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Assessing the Effect of Monitoring on Performance of the Parliamentary Service Commission of Kenya

Espirah, Joel Omuyoyi

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E-mail Address: ctyptjoel2015@gmail.com

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Abstract

Monitoring continues to maintain popularity as the strategic management process that enhances the performance of public and private organizations across the globe. The current study sought to assess the effect of monitoring on the performance of the Parliamentary Service Commission, Kenya. To achieve the study objective, the study targeted a sample of 71 employees/staff currently working at the Parliamentary Service Commission offices situated in Nairobi. The study adopted a descriptive research design and sought to identify the characteristics of monitoring executed at the Parliamentary Service Commission and its effect on performance. Data collected was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 program. Linear regression model was used to establish the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable and the strength upon which the independent variables affect the dependent variable. Effective monitoring was found to have a positive and strong correlation with performance ($r=0.551$; $p=0.025$). A statistically significant relationship was found between monitoring and performance of the Parliamentary Service Commission ($p=0.00$; $p<0.05$); this led to rejection of the null hypothesis. It was recommended that the government should put in place strict and objective measures of monitoring to continuously improve the performance of the Parliamentary Service Commission of Kenya.

Keywords: *Parliamentary Service Commission, monitoring, performance, Parliamentary Service Commission.*

1.0 Background to the Study

The importance of monitoring on performance is founded on its focus to assess institutional objectives in a bid to determine if they have been met or not (Alidrisi *et al.*, 2019; Tomović *et al.*, 2020). Karanja and Yusuf (2018) emphasized the need to monitor performance because it can make the difference between success and failure. Failure to execute monitoring denies organizations ways of knowing the levels of effectiveness of their staff, team, departments, or organizational processes. Monitoring involves a continuous function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and main stakeholders of an on-going development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives (Giannini, 2015). Lack of knowledge of how well or poor the staff are performing could blur organizations' corrective prospects such as enhancing employee efficiency, areas of improving input, and identifying people who are not meeting organizational objectives.

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In the most current literature, monitoring goes hand in hand with evaluation. Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed programme or policy and the aim is to determine relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability (Draghici, Popescu & Gogan, 2014). It should involve incorporation of lessons learned into decision-making process and also relates to the worth or significance of an activity, policy or programme. Extant models of monitoring for organizational performance tend to emphasize strategy, execution, systems, growth, and culture. Monitoring the flow of the aforementioned processes provides measures of performance that organizations use to determine whether an organization is progressing towards achieving the desired results or not. Based on the argument by Bauer *et al.* (2016), the results from monitoring and evaluation enable organizations to make the necessary adjustments as one way of ensuring an alignment with the strategies for ensuring organizational performance.

Parliament of Kenya just like other organizations has a vision in that being a public institution; it has a responsibility to ensure that it carries out its constitutional mandate of representation, legislative and oversight roles to the public. The role of monitoring the execution of its vision statement lies with the Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC) with assistance from the Board of Senior Management (BoSM) through staffs of Parliament (Espirah & Murigi, 2019). Being an institution full of elected leaders, it is expected to be the center of excellence in terms of public image and integrity. Recent reports have emerged painting a picture of an institution with serious challenges in public image, false financial claims and poor confidence rating in the ability to carry out the constitutional mandate. Currently the Kenyan Parliament has two parallel structures in one institution referred to as bicameral system.

Despite being a public institution, PSC's performance is a crucial aspect of service delivery because it serves the republic that is rapidly becoming oriented to quality service delivery. Barney and Hesterly (2006) averred that positive organization performance depends on effective execution and rationalization of the basic strategic components. Strategy execution comprises the actions of establishing policies and yearly objectives and assigning resources so that a formulated strategy can be accomplished. While executing strategy, Draghici *et al.* (2014) emphasized the need for consistent monitoring to ensure that the actions being undertaken contribute successfully to the overall strategic vision of the organization. An organization's performance usually has been considered to be the outcome of a strategic management process which contains all possible circumstances and activities, comprising the external environment, and internal factors, including an organization's size, age and structure, and strategy. The role of monitoring on performance cannot be understated because it provides the basis for assessing progress and executing the necessary corrective actions.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Performance for any organizations is a measure of how effective an entity is achieving its objectives (Andersen, 2013). Having a good strategy is also one of the important factors that enable organizations/firms to survive and go further. Kenyan Parliament has two Speakers and two Clerks, one for each house (GoK, 2010). Both houses are managed by Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC) which comprise of membership from both houses. The extent to which such a structure is supportive in strategy management process particularly to strategy execution has not been clarified. Recently the public has been treated to supremacy battles between the two houses with frequent formation of mediation committees to solve contentious issues. These disagreements create suspicion and may pose a big challenge in the quality of strategy execution.

Parliamentary institutions have not attracted much attention from the public management scholars in the same way that central executives and local authorities' organizations have. More importantly, academic literature on strategic management process on organization performance is rather silent within parliamentary institutions despite a significant modernization agenda affecting legislatures around the world (Espirah & Murigi, 2019). Being government institutions, past scholars might have chosen to avoid studying PSCs because of the assumption that they are not strictly oriented to performance. However, performance of all organizations: for profit and non-profit, public and private, religious and non-religious, is becoming a crucial element of consideration in service delivery.

Available studies do not clearly link the relationship between monitoring and performance because they concentrate only on one variable or different contexts. For example, a study by Amollo (2011) on Challenges of Strategy Implementation in PSC established that the organization structure at Parliamentary Service Commission was not fully aligned with the strategic plan that had been adopted. Guchu (2014) carried a study on Strategic Management Practices in Parliament of Kenya and established that the institution's performance is closely linked to the planning strategy. A study by Kimathi (2011) on Implementation of Strategic Change at Parliamentary Service Commission established that the strategies were executed in a planned manner with support from the Board of Senior Management which was the top decision-making organ. Thus, there has been very scanty research on the Kenyan Parliament on the linkage between monitoring and organizational performance. To this effect, this study endeavours to empirically examine relationship between strategy execution and organization performance of the Parliamentary Service Commission.

1.2 Research Objective

The aim of this study is to determine the effect of strategy execution on performance of Parliamentary Service Commission.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to existing theory for scholars who intend to carry out further research in this area. The scholars will find the research outcome useful as reference material. Further, the study reviews if the salient tactics, strategies and principles used by strategic managers for making a business stand out and overcome competition in the cutthroat environment hence high performance is influenced by proper planning, implementation and monitoring. To top managers as policy makers, the study is beneficial to the organizations so that they are able to understand the crucial role of proper planning, proper implementation and monitoring of strategic programs and their impact on organization performance.

2.0 Literature Review

The literature review presents a discussion of the theories that anchored the study and the review of past studies (empirical literature) related to the current topic. A conceptual framework that hypothesizes the relationship between monitoring and evaluation is also included.

2.1 Theoretical Review

The current study was anchored by two main theories, which included the resource-based view theory and the value chain analysis theory.

2.1.1 Resource Based View Theory

The theory was first published by Wernerfelt Birger (1984) in an article “Resource Based View of the Firm.” This theory looked at what an organization owns internally that can make it perform better than her competitors. Whereas some scholars were advocating for organization to look into the environment for sources of competitive advantage, Wernerfelt advocated for organizations to look at their internal intangible resources to gain and sustain competitive advantage (Wernerfelt 1995, Penrose, 1959). His argument was that, tangible resources such as equipment, land, and capital can be a source of competitive advantage but only in the short run, over time other firms can easily acquire similar resources from the market.

The intangible resources advocated in this theory include brand reputation, intellectual properties and trademarks. According to Wernerfelt (1995), for these internal resources to create competitive advantage they must have certain characteristics. The framework for identifying these attributes was proposed by (Barney, 1991). The framework advocated was referred to as VRIN framework which meant that the resource must be heterogeneous or unique to a particular organization, immobile, valuable, rare and not easily imitable. The proponents of this theory believe that an organization that is able to identify an internal resource that has the mentioned attributes can have sustained competitive advantage over its competitors resulting in superior performance. The work being performed is required to be evaluated based on the VRIN framework to help organizations monitor the progress in the achievement of results.

2.1.2 Value Chain Analysis Theory

Value Chain Analysis (VCA) was developed and published by Michael Porter in his book, “Competitive Advantage” in 1985 as a competitive strategy. Porter argued that an organization has to look at its processes and to seek to improve efficiency and effectiveness in order to improve organizational performance. In an organization, performance is measured both at individual and organizational level. On an individual level according to Campbell (1993) performance is what an organization hires one to do and do well, whereas Motowidlo, Borman, Schmit (1997) categorize individual performance into task performance and contextual performance.

In VCA Porter stressed the importance of an organization creating services and goods that have far greater value (McGuffog & Wadsley, 1999) than the cost of production by creating efficiency along the process chain. The process of transforming inputs into outputs to create value for customers is what is known as value chain (Hill & Jones, 2001) and are systematically interrelated (Sanchez & Heene, 2004). Combining great value and affordable price can be a source of competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is at the heart of strategic management. Parliamentary business consists of two main processes. The processes related to the core responsibility of MPs and staffs and processes related to Members and staff welfare. This theory is relevant to this study in that it helps to interrogate performance along the value chain of various processes in PSC which can result in necessary changes for improved performance. Value chain analysis theory provides for conducting monitoring at each point of the service delivery to ensure that actions are supporting goals at each point of the chain process. Inconsistencies that become evident in the monitoring process are addressed to ensure service delivery is not broken and that performance indicators are the main focus of the delivery process.

2.2 Empirical Review

It is the desire of management to realize organization's objectives as set out in planning documents such as strategic plans (Karanja & Yusuf, 2018). But it is suicidal for the organization to wait until the end of implementation to compare the actual achievements against the desired results. Managers cannot make any changes once results have been achieved, but they can factor the desired changes in the next set of plans. This becomes very expensive for the organization in the long run. The ideal situation is to put strategies in place to ensure that any deviation from the desired plan is detected and flagged out, analyzed and necessary corrective action taken (Giannini, 2015). This brings in the need to continuously monitor the progress and collect information which is evaluated and action taken. The question that managers need to ask themselves is, does monitoring enhance organization performance? Or what are the consequences of not monitoring on-going programs?

In a study done by Owour, Chepkuto, Tubey and Kuto (2012), on Constituency Development Funds (CDF), currently called National Government – Constituency Development Fund in Ainamoi Constituency (Kenya), they concluded that due to lack of monitoring and evaluation framework there is duplication of CDF projects and failure of completion of several others. This becomes wasteful because, public funds are not being efficiently utilized to improve the lives of the intended beneficiaries. It is observed that due to Official Secret Act, sharing of information is limited among project implementers, yet gathering information on ongoing programmes is at the core of M & E. The study concludes that lack of monitoring and evaluation (M & E) has a negative impact on CDF projects in Ainamoi Constituency.

Phiri (2015) conducted a study on influence of monitoring and evaluation on project performance. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation has a direct influence on performance. It simply states that monitoring, is basically 'watching over' the strategy as it is being implemented while evaluation is 'judging' performance in relation to set target. This means that it is only through monitoring and evaluation that performance can be assessed and corrections made to improve performance.

Issah (2016) conducted a study on the role of monitoring in promoting strategic management. This study concludes that monitoring has played a major role in the strategic management of The Royal Bank that has resulted in the continuous growth of the bank. Monitoring has been instrumental in producing the type of activities that deepen the ethos of strategic management such as accountability, transparency and learning. Thus, the study confirmed that monitoring is a crucial element in the performance of banking organizations. However, the study by Issah (2016) was not based on a public institution, prompting the need to test if the same effect could hold in a public organization such as the PSC.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework hypothesizes the relationship between the variables of the study. Figure 1 below shows a hypothesized relationship between monitoring and organizational performance of the Parliamentary Service Commission.

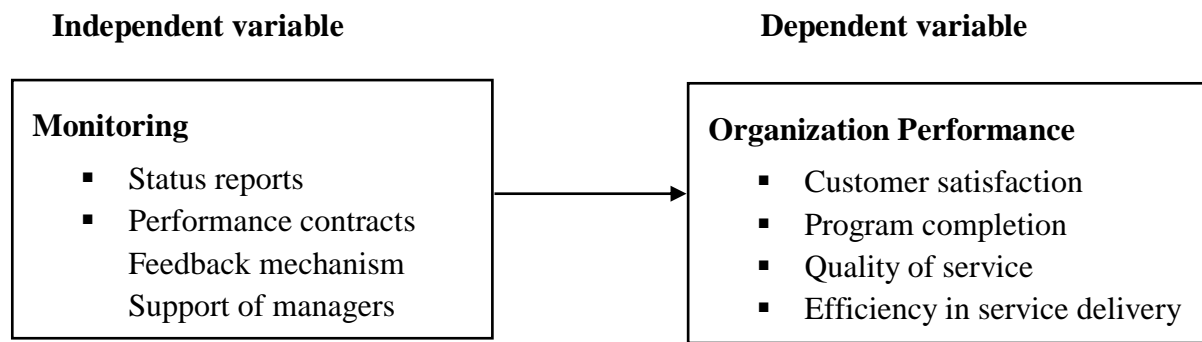


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

(Source: Author, 2022)

3.0 Methodology

The research design that was adopted for this study was descriptive research design. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), a descriptive research is concerned with the process of collecting information to answer questions on the present status of an occurrence. Kothari & Gaurav (2014) explain that a descriptive study gives a clear explanation of the characteristics of the population or situation being studied. The Target population of the study was obtained from parliamentary service commission offices situated in Nairobi. The target population was total of 71 employees/staff working in the organization

Table 1: Target Population

Category	Number	Percentage
Senior Management	8	12.6
Directors	17	23.9
Head of departments	21	28.5
Others Staff	25	35.0
Total	71	100

(Source: PSC 2018)

The questionnaires was administered to the respondents using the drop and pick method. The researcher made regular follow ups to remind the respondents to fill the questionnaires in order to minimize delays in data collection. Questionnaires have advantage over other instruments because they are cheap, easy to administer and most often have standard answers making it easy to compile data. Reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach’s Alpha with a target score of 0.70 and above. A prior test was done by giving the questionnaire to 7 suitably selected respondents to fill which is 10% of the population. The respondents were requested to evaluate the statement items for relevance, meaning and clarity. On the basis of their response, the instrument was adjusted appropriately before embarking on data collection.

A pilot study was conducted on 7 respondents which was 10% of the sample size. The 7 respondents chosen for pilot testing reduced the sample size from 71 to 64. The advantage of the study was to enable the researcher to foresee challenges in the questionnaire structure and flow, identify elements that can introduce bias and errors and from the feedback of the test, pinpoint areas of improvement in preparation for the actual survey.

Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the observation from the sample of the data collected. The study used Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) technique to analyze the degree of relation between independent (strategic planning, strategy execution and monitoring an evaluation) and dependent (performance) variables. The correlation coefficient enabled the researcher determine the magnitude and direction of the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable and the bigger the co-efficient, the stronger the association between the two variables. The correlation analysis was done by use of SPSS computer programme.

Linear regression model was used to establish the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable and the strength upon which the independent variables affect the dependent variable. Before carrying out of regression analyses, diagnostic tests associated with regression (Linearity Test and Normality Test) were conducted to investigate on the basic assumptions of multiple linear regressions.

A linear regression model $Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + e$ was created.

y = dependent variable (performance); B_0 = Constant term; B_1 = Coefficient of Independent Variable slope; X= Monitoring; ϵ = Stochastic Error Term

The ethical consideration of research that were taken into consideration included ensuring no harm to participants, respecting participants dignity, obtaining full consent from participants, protecting participants' privacy, avoiding deception or exaggeration and avoiding misleading information (ensuring honesty transparency in communication).

4.0 Findings and Discussion

Response rate and Reliability

A response rate of 81% was achieved. Out of the targeted 64 respondents that were targeted, only 52 of them successfully participated in the study. Reliability analysis for strategy execution was 0.913. According to Garson (2012), the computed Coefficient Alpha Value of > 0.7 is considered acceptable in the test of reliability.

Demographic Characteristics

Majority of the respondents 58% were male while 42% were female of the total respondents who participated in the study. This indicates that there are slightly more male employees than female in the parliamentary service commission. A large proportion of respondents 35.79 % had an experience of between 6–10 years; another proportion of 31.1% had worked with parliamentary service commission for between 11–15 years while 14.16% had worked for more than 15 years. Cumulatively 81.05% of the respondents had worked with parliamentary service commission for more than 5 years meaning they were competent to answer the questions on relationship between strategic management process and organization performance. 44.4% had undergraduate degrees, while those with postgraduate were 39.7% and diplomas only 15.9 %.

Descriptive Analysis

The researcher sought response from the respondents on the statements relating to monitoring on performance of Parliamentary Service Commission on the Likert scale of 1 to 5 Where: Where: 5= Strongly Agree; 4= Agree; 3= Neutral; 2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree. The outcome is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Monitoring in PSC

Statements	n	Mean	Std Deviation
All departments in PSC have service charters that spells out expected service standards	52	4.34	0.875
PSC departments hold frequent evaluation workshops to assess programs	52	4.08	0.903
PSC has adopted performance contracts for her employees	52	3.99	1.056
The monitoring function enjoys the support of senior managers in PSC	52	3.96	1.065
PSC has an elaborate customer satisfaction feedback system	52	4.00	0.929
Overall statistic		4.074	0.966

Source: (Survey data, 2019).

All departments in PSC have service charters that spells out expected service standards with a mean of 4.34 and standard deviation of 0.875, PSC departments hold frequent evaluation workshops to assess programs with a mean of 4.08 and standard deviation of 0.903, PSC has adopted performance contracts for her employees with a mean of 3.99 and standard deviation of 1.056, The monitoring function enjoys the support of senior managers in PSC with a mean of 3.96 and standard deviation of 1.065 and PSC has an elaborate customer satisfaction feedback system with a mean of 4.00 and standard deviation of 0.929.

The overall statistics of this section was a mean of 4.074 and standard deviation of 0.966 this indicating that monitoring is significant performance of Parliamentary Service Commission. The results are supported by a study done by Phiri (2015), Issah (2016), and Owuor *et al.* (2012), which concluded that monitoring and evaluation has a direct influence on performance. The study stated that monitoring, is basically ‘watching over’ the strategy as it is being implemented while evaluation is ‘judging’ performance in relation to set target. This means that it is only through monitoring and evaluation that performance can be assessed and corrections made to improve performance.

Inferential Analysis

Regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis, *monitoring does not significantly influence performance of Parliament Service Commission*. Before the analysis was carried out, diagnostic tests were conducted to investigate on the basic assumptions of multiple linear regressions. Linearity was confirmed using Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient ($r=0.551$; $p=0.00$) while normality was established using Kurtosis (-0.579) and Skewness (0.412).

The correlation between strategy execution and performance was strong and positive ($r=0.551$). The correlation is also significant ($p=0.025$; $p>0.05$). From the regression analysis, table 3 below was constructed. Monitoring had a positive correlation coefficient of 0.551 with a p-value of less than 0.05. The direct relationships between monitoring and performance were computed and the results used to develop table 3 below.

Table 3: Test of Direct Relationship Coefficient Table

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.346	-	-	3.84	0.181
	Monitoring	.537	.059	.541	1.88	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Parliament Service Commission

(Source: Survey data, 2019)

Using the figures in table 2 above, a predicative regression model was constructed in the form:
 Performance of PSC=2.346+ 0.537X+e.....(i)

Results from Table 3 shows that the coefficient of Monitoring was 0.537 with the t-statistic and corresponding p-value of 3.27 and 0.000 respectively. The coefficient of strategy execution was 0.537 showing that by holding other factors constant, a unit increase in monitoring would result in a 53.7% increase on the performance of the Parliamentary Service Commission. Thus, there is a direct relationship between monitoring and performance at Parliamentary Service Commission. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected at P <0.000 level of significance implying that monitoring has a significant influence on performance at Parliamentary Service Commission. The results are in agreement with the work done by Phiri (2015) who conducted a study on influence of monitoring and evaluation on project performance. The study concluded that monitoring and evaluation have a direct influence on performance, consistent with assertions by Issah (2016) and Alidrisi *et al.* (2019). The study stated that monitoring, is basically ‘watching over’ the strategy as it is being. This means that it is only through monitoring that performance can be assessed and corrections made to improve performance.

5.0 Conclusions

Monitoring is seen as a continuous function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and main stakeholders of an on-going development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives. The third objective was to assess effect of monitoring on performance of Parliamentary Service Commission. Findings from respondents indicate that monitoring has an effect on performance of Parliamentary Service Commission with an overall mean of 4.074 from descriptive analysis. The correlation coefficient was positive with $r = 0.551$ and the regression coefficient was .537. Finally, the hypothesis test concluded that monitoring has a significant influence on performance at Parliament Service Commission. The conclusions from the findings indicate that monitoring has an influence on organization performance. Hence, it is apparent that all the independent predictors have impact on organization performance at Parliamentary Service Commission.

6.0 Recommendations

The study findings showed that monitoring has a significant effect on the performance of the Parliamentary Service Commission. Thus, it is important for the government to institute not only strict, but also objective measures to monitor performance and make the necessary corrections to the service delivery processes. The importance of objective monitoring is that it could ensure continuous improvement in service delivery and eventual improvement in

performance (Alidrisi *et al.*, 2019; Owuor *et al.*, 2012). The PSC should ensure that service charters are effectively spelling out expected standards to guide the staff on how to offer gap-free services. Holding frequent evaluation workshops should be prioritized as a way of assessing programs and ensuring that the actions being undertaken are consistent with the overall strategic objectives. The top management team of the PSC should not only support the monitoring function, but also redesign the monitoring programs and adjust the indicators being evaluated to reflect the dynamics that characterize changing circumstances. Having an elaborate feedback system is a crucial basis of monitoring performance and ensuring that gaps are addressed timely to maintain performance.

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