ST. MARY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

FACTORS AFFECTING PROJECT PERORMANCE IN NGO'S IN THE CASE OF VETERINARES SANS FRONTIERES GERMANY (VSF GERMANY) ETHIOPIA

BY: DAGMAWIT ABRAHAM

JANUARY, 2025 ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES FACULTY OF BUSINESS

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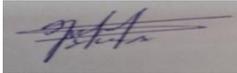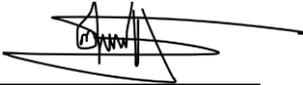
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Student declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that the study titled "Factors Affecting Project Performance in NGOs: A Case Study of Vsf Germany" is my original work, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's degree in Project Management at St. Mary's University, Addis Ababa. This study has not been presented for a degree at any other university.

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE
 INTRODUCTION
1.1 Background of the Study
1.2 Statement of the problem
1.3 Research Questions
1.4 Objectives of the Study
1.4.2 Specific Objectives
1.5 Significant of the study
1.6 Scope of the Study
1.7 Limitation of the study
1.8 Organization of the Study
CHAPTER TWO
RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1. Introduction
2.2 Theoretical Literature Review
2.2.2. Project Performance
2.3. Factors affecting the performance of Projects
2.3.1. Internal Factors of Project performance
Integration Management
Communication Management
Organizational Culture
2.3.1.2 Risk Management
2.3.1.3 Project Monitoring and Evaluation
2.3.1.7 Stakeholders' involvement
2.3.2. External Factors of Project performance
2.3.2.2 Political Instability
2.4. Empirical literature of the Study
                 2.5. Conceptual Framework
Chapter THREE
 Research Design and Methodology
3.1 Description of the study
3.2 Research Approach
3.3 Research Design
3.4 Target Population
3.5 Data type and data collection method   20
3.5.2 Methods of Data collection

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ABBREVIATION

VSF GERMANY -VETERINAIRES SANS FRONTIERES GERMANY

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations

HRM-Human Resource Management

SPSS – Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences

PEST - Political, Economic, Sociocultural, and Technical

PACT - Program of Accountability and Community Transformation

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

With a focus on Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Germany (VSF Germany) in Ethiopia, this study examines the variables influencing project performance in NGOs. In order to offer practical suggestions for improving project outcomes, the research will examine both internal and external elements, such as organizational capability, stakeholder involvement, risk management, and sociopolitical obstacles. Structured surveys, and secondary sources were used to gather both qualitative and quantitative data using a mixed-methods approach. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to examine the data in order to find important trends and relationships. While cultural barriers, financial constraints, and environmental disruptions present challenges, the results show that effective communication, thorough risk management, alignment of activities with organizational goals, and active stakeholder participation significantly improve project success. Suggestions highlight the significance of customized training initiatives, strong foundations for monitoring and evaluation, as well as flexible approaches to deal with environmental and sociopolitical circumstances, all of which promote long-term project results and stakeholder trust.

Keywords: *Organizational capacity, Project Performance success, Human resource management, Stakeholder engagement*

CHAPTER ONE
Introduction

1.1   Background of the Study

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges worldwide. Their projects often aim to improve the well-being of communities, advance human rights, and protect the environment. NGOs work in situations that are dynamic and frequently resource-constrained, with a range of stakeholder interests, intricate funding systems, and differing levels of institutional competence. Around 1960, the emergence of NGOs, both national and international, was prompted by the inability of the government and the numerous self-help groups prevalent in Ethiopian society to address the increasingly pressing needs of the populace. As a result, NGOs became a crucial part of the country's infrastructure (World Bank, 2000).

Ethiopia has a sizable NGO sector as compared to Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Somaliland. In contrast to other African nations, it is small (beurden, 1998). In recent decades, Ethiopia has emerged as a significant beneficiary of global assistance. The major source of official development aid for Ethiopia is the International Development Associate. Since 1991, it has provided about $20 billion for over 80 projects in Ethiopia, mostly related to roads, water, sanitation, and education (Girma, 2020).

A project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service or result. Projects are undertaken to fulfill objectives by producing deliverables.an objective is defined as an outcome toward which work is to be directed (Project Management Institute, 2021.p27).

Project performance is influenced by two main factors: internal and external. Internal factors include organizational capacity, which involves the NGO's financial resources, staff expertise, management systems, and internal communication channels. Capacity is the probability of progressing from each stage to the next in a given period. If it does not progress, the project remains in the same stage to begin the next period. Benefits are realized upon completion, but each period before completion imposes costs that are increasing in the project's scale. Thus in the absence of outside interference, an organization with higher capacity — due to better personnel or technology — reduces costs and variability in delivery times. Effective project design and planning, with well-defined goals and realistic objectives, is crucial for implementation,(Foarta, D., & Ting, M. M. 2023). Strong leadership and management are essential for motivating teams and ensuring accountability, while weak leadership and poor communication can

Negatively impact outcomes (Khan& Khan, 2016). Risk management is also key, inadequate risk assessment and lack of contingency planning can lead to budget overruns and delays (PMI, 2017). Additionally, regular monitoring and evaluation are critical for tracking progress and adapting strategies as needed (OECD, 2005).

External factors affecting performance include contextual elements like political, social, and environmental conditions, which can pose challenges such as conflict and lack of infrastructure (UNDP, 2015). Stakeholder engagement is another critical aspect, as effective collaboration with beneficiaries, government agencies, and other NGOs is essential, while poor engagement can undermine project goals (Klijn & Teisman, 2010). Finally, resource availability, including access to financial resources, skilled personnel, and essential materials, plays a significant role, and constraints in these areas can hinder progress (Salomon, 2001).

This study examines factors influencing project performance at Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Germany (VSF Germany), an international NGO headquartered in Berlin, dedicated to advancing the One Health Agenda in East Africa. Operating since 1998, VSF Germany has expanded its reach across the Horn of Africa with Country Offices in n b Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda, supported by a Regional Office in Nairobi, Kenya. The main visions of the organization are communities achieving sustainable livelihoods through nature and livestock, fostering independence and humane living. Its mission is to enhance the well-being and resilience of vulnerable communities by promoting livestock health in harmony with the environment. Core values guiding VSF Germany's work include professionalism, accountability, a Nexus and One Health approach, community-centered solutions, and a focus on empowering women and youth, ensuring that interventions are sustainable, impactful, and sensitive to local contexts. Therefore, the findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the key factors influencing project performance in VSF Germany, applying various approaches to enhance project effectiveness and achieve intended outcomes.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Projects that are successfully implemented can have far-reaching effects not only economically but also on the health of the people and environment. The effects of successful project extend through borders and can influence not only the global economy but also the dynamic and health of people (Derindag, 2023). Project failure can be attributed to inadequate management systems, inconsistent rewards and actions, and inadequate communication of the intended aims of the project (Belassi and Tukel, 2016)

NGO's contribute significantly to community welfare through initiatives targeting social, economic, and environmental issues. Despite their critical role, the performance of NGO projects often faces setbacks due to internal inefficiencies, limited stakeholder engagement, and external environmental factors. These challenges are more pronounced in dynamic and resource-constrained settings like Ethiopia, where NGOs operate under unique socio-political and cultural conditions.

This concern is more observed in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) located in Ethiopia. Few studies have really examined the operational dynamics and difficulties faced by NGOs functioning within the distinct socioeconomic and cultural environment of Ethiopia, despite the fact that some have examined project management methods in international development contexts. Research that has already been done on the Ethiopian NGO sector frequently falls short in its analysis of the complex relationships that exist between local players, resource limitations, and project outcomes. Furthermore, because to variations in socio-political environments, cultural norms, and organizational structures, the relevance of research conducted in other regions while offering insightful information about the factors that influence project performance to the Ethiopian setting is still questionable.

While there is literature on project management methodologies in the international development. There is a lack of focused studies on the specific challenges faced by NGO'S Operating in Ethiopia, Particularly on the Socio-Cultural and political environments. For instance recent studies Balemlay (2022) examined factors influencing project performance in local NGO'S focusing on HRM, Organizational culture, Organizational leadership, Resource allocation. Also Kenan (2020) also examines Determinants of project success in the case of USAID funded project focusing on internal factors.

There is a notable absence of empirical insights into the operational dynamics of NGOs in Ethiopia, The research addresses the gap in understanding how internal factors (like organizational capacity, management practices) and also how external factors like political, socio cultural conditions affect or influence project performance.

Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by focusing on Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Germany (VSF Germany), a prominent international NGO operating in Ethiopia. By examining internal and external factors influencing project performance, the research aims to provide practical recommendations that enhance NGO effectiveness, foster stakeholder trust, and contribute to sustainable development outcomes.

1.3 Research Questions

1) What are the key factors that influence the successful execution of initiatives in VSF Germany?

2) How do internal factors and internal factors impact the performance of VSF Germany's projects, and what strategies does the organization employ to adapt to these changes?

3) What monitoring and assessment procedures does VSF Germany use to evaluate the results and effects of its projects, and what role do these procedures play in improving learning and project performance

1.4 Objectives of the Study
1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study is to analyze factors influencing the performance of project in NGOS focusing on Vsf Germany.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the major variables that influence how well NGO'S execute their initiatives, specifically in VSF Germany

2. To examine how internal and external factors like organization capacity, project management techniques, stakeholder involvement, and other pertinent factors affect the success of projects within Vsf

3. To examine the monitoring and evaluation strategies used in assessing the results of projects out comes. Or To analyze the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategies in ensuring project success.

4. To propose recommendations and best practices for improving project success and performance at VSF and other NGOs that are comparable.

1.5 Significant of the study

Studying the variables that affect an NGO's project performance enhances both theoretical understanding and practical application in the development and humanitarian domains. Results from these types of studies can help shape policies, guidelines, and procedures not only for VSF Germany but also for other NGOs, academic institutions, and policymaking bodies.

To summarize, there is considerable importance in examining the variables that affect the way NGOs such as VSF Germany carry out their projects in terms of their humanitarian effect, resource efficiency, sustainability, organizational flexibility, stakeholder involvement, and knowledge and practice transfer to the sector. Such research projects have the potential to improve vulnerable populations' lives and the effectiveness and responsiveness of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in addressing urgent global issues. Moreover, this study provides a foundation for future research by identifying gaps and areas requiring further exploration to comprehensively understand the factors influencing NGO project performance.

1.6 Scope of the Study

From many NGOs found in Ethiopia the research will be conducted on non-governmental organization (NGO) VSF Germany. It assess at a number of regionally-implemented VSF Germany projects in fields like community development, livestock management, and veterinary care.

The Afar Borena, Jinka region will be the specific focus of the investigation. Due to the arid and semi-arid environments in those areas, there are special potential and challenges for development initiatives. The study's purview is restricted to assisting management, project personnel, and other corporate or project stakeholders in gathering data. The research will employ a cross-sectional approach to gather data.

1.7 Limitation of the study

The limitation of this study includes recollection bias, social desirability bias, which may impact the validity and reliability of the data collected. Additionally, due to accessibility constraints, data collection relied on virtual communication rather than in-person interactions, potentially reduces the effectiveness of the process.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The research report was organized into five chapters: Chapter one focuses on the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, scope, limitation and significant of the study. In chapter two, literatures theoretically perspectives review literature, empirical literature review and conceptual frame work are presented. In third chapter, detail of methodology followed by the study design, research to approach, sampling technique and data analysis were presented. Chapter four addressed results and discussion of the study supported with findings from other research works. Finally, Chapter five focused on main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

Related Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The chapter's goal was to look at previous research studies on factors affecting project success. It provides an insight into the literature by other scholars and researchers on the topic of factors influencing the effective implementation of projects in non-governmental organizations. In order to assure relevance to the research topic, the review was arranged according to specified objectives. It also offers the theoretical foundations for the research. Project planning, clarification of project donor laws and regulations, project communication, and management aspects are all discussed in this section. The conceptual framework, which detailed the independent and dependent variables, was also given.

The theoretical basis for the key variables investigated in this research is provided in this chapter, encompassing the areas of interest for this research; the influence of the four targeted organizational factors: stakeholder involvement, resource allocation, organizational leadership and human resource factor on project success or failure (time, cost, and quality). This is followed by an explanation of the hypothesized associations of variables in the conceptual framework, gaps in the literature, and literature summary.

2.2 Theoretical Literature Review

2.2.1. Project and Project Management

A project is a temporary endeavor, having a defined beginning and end (usually constrained by date, but can be by funding or deliverables), undertaken to meet unique goals and objectives, usually to bring about beneficial change or added value Gray & Larson, (2006). The temporary nature of projects stands in contrast to business as usual (or operations}, which are repetitive, permanent or semi-permanent functional work to produce products or services. The primary challenge of project management is to achieve all of the project goals and objectives while honoring the preconceived project constraints. Typical constraints are scope, time, and budget. The secondary--and more ambitious-challenge is to optimize the allocation and integration of inputs necessary to meet pre-defined objectives. The integration of the objectives into the project management comes from the earlier groundwork done by the proponents of management by objectives (MBO). The term "management by objectives" was first popularized by Peter Drucker in his 1954 book 'The Practice of Management'. Objectives being the major milestones that defines the success or failure of any given project among other parameters, the project management spends the better part of the project time in the initiation stage which essentially entails the plan of which and how the objectives will be achieve

A project is defined as "a succession of distinct, complicated, and interrelated actions with one objective or purpose that must be finished by a certain time, within budget, and according to specification" by Wysocki, Beck, and Crane (2000). This contrasts with daily operations, or a routine set of activities, which are intended to be ongoing processes without a clear end point.

Additionally, a project's objective, life cycle, distinctiveness, interconnectedness, and conflict are broad features that set it apart. (Mantel Jr. and Meredith, 2000)

Project management, as defined by Horine (2005), is a change management approach that involves defining actions that align with predetermined goals through collaboration and engagement of stakeholders. Projects are characterized by a clear start and finish.

2.2.2. Project Performance

Afaq (2013) states that a project performance is considered great if it meets all of its technical requirements and the needs of all stakeholders, including sponsors, financiers, end users, and project team members. Project success is one of the project management topics that writers have debated without coming to a consensus on, according to Bateta & Wagoki (2015). As a result, the definition of project performance is still unclear and differs among authors. However, there is general agreement among stakeholders in projects that project performance demands both efficacy and efficiency. User satisfaction, cost, quality, safety, and timeliness are some metrics that can be used to gauge a project's performance. A project's performance is considered successful, according to Abok et al. (2013), if it is finished on schedule, within budget, achieves the set goals, and results in user satisfaction. Deadlines, cost control, and quality standards were the traditional metrics used to assess a project's performance. However, projects that go beyond the allotted time and budget might be labeled successful, while those that are finished on time, within budget, and are thought to be of excellent quality can be considered failures. As a result, additional measurements must be used in addition to standard performance indicators like quality, cost, and budget, which are essential for assessing performance. These indicators include things like user happiness, client satisfaction, and environmental effect. According to Nguyen & Watanabe (2017), project performance should be measured in terms of completion time, budgetary compliance, efficiency, effectiveness, meeting stakeholder expectations, minimal conflicts and disputes, and   safety.

Different authors use different metrics to assess project performance. For instance, Wangu (2015) evaluated non-governmental organizations' performance based on measures such user happiness, completion within budget, cost of completion, transparency, and accountability. According to Muriungi (2012), completion time, completion cost, and goal achievement are used to gauge how well non-governmental organization projects succeed. As to the relevant literature, the two main subjects involved in determining success are the project and the client. According to Nixon, Harrington, and Parker (2012), "therefore, keeping the external stakeholders in mind, the success art is to appropriately utilize the assigned resources, wisely use the allocated budget, and achieve the strategic goals within the due date, because all of these factors are always dependent on each other, and brings a complicated reality into existence." The three fundamental factors of project success—time, money, and quality—are covered in practically every essay on the subject, including those by Walker (1995, 1996), Atkinson (1999), and Belassi and Tukel (1996). These three criteria are called the "iron triangle".

2.3. Factors affecting the performance of Projects

Project performance is influenced by a number of things. But categorizing them into two groups—those falling under the purview of the project management function and those that are typically classified as factors inside and outside of project management—is the easiest method to distinguish between them.

2.3.1 Internal Factors of Project performance

2.3.1.1. Organization Capacity

Issues that are both static and dynamic might impact project budgets. Inadequate budgeting for the breadth and expense of necessary resources at the outset of the project will result in a "cost blowout" that could provide difficulties. (Gebczynska, 2019). Project managers must carefully balance spending and income during the development phase to guarantee that there are no dynamic cash-flow difficulties (Putnam, 2000).

It can be extremely challenging to accomplish project deliverables on time if all necessary activities are not identified and defined, or if these tasks are grossly underestimated. Project termination may arise from growing stakeholder anxiety brought on by delays. Furthermore, when human resources are unevenly burdened due to poorly scheduled tasks, bottlenecks may form, leading to stress and inefficiencies.

If the quality of the project deliverables is to meet the specified standards, it is imperative to conduct routine quality evaluations and take corrective action as needed. If a project's quality throughout development is so poor that stakeholders lose faith in the finished product, the project will fail.

When deliverables fall short of expectations, a project may fail due to inadequate scope definition at the outset, underestimating project complexity, and a failure to gradually detail and record scope modifications. According to Melymuka (2000), scope creep and requirements are the main reasons why stakeholders are not satisfied.

Integration Management

According to Putnam (2000), fostering trust and integrating networks among stakeholders can improve collaboration and project results.

A basic neglect of obligation on the part of the project manager is the absence of a clear project definition and plan, which typically works against the project to a significant degree. Furthermore, this needs to be supported by continuous revision as needed in the event that there are almost unavoidable scope, schedule, cost, or quality slippages. In order to keep control over the evolving baseline, these adjustments must also be handled; otherwise, it may become unachievable. Essentially, the project manager should see the project through from start to finish and integrate and manage all project parts as one cohesive whole.

Human Resource Management

One of the most crucial resources for successful organizational growth is human Resource. A lot of institutions have placed a lot of emphasis on the competency issue. Heumann et al. (2007) claim that certain problems in the context of HRM are brought on by project-oriented, particular elements that are poorly understood in general management. The need for change is largely driven by human resources, as workers expect new abilities and proficiencies. As a result, the organization's human resource structure needs to alter whenever a new project or program starts. Both the organization and the available human resources may come under pressure. To be successful in collaborating on the project, particular skills, knowledge, and competency will be required. Formally, it may be sponsored by the organization, but it is informally required given the nature of the initiative. Huang (2000) discussed the relationship between HR methods and employees' intentions to leave, job happiness, and organizational loyalty. Bratton and Gold (2007) show how human resource management links the role of human resources to the strategic objectives of the company to improve performance. Moreover, human resource policies and procedures—a management process known as human resource management, or HRM— must be connected to the goals of the company.

Improved performance, which is driven by an organization's resource management strategies, results in expansion and the acquisition of a long-term competitive advantage. HRM procedures improve a company's performance, which further advances its growth and ability to maintain a competitive advantage.

If they are able to select the members of their project team, project managers are extremely fortunate. More specifically, their team was brought to the project from different organizational departments. Working with a strong project team that possesses fundamental abilities that can develop into the organization's core competencies and skills is essential. The success of the project and the company's overarching goal must be shared by every member of the project team. Project team members should have open lines of communication with "both the functional manager and the project manager within a matrix organization," in addition to their abilities and dedication. According to the (PMBOK Guide, 2004, p215)."Effective management of this dual reporting is often a critical success factor for the project." Poor team planning and development, including under-staffing, vague responsibilities and instability, lead to lack of staff motivation and direction. This will cause a lapse in quality and slow down progress.

Communication Management

Project communication is an auxiliary activity that facilitates the creation of the project's final output and its distribution to clients and end users; Communication is necessary for both profiling and being profiled in order to build a trustworthy and favorable service profile

To prevent misconceptions, effective communication between the project manager, team members, and stakeholders is crucial. The executive sponsor cannot offer support to you to the fullest extent if concerns are not reported to them in a timely manner; as stated in Getting the Sponsor You Need, 2000, "the level of help you get is inversely proportional to your delay in asking."

Organizational Culture

Some authors find a strong correlation between company culture and project performance, while other find none at all. For instance, Belassi, Kondra, and Tukel (2007) found a strong correlation between new product development efforts' success and culture, as well as a positive work atmosphere and effective leadership. A "positive work environment" is associated with the belief held by staff members that they are free to speak with their managers and that their performance is the most important aspect of the company. "Strong Leadership" is defined as encouraging people to keep trying even if they fail during the creation process and keeping long-term goals at the forefront of all top management choices. Ninety-five American manufacturing companies provided data for this study.

The impact of organizational culture on knowledge transfer in "non-project enterprises" that employ a

"project-style" approach was examined by Ajmal and Koskinen (2008). The problem with these kinds of organizations is that the knowledge that is produced on one project is not carried over to the next. The authors claim that in order for knowledge transfer to occur effectively in project-based companies, the organizational culture needs to be open to accepting and putting new ideas into practice. Project managers are responsible for fostering efficient knowledge management and uniting diverse organizational and professional cultures into a cohesive project culture.

Researchers in Turkey found that an organization's culture significantly affects how well projects in non- governmental organizations work (Metin & Coşkun, 2016). Organizational culture, according to Metin and Coşkun (2016), is the motivating environment in which people want to work and feel comfortable taking on responsibilities, creating a good atmosphere. In a similar vein, Ojo (2009) claims that since project success in Nigeria is dependent on competent personnel performance, a strong corporate culture can enhance project success. a. Moreover, the leaders' conduct and personal views matched those of the project's workers.

Conversely, Yesil and Kaya (2013) found no relationship between an organization's cultural characteristics and project performance. More accurately, change management and project performance in terms of on- time and within-budget delivery were not significantly impacted by the pattern of underlying assumptions, beliefs, norms, values, and expectations.

2.3.1.2 Risk Management

When the severity of risk items becomes fully apparent later in a project, failing to manage them by appropriately addressing them early on can result in a major cost blowout. Risk items are often in the form of untested assumptions. A key component of the project's success is the project management team's capacity to predict the possible outcomes that could cause the project to fail.

Risk management has been highlighted by Kulik (1997), Malmuka (1997), Buttrick (2000), and others as a crucial aspect of project management. Every commercial activity is carried out in an environment of uncertainty that comes from several sources. Hillson (1999). Technical problems, financial

Limitations, managerial challenges, and external dependencies are a few of them. However, because they understand the link between risk and reward, successful projects do not aim to eliminate ambiguity. Since the potential rewards are mostly decided by the level of risk an organization is willing to accept, there is no such thing as a "zero risk" enterprise or project, and in fact, it is not desirable. But uncertainty and risk are not the same thing. Risk is described as "Any uncertain event or set of circumstances that, should it occur, would have an effect on one or more objectives." Risk develops when uncertainty has the ability to affect objectives (Association for Project Management 2004). Uncertainties exist that do not pose a danger since they cannot impact objectives. Risk management

plays a critical role in project performance and business advantages because of the relationship that exists between risk, uncertainty, and objectives.

2.3.1.3 Project Monitoring and Evaluation

The process of gathering and evaluating project-related data to determine if you are on pace to meet your goals and whether the project had the intended impact was known as monitoring and evaluation. You must monitor the project during execution and assess its impact at the end of the project to determine whether you are on track to meet the objectives of the program. You can modify the software as necessary to guarantee that you meet your goals by keeping an eye on the project's progress. If properly carried out, the main hazards that cause projects to fail can be quickly identified, and the appropriate preventative and remedial action can be implemented.

2.3.1.4 Stakeholders' involvement

The involvement of users or stakeholders in the project planning stage has been regarded as the most crucial component. Involvement in design, execution, and testing also raises the possibility that, upon project completion, the needs of the users will be satisfied. Stakeholders and sponsors need to be involved in the project actively. Buttrick (2000) goes on to say that by having users and customers participate in workshops and focus groups, they will have a much greater understanding of the project's present and future needs. Prototypes and simulations are helpful tools for gaining the commitment and interest of stakeholders. Greer (1999) recommends that project sponsors take an active role in identifying deliverables, encouraging development, and providing access to end user reviews, comments, and necessary documentation.

2.3.2. External Factors of Project performance

The political, economic, sociocultural, and technical (PEST) framework in which the project is being carried out can be considered the external environment. At any point during the project, external factors such as weather, workplace accidents, or favorable or unfavorable laws from the government could have an impact. "Note that if a client is from outside the organization, he should also be considered as an external factor influencing the project performance" (Belassi and Tukel, 1996). As external elements that can compromise the success of a project, competitors should also be taken into consideration. This is because a more glamorous and successful initiative introduced by a different firm may eclipse the initial project.

Project performance is critically influenced by a complex interplay of socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers that can significantly impede organizational success. According to Turner and Müller (2003), these multidimensional barriers create intricate challenges that extend beyond traditional project management frameworks. Socio-cultural barriers manifest through communication disparities, cultural

misalignments, and organizational resistance to change, while economic constraints emerge from limited resource allocation, budget restrictions, and market volatilities. Political barriers further complicate project dynamics through regulatory complexities, institutional inefficiencies, and stakeholder power struggles. These interconnected obstacles require sophisticated, adaptive strategies that integrate cross-cultural competence, flexible financial planning, and strategic stakeholder engagement to mitigate potential performance disruptions (Müller & Turner, 2010). Effective project managers must develop comprehensive approaches that anticipate and navigate these systemic challenges, recognizing that successful project implementation demands nuanced understanding of the broader contextual environment.

2.3.2.1. Socio-Cultural and Economical Barriers

Project performance is significantly impacted by sociocultural and economic factors through complex processes of resource allocation, organizational behavior, and cultural dynamics. Cultural differences in power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism have a profound impact on project interactions and decision-making processes, as demonstrated by Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (2001). Economic factors, as explored by scholars like Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), introduce complex resource dependency challenges that impact project implementation, including budget constraints, technological access, and competitive resource environments. The intersection of socio-cultural and economic domains reveals multifaceted barriers such as workforce diversity challenges, skill gaps, technological disparities, and organizational resistance to change. Scholars like Sen (1999) emphasize the importance of understanding these factors as interconnected systems rather than isolated variables, suggesting that successful project management requires a holistic approach that integrates cultural intelligence, financial flexibility, and advanced stakeholder engagement techniques.

2.3.2.2 Political Instability

Project performance is significantly impacted by political instability, which essentially compromises organizational efficacy and strategic execution. Political instability is characterized by unstable governance arrangements, frequent regime changes, policy ambiguities, and institutional fragmentation that provide unpredictable operating conditions, according to research by North (1990) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2012). Significant project risks are created by these dynamics, such as abrupt changes in regulations, administrative roadblocks, and even expropriation hazards that have the potential to drastically change project paths. Political instability, according to academics like Rodrik (2007), adds systemic uncertainties that raise transaction costs, erode investor confidence, and erect significant obstacles to long-term strategic planning. Projects must constantly adjust to changing political environments due to the intricate interactions between political players, institutional restraints, and governance systems. This calls for advanced risk management techniques and remarkable

organizational tenacity.

2.4 Empirical literature of the Study

Balem (2022) examines how project success at EOTC/DICAC is impacted by four organizational factors: resource allocation, organizational culture, organizational leadership, and human resource concerns. The results show that there are high correlations between these factors and that they have a statistically significant positive effect on project performance. According to the study's findings, improving these organizational elements can result in better project outcomes and increased productivity.

Surveys and interviews were used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data as part of the mixed-methods strategy used in the research methodology. Targeting a particular group, the study collected data using key personnel interviews and structured questionnaires, guaranteeing the acquisition of pertinent primary and secondary data.

Descriptive statistics, such as multiple regression analysis and measures of central tendency, were performed for data analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) in order to evaluate the influence of the variables that were found on project performance. Furthermore, qualitative data from interviews was interpreted using narrative analysis, which offered a thorough grasp of the variables influencing project performance.

Mohammed (2020) examines the variables that affect project performance in non-governmental organizations, with a focus on examining elements including project mission, client acceptance, budget adherence, timeliness, quality, monitoring and feedback, team commitment, and communication.

In order to obtain information from project team members and guarantee a thorough grasp of their experiences and opinions about project management techniques, the study employed questionnaires.

The data was summarized using descriptive statistics, which included measurements such as means and standard deviations for several performance indicators. According to an evaluation of the golden triangle of project performance—time, cost, and quality—projects were typically finished on time (mean 2.77), in compliance with quality standards (mean 2.21), and within budget (mean 2.87).

Kenan (2020) investigated the determinants of project success in the case of USAID funded project. With a focus on leadership, stakeholder involvement, team commitment, monitoring and evaluation, time cost and quality were found to be significant determinants of project success. It used a cross-sectional study design and gathered quantitative and qualitative information from 123 respondents.

There is a notable absence of comprehensive empirical evaluations of operational dynamics within

Ethiopia NGOs particularly regarding how internal factors also external factors influence project performance. As we can see both balem, Kenan focuses on internal factors only.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the implementation of projects and managerial factors with the consideration six various factors under the study project success in funded projects in Ethiopia. The conceptual framework of this study was based on six independent variables and one dependent variable as represented diagrammatically in the above figure. The study uses a conceptual framework in order to answer the research questions.

Fig 2.1 Conceptual framework
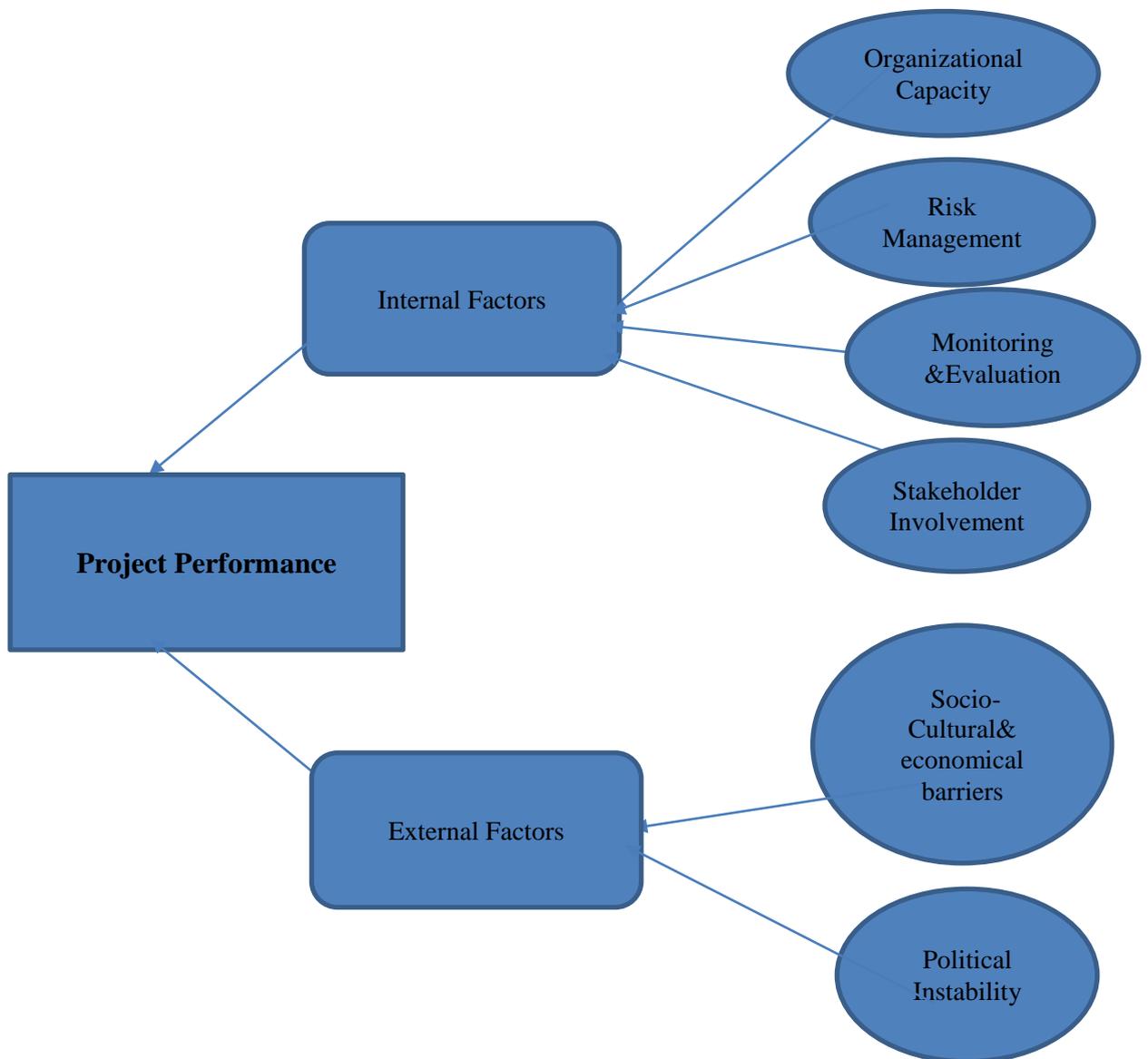
Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

The methodological framework applied to solve the research problem and to answer the research questions are presented as follows.

3.1 Description of the study

The study concentrated on an international NGO VSF Germany, located in Ethiopia. These areas were chosen because they offer a range of difficulties and are strategically significant to VSF Germany's operations. Some of the locations are Afar Region VSF Germany's livestock and food security programs heavily rely on the Afar Region, which is recognized for its dry climate and pastoralist communities living on the move. Somali Region Because of its severe climate and continuous conflicts, this region has many difficulties, making it a crucial location for projects aimed at resilience-building and humanitarian aid. The Oromia Region is a focal point for health, nutrition, and sustainable development initiatives due to its mix of agricultural and pastoralist people.

The Amhara region is significant for initiatives meant to increase food security and lower the risk of disasters because of its potential for agriculture but also because of its susceptibility to drought.

3.2   Research Approach

Research approaches are plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell (2009), mixed methods research is an approach to an inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may include philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either method alone. Therefore, based on the above information, in order to gain a better understanding on factors influencing project performance in Vsf Germany, this researches choose mixed methods approach or a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods which are questionnaire.

3.3   Research Design

Research design is the blueprint for fulfilling research objectives and answering research questions (John, Hafiz, Robert, & David, 2007) the same authors discusses three types of research design, namely exploratory (emphasizes discovery of ideas and insights), descriptive (concerned with determining the

frequency with which an event occurs or relation between variables) and explanatory (concerned with determining the cause and effect relationships).

As this study aims to examine the factors affecting project performance, thus it targets to measure relationships between variables, a combination of descriptive and explanatory type of research was used. Descriptive type of research was used because it involves investigation the frequency and the influences of variables on project performance. Explanatory type of research was also applied since it enriches and supports the previous theories through comparing the findings with research questions.

3.4 Target Population

Every research that involves primary data collection needs to have a set of elements from which this data is collect. Any group of individuals places or objects that share common characteristics that are relevant for the research purposes are known as the population (John & Creswell, 2009). The target population is the specified group of people from which questions will be asked in order to develop the required data structures and information need in the research (Cress well & John, 2003). Accordingly, the population of the study was VSF Germany in Ethiopia, Jinka, and the Afar and Borena region projects. Since the target population was small, the census method was used. About 64 employees and managers were included in data collection process.

3.5 Data type and data collection method

3.5.1 Sources of Data

The study employed both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected through a well-designed questionnaire, completed by respondents who willingly filled out and returned the questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from the VSF database, annual reports, and journals. Additionally, a variety of books, websites, research journals, thesis, and articles were reviewed to make the study fruitful.

3.5.2 Methods of Data collection

The data were collected through well-structured questionnaires, providing specific responses to the research questions. The questionnaire began with an introductory statement specifying that the purpose of the research was purely academic, followed by questions about factors affecting project performance and respondents' perspectives on management. Respondents were encouraged to be objective in their responses as they were assured of confidentiality. Secondary and additional data were obtained by examining various documents, including VSF annual reports, local and international newspapers related to project performance

3.6 Data Preparation, Analysis and Presentation Technique

After all necessary data were collected through the aforementioned research tools, they were organized in a way suitable for analysis using tables and charts. The descriptive statistical analysis of the data was carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The frequency distribution of each variable was first determined, and the results were expressed as percentages. Aggregated variables per unit of inquiry were presented through summary tables.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability of the measures need to be assessed before using the method of data collection (Hair et al., 2003). Validity concerns whether an instrument can accurately measure, while reliability pertains to the consistency in measurement. Therefore, in this study the reliability and validity was tested as follows;

In this study in order to assure the validity of the research instrument, various relevant literatures and different previous research questionnaire were used. Also the research advisor and the internal examiner will critically check for the validity of the questionnaire. As well, the draft survey questionnaire was pilot tested with at least 10 respondents in order to assure that the instrument is clear and unambiguous. Following the above mentioned means and pilot testing, the researcher incorporated the feedback of the respondents into design of the final survey questionnaire. So, after completing the entire process, the research instrument was distributed to the respondents.

Tab 3.1 Validity Table

NO	age	Education level	Feedback on clarity	Time taken
1	30	BSc	Clear	10
2	39	BSc	Clear	13
3	27	BSc	Some	16

			con fusi on	
4	3 9	BSc	Cle ar	1 2
5	4 0	MSc	Cle ar	9
6	2 9	BSc	So me con fusi on	1 5
7	3 7	BSc	Cle ar	1 0
8	3 2	BSc	Cle ar	1 5
9	4 3	BSc	So me con fusi on	1 5
1 0	5 1	PH D	Cle ar	1 0

Source: Survey Data (2024)

3.8 Ethical Consideration

In the context of research, ethics is defined as the appropriateness of the researcher's behavior in relation to the rights of the participants or subjects of the research work (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Therefore, this study is governed by the general rules of research ethics in such a way that, the respondents will request to provide information on voluntary basis, there will be prior communication about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality of the information will be guarantee. Furthermore, attempts will make to bring clarity in the questionnaire to best fit with the industry context. Lastly, the questionnaires will distribute only to voluntary participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

Based on the sample respondents' responses to the questionnaire's items, the researcher has presented the data analysis and discussion of the respondents' general information, Factors Affecting Project Implementation in Vsf Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and their corresponding summarized results. With the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 21, descriptive statistics, and correlation analyses are performed, and the outcomes are presented using tables, percentages, and frequencies as follows.

4.1. General information

The next section provides general background information about the study participants. Gender, age, educational background, experience with non-governmental organizations, current position within the organization, the organization's size in terms of the number of projects it undertakes annually, and the size of its project staff are all evaluated using frequencies and percentages.

The target sample was primarily composed of male respondents, with 68.8% of the total sample, and 31.3%, being female. This indicates that there are more male respondents overall than female respondents in this study.

The age distribution reveals that individuals in their 20s form the largest group, accounting for nearly 40% of the population. Those in their 30s closely follow, making up just over one-third of the total. There is a noticeable drop in representation among individuals in their 40s, who constitute about 14% of the population. The smallest group is those in their 50s, contributing less than 10% to the overall population. The majority of the population (77.8%) falls into the 20-39 age range, suggesting a predominantly young demographic. The distribution shows a steep decline in representation as the age increases, indicating fewer individuals in older age brackets.

Among the 68 respondents, approximately 82% hold a bachelor's degree, making it the most common qualification. Around 12% have completed a master's degree, while 3% have earned a doctorate, reflecting the highest level of education. Similarly, 3% hold a diploma as their qualification.

4.2. Factors Affecting Project Implementation

The following significant questions are posed to the respondents in order to look into the overall Project Implementation and its determinants; as a result, the responses are examined using the following frequency and percentage distributions.

For the tables that will be coming after this the following abbreviations will be used

1. Not at All=NA
2. To a Small Degree=SD3.Neutral=N
3. To a Moderate Degree=MD5.To a Significant Degree=SI

1 Organizational Capacity

Tab 4.1: Human Resource Management

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Familiarity with core duties and responsibilities in your project	64	1	5	4.20	1.06
Planned specialized training programs	64	3	5	4.88	.418
Alignment of training program with organization goals	64	1	5	4.23	.904
Do you agree there is an appropriate technology in your project?	64	1	5	3.84	1.144
Do you believe there is sufficient skilled personnel in your project	64	1	5	4.06	1.11
Do you have the resources and tools you need to improve your skills	64	1	5	4.06	0.89
Provide continuous professional development	64	2	5	4.63	0.72

Source: Survey data (2024)

Participants' knowledge with their primary tasks and responsibilities within the project was investigated

through the survey. The replies show a distinct pattern: most participants indicated that they understood their roles rather well. Fewer individuals indicated little or no familiarity, but a smaller fraction expressed a moderate level of familiarity.

According to this distribution, the majority of team members appear to be familiar with their project duties, which is crucial for effectiveness and output. Nonetheless, the existence of a minority with little knowledge suggests a chance to improve training or onboarding procedures.

The purpose of the study was to find out how much specialized training is scheduled for participants. The majority of participants indicated that such initiatives are planned to a substantial or moderate degree, which is an encouraging trend in the responses. Very few claimed no planning at all, while a smaller percentage indicated little planning or a neutral position. This pattern implies that the organization views specialized training as a top priority, with Efforts mostly concentrated on giving team members the skills and information they need.

A sizable percentage of respondents believe that organizational objectives and training initiatives are significantly aligned. This suggests that most people are aware of the work and value these initiatives provide in advancing more general corporate goals. Subsequently, a noteworthy subset of respondents perceives the alignment to a moderate degree, indicating that although progress has been observed, certain aspects may still require modification.

A smaller but noteworthy portion of respondents express no opinion, which could be a symptom of ambiguity or conflicting training program experiences. Complete misalignment is not a common worry, as only a very small percentage senses no alignment at all.

Most respondents think the project's technology is suitable, and many are very confident that it meets the project's requirements. A minority has indifferent or unfavorable opinions, whereas a smaller but significant percentage believes the technology is reasonably suited. According to the largest group, the technology is highly appropriate for the project. This implies that the technology is generally well-chosen and successfully fits the aims and objectives of the project. Some respondents have opinions that are indifferent. This could mean that they don't know enough about the technology or don't know how it will affect the project's results. Perhaps a small percentage of people believe that the technology is either completely inappropriate or perhaps marginally appropriate. These responders may have encountered difficulties.

To a considerable extent, the majority of participants believe that the project has enough qualified staff. This implies that the project team is made up of people who possess the skills and credentials needed to successfully contribute to its achievement. To a considerable extent, the majority of participants believe that the project has enough qualified staff. This implies that the project team is made up of people who

possess the skills and credentials needed to successfully contribute to its achievement. Only a small percentage of responders question whether there is enough qualified staff. Despite being anomalies, these might represent sporadic instances of unfulfilled requirements or difficulties with particular project components

The majority of respondents firmly believe that tools and resources are available to a considerable extent, suggesting that the company is probably making an attempt to offer professional development possibilities. This impression is further supported by the fact that a sizable portion also consider these resources to be quite adequate. Although resources may exist, a lesser percentage of respondents have a neutral opinion, arguing that they are either inaccessible, underutilized, or poorly presented. This can indicate regions that would benefit from increased distribution or awareness. Just a very tiny portion of participants believe that resources are either completely unavailable or only partially available. Despite being anomalies, these answers highlight specific issues that could be resolved to increase resource distribution equality.

The organization's success in giving professional development first priority is highlighted by the overwhelmingly positive response. Employee satisfaction and skill development can be further improved by building on existing initiatives and increasing possibilities. According to the unsatisfied and neutral respondents, there can be shortcomings in the development programs' relevance, accessibility, or communication. Their problems might be addressed by offering specialized solutions, raising awareness of ongoing projects, and getting input from these groups. The main goal should be to guarantee that all workers, irrespective of their position or division, have fair access to professional development course.

Tab 4.2: Communication

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Is there written communication procedure and policy	64	1	5	4.20	1.06
Effectiveness of Communication among Project Staff	64	1	5	4.53	0.88
Exchange of Information among Stakeholders	64	3	5	4.55	0.56

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Feedback Mechanisms between Project Staff and Users	64	1	5	4.13	1.02
Availability of Information for Decision-Making	64	1	5	4.59	0.90
Impact of Cultural Barriers on Communication and Outreach	64	1	5	2.91	1.66

Source: Survey data (2024)

The feedback and responses indicate that the majority of respondents view written communication policies and processes as effective and well-established, contributing to efficient and consistent communication. However, neutral responses suggest potential gaps in awareness or application, pointing to a need for improved clarity, accessibility, and consistent adherence to communication guidelines. A small proportion of dissatisfied respondents highlights specific areas where implementation or written procedures may need improvement. Regarding information sharing among stakeholders, most respondents believe it is effective, with many considering it extremely effective, reflecting well-established communication channels and stakeholder engagement processes. Nevertheless, some respondents see room for improvement, suggesting opportunities to enhance the efficiency of current information-sharing practices. Feedback mechanisms between staff and users are generally viewed as effective, with most respondents rating them as significantly or moderately effective. However, some express neutrality or dissatisfaction, indicating potential inconsistencies, accessibility issues, or a lack of structured feedback systems, which could be addressed to improve adaptive project management and user-staff communication. In terms of decision-making, most participants agree that there is a considerable amount of information available, reflecting strong information management practices. However, a small percentage of neutral or dissatisfied responses may highlight isolated issues with the timeliness, relevance, or accessibility of information. Overall, while the positive feedback underscores the effectiveness of current communication and information-sharing practices, addressing the identified gaps through tailored interventions, such as training or feedback sessions, can further strengthen project performance and stakeholder satisfaction.

Tab 4.3: Funding and Financing

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
do you have	64	1	5	3.83	1.176

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
sufficient independency in the budgetary decision					
are adequate and predictable fund being disbursed	64	3	5	4.88	.418
was the project completed within the allocated budget	64	1	5	4.23	.904
were financial challenges encountered during the implementation	64	1	5	3.84	1.144
delivery of project activates in terms of budget utilization	64	2	5	4.52	.797
Valid N (list wise)	64				

Source: Survey data (2024)

1. Sufficient Independence in Budgetary Decision-Making

A somewhat high degree of perceived freedom in budgetary decision-making is indicated by the average response. Though many respondents feel independent, others may feel limited in their capacity to make financial decisions, as suggested by the comparatively high standard deviation (1.176). This discrepancy could be the result of different departmental roles or levels of power within the project.

Where appropriate, organizations should investigate the causes of this discrepancy to guarantee consistent autonomy. People who feel less independent may benefit from customized programs that enhance their decision-making abilities.

2. Adequacy and Predictability of Fund Disbursement

A very high degree of satisfaction with the sufficiency and predictability of fund delivery is shown by the mean score. A consistent view of timely and adequate resource allocation is seen in the low standard deviation (0.418), which indicates that respondents generally agree on this subject.

This suggests a well-organized financial management system that guarantees financing adequacy and predictability. Sustaining project success and stakeholder trust will require maintaining this level of performance.

3. Completion of Project within Allocated Budget

Strong agreement that the project was finished within the budget allotted is indicated by the mean. The higher standard deviation (0.904) suggests some variability, though, as

Some respondents might have experienced budget overruns or other associated difficulties. For those who encountered difficulties, thorough evaluations could pinpoint particular reasons, such unanticipated costs or poor management, and put

Remedial measures in place. Emphasizing examples of successful budget adherence might help future projects adopt best practices.

4.   Financial Challenges Encountered During Implementation

The average score indicates a moderate level of agreement that there were financial difficulties. The comparatively high standard deviation (1.144) indicates that different teams had different experiences, with some encountering major obstacles while others did not.

To lessen the impact of financial difficulties in upcoming initiatives, it is essential to identify and address their underlying causes. Teams may become more financially resilient overall if they share solutions and experiences.

5.   Budget Utilization in Delivering Project Activities

The high mean score suggests that the majority of respondents have a favorable opinion of how well project activities are delivered within the allocated budget. Although the majority of respondents concur, a minority may believe that resource distribution is inefficient, according to the moderate standard deviation (0.797).

Employing these outcomes as proof of accomplishment, organizations should promote effective budget utilization procedures. All project operations will be seen as meaningful and cost-effective if efforts are made to allay minority concerns.

Tab 4.4: Stakeholder Management

Descriptive Statistics			N	Min imu m	Ma xim um	Mea n	Std. Deviati on
is there well known reporting formats and requirement			64	1	5	3.52	1.403
does the project lifecycle include a well-defined and record plan for stakeholders			64	1	5	3.77	1.389
to what degree stakeholders expectations and needs are considered			64	1	5	4.22	.967
does the project provide openness to stakeholders about the distribution of resource			64	1	5	3.17	1.242
do stakeholder's have means to hold the project responsible for its result and performance			64	3	5	4.70	.525
Valid N (list wise)			64				

Source: Survey data (2024)

1. Well-Known Reporting Formats and Requirements

With respondents expressing a broad feeling of structure in reporting, the mean score indicates that the presence of well-known reporting forms and standards is regarded moderately. Significant answer diversity is shown by the large standard deviation (1.403), which implies that while some stakeholders may find the reporting criteria unclear or inadequate, others may feel more confidence about their clarity.

Standardizing reporting formats and outlining these needs precisely could help the project and guarantee

that all parties involved are on the same page. Reducing misunderstandings and making sure that reporting procedures are uniform across the project could be the main goals of future initiatives.

2.   Project Lifecycle Includes Well-Defined and Recorded Plan for Stakeholders

Respondents generally perceive the project lifecycle to have a well-defined and documented plan for stakeholder engagement. The moderate mean score suggests that

there is a solid foundation in place, though some respondents feel the plan could be further refined. The high standard deviation (1.389) indicates differing views, with some individuals perhaps feeling that the stakeholder plan could be better structured or more accessible.

Review and possibly improve the documentation and accessibility of the stakeholder engagement plan to ensure all stakeholders are aware of and involved in the project lifecycle. A more structured and transparent approach to stakeholder engagement could reduce variability in satisfaction.

3.   Consideration of Stakeholder Expectations and Needs

The relatively high mean score suggests that stakeholders generally feel that their expectations and needs are considered to a significant degree during the project. The standard deviation (0.967) is moderate, indicating that while most respondents agree, there is some variability in their experiences, potentially reflecting different stakeholder groups' engagement levels.

This reflects well on the project's efforts to prioritize stakeholder concerns, but continuing to refine these efforts to meet the diverse needs of all stakeholders will further enhance project outcomes.

Ensuring that all stakeholder groups feel equally considered is crucial for fostering ongoing engagement and support.

4.   Openness to Stakeholders about the Distribution of Resources

The mean score indicates that the level of openness about the distribution of resources is perceived to be moderate, with many stakeholders feeling that there could be more transparency in this area. The high standard deviation (1.242) suggests that there is considerable variation in how openness is perceived, with some stakeholders feeling adequately informed while others may feel excluded or unaware of resource allocation. Enhancing transparency in how resources are distributed among stakeholders can improve trust and satisfaction. Implementing clearer communication strategies regarding resource allocation may help address concerns about perceived inequities or lack of information.

5.   Stakeholders Have Means to Hold the Project Accountable for Results and Performance

The very high mean score indicates that most respondents believe that stakeholders have effective mechanisms in place to hold the project accountable for its outcomes and performance. The low standard deviation (0.525) suggests strong consensus among respondents, indicating that stakeholders

feel confident in their ability to influence or assess the project's results.

Strong perception of accountability suggests that the project has effective mechanisms for transparency and stakeholder involvement in assessing performance. Ensuring that these accountability mechanisms are maintained and strengthened will continue to foster trust and engagement among stakeholders.

Tab 4.5: Risk Management

		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Descriptive Statistics					
	were potential risk identified and documented	64	1	5	3.98	1.253
	are risk regularly reviewed and updated	64	1	4	2.64	1.213
	are staff trained to handle unforeseen challenges	64	1	4	2.92	1.059
	does the project operate in areas prone to conflict	64	1	5	4.09	1.019
	have any stakeholder withdrawn their support to your project	64	2	3	2.39	.492
	are there cultural factors that could limit the success of the project	64	2	5	3.92	.783
	Valid N (list wise)	64				

Source: Survey data (2024)

1) Risk Identification and Documentation

There is strong agreement among respondents that risks are being identified and documented. This suggests that risk management frameworks or protocols are well- established in the majority of projects. The attention given to risk identification highlights a proactive approach to anticipating potential challenges.

Effective risk identification is a cornerstone of successful project management. This practice likely contributes to mitigating unforeseen disruptions and ensuring smoother project execution.

2) Reviewing and Updating Risks

The responses indicate that while risks are being reviewed and updated, this practice is less consistent or systematic across projects. The variability in responses might point to differences in organizational priorities, capacities, or understanding of risk dynamics.

Irregular risk reviews could expose projects to evolving threats, especially in dynamic environments. Emphasizing the importance of frequent and structured risk reviews could enhance resilience and adaptability.

3) Staff Training for Unforeseen Challenges

Staff training on handling unforeseen challenges is moderate, reflecting a somewhat reactive rather than proactive approach to equipping personnel. Some projects may prioritize this more than others, leading to disparities in readiness.

Limited training can result in reduced preparedness, particularly in complex or unpredictable project environments. Investing in comprehensive training programs tailored to specific project contexts could empower teams and improve outcomes.

4) Operating in Conflict-Prone Areas

Many respondents indicate that their projects operate in areas prone to conflict. This suggests that the sample is predominantly involved in high-risk environments where external factors, such as political instability or security issues, are a constant concern.

Working in conflict-prone areas necessitates not only robust risk management but also an understanding of local dynamics and contingencies to ensure project sustainability and stakeholder safety.

5) Stakeholder Withdrawal

Stakeholder withdrawal appears to be a rare occurrence, with minimal variability in responses. This indicates strong stakeholder engagement and alignment with project goals in most cases.

Stable stakeholder support reflects effective communication and shared interests. However, projects should remain vigilant to prevent potential withdrawal, as it could significantly impact resource availability and project credibility.

6) Cultural Factors Affecting Success

Cultural considerations are acknowledged as a potential challenge to project success. This underscores the importance of understanding local customs, norms, and values to ensure the project's relevance and acceptance.

Projects that neglect cultural factors risk alienating local communities or encountering resistance. Incorporating cultural sensitivity into project design and implementation can foster trust and enhance outcomes.

Tab 4.6: Evaluation and Monitoring

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min imu m	Max imu m	Mea n	Std. Deviati on
were the evaluation result communicated to the projects donor and funders	64	4	5	4.50	.504
do you establish clear performance indicators to measure project success	64	2	5	4.23	.729
Do the performance indicators being monitored on regular basis	64	1	5	3.95	.844
has your project been evaluated at any point during implementation	64	4	5	4.47	.503
were your project activates aligned with the objectives outlined in the project	64	3	5	3.89	.945
did your project meet its overall goals and objectives	64	3	4	3.88	.333
Valid N (list wise)	64				

Source: Survey data (2024)

1) **Communication of Evaluation Results to Donors and Funders**

Responses show that there is relatively little variance in the way evaluation results are shared with funders and contributors. This implies that the projects place a high value on accountability and

35

openness.

In addition to fostering confidence among stakeholders, open communication of results promotes continued funding and collaboration opportunities. This procedure is a reflection of established reporting systems.

2) **Establishing Clear Performance Indicators**

Clear performance indicators are confirmed by the majority of respondents, indicating that initiatives often have a clear framework for gauging success. Slight variation, however, suggests

that certain initiatives may not be fully explicit or rigorous in establishing these metrics.

Indicators that are well-defined are essential for coordinating project activities with goals. More efficient monitoring and assessment are made possible by this approach, which aids in determining both areas of success and room for development.

3) Regular Monitoring of Performance Indicators

Performance indicators are monitored regularly, though responses suggest this is less consistently practiced compared to their establishment. Some projects may face challenges in implementing regular monitoring due to resource or operational constraints.

Regular monitoring is key to adaptive management, allowing projects to respond to issues as they arise. Strengthening this practice can enhance overall project effectiveness and learning.

4) **Evaluation during Project Implementation**

The overwhelming majority of responses attest to the fact that projects are assessed while they are being implemented. This constancy is indicative of a robust culture of continuous evaluation to guarantee that initiatives stay on course to meet their goals. Mid-project assessments offer vital information that might guide required modifications and enhance results.

5) **Activities and Objectives Alignment**

The majority of participants concur that project activities are in line with the stated goals. The replies, however, exhibit greater variability, indicating that unanticipated events or changes in priorities may cause some initiatives to become misaligned.

In order to stay focused and produce the desired outcomes, actions and objectives must be in line. Projects can remain on track even in dynamic situations with the support of periodic reviews of this alignment.

6) **Achievement of Overall Goals and Objectives**

Although there is little diversity, the replies show a high degree of objective attainment. This implies that the majority of projects achieve their aims, but obstacles or predetermined limitations may limit the margin for going above and beyond.

Achieving objectives is a sign of good preparation and execution. The modest limitation in variability,

however, may indicate conservative goal-setting or persistent obstacles that prevent full potential attainment.

The information shows that when it comes to project implementation, responsibility, openness, and organized management techniques are clearly prioritized. Although there are clear benefits such goal alignment and evaluation communication, there seems to be a relative lack of regular performance indicator monitoring. Improving this element may facilitate adaptive management and lead to improved long-term results.

Tab 4.7: External Factors

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
to what degree do political changes impacted the progress of your project	64	4	5	4.44	.500
impact of socio cultural and structural challenges to your project	64	2	5	3.89	1.025
to what extent inflation fluctuation impacted the project	64	3	5	4.14	.710
does your project consider environment sustainability in its design and implementation	64	4	5	4.42	.498
Impact of environment condition disrupted the Project	64	4	5	4.67	.473
Valid N (list wise)	0				

Source: Survey data (2024)

1) Political Changes Impacting Project Progress

There is minimal fluctuation in the responses, which show that political shifts significantly affect project progress. Almost majority of the respondents concur that political changes have a significant

37

impact.

Projects work in settings where advancement may be significantly impacted by political stability or modifications to laws, policies, or governance. This emphasizes the necessity of flexible tactics and backup plans to deal with political unpredictability.

2) Structural and Sociocultural Difficulties

The responses are more diverse than for other criteria, sociocultural and structural elements are acknowledged as having an impact on project success. This implies that, depending on the local context, some initiatives may be more impacted than others.

Project implementation may be hampered by social dynamics, cultural norms, andStructural obstacles. These problems can be lessened and acceptance and influence can be increased by designing programs to address certain sociocultural situations.

3) Impact of Inflation and Economic Fluctuations

Although somewhat more variable, economic factors—in particular, changes in inflation—are thought to have an impact. This suggests that although inflation has an influence on projects in general, the extent of that impact may vary depending on variables including project size, funding stability, and financial management.

Planning can be disrupted and finances strained by economic uncertainty. Inflationary effects can be controlled with the aid of flexible budgeting techniques and sound financial forecasting.

4) Environmental Sustainability in Design and Implementation

Responses are quite consistent, indicating that environmental sustainability is taken into account extensively while designing and implementing projects. This shows a great dedication to including environmental factors into project planning.

By bringing projects into line with international trends and guaranteeing long-term profitability, this emphasis reflects a growing understanding of the significance of sustainability. Additionally, it shows compliance with environmental compliance regulations and donor expectations.

5) Environmental Conditions Disrupting Projects

Projects are said to be significantly and consistently impacted by environmental interruptions like severe weather or natural catastrophes. Almost majority of the

Respondents concur that these conditions have a significant impact.

In order to lessen the effects of environmental disturbances, this research emphasizes the significance of resilience planning and adaptive strategies. To protect their success, projects need to include risk mitigation techniques like climate adaption and disaster readiness.

According to the statistics, external elements are crucial to the success of a project, particularly those that are political, environmental, and economic. Even if a lot of initiatives show a great commitment to sustainability, external interruptions present difficulties. Adaptive designs, adaptable financial management, and in-depth cultural knowledge are crucial for enhancing resilience.

Tab 4.8: Measurement of project success

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
stakeholder satisfaction on your project	64	3	5	4.44	.588
project product quality	64	4	5	4.78	.417
on budget delivery	64	3	5	4.34	.821
on time delivery	64	2	5	3.89	.928
Valid N (list wise)	64				

Source: Survey data (2024)

1) Stakeholder Satisfaction

The majority of stakeholders are quite happy with the initiatives, as evidenced by the extremely high rating of stakeholder satisfaction with little variation.

Strong project alignment with stakeholder expectations and good communication are indicators of high stakeholder satisfaction. This points to a successful stakeholder engagement plan that fosters long-term cooperation and trust.

2) Product Quality

With virtually little variation in replies, the project's outputs or products are regarded as being of extraordinarily high quality. This suggests that almost everyone believes that the quality of the products is excellent.

Superior results enhance the project's legitimacy and lasting influence. This finding implies that quality control procedures, which are essential to project management success, are given a lot of attention.

3) On-Budget Delivery
Although there is a little more fluctuation than with other measures, delivery within budget is consistently accomplished. This implies that although the majority of projects remain within their allocated budget, some encounter difficulties with financial management or incur cost overruns.

One important sign of effective planning and resource use is on-budget delivery. Enhancing financial control, monitoring, and forecasting systems may be necessary to address the variability.

4) On-Time Delivery

Compared to other metrics, timely delivery has greater variability, with certain projects having difficulty meeting deadlines. This component seems to be a relative weakness, even though the average ranking is above moderate.

Delays in delivery could stem from various factors such as resource constraints, unforeseen risks, or inefficient processes. Addressing this gap might involve better scheduling, risk management, and contingency planning to ensure timely completion.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Findings and Conclusion

5.1 Findings

The overall findings of factors affecting project performance is can be summarized as follows:

- **Organizational capacity Significance**

Project success was found to be significantly influenced by organizational capacity, which includes leadership, human resources, and financial stability. VSF Germany showed strengths in staff knowledge and dedication to project objectives. But regional differences in leadership effectiveness and training accessibility pointed to areas that needed work. The ability of the team and effective leadership were found to be essential components for accomplishing project objectives.

Furthermore, it became clear that resource allocation had a significant impact on project performance. NGOs are better positioned to accomplish project goals when they utilize resources both human and financial effectively. According to the report, a lack of resources frequently results in project delays and lower quality, highlighting the necessity of strategic resource management.

Also feedback mechanisms play a part in adaptive project management. Continuous improvement requires the capacity to collect and evaluate input from project participants and employees.

- **Communication and Stakeholder Engagement**

Communication, as a critical factor for project implementation, is identified by the respondents as essential for the success of projects at VSF Germany. The absence of a well-written communication procedure and policy, ineffective communication among project staff, improper exchange of information among stakeholders, and a lack of timely access to necessary information are noted as significant challenges. Ensuring proper feedback systems, the availability of information for decision-making, and the use of project management tools are seen as vital to improving project outcomes.

Stakeholder engagement proved pivotal in enhancing project success. The involvement of local communities, donors, and governmental bodies ensured alignment with needs and priorities. However, issues such as inadequate transparency in resource distribution and inconsistent feedback mechanisms undermined the effectiveness of stakeholder relationships in some contexts. According to the results, NGOs with well-established feedback mechanisms are more likely to improve project outcomes and adjust to obstacles. This underscores the importance of refining engagement practices.

- **Risk Managements**

Risk management is pivotal for ensuring project success, especially in volatile environments like Ethiopia. While the study highlights strengths in risk identification and documentation, inconsistencies in regular risk reviews and limited staff training expose projects to unanticipated threats. Practical gaps,

including reactive rather than proactive approaches, were evident in projects operating in conflict-prone regions. Incorporating systematic risk reviews, culturally sensitive strategies, and comprehensive training programs will enhance teams' preparedness and foster resilience. By embedding risk ownership and leveraging technology for monitoring, NGOs can ensure adaptive management and minimize disruptions effectively.

5.2 Funding or Financing

The availability and management of funding significantly influence project outcomes, with adequate and predictable disbursements ensuring smooth implementation. Findings reveal high satisfaction with fund predictability, aligning with best practices outlined in financial management literature. However, disparities in budgetary autonomy and financial decision- making suggest challenges in resource control at different project levels. Addressing these gaps through enhanced transparency and empowerment of project teams can improve financial efficiency and stakeholder trust. Additionally, contingency planning for economic fluctuations, such as inflation, is critical to safeguarding project sustainability. Streamlining resource allocation and fostering openness in budget utilization will strengthen accountability and promote long-term project success.

- **Efficacy of Monitoring and Evaluation**

While VSF Germany employed robust monitoring and evaluation systems, inconsistencies in implementation across projects were noted. Clear performance indicators and regular assessments were instrumental in aligning projects with organizational goals. However, gaps in the frequency and comprehensiveness of these evaluations occasionally led to missed opportunities for mid-course corrections.

5.3 Impact of External Challenges

External factors such as political instability, cultural barriers, and environmental risks were recurrent themes in the study. Political changes often disrupted project timelines and resource allocation, while cultural and structural barriers limited outreach and stakeholder satisfaction. VSF Germany's operations in environmentally fragile and conflict-prone regions added layers of complexity, necessitating resilience and adaptability in project planning.

Socio-Cultural Challenges

Effective project implementation at VSF Germany has also been hindered by various socio- cultural factors, including:

✔ Community resistance and dependency syndrome among beneficiaries and stakeholders

✔ Poor attitudes towards sustainability and change

✔ Deep-rooted traditions and unhelpful practices, such as wrong beliefs and opinions that challenge development

✔ Illiteracy and the impact of climate change

✔ Differences in family background, religion, lifestyle, and geographic location among staff

✔ Variances in political ideologies and political instability.

The study further identified the following issues as significant obstacles to effective project implementation:

✔ Lack of trust between NGOs and the government, leading to restrictive formal and informal policies

✔ Projects and development programs initiated by donors are often highly specific in scope, limiting their ability to address broader societal challenges

5.4 Conclusion

The study's objective was to determine the internal and external factors that affect project performance. Variables like (Organizational capacity, Risk Management, Monitoring & Evaluation, socio-cultural, political aspects affect project outcomes) the study's findings led to the following conclusions;

The study found that project performance is strongly impacted by organizational capacity, stakeholder involvement in overall project process, Strong and timely M&E, Systematic Risk management, and also socio norms –cultural values economical condition and political stability of the project execution. These variables were found to be significant predictors of project success. The findings indicate that increased focus on Risk Management, nurturing a supportive organizational culture, practicing Stakeholder engagement, and ensuring sufficient resource allocation will lead to improved project performance. Therefore, integrating and enhancing these factors is essential for ensuring successful project outcomes and advancing organizational objectives at VSF Germany.

5.5 Recommendation

Based on the findings of the analysis and the conclusions reached, the following suggestions are made:

The study found that capacity building has a positive and statistically significant effect on project performance. Accordingly, it is recommended that organizations like VSF Germany prioritize comprehensive staff training programs to address competency gaps in project management, cultural sensitivity, and risk mitigation. Leadership development programs should also be introduced to enhance adaptive decision-making skills and improve team motivation and performance. The study highlights the importance of continuous learning for project success. VSF Germany should develop a centralized repository of best practices and lessons learned to guide future projects. Establishing cross-project learning platforms will foster peer learning and enhance collective expertise across teams.

The study revealed that transparency and stakeholder engagement significantly contribute to project success. VSF Germany should establish clear communication mechanisms to ensure the timely sharing of project updates and resource allocation details. Formalizing feedback systems that involve beneficiaries, donors, and partners will also strengthen collaboration and improve project outcomes.

Institutionalizing regular monitoring and evaluation processes with standardized practices can help ensure consistency in performance tracking. VSF Germany should leverage advanced data management tools to enable real-time analysis and proactive project adjustments, ultimately improving resource management and decision-making.

Given the external risks identified, it is recommended that the organization develop resilience plans that account for political, environmental, and socio-cultural challenges. Engaging local communities as partners in project planning and implementation will enhance acceptance and the sustainability of interventions. Sustainability principles must be integrated into all phases of project design and execution to ensure environmental responsibility. VSF Germany should also promote innovation by adopting digital tools such as mobile applications for project tracking and virtual training platforms to improve efficiency and reach.

Policy engagement and collaboration with government and international bodies are crucial for creating a supportive operational environment. The organization should advocate for policies that stabilize NGO operations and align resources with national development goals for better synergy and impact.

Financial risk management is critical for project performance. The organization should implement flexible budgeting systems that account for inflation and unforeseen expenses. It is also recommended that VSF Germany diversify its funding sources by exploring public-private partnerships and new grant opportunities to reduce donor dependency.

The study emphasizes how crucial it is for NGOs to manage their projects using an integrated strategy. The resilience, adaptability, and effectiveness of organizations such as VSF Germany can be enhanced by tackling both internal dynamics and external issues. The suggestions made give a road map for enhancing stakeholder trust, improving project performance, and guaranteeing the sustainability of interventions. NGOs can accomplish their short-term aims and make a substantial contribution to long-term development objectives by using creative approaches, open practices, and ongoing learning.

5.6. Areas for Further Research

This study was limited to VSF Germany, one of many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Ethiopia. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all NGOs in the country. It is recommended that further research be conducted to explore the factors affecting project performance across various NGOs in Ethiopia. Additionally, this study relied solely on questionnaires for data collection due to accessibility constraints. Future research should consider using diverse data collection methods to better assess the impact of various factors on NGO performance in Ethiopia.

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Questionnaire

DEAR SIR/MADAM

My name is Dagmawit Abraham, a master's student in Project Management at Saint Mary's University. I am conducting research for my thesis titled "Factors Affecting Project Performance in VSF Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)." As part of this study, I have developed a survey to gather insights on related topics. I kindly request your participation in completing the survey, which would greatly contribute to the success of this research.

Your responses are crucial for ensuring the accuracy of the analysis. Please rest assured that all your answers will remain strictly anonymous and confidential. The data collected will be accessed solely by the researcher and the thesis supervisor and will be handled with the highest level of discretion. Your time and input are deeply appreciated.

Thank you for your cooperation and time. Instructions

For certain questions, you are required to choose by ticking (√) one answer among the alternatives. For certain questions, you are encouraged to specify other alternatives in the space provided or to fill the blank spaces. Also feel free to write helpful comments where appropriate in the margins.

Part 1

1.   In which location do you carry out your project?

……………………………………………………………………………………

2. What is your gender?

Male ☐ Female ☐

3. Age _____

4. What level of education have you attained?

a) 0-level   ☐

b) Certificate ☐

c) Diploma   ☐

d) Bachelor 's Degree ☐

e) Master 's Degree ☐

f) Doctorate ☐

5. How many years have you been in the Ngo sector? _____

6. How many years have you been at the organization? _____

7. What is your position in the organization?

a) Top Management	
b) MEL officer(Monitoring, Evaluation and learning officer)	
c) Project Manager	
d) Project Coordinator	
e) Finance Manager	
f) Project office Team-Member	

g) Others (please specify)_____

8. Of the following, in which sector does your project fall?

a. Agriculture ☐

b. Education ☐

c. Health ☐

d. Environment ☐

e. Relief ☐

f. Micro finance ☐

g. Other_____

9. How many projects have you work on?

a. 1 – 5 projects ☐
b. 5 – 10 projects ☐
c. 10 – 20 projects ☐

d. Over 20 projects ☐

10. What is the size of your project's staff?

a.   1 – 5
   people   ☐

b.   5 – 20
   people   ☐

      c.20 – 50 people   ☐

d. Over 50 people ☐

Part 2

In the following tables please mark down your answer based on the following assumption

1. Not at All

2.   To a Small Degree

3.   Neutral

4.   To a Moderate Degree

5.   To a Significant Degree

Included Questions	NA	SD	N	MD	S I
Human resource management	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
Familiarity with core duties and responsibilities					
Planned specialized training programs					
Are training programs aligned with the organization's goals					
Appropriate technology					
Do you believe there is sufficient Skilled personnel					
Do you have the resources and tools you need to improve your skills					

Included Questions	NA	SD	N	MD	SI
Communication	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
Is there written communication procedure and policy					
Do you think there is effective communication among project staff					
Is there exchange of information among Stakeholders					
Do you get or give feedback to/from project staff to/from users					
Availability of information for decision- making					
Are cultural barriers affecting the project's communication and outreach efforts					
Does the organization provide opportunities for continuous professional development					

Included Questions	N A	SD	N	MD	S I
Stakeholder requirement	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
Does the project lifecycle include a well- defined and recorded plan for engaging stakeholders?					
Is there well known reporting formats and requirement					
To what degree stakeholders' expectations, needs are incorporated into the project planning process?					
How much have stakeholders participated in the project's decision-making processes					
Does the project provide openness to stakeholders about the distribution of resources, budgeting, and decision-making					
Do stakeholders have the means to hold the project responsible for its results and performance					

Included Questions	NA	SD	N	MD	S I
Risk Management	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
Were potential risks identified and documented during the project planning phase					
Are risks regularly reviewed and updated throughout the project lifecycle					

Are staff or key team members adequately trained to handle unforeseen challenges					
Does the project operate in areas prone to conflict or political instability					
Have any stakeholders withdrawn their support for the project?					

Are there cultural factors that could limit the success of the project?					

Included Questions	NA	SD	N	MD	S I
Project Monitoring and Evaluation	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
Do you established clear performance indicators to measure project success					
Do the performance indicators being monitored on a regular basis (e.g., weekly, monthly)					
Has your project been evaluated at any point during its implementation					
Were your project activities aligned with the objectives outlined in the project proposal					
Did you project meet its overall goals and objectives					
Were the evaluation results communicated to the project's donors and funders					

Included Questions	NA	SD	N	MD	SI
External Factors	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
To what degree do political changes (e.g., government transitions, policy changes) impacted the progress of your project					
Impact of legal or regulatory requirements that have affected your project implementation					
To what extent inflation or currency fluctuations impacted the project budget					
Does your project consider environmental sustainability in its design and implementation					
Impact of environmental conditions (e.g., climate, weather, natural disasters) disrupted the project					

16.   Which of the aforementioned elements do you think is most important for projects to be implemented successfully inside your company, and why?

…..

Part 3

Questions on dependent variables

17.How do you measure project implementation practice/progress?

....

....

18.   Do you find it difficult to finish projects in the specified time and using the set resources?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If Yes, what is the common reason

....

....

19.   Which of the below factors were most indicative to you to show that a given project had been effectively implemented?

Project Implementation					
Project product delivery					
Sustainability of project benefits					
On-Budget delivery					
On-Time delivery					
Project product quality					
Stakeholder satisfaction					
Donor satisfaction					

20.   Which sociocultural elements influenced your organization's ability to implement projects successfully?

………………………………………………………………………………………

21.   Are there any additional elements that you would largely credit with your organization's successful project implementation?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………

Thank you for your Time