpose of the study, Australia, Chile and Ghana will be assessed. There is a continuous struggle by countries to merge performance information and management decision making. To have performance information results incorporated in decision making, it depends on the level to which national planning and budgeting processes are done. Some countries monitor performance based on predetermined targets and plans and some

countries look at baseline performance or benchmarking (evaluations). Below we will compare and contrast such M&E systems.

Australia

Australia is one of the countries that pioneered the use of an M&E system as part of decision making. The Department of Finance are the leaders and set direction for the implementation of the government wide evaluation strategy. Government departments are expected to develop their own departmental guidelines on how they will conduct their M&E system. Evaluations are done every three to five years and submitted with annual portfolio of evidence source documents (Feridoun & Schick, 2006). The Department of Finance will then audit and assess the performance of government departments (Mackay, 2007).

The Australian government has always prioritised M&E to make sure that they support its institutionalisation financially, by building capacity as well as instilling good governance processes of accountability and transparency. Performance information results are published during budget allocations to influence decision making. Departments that are not performing are given less budget and the rest of the money is shifted to departments that are performing. This kind of systematic and detailed used of performance data is a conducive way of strengthening the M&E system and promoting accountability (Feridoun & Schick, 2006).

Chile

The government of Chile has the Ministry of Finance responsible for the government-wide M&E system. The ministry uses both annual predetermined targets as well as impact evaluations to influence decision making (Mackay, 2007). Its success of the M&E system can be attributed to good governance. Various instruments and methodologies are used perpetually such as stringent demand for reporting performance results consciously. Performance results are used during annual budgetary processes and various agents/departments are held accountable for non-performance (Almqvist et al., 2013). Furthermore, the ministry uses the same performance results to set planned indicators and targets for agents to enforce management improvement for the agencies and the ministry itself. The ministry has the responsibility to monitor the management improvement and ultimately hold the agencies accountable.

Ghana

In Ghana, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) is responsible for guiding the formulation of national development plans and the monitoring and evaluation in the country since 1997 (CLEAR, 2012b) This is an institution mandated by the Constitution to design, facilitate, and support M&E systems and processes (NDPC, 2009). An M&E unit has in recent years, been established in the Ministry of Finance (MoF). In their website MoF, (2023), it was further upgraded to Division status around 2016 for the purpose of strengthening and institutionalising M&E. This meant that the government of Ghana was decentralising by subdividing existing districts into three levels to further development. Each Division is required to be a pioneer in coordinating M&E activities for the purpose of strengthening their M&E system (MoF, 2023). M&E in Ghana has been widely recognised and accepted as a tool to assist in policy formulation development. Institutional arrangements, formulation of development plans by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) are some of the things put in place by the government that indicate how important M&E is. M&E has gradually been used as a strategic tool to promote good governance however, there has been glaring challenges on the quality, validity and reliability of information derived from monitoring and evaluation. This is due to budget allocated for M&E activities including capacity and weak political will. Despite all these challenges, the government of Ghana has made all efforts to strengthen government performance through establishing M&E systems that provide early warning signals to poor performance.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Based on what has been outline above, there has been an awakening created around the importance of having an M&E system and how it promotes good governance. Governments are confronted everyday with dissatisfied citizens who wants government to account on its budget spending. Improved processes, policies and systems do not guarantee improved service delivery and accountability at the end (Ghobadian et al. 2009). It is in the application and ethical compliance of these legislation mandates that there is a chance to see progressive change.

2.6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DALRRD)

Introduction

This section seeks to outline how monitoring and evaluation is conducted in the DALRRD. This is to give context in terms of the problem statement outlined and how the DALRRD is conducting M&E to improve good governance. Monitoring and evaluation processes within the department are outlined including a detailed explaination of how support to the department particularly the programme managers is provided so that they can perform administrative monitoring and evaluation and ultimately take accountability for performance results.

Monitoring in the DALRRD

The Directorate Monitoring is responsible for providing institutional monitoring and reporting support to the DALRRD. This Directorate does this by focusing its coordination of support to the DALRRD Strategic Plan (SP) and Annual Performance Plan (APP) implementation. It further supports the department to be empowered in administratively managing monitoring and reporting on other areas of performance that emerge during implementation of already tabled APP.

The institutional support that is provided includes:

- Promoting understanding and compliance to departmental institutional monitoring and reporting requirements;
- Facilitating awareness and necessary training towards monitoring requirements;
- Supporting planning and reporting champions in ensuring compliance to institutional requirements;
- Providing regular feedback on branch state of performance including raising early warning signals where there are challenges;
- Ensure that the department performance is accurately reflected in departmental performance reports;
- Coordinate and facilitate the process of performance auditing with Internal Audit and the Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA)
- Participate in departmental performance review sessions; and

- Provide support to other department programmes and oversight structures involved in performance information.

To enable an organisation to track progress on a continuous basis, the monitoring unit receives progress reports from line managers on the performance of projects. Monitoring assesses the information based on the agreed indicators in the strategic plans and annual performance plans. The indicators and the means of verification are predetermined and managers have to comply with the prescribed indicators, targets and evidence required. A performance report is generated by the Monitoring unit on the performance of the organisation indicating key challenges, reasons for non-achievement, planned actions and recommendations. It is this information from the performance report is reported to oversight structures that assist in decision making and their inputs further informs planning.

The monitoring unit, usually comes in at the tail end of implementation. In the process of implementation, it is the responsibility of the programme managers to track performance. Monitoring systems need to be put in place such as the development of monitoring plans, standard operating procedures as well as data collection and management tools.

Figure 1: Process of monitoring and reporting against APP targets in DALRRD



Source: DALRRD M&E guidelines, 2022

Evaluation in the DALRRD

The focus point in evaluation is the assessment of departmental interventions such a policy, programmes, or projects. The aim is to provide feedback to programme managers on the performance of departmental interventions. On an annual basis the Evaluation unit reviews the departmental evaluation plan which plans out what evaluations will be conducted and what kind of evaluation will be done. There are six types of evaluations which are usually performed on the programme managers' request or head of department. An evaluation could be an impact evaluation, outcome evaluation, economic, diagnostic, design, or implementation evaluation. All these types of evaluations have differing timing or duration in which they are conducted.

Figure 2: Evaluations in the DALRRD



Source: DALRRD M&E guidelines, 2022

2.7 CURRENT CHALLENGES AND DEBATES

The role of government is to provide a conducive environment for business to thrive as well as providing public goods and services to the public (Linna et al 2010). Government has various stakeholders with varied interest and with this there is a huge expectation to satisfy the needs of all, which can be such a daunting exercise in the absence of good governance (Mimba et al 2007). Good governance brings about efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources and enables the maximisation of those resources compared to the outputs achieved (Mihaiu, et al 2010). Efficiency in the use of resources in the public sector is one challenge (National Treasury; 2007). This tells us that the government needs to ensure that

it responds to its stakeholders in a way all their needs are met. For this to happen, government needs to ensure that there is public sector reform.

In the past decades government has been compelled to introduce change in the way they govern, such change is known as the New Public Management (NPM). The public sector has been struggling with inefficiencies, bureaucracy, and lack of effectiveness and the NPM has been a response to these accusations (Almqvist, 2013). The NPM is the traditional method of public administration, with the NPM it's a private business method that was introduced in the public sector because of distrust or low confidence in public sector accountability (Almqvist, 2013). The NPM focuses a lot on sophisticated private business accounting and managerial techniques, it's the new public sector management reform.

The introduction of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) and the Public Service Act is part of the NPM reform. These frameworks have assisted to strengthen controls over public expenditure and empower public sector managers (National Treasury; 2007). Policy initiatives and legal requirements have also been developed to strengthen controls including the integration of performance measurements and concepts from the Estimated National Expenditure (ENE).

Furthermore, leaders need to be accountable, according to Section 2 of the Constitution, in exercising their powers and the execution of their functions. Members of cabinet are accountable to Parliament as individuals and as a collective. Parliament should be provided with comprehensive and continuous reports regarding issues under their functions. The Executive council (MEC) belongs to a province and is accountable to the provincial legislature as stated in Section 133 of the constitution. Municipalities are also accountable under the Municipal Structures Act (1998).

The service delivery protests that have been taking place over the couple of years in South Africa are a sign of the public sector incapability's to adequately deal with problems in the public sector.

For the purpose of this research we seek to understand if there has been adequate improvements in accountability resulting from the key problems and various aspects

impeding service delivery since the dawn of the NPM which brought about the institutionalisation of a result based M&ES.

In conclusion, although all these challenges and problems contribute to poor service delivery. It is believed that leadership skills could be at the centre of the problems. It is suggested that, ineffective leadership is the major problem in the poor performance of the public sector in South Africa (Francis, 2013). The author adds that the problem of leadership is mainly caused by appointing incompetent senior officials coupled with the absence of accountability from the public sector leaders. Even though there is limited evidence of what really improves the performance of the public sector (Blum et al, 2012). The research is conducted to establish if the institutionalisation of M&ES could provide enough evidence on whether it has worked in improving the performance and accountability.

2.8 KEY DEFINITIONS

Monitoring and evaluation system

It should be known that monitoring can be differentiated from evaluation, they are just but two sides of the same coin, they are both important elements for the long-term development of plans and policy making (Gaader & Briceno, 2010). To provide context, monitoring can be defined as a management tool used to collect, analyse and report data on a continuous basis on inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts as well as external factors (Engela & Ajam, 2010). It is intended to track progress during implementation and provide feedback to decision makers, managers and policy makers. It is used as an early warning system to identify problems for remedial action.

On the other hand, Evaluation can be defined as a systematic and timebound exercise that provides reliable, useful, and credible information in answering targeted questions to inform decision making by managers, leaders and policy makers (Engela & Ajam, 2010). It's about assessing the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability of programmes or projects (Engela & Ajam, 2010). It can also assess if the underlying theories and assumptions are valid, assess what has worked and did not work during implementation. The results of evaluations are then used to provide policy makers, managers and decision

makers with feedback on cross cutting lessons and specific recommendations on whether there is a need to modify policies or any other strategic result framework.

Monitoring and Evaluation are intertwined and feed into each other. These definitions of monitoring and evaluation cannot be separated from each other but are defined separately for the purpose of providing context in the comparison of the two concepts (Kimaro, 2017). They are distinct and interrelated. In this context, we can talk of M&E as a system, together they are defined as a process were progress on predetermined indicators and what is achieved is assessed or measured for the relevant institution, project, or programme (Kimaro, 2017). Therefore, all this makes up a results based management tool or governance tool called the Monitoring and Evaluation System (M&ES).

According to Kusek & Rist, (2004) a results-based monitoring and evaluation system is a public management tool meant to assist decision makers and policy makers to track progress and demonstrate the impact of a given project, programme, or policy. An M&E system is defined by Ijeoma, (2014, p. 401) “as a set of planning, information gathering, synthesis, reflection and reporting process”.

Different authors define it as a combination of formal managerial functions such as plans, indicators, standards, management process, strategies, information systems, organisational structures as well as reporting lines and accountability relationships that enable government organisations and other institutions to implement their M&E functions effectively (Wongtschowski et al., 2016). All these formal managerial functions will determine if the feedback from M&E will assist in decision making, service delivery and learning. The elements are institutionalised and inculcated in the culture of the organisation.

In the context of this research, we shall adopt the definition made by Kusek & Rist (2004), that M&E system is a public management tool meant to track continuous progress to demonstrate the impact of a given project, programme or policy to decision makers.

It is important that the complementary element of M&E is demonstrated for providing context in demonstrating the exclusive definitions.

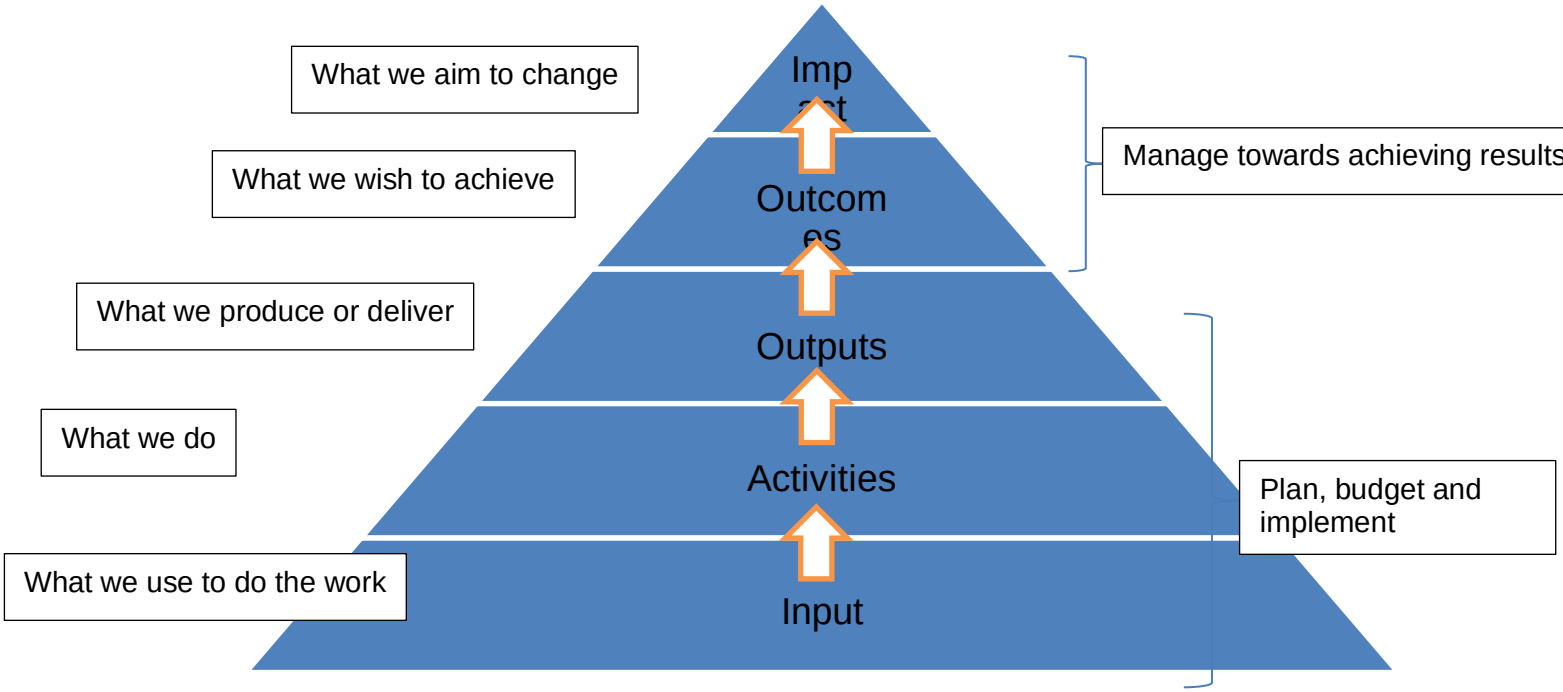
Table 1: Difference between M&E

Monitoring	Evaluation
Explains and clears up project, programme, and policy objectives	Assesses and gives reasons as to why predetermined objectives outcomes and results were achieved or not achieved.
Creates a link between activities, outputs, and outcomes to objectives	Analyse the causal contributions of activities and outputs to results
Derive performance indicators and targets from the set objectives	Assess the implementation process
Continuously collects data on the performance indicators and measures actual results based on set targets	Examines unintended results
An early warning system that alerts everyone of possible problems	Highlights lessons learned and major achievements. Provides specific recommendations for performance improvement

Source: (Rist and Kusek, 2004: 14)

It is also important to highlight the key concepts of M&E. The key concepts below are the most important in M&E and planning. Looking at the diagram 1 below, indicators can be developed at each level to measure progress of projects, programmes, and policies at each level of implementation. These key concepts are meant to guide organisations in developing their Strategic Plans (SP) and Annual Performance Plans (APP). These plans can be at activity level or output level and others could be related to socio economic challenges. The timelines could be more than 5 years, those are at outcome and impact level where it's all about managing results (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

Figure 3: Key concepts of M&E



Source: Strategic Planning, Annual Performance Plan Framework by The Presidency, 2014)

Institutionalised monitoring and evaluation

The institutionalisation of M&E refers to an M&E system where performance management and all the other formal managerial functions are conducted at institutional level for a sector, project or programme that is implemented within an organisation (Kimaro, 2017).

M&E is only institutionalised when it is used in the mainstream of performance management of an institutions (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2015). It helps in facilitating the analysis of predetermined objectives at all levels of performance including facilitating assessments, reporting of progress, tracking of performance information and its use. In essence, the M&ES encapsulates all performance elements and promotes the recognition of what performance management is all about in its entirety (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2015).

For an organisation to demonstrate the institutionalisation of the M&E system, certain elements should be in place. It should however be noted that in each public service institution, the extent of M&E institutionalisation varies, therefore to determine the full extent

of institutionalisation a checklist has been outlined on a table below based on the various elements. It is argued by Kimaro (2017), that what defines a successful and mainstreamed M&E system is one where good-quality performance information and evaluation findings are produced, and are used intensively at one or more stages of the policy cycle.

These elements are very importance because they form part of the data collection methodology. Each element will act as a construct wherein the hypothesis will be derived.

Table 2: Elements of an institutionalised M&ES

Elements of an institutionalised M&ES		M&E checklist
1	Developing measurement objectives	Annual performance plans and strategic plans informed by M&E information
		Annual performance plans cascaded from the strategic plans
		Institutional structures in place to support M&E functions
2	Formulation of indicators (or M&E system)	Linkage between M&E system, frameworks, and institutional plans
		Levels of implementation measured through various indicators
		Budget made available to support M&E functions and activities
		Policies, tools, and procedures should be available
3	Data collection and analysis	Data collection methods using the M&E plan
		Data collection on a continuous basis
		Evaluations conducted systematically and regularly
		IT infrastructure to support M&E data analysis available
4	Reporting	Non-financial performance reports generated from an M&E system backed by IT infrastructure

Elements of an institutionalised M&ES		M&E checklist
		Performance information findings disseminated to various stakeholders internally and externally
5	Use of M&E information	Institutional arrangements in place to enforce the use of M&E
		Consequence management in place for non-performance and rewards for good performance
		M&E findings to inform decision making especially for planning, budgeting, and implementation process improvement.
		Performance information informs the review of strategic plans.

Source: Kimaro, 2017 p.210

Accountability in the public sector

For a clear understanding of public sector accountability, we must understand it in the context of governance. Accountability has different meaning depending on the context. According to Smyth, (2012) accountability can be referred to as the display and actioning of good conduct. On the other hand, Bovens, (2009) argues that accountability is a social relationship where a person becomes obligated to explain and justify their conduct to a significant other. This is a rather specific and concise definition of accountability.

Other authors emphasise the need for control where the concept is related to some sort of power delegation from head of department to senior managers that will ensure a relationship between the head and the manager (Almqvist, et al., 2013).

Bargeris, (1998) and Mulgan, (2000) agree that the relationship of accountability can be expanded beyond what Almqvist et al., (2013) say above, they relate government accountability as the relationship between politicians and the people of the country including between politicians and public managers.

Deleon, (1998); Romzek and Dubnick, (1987) argues that accountability not only affects the power delegation of the head of department and the senior managers but also affects external stakeholders amongst the different levels of the organisation.

In the context of this research, public sector accountability can be explained as a governance tool where the public spending is open to public scrutiny and all performance information findings are available to the public for transparency unless there are compelling reasons stating otherwise (Mihaiu, et al., 2010).

Accountability can also be described as a virtue or a mechanism. As a virtue, it is explained as a sense of responsibility or ability to be transparent, fair, and act in an equitable way. It is thus concerned with the behaviour of individual actors (Bovens, 2005)

On the other hand, as a mechanism, accountability can also be understood as a social, political or administrative mechanism. An "institutional relation or arrangement in which an agent can be held to account by another agent or institution". Rather than being concerned with how individuals behave, it is concerned with the "ways in which institutional arrangements govern the behaviour of public agents" – and how these agents are held responsible once the procedure has been followed (Bovens, 2005)

The 5 elements of M&E that were converted into constructs are linked to the criterial of accountability because M&E is linked to an administrative mechanism where managers can be held to account by other agents or institutions for not reporting, collecting data, formulating indicators and not using M&E information accordingly including developing measurable objectives. Institutions such as the Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation and National Treasury hold government departments accountable for not complying to the 5 aspects of M&E. They are concerned with how institutional arrangements govern.

As articulated in the study, M&E systems are there to influence performance improvement, ethical compliance, and accountability. Therefore the 5 aspects can also be explained as a virtue which is the ability to be transparent, fair and act in a equitable way.

2.9 CONCLUSION

It goes without saying that there are varied views when it comes to key concepts to M&E and that monitoring, and evaluation are intertwined. It is crucial that an M&E system is developed in any organisation to promote good governance.

CHAPTER 3: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Introduction

This section on methodology will cover how data for the research study is collected, the tools that are used as well as the sample size. Reasons will be provided for the chosen sample size using existing theory including how the collected data will be analysed.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

The research study uses a quantitative research method using descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis is used for conducting statistical analysis because it helps in detecting outliers, assist in identifying linkages amongst variables as well as identifying typos and the distribution of data (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

A survey was used to collect data in the form of a questionnaire. The question was a five Likert scale, from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree” statements. A total of 36 statements were incorporated in the questionnaire from adopted literature scale statements, with six constructs namely, measurement objectives, formulation of indicators, reporting, monitoring and evaluation information, data collection and analysis as well as accountability. Data was collected among employees from DALRRD based on their consent.

The statistical concept of hypothesis testing is used. This is a process of testing whether the research claims are using simple evidence. The research claims will be supported by the results of the statistical process based on the analysis of sample evidence.

The research is to establish whether M&E contributes to accountability. Several propositions that relate to M&E and accountability objectives in relation to the research questions were formulated with each question being a statement of empirical testing called the hypothesis.

A statistical software tool was used called SPSS tool to analyse the data. The demographic profile, reliability and validity test, descriptive statistics and regression analysis were computed from the SPSS. A questionnaire was developed and its validity and reliability was tested using Cronbach alpha as a measurement method to test internal consistency of the reliability scale. This is done to reduce measurement errors and data inconsistencies.

3.3 SAMPLING

Sampling is a representation of a complete population through the selection of a portion of the population in a research area (Landreneau & Creek, 2009). Convenience sampling was used since the researcher is aware of the employees from DALRRD, Moreover the benefits of convenience sampling are the low costs involved, participants are readily available and efficient (Brewis, 2014). Previous studies were used to determine the sample size appropriate for this research. A sample size of n=70 is targeted, however according to Javali et al., (2011), the strength or significance of coefficient of internal consistency reliability such as the Cronbach alpha, are comparable and consistent at n=50 with any calculation of scale with five, four or three points. Therefore, any sample size 50 and above is acceptable. The sample covers only the employees of the DALRRD. A questionnaire was generated in line with the M&E system developed frameworks. The sample population collected is 57 and all respondents answered all questions. During cleaning of the data, no data was excluded.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are very important for any researcher. To collect data from respondents for research purposes without ethical clearance would compromise the work of the researcher. According to Haggerty (2004), ethical expectation in research is a level of conduct about a researcher's actions, that are either personal or professional in accordance with the participants' expectations of accountability. The biggest concern when it comes to ethical consideration is the element of informed consent (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). All

participants have been informed of what was asked, the end use of the data and any consequences that could arise from the research whether intended or unintended.

A questionnaire was developed as the data collection tool. The questionnaire was converted into an electronic data collection questionnaire. A link was sent informing potential participants explicitly of their willingness and right to participate or withdraw from the survey. They were granted freedom to participate or not to. It was explicitly stated that by participating in the study, they consent to participate in the study and that the researcher to use the survey results for the intended purpose of the research. The researcher's name, the purpose of the research, the information required and how it will be asked. This information was written and carefully worded on the first page of the questionnaire. The participants were given an option to opt out without any reason provided. It was made clear that the participants identity will be kept confidential. According to Miles & Hubernan, (1994) it is crucial that the questionnaire and the consent information is clear, well written with no ambiguity, if unclear it may result into weak consent agreement and poor quality of data collected. This can also raise feelings of mistrust and weak protection for both the researcher and the participant (Miles & Hubernan, 1994).

The research questions were free from self-identifying statements. There is a thin line between anonymity and confidentiality. According to Fleming, (2018), anonymity means the identity of the participant is not known by the researcher therefore anonymity could not be promised. The survey link was sent via email; however, the email addresses were blind copied. Only confidentiality was guaranteed. On the other hand, with confidentiality, the identity of the participant in known but kept confidential (Fleming, 2018). Anonymity and confidentiality are done for the protection of the participant, researcher and the institution involved from any possible harm. There was no conflict of interest with all the role players involved. The DALRRD gave consent to conducting the study. The fact that the researcher works for the department did not seem to be an issue. Consent was issued based on certain conditions outlined on the approval letter by the department.

The research ethics approval was done prior to data collection. The methodology, research problem and experience of the researcher was considered in preparation for ethics approval.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter is an extension of the previous chapter on the application of the research methodology and the design. The chapter focuses on data analysis and the results of the study. This chapter is made up of four sections namely, demographic profile, reliability and validity test, descriptive statistics, and the regression analysis. The demographic profile is the basic information about the demographics of the study, the reliability and validity were tested using the Cronbach alpha. The descriptive statistics looks at standard deviation and the means. Whereas the linear regression analysis addresses the hypothesis of the study among the relationships between the variables of interest of the study.

A manual questionnaire was converted into an electronic google form format for easy collection of data. The link https://forms.gle/gNMsU4x32ZwqwEBK6 was distributed via email to 69 DALRRD employees and only 57 responses were received. The link was sent on the 28 January 2023.

Case Processing Summary

Table 3: Sample size

		N	%
Cases	Valid	57	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	57	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

The sample population collected is 57 and all respondents answered all questions. During cleaning of the data, no data was excluded. Approval to conduct the research within the department was granted. All these are provided as supplementary files.

Demographic Profile

Gender

In the below Table 4 indicates the classification of information regarding the respondent's gender. A total of 54.4% (n=31) respondents indicated that they are female and a total of

45.6% (n=26) respondents indicated that they are male. Therefore, the respondents of this study was made up of more female than male respondents.

A1. Gender:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	26	45.6	45.6	45.6
	Female	31	54.4	54.4	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Gender

AGE

In the below Figure 4 indicates the classification of information regarding the respondent's age. A total of 43.9% (n=25) respondents indicated that they are between the age of 45-54 years, followed by 40.4% (n=23) are between the ages of 35-44 years, 12.3% (n=7) and lastly 3.5% (n=2) were between the ages of 25-34 years.

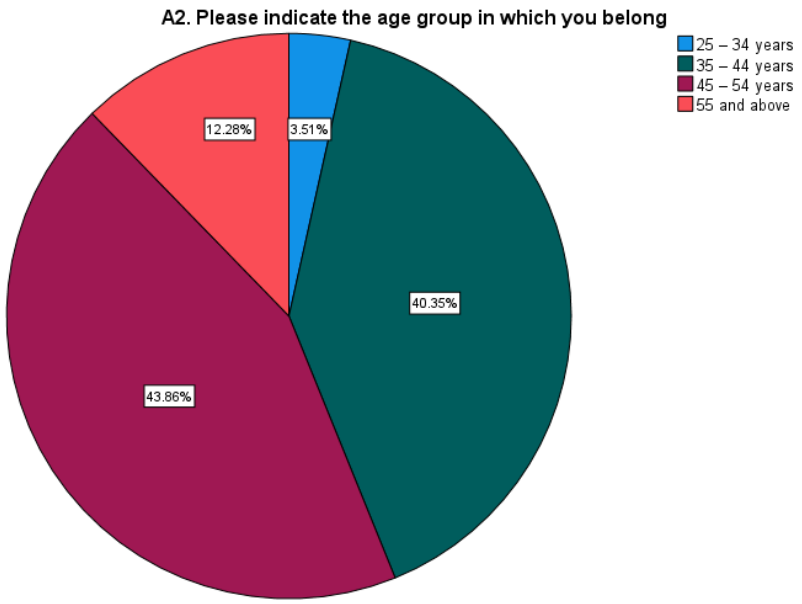


Figure 4: Distribution of the study respondents

EDUCATION

In the below Table 5 indicates the classification of information regarding the respondent's education. The largest portion of the sample indicated that 96.5% (n=55) respondents were postgraduate, and the rest of the sample constituted 1.8% (n=1) for both matric and those that were certificate/diploma holders.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Matric	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Certificate/Diploma	1	1.8	1.8	3.5
	Postgraduate	55	96.5	96.5	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Education distribution of the study

RANK

In the below Figure 5 indicates the classification of information regarding the respondent's job rank at DALRRD. The largest portion of the sample indicated that level 11 and 12 are the respondents with the highest percentage at 24.6% (n=14) followed by level 13 at 15.8% (n=9) and level 09 and 10 at 12.3%. Level 14 is at 3.5% (n=2). There are other ranks that were not catered for in the questionnaire which made up 7% (n=4) of the sample size.

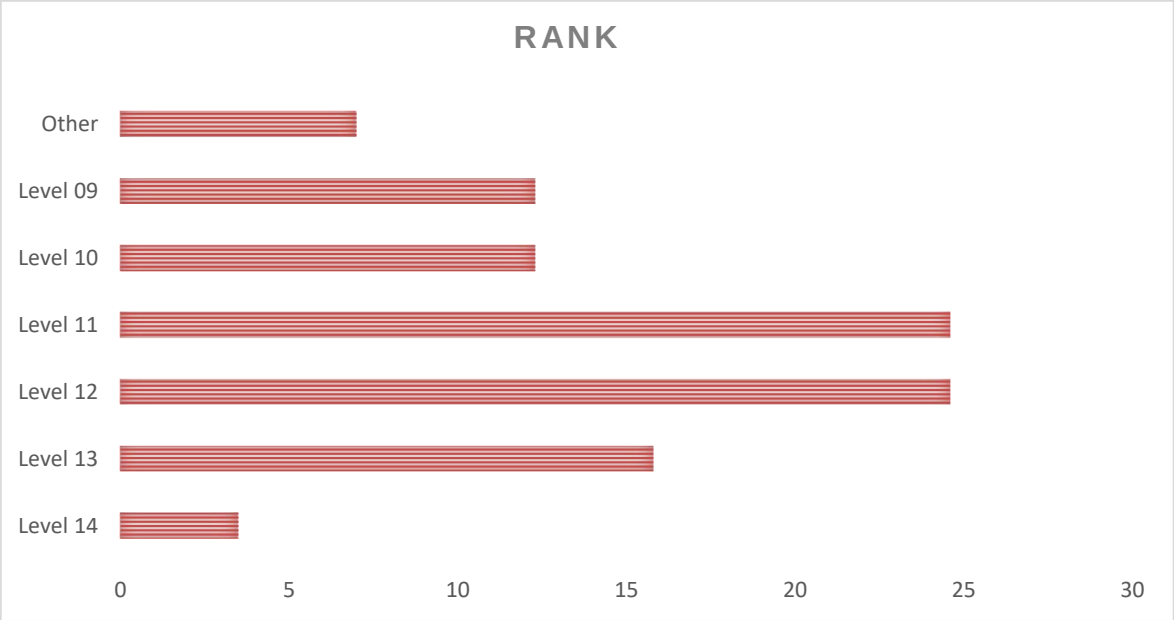


Figure 5: Rank of study respondents

LENGTH OF SERVICE

Figure 6 indicates the classification of information regarding the respondent's length of service. Most of the sample respondents have been in the public sector for 10 years and more indicating 71.9% (n=41), followed by 5 years- 10 years at 24.6% (n=14) and lastly at 1.8% (n=1) for both 6 months – 1 year and 1 year -2 years.

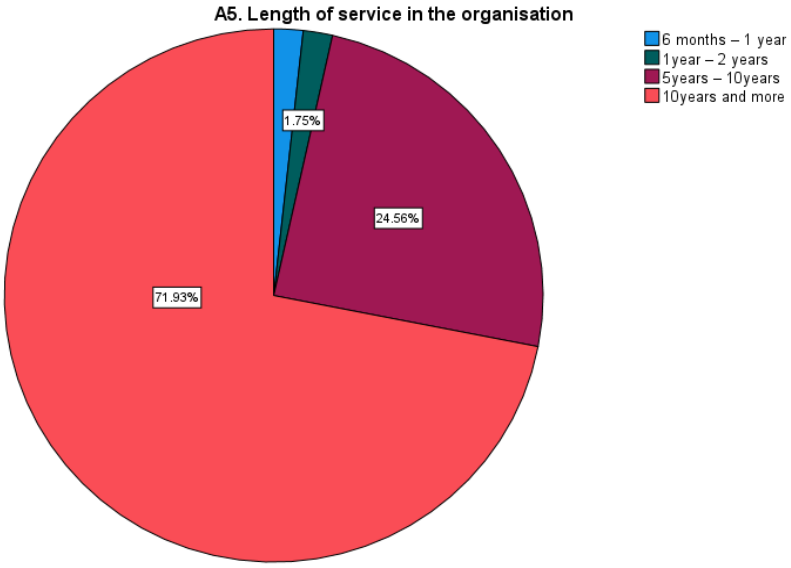


Figure 6: Length of service in the organisation

PROGRAMMES

In the below Figure 6 indicates the classification of information regarding the respondent's programmes that they fall under. This is like a division within the department based on whether they are providing technical or support services. Most of the respondents indicated that they fall under programme 1 at 38.6% (n=22) followed by programme 5 at 26.3% (n=15). Programme 2 is at 22.8% (n=13) and programme 3,6 and 4 are at 7% (n=4), 3.5% (n=2) and 1.8% (n=1) respectively.

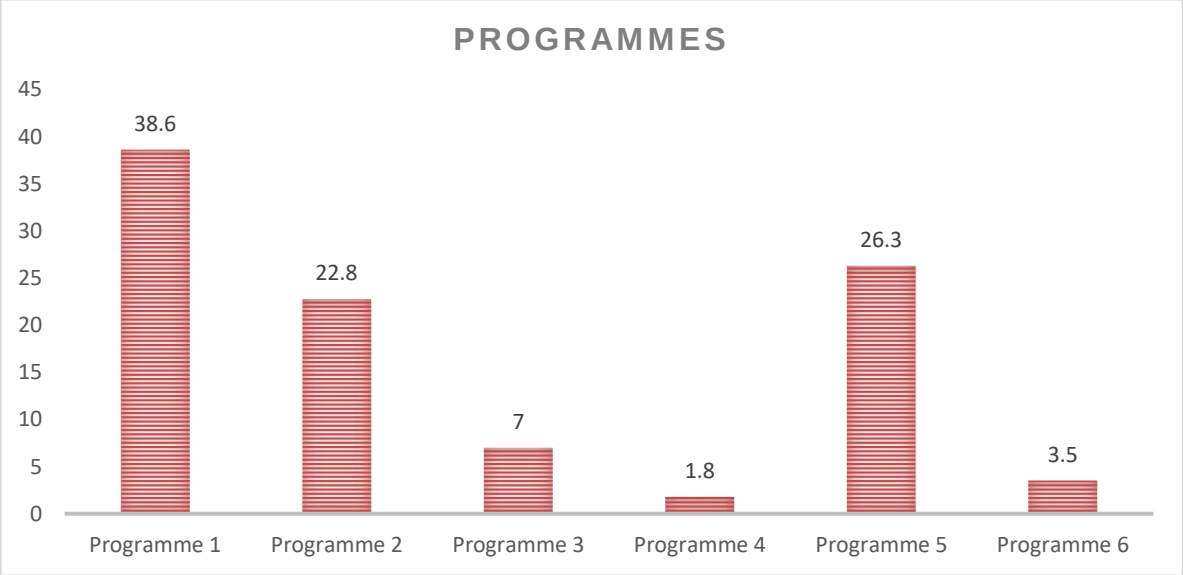


Figure 7: Rank of respondents in the workplace

3.5.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

In this section, it reports on the descriptive statistics which analyse the mean and standard deviation of the constructs understudy. The constructs are Measurement Objectives Developed (MOD), Formulation of Indicators (FOI), Reporting (R), Data collection and analysis (DCA), M&E Information (MAEI), Data collection and analysis (DCA) as well as Accountability (A). The analysis determines the level of respondents' agreement or disagreement of each construct. The measurement of central tendency for this study is determined by the computed mean. The mean value for all the questions in the tables below, Table 11,12,13,14 and 15 is between three and four, indicating that the majority of the respondents either had a neutral viewpoint ('3' on the Likert scale) or agreed ('4' on the Likert scale) with the assertions presented. The standard deviation numbers are used to calculate the variation of responses for each variable. Standard deviation values were computed to measure the variance of responses on each variable. The standard deviation above 2, indicates that there is an issue of outliers (Merza & Mohammed, 2021; Chuchu & Maziriri, 2020; Drost, 2011). It is advisable to have the standard deviation less than 1 but not more than 2. According to the Lee, (2015) when standard deviation is large above 2, this means the responses were varied, which makes the distribution values fall far from the mean of distribution and which was not the case for this study.

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
MOD1	3.68	.967	57
MOD2	4.12	.734	57
MOD3	3.58	.963	57
MOD4	3.63	.816	57

Table 6: Measurement Objectives Developed

Table 6 indicates the highest mean score of 4.12 (MOD2) and the lowest at 3.58 (MOD3). The highest and lowest mean give a range of 0,54. The highest mean score of 4.12 (MOD2) indicates that DALRRD respondents agree that the annual performance plans are cascaded from the strategic plans. Similarly, MOD3 with a mean score of 3.58, is the lowest mean score that indicates DALRRD colleagues agree that institutional structures are in place to support M&E functions.

Table 6 further indicates the standard deviations to be all below 2. The highest standard deviation at 0.967 (MOD1) and the lowest to be 0.734 (MOD2). This means that the data points are clustered around the mean and that there are no outliers.

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
FOI1	4.05	.766	57
FOI2	4.19	.667	57
FOI3	3.05	1.260	57
FOI4	3.72	1.082	57
FOI5	3.58	1.068	57
FOI6	3.42	.999	57

Table 7: Formulation of Indicators

Table 7 indicates the highest mean score of 4.19 (FOI2) and the lowest at 3.05 (FOI3). The highest and lowest mean give a range of 1.14. The highest mean score of 4.19 (FOI2) indicates that DALRRD respondents strongly agree that they have no doubt of what is expected of them regarding M&E functions. Similarly, FOI3 with a mean score of 3.05, is the lowest mean score that indicates DALRRD colleagues are neutral on whether there is little uncertainty in their job in relation to M&E functions.

Table 7 further indicates the standard deviations are all below 2. The highest standard deviation at 1.260 (FOI3) and the lowest to be 0.667 (FOI2). This means that the data points are clustered around the mean and that there are no outliers.

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
R1	2.77	1.118	57
R2	3.65	.916	57
R3	3.30	1.101	57
R4	3.39	1.048	57
R5	2.91	1.005	57

Table 8: Reporting

Table 8 indicates the highest mean score of 3.65 (R2) and the lowest at 2.77 (R1). The highest and lowest mean give a range of 0,88. The highest mean score of 3.65 (R2) indicates that DALRRD respondents agree that performance information findings are disseminated to various stakeholders internally and externally. Similarly, (R1) with a mean score of 2.77, is the lowest mean score that indicates DALRRD colleagues disagree that non-financial performance reports are generated from an M&E system backed by IT infrastructure.

Table 8 further indicates the standard deviations to be all below 2. The highest standard deviation at 1.118 (R1) and the lowest to be 0.916 (R2). This means that the data points are clustered around the mean and that there are no outliers.

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
DCA1	3.28	.978	57
DCA2	3.70	.963	57
DCA3	3.53	.984	57
DCA4	3.56	.926	57
DCA5	2.91	1.154	57

Table 9: Data collection analysis

Table 9 indicates the highest mean score of 3.70 (DCA2) and the lowest at 2.91 (DCA5). The highest and lowest mean give a range of 0,79. The highest mean score of 3.70 (DCA2) indicates that DALRRD respondents agree that data collection is on a continuous basis. Similarly, (DCA5) with a mean score of 2.91, is the lowest mean score that indicates DALRRD colleagues disagree about the availability of IT infrastructure support for M&E data analysis.

Table 9 further indicates the standard deviations to be all below 2. The highest standard deviation at 1.154 (DCA5) and the lowest to be 0.926 (DCA4). This means that the data points are clustered around the mean and that there are no outliers.

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
MAEI1	3.58	1.051	57
MAEI2	2.33	1.244	57
MAEI3	2.67	1.185	57
MAEI4	3.00	1.180	57

MAEI5	3.49	1.120	57
MAEI6	3.25	1.214	57
MAEI7	3.46	1.135	57

Table 10: M&E information

Table 10 indicates the highest mean score of 3.58 (MAEI1) and the lowest at 2.33 (MAEI2). The highest and lowest mean give a range of 1.25. The highest mean score of 3.58 (MAEI1) indicates that DALRRD respondents agree that there are institutional arrangements in place to enforce the use of M&E in the organisation. Similarly, (MAEI2) with a mean score of 2.33, is the lowest mean score that indicates DALRRD colleagues disagree that the organisation has consequence management in place for non-performance.

Table 10 further indicates the standard deviations to be all below 2. The highest standard deviation at 1.244 (MAEI2) and the lowest to be 1.051 (MAEI1). This means that the data points are clustered around the mean and that there are no outliers.

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
A1	3.51	1.002	57
A2	3.11	.958	57
A3	4.25	.635	57
A4	3.77	1.035	57
A5	3.47	1.104	57
A6	3.33	1.107	57
A7	2.35	1.157	57
A8	3.93	1.050	57
A9	4.40	.821	57

Table 11: Accountability

Table 11 indicates the highest mean score of 4.40 (A9) and the lowest at 2.35 (A7). The highest and lowest mean give a range of 2.05. The highest mean score of 4.40 (A9) indicates that DALRRD respondents strongly agree that they are aware that monitoring and evaluation is an administrative function and not just the responsibility of M&E. Similarly, (A7) with a mean score of 2.35, is the lowest mean score that indicates that DALRRD colleagues disagree that there are sanctions or penalties for non-performance.

Table 11 further indicates the standard deviations to be all below 2. The highest standard deviation at 1.157 (A7) and the lowest to be 0.635 (A3). This means that the data points are clustered around the mean and that there are no outliers.

3.5.2 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY TEST

To determine the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, Cronbach alpha is widely used as a tool to measure the internal consistency reliability of scale (Javali et al., 2011). The Cronbach alpha was generated using the SPSS software. Acceptable level of the Cronbach alpha is above 0.6 (Petrea, O'Donnell, Beiser, Habes, Aparicio, DeCarli, & Romero, 2020). It is also noted that according to Redda (2015), Cronbach alpha ranges between 0 to 1, where 0.6 is an acceptable scale of reliability and anything above 0.7 till 0.8 indicates a good reliability furthermore 0.8 to 0.95 reflects a very good reliability.

MOD

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.685	4

Table 12: Cronbach's Alpha - MOD

The construct on measurement of objectives developed, had four statements, and indicated a Cronbach alpha of 0.685. The coefficient is above 0.6 at 0.685 which indicates that it is acceptable and reliable. This demonstrates that the internal consistency of the statements are acceptable for MOD construct.

FOI

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.619	6

Table 13: Cronbach's Alpha - FOI

The construct on formulation of indicators, had six statements and gave a Cronbach alpha of 0.619. The coefficient is above 0.6 at 0.619 which indicates that it is acceptable and reliable. This demonstrates that the internal consistency of the statements are acceptable for this construct FOI.

Reporting

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.716	5

Table 14: Cronbach's Alpha - R

The construct on reporting, had five statements and obtained a Cronbach alpha of 0.716. The coefficient is above 0.6 at 0.716 which indicates that it is good and reliable. This demonstrates that the internal consistency of the statements pertaining to reporting are acceptable for this construct.

DCA

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.765	5

Table 15: Cronbach's Alpha - DCA

The construct on data collection and analysis, had five statements and gave a Cronbach alpha of 0.765. The coefficient is above 0.6 at 0.765 which indicates that it is good and reliable. This demonstrates that the internal consistency of the statements are acceptable for DCA construct.

M&EI

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.802	7

Table 16: Cronbach's Alpha - MAEI

The construct on monitoring and evaluation information, had seven statements and gave a Cronbach alpha of 0.802. The coefficient is above 0.6 at 0.802 which indicates that it is very good and reliable. This demonstrates that the internal consistency of the statements are very good for MAEI construct.

Accountability

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.771	9

Table 17: Cronbach's Alpha - A

The construct for accountability, had nine statements and gave a Cronbach alpha of 0.771. The coefficient is above 0.6 at 0.771 which indicates that it is good and reliable. This demonstrates that the internal consistency of the statements is good for this construct, and they are varied.

3.5.3 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical analysis outlined used the regression model and is meant to analyse the relationship between the independent variables and the depended variable. The statistical analysis is inferential meaning the results from the sample data analysis are generalized to a population with certain level of conviction. In this case, independent variables understudy were (MOD), (FOI), (R), (DCA) and (MAE) while the dependent variable was (A)

3.6 REGRESSION

Regression analysis results as they appear on the Coefficients table are analyzed. The significance level is 5%. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis the p-value is less than 0.05.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.889	.366		2.427	.019	.154	1.625					
	MOD	.152	.103	.161	1.469	.148	-.056	.359	.527	.202	.126	.612	1.634
	FOI	.148	.114	.145	1.293	.202	-.082	.377	.514	.178	.111	.582	1.719
	R	-.126	.121	-.151	-1.045	.301	-.368	.116	.452	-.145	-.090	.350	2.857
	DCA	.271	.137	.330	1.984	.053	-.003	.546	.628	.268	.170	.265	3.771
	MAE	.294	.072	.460	4.094	<.001	.150	.438	.712	.497	.351	.582	1.719

Table 18: Coefficients

H1 – Measurement Objectives Developed (MOD)

H0: The development of measurement objectives has a positive and a significant impact on accountability;

H1: The development of measurement objectives does not have a positive and a significant impact on accountability.

- MOD has a positive (β=0.161) and insignificant impact (t=1.469; p=0.148) on A, Literature states that for a relationship to be considered significant the p-value should be less than 0.5 and the t value should be above 1.96.
- The results therefore indicate that there is not sufficient evidence to support the claim that, the development of measurement objective has a positive and significant impact on accountability. Therefore, Ho was not accepted and thus rejected.

H2 – Formulation of Indicators (FOI)

H0: The formulation of indicators has a positive and significant impact on accountability;

H1: The formulation of indicators does not have a positive and significant impact on accountability.

- FOI has a positive (β=0.145) and insignificant impact (t=1.293; p=0.202) on A, according to literature for a relationship to be considered significant the p-value should be less than 0.5 and the t value should be above 1.96
- This means there is not sufficient evidence to support the claim that, the formulation of indicators has a positive and significant impact on accountability. Therefore, Ho was not accepted rather was rejected.

H3 – Data collection and analysis (DCA)

H0: Data collection has a positive and significant impact on accountability;

H1: Data collection does not have a positive and significant impact on accountability.

- DCA has a positive (β=0.330) and insignificant impact (t=1.984; p=0.053) on A. the support from literature is that for a relationship to be considered significant the p-value should be less than 0.5 and the t value should be above 1.96
- This means there is sufficient evidence to support the claim that, data collection has a positive and significant impact on accountability. Hence Ho was accepted and not rejected.

H4 - Reporting

H0: Reporting has a positive and significant impact on accountability;

H1: Reporting does not have a positive and significant impact on accountability.

- R has a negative (β=-0.151) and insignificant impact (t=-1.045; p=0.301) on A. Based on the standard acceptable thresholds it therefore means the relationship is negative between R and A.
    - This means there is no sufficient evidence to support the claim that, reporting has a positive and significant impact on accountability.

H5 – Monitoring and Evaluation information

H0: Monitoring and Evaluation of performance information has a positive and significant impact on accountability

H1: Monitoring and Evaluation of performance information does not have a positive and significant impact on accountability.

- MAE has a positive (β=0.460) and significant impact (t=4.094; p=0.001) on A. Literature states that for a relationship to be considered significant the p-value should be less than 0.5 and the t value should be above 1.96. Considering the outcome of the results there is sufficient evidence to support the claim that, monitoring and evaluation of performance information has a positive and significant impact on accountability. Hence Ho was accepted and not rejected.

3.7 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A total of 69 respondents took part in the survey, but only 57 respondents completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 82%. The results indicated an even spread in the demographic section under gender where 45.6% were male and 54.4% were female. Most respondents are at post graduate level at 96.5% and have been in the department for more than 10 years at 71.5%.

Descriptive data was analysed. It indicated that the mean value for all the questions are between the scale of three and four, indicating that the majority of the respondents either had a neutral viewpoint ('3' on the Likert scale) or agreed ('4' on the Likert scale) with the assertions presented. The standard deviation was less than two which meant that there were no outliers. Reliability and validity were tested. The Cronbach alpha were all above 0.6 for

the constructs which meant that there is internal consistency reliability of scale items understudy. The construct on the use of monitoring and evaluation information had a high Cronbach alpha of 0.802 which indicates that it is very good and reliable. This demonstrates that the internal consistency of the statements are very good for this construct.

The analysis of the inferential statistics indicated that the hypothesis was rejected on three of the hypothesis testing. The three rejected are MOD, FOI and R meant that there was not enough evidence to support the hypothesis. DCA and MAEI were accepted with enough evidence to prove the hypothesis. the support from literature is that for a relationship to be considered significant the p-value should be less than 0.5 and the t-value should be above 1.96. Based on the standard acceptable thresholds it therefore means the relationship between DCA and A as well as MAEI and A are positive.

This means that there is sufficient evidence to support the claim that, the use of monitoring and evaluation performance information has a positive and significant impact on accountability. The use of M&E information has a relationship and an impact on accountability. Similarly, data collection and analysis have a positive and significant impact on accountability. Therefore, we can conclude that the use of monitoring and evaluation performance information and data collection and analysis have a positive and significant impact on accountability from the sample data to the population at large. These constructs on the use of MAEI and DCA are very important variables to include in the regression model and the effect is statistically significant.

The analysis of the inferential statistics indicated that the hypothesis was rejected on three of the hypothesis testing. The three rejected are Measurement of Objectives Developed (MOD), Formulation of Indicators(FOI) and Reporting (R) meant that there was not enough evidence to support the hypothesis. This is supported by the explanation of what accountability is not. Bovens 2005 says, accountability is not about implementing quality controls or benchmarking, we cannot say by merely submitting reports and formulating indicators and measurable objectives through demonstrating transparency we can say we are accountable. Accountability is not just compliance in the form of responsiveness and participation. It is more than that.

3.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further studies need to be conducted to assess the relationship between M&E system and accountability. This is because not enough evidence was present to demonstrate the impact.
- Consequence management should be instituted within the department because accountability without consequence management, it is merely a responsibility. In the problem statement it is indicated that programme managers do not regard M&E as their responsibility. Should there be consequences for those managers who are not incorporating M&E as their daily management function the level of compliance would improve.
- The findings have demonstrated that the use of M&E information has a significant impact on accountability. It is recommended that M&E information should always be considered and even used to guide decision making including policy development.

3.9 CONCLUSION

The objectives of the study was to assess the effect of an M&E system on improving accountability in the public sector. Five research objectives were identified and only two were met or accepted and three were not met or rejected. Regarding the rejected objectives, we could conclude that the development of measurement objectives, formulation of indicators and reporting on performance information do not have an impact or do not influence accountability. Two of the five objectives were met, where there was sufficient evidence to prove that data collection and analysis including the use of M&E information have an impact or influence accountability.

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