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Influence of Monitoring and Evaluation Planning Practices on Performance of Education Projects in Karongi District, Rwanda

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) planning practices on performance of education projects in Karongi District, Rwanda. The study adopted descriptive and correlational research designs within a mixed-methods approach. A sample of 187 respondents was selected from a target population of 350 using purposive, stratified random, and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings indicated that respondents agreed that M&E planning practices were implemented, with an overall mean score of 4.22. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between M&E planning practices and education project performance ($r = 0.895$, $p < 0.01$). The regression model explained 89.9% of the variation in project performance ($R^2 = 0.899$). Although M&E planning practices were closely associated with project performance, challenges remained in routine data collection, timely reporting, feedback mechanisms, and the systematic use of M&E findings to revise project plans. Education project performance was generally rated positively, particularly in learner achievement, innovative teaching practices, and adherence to project schedules. The study concludes that effective M&E planning is an important determinant of education project performance, as it supports implementation efficiency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. The study recommends strengthening M&E planning frameworks, establishing clear performance indicators and reporting schedules, and ensuring that monitoring findings inform corrective actions throughout project implementation. Further research should establish how specific dimensions of M&E planning influence education project outcomes in different contexts.

Keywords: *Monitoring and Evaluation Planning; Education Projects; Project Performance; Monitoring and Evaluation Practices; Karongi District.*

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1.0 Introduction

Globally, education is recognized as a fundamental driver of social development, economic growth, and human capital formation. Governments, international organizations, and development partners continue to invest in education projects to improve access, equity, teaching quality, infrastructure, and learning outcomes. However, the success of these investments depends not only on the availability of financial and human resources but also on the quality of project planning, implementation, and performance management. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) planning practices are particularly important because they provide the framework within which project objectives, performance indicators, baseline information, targets, monitoring schedules, and reporting responsibilities are defined.

The World Bank (2021) emphasizes that an effective results framework should establish measurable indicators, baselines, targets, and clear responsibilities for monitoring and reporting. Similarly, the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG, 2025) identifies the quality of results frameworks, monitoring arrangements, and the use of evidence for corrective action as important dimensions of project performance management. Consequently, effective M&E planning provides the foundation for tracking implementation progress, identifying performance gaps, and assessing whether education projects achieve their intended objectives.

International organizations, including the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), consistently emphasize results-based planning and performance measurement in development interventions. In particular, the World Bank (2023) recommends establishing a results framework based on a clear theory of change, measurable indicators, baseline information, realistic targets, and appropriate methods for verifying results. Such arrangements enable project managers assess progress against predetermined expectations and identify implementation gaps requiring corrective action. In addition, the IEG (2025) reports that more than one-third of World Bank projects continue to receive modest or negligible ratings for M&E quality, which shows that weaknesses in results frameworks and monitoring arrangements remain a persistent concern.

The OECD (2021) also emphasizes the importance of assessing development interventions against clearly articulated criteria, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. These principles apply to education projects, in which expected results include improved learner achievement, teacher capacity, school infrastructure, equitable access, and the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, M&E planning should be incorporated into project design from the outset rather than treated as an administrative activity introduced after implementation has begun. UNESCO's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, further demonstrates the importance of systematic planning and performance measurement. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS, 2025) provides education indicators covering learning outcomes, participation, completion, equity, teachers, and education financing, enabling governments and other stakeholders to assess progress toward international education targets. Nevertheless, the availability of indicators does not guarantee that education interventions will achieve their intended outcomes.

The Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2024) highlights the importance of educational leadership in supporting learning and strengthening the management of education

systems. Similarly, the OECD (2021) emphasizes that evaluation criteria should be applied thoughtfully throughout the intervention cycle to support credible assessments and informed decisions. For education projects, these considerations reinforce the need to define measurable objectives, establish baseline values, set realistic performance targets, and determine how progress will be assessed before implementation begins. Effective M&E planning therefore translates broad educational priorities into measurable project commitments and provides a basis for assessing implementation performance and the achievement of expected results.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, governments and development partners have introduced numerous education projects to address persistent challenges relating to access to education, teacher development, school infrastructure, learning quality, and educational inequalities. Despite these investments, considerable gaps remain in achieving foundational learning outcomes and ensuring that children complete their education with the competencies required for further learning. The African Union and UNESCO (2025), in their report on basic education completion and foundational learning in Africa, highlight persistent weaknesses in foundational learning outcomes across the continent.

These gaps reinforce the importance of establishing appropriate performance measures and using evidence to guide education interventions. M&E planning supports these efforts by defining realistic project targets, identifying appropriate indicators, establishing monitoring schedules, and assigning responsibilities for assessing implementation progress. The IEG (2025) similarly identifies clear monitoring responsibilities, consistent supervision, and the use of evidence for corrective action as characteristics associated with stronger project M&E systems. Accordingly, the performance of education projects depends partly on whether monitoring arrangements are adequately planned, aligned with project objectives, and supported by sufficient institutional capacity.

Experiences from countries such as Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria provide relevant reference points for examining M&E planning in African education systems. Education initiatives across the region commonly address curriculum reform, teacher professional development, school infrastructure, and expanded access to educational opportunities. These interventions require clearly defined objectives, appropriate performance indicators, realistic implementation schedules, and mechanisms for tracking progress. The World Bank (2021) explains that a well-developed results framework should specify the indicators used to measure outcomes, their baseline values and targets, and the methods and responsibilities for collecting and reporting information.

Similarly, UNICEF's revised Evaluation Policy (2023) emphasizes accountability, evaluation capacity, and the systematic use of credible evidence to support organizational learning and decision-making. These principles suggest that the existence of M&E structures alone is insufficient, since the quality of planning arrangements is equally important. In education projects, inadequate planning makes it difficult to assess whether implementation activities are progressing as intended, whether resources are being used efficiently, and whether project objectives are being achieved. Examining M&E planning as a distinct management practice can therefore help clarify its relationship with education project performance without assuming that all M&E activities have identical effects.

Within East Africa, countries such as Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda have incorporated monitoring, performance assessment, and evidence-based planning into their education sector

policies and programmes. These efforts reflect the need to connect national education priorities with measurable targets, implementation activities, and mechanisms for reviewing progress. The UIS (2025) emphasizes the importance of comparable education indicators for monitoring progress towards SDG 4, while the OECD (2021) highlights the importance of aligning evaluation approaches with the objectives and intended results of development interventions.

In decentralized education systems, where implementation responsibilities are shared among central government institutions, local authorities, schools, and development partners, clear planning arrangements are particularly important. Such arrangements establish who is responsible for monitoring specific activities, when progress should be assessed, and which indicators should be used to determine whether targets have been achieved. The IEG (2025) further identifies clear roles and consistent supervision among the characteristics of stronger project monitoring systems. These considerations make M&E planning central to improving coordination, identifying implementation delays, and maintaining alignment between project activities and expected educational outcomes.

In Rwanda, education remains a strategic priority for human capital development and socioeconomic transformation. The Ministry of Education's Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2024–2029 establishes strategic priorities, sector outcomes, and performance targets intended to guide education development during the plan period (Ministry of Education [MINEDUC], 2024). The strategy also prioritizes strengthening and integrating education data systems to support evidence-based decision-making, accountability, and planning at different levels of the education system.

Furthermore, MINEDUC's *Education Statistical Yearbook 2024/2025* provides updated information on school infrastructure, learners, teachers, educational resources, and other sector indicators, including district-level information (MINEDUC, 2025). The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda's (NISR, 2025) *EICV7 Thematic Report: Education 2023/24* also provides recent evidence on educational attainment, school attendance, and literacy. Together, these sources underline the importance of reliable indicators and systematic performance measurement in understanding education sector progress. At the project level, effective M&E planning aligns individual interventions with national priorities by establishing measurable objectives, appropriate indicators, realistic targets, implementation timelines, and clearly assigned monitoring responsibilities.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

At the district level, M&E planning is especially important because education projects must respond to local priorities while contributing to national education objectives. In Karongi District, assessing the relationship between M&E planning practices and education project performance requires attention to how project objectives are defined, how performance indicators and targets are established, and how monitoring activities are scheduled and assigned. Rwanda's education statistical reporting provides a basis for examining district-level educational conditions and identifying relevant performance measures (MINEDUC, 2025). However, national and sector-level evidence cannot, on its own, establish the effectiveness of M&E planning in individual education projects in Karongi District.

Such an assessment requires context-specific empirical investigation. The World Bank (2023) emphasizes that indicators should be clearly defined, measurable, and linked to an intervention's

theory of change, while the IEG (2025) underscores the importance of effective monitoring arrangements and evidence-based corrective action. Accordingly, examining M&E planning in Karongi District can help establish whether planning arrangements are associated with the achievement of project objectives, adherence to implementation schedules, efficient resource utilization, and improvements in educational outcomes.

Although M&E planning is widely promoted in national and international frameworks, limited empirical evidence exists on how its specific components, including baseline studies, documented performance indicators, and monitoring schedules, relate to the performance of education projects at the district level in Rwanda. Most available studies have examined M&E practices in energy, construction, and enterprise development projects rather than education projects. This study addresses this gap by focusing on education projects implemented in Karongi District.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The study examined the effect of M&E planning practices on performance of education projects in Karongi District, Rwanda.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H0: M&E planning practices have no significant influence on performance of education projects in Karongi District, Rwanda.

2.0 Literature Review

This section presents the theoretical review, the empirical review, the research gap, and the conceptual framework that guided the study.

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Results-Based Management Theory

Results-Based Management (RBM) theory provides the principal theoretical foundation for this study. The theory holds that development interventions should be managed against clearly defined results, with performance measured through indicators, baselines, and targets established at the planning stage. The World Bank (2023) operationalizes this principle by recommending that M&E systems begin with a results framework anchored on measurable indicators, baseline information, realistic targets, and defined methods for verifying results. Similarly, the OECD (2021) advises that interventions be assessed against articulated criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, which presupposes that expected results are specified in advance. Empirical applications of the theory support its relevance to project performance. Jabongo (2025) reported that results-based monitoring was widely adopted among housing projects in Nairobi and was positively associated with project performance, although the fidelity of implementation and the application of feedback required improvement. In the context of the present study, RBM theory implies that education projects with clear objectives, documented indicators, baseline studies, and regular monitoring schedules are better positioned to track progress and to take corrective action. The theory therefore links the M&E planning practices examined in this study to the performance of education projects in Karongi District.

2.1.2 Theory of Change

The Theory of Change complements RBM theory by explaining how and why planned activities are expected to produce intended results. A theory of change describes the causal pathway from inputs and activities to outputs, outcomes, and long-term impact, together with the assumptions that underlie each link. The World Bank (2023) recommends that a results framework be built on a clear theory of change so that indicators measure the changes an intervention seeks to achieve. Applied to education projects, the theory requires implementers to specify how activities such as teacher training, infrastructure development, and the provision of learning materials are expected to improve learner achievement and teaching quality. M&E planning operationalizes this causal pathway by defining indicators, baselines, and monitoring arrangements for each stage of the results chain. This enables project teams to detect deviations from expected results at an early stage and to revise implementation strategies accordingly. The Theory of Change therefore explains why the quality of M&E planning is expected to influence the performance of education projects.

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical evidence from Rwanda indicates that M&E planning contributes to the performance of development projects. Gakomye and Njenga (2023) examined the link between M&E practices and the sustainability of an education project in Rwanda, which demonstrates the growing attention given to M&E in the education sector. Uwibambe and Njenga (2025) examined M&E practices in the Electricity Access Rollout Programme and found that M&E planning was positively correlated with project performance ($r = 0.632$), while baseline survey implementation showed a stronger correlation ($r = 0.832$). The M&E components examined jointly explained 73.1% of the variation in project performance, and both planning and baseline implementation were significant predictors. However, the study covered a census of 15 project staff in the energy sector, which limits the generalization of its findings to education projects.

Habarurema and Akims (2024) assessed the effect of M&E practices on the performance of construction projects in Gasabo District, Rwanda, using a descriptive design and 263 respondents. The study found that M&E planning had a positive and significant effect on project performance, while M&E information and communication technology management had the strongest effect and M&E staff skills management had no significant effect. Similarly, Iribagiza and Kirabo (2024) examined project management practices in a USAID-funded project in Rubavu District and reported that planning, risk management, and M&E significantly influenced project success. Together, these studies confirm the relevance of planning within M&E systems, although they addressed construction and donor-funded projects rather than education projects.

Uwitonze and Dushimimana (2026) investigated project management practices and the success of a business development support services project in Rusizi District, Rwanda. Using a descriptive and correlational design with a census of 129 respondents, the study found that project management practices explained 79.8% of the variance in project success. Project planning and design, implementation, and M&E each had a significant positive effect, with implementation emerging as the strongest predictor. The study demonstrates that planning and M&E operate as complementary practices that jointly shape project outcomes. Its design closely resembles that of the present study, which strengthens the basis for comparing findings, although its focus was enterprise development rather than education.

Within the education sector, Ndayisaba and Njenga (2026) assessed the effectiveness of results-based M&E on school performance in public secondary schools in Rulindo District, Rwanda, using a mixed-methods design with 185 respondents. The study found that, when effectively implemented, results-based M&E improved transparency, supported evidence-based decision-making, and strengthened institutional performance. However, limited technical expertise, inadequate funding, insufficient training, and unclear performance indicators constrained its application. The study concluded that reliable baseline data and organizational capacity are critical for effective results-based M&E. These findings are directly relevant to the present study, as they identify baseline data and clear indicators as core planning requirements in education settings.

At the regional level, Masvaure and Fish (2022) examined M&E capacity strengthening in selected programmes in eight Anglophone African countries, including Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The study found that capacity strengthening initiatives were largely uncoordinated and focused mainly on individual skills rather than organizational systems, and that the effectiveness of such initiatives was rarely measured. This evidence suggests that weaknesses in M&E systems in the region often originate in inadequate planning of capacity and measurement arrangements. It further supports the observation of the IEG (2025) that the quality of results frameworks and monitoring arrangements remains a concern in development projects.

2.3 Research Gap

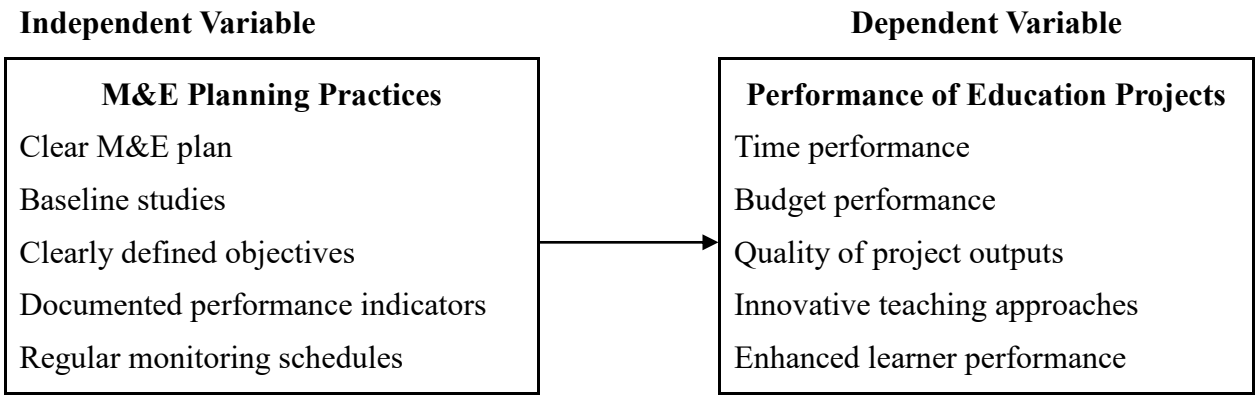
The reviewed studies demonstrate that M&E planning is positively associated with project performance in energy, construction, enterprise development, and school management contexts (Habarurema & Akims, 2024; Uwibambe & Njenga, 2025; Uwitonze & Dushimimana, 2026). However, most of these studies treated M&E planning as one of several practices, and few examined education projects at the district level. In addition, the education sector study by Ndayisaba and Njenga (2026) focused on school performance rather than project performance. The present study addresses these gaps by examining the specific components of M&E planning and their influence on the performance of education projects in Karongi District.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized relationship between M&E planning practices, as the independent variable, and the performance of education projects, as the dependent variable. M&E planning practices are measured through a clear M&E plan, baseline studies, clearly defined objectives, documented performance indicators, and regular monitoring schedules. Project performance is measured through time performance, budget performance, quality of project outputs, innovative teaching approaches, and enhanced learner performance.

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Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher, 2026

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a more complete understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021).

3.2 Research Design

The study used descriptive and correlational research designs. The descriptive design was used to describe the study variables, whereas the correlational design and regression analysis were used to examine the relationship between M&E planning practices and education project performance in Karongi District.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Karongi District, which is located in the Western Province of Rwanda.

3.4 Target Population

The target population for this study comprised 350 stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the implementation, management, and oversight of education projects in Karongi District, Rwanda.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula:

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

where n is the sample size, N = 350 is the target population, and e = 0.05 is the margin of error.

$$n = \frac{350}{1 + 350(0.05)^2} = \frac{350}{1.875} = 186.67 \approx 187$$

Therefore, a sample of 187 respondents was selected using purposive, stratified random, and simple random sampling techniques to ensure adequate representation of the relevant stakeholder groups.

3.6 Research Instruments

Both quantitative and qualitative instruments were employed to obtain comprehensive and triangulated information on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices and the performance of education projects in Karongi District, Rwanda. Structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from respondents, while interview guides were used to collect qualitative data from key informants.

3.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS through descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, and inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and regression analysis. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically, and the emerging themes were used to complement and explain the quantitative findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

4.0 Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the gender and age of respondents to provide background information and to contextualize the findings on M&E planning practices and the performance of education projects in Karongi District. The gender distribution of respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Male	109	58.3%	58.3%
Female	78	41.7%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data, 2026

Table 1 shows that 109 respondents (58.3%) were male, while 78 respondents (41.7%) were female. The results suggest that both genders were adequately represented in the study, although males constituted a larger proportion of the respondents. This distribution may reflect the composition of personnel involved in the implementation and management of education projects within Karongi District, where leadership and technical positions are often dominated by males. Nevertheless, the considerable representation of female respondents enhanced the inclusiveness of the study and allowed the findings to reflect diverse perspectives on M&E practices and project performance. The distribution of respondents by age is presented in Table 2.

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Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Category	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
20–30 years	42	22.5%	22.5%
31–40 years	78	41.7%	64.2%
41–50 years	49	26.2%	90.4%
51 years and above	18	9.6%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The results in Table 2 show that the largest proportion of respondents, 78 (41.7%), were aged between 31 and 40 years. This was followed by 49 respondents (26.2%) aged between 41 and 50 years, while 42 respondents (22.5%) were between 20 and 30 years. Respondents aged 51 years and above accounted for only 9.6% of the total sample. The findings indicate that most of respondents were within the economically active and professionally productive age groups. Individuals within these age brackets are likely to possess substantial experience in project implementation, supervision, and M&E activities. Consequently, their participation provided informed views on the effectiveness of M&E practices and their influence on the performance of education projects in Karongi District.

4.2 Descriptive Results on M&E Planning Practices

This section presents, interprets, and analyzes findings related to the independent variable of the study, namely M&E planning practices. The analysis focuses on the indicators of M&E planning identified in the conceptual framework, namely a clear M&E plan, baseline studies, clearly defined objectives, documented performance indicators, and regular monitoring schedules. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with statements measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The findings are presented using means and standard deviations to determine the extent to which M&E planning practices were implemented in education projects in Karongi District. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Respondents' Perceptions of M&E Planning Practices

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
The project has a clear M&E plan.	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.5%)	7 (3.7%)	127 (67.9%)	52 (27.8%)	4.227	0.364
Baseline studies were conducted before project implementation.	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.6%)	11 (5.9%)	114 (61.0%)	59 (31.6%)	4.226	0.450
Project objectives are clearly defined.	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (2.7%)	116 (62.0%)	66 (35.3%)	4.328	0.345
Performance indicators are well documented.	2 (1.1%)	8 (4.3%)	15 (8.0%)	109 (58.3%)	53 (28.3%)	4.124	0.586
Monitoring schedules are followed regularly.	2 (1.1%)	5 (2.7%)	15 (8.0%)	108 (57.8%)	57 (30.5%)	4.237	0.757
Average mean						4.228	
Valid N (listwise)	187						

Source: Primary Data, 2026

Table 3 presents the views of respondents on M&E planning in education projects in Karongi District. The findings indicate that respondents generally perceived M&E planning practices to be effectively implemented across the projects under study. Among the assessed statements, respondents most strongly agreed that project objectives were clearly defined, as reflected in the highest mean score (M=4.328, SD=0.345). This suggests that education projects established clear goals that guide implementation and facilitate performance assessment. Respondents also agreed that monitoring schedules were followed regularly (M=4.237, SD=0.757), that the project had a clear M&E plan (M=4.227, SD=0.364), and that baseline studies were conducted before project implementation (M=4.226, SD=0.450). These findings imply that considerable attention was given to planning activities that support effective M&E throughout project implementation. Furthermore, respondents agreed that performance indicators were well documented (M=4.124, SD=0.586), indicating that project stakeholders had access to measurable benchmarks used to track progress and evaluate outcomes. Considering the overall average mean of 4.22, the findings suggest that M&E planning practices were well applied in education projects, as the overall mean represents approximately 84.4% of the maximum attainable score. The standard deviation values, which ranged from 0.345 to 0.757, indicate a reasonable level of agreement among respondents regarding the existence and effectiveness of planning mechanisms.

The findings imply that effective M&E planning practices constitute a critical foundation for enhancing the performance of education projects in Karongi District. The presence of clearly defined objectives, comprehensive M&E plans, baseline studies, regular monitoring schedules, and well-established performance indicators provides project managers with reliable mechanisms for tracking implementation progress, identifying implementation gaps, and making timely corrective decisions. These planning practices are likely to contribute to improved project efficiency, accountability, and achievement of intended educational outcomes. Therefore, strengthening M&E planning should remain a strategic priority for education project implementers, as robust planning practices increase the likelihood of successful project implementation and sustainable project performance.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The findings show that M&E planning practices are closely associated with the performance of education projects in Karongi District. Most respondents agreed that education projects had clear M&E plans, well-defined objectives, performance indicators, and monitoring schedules. Interviews with key informants supported these findings and indicated that M&E planning usually begins during project design, when objectives, indicators, baseline studies, and implementation frameworks are established to guide project activities. The statistical results further confirmed this relationship. Correlation analysis revealed a very strong positive relationship between M&E planning practices and education project performance ($r = 0.895$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis also showed that M&E planning was a significant predictor of project performance ($\beta = 0.378$, $p < 0.001$). These results suggest that clear and well-organized M&E plans help project teams set priorities, allocate resources effectively, monitor progress, and remain accountable for achieving project targets. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H01) was rejected.

These findings are consistent with those of Uwibambe and Njenga (2025), who found that M&E planning and baseline survey implementation were significant predictors of the performance of energy projects in Rwanda. They also agree with Habarurema and Akims (2024), who reported a positive and significant effect of M&E planning on the performance of construction projects in

Gasabo District, and with Uwitonze and Dushimimana (2026), who established that project planning and M&E significantly influenced project success in Rusizi District. The findings further support the conclusion of Ndayisaba and Njenga (2026) that reliable baseline data and clear performance indicators are prerequisites for effective results-based M&E in education settings. Consistent with RBM theory, the results indicate that defining expected results at the planning stage enhances the capacity of project teams to track and improve performance. In the context of Karongi District, the findings underline the need to incorporate M&E planning into education projects from the outset. When project objectives, indicators, and monitoring schedules are clearly established, implementers have a stronger basis for assessing progress and identifying areas that need improvement. Overall, the findings suggest that effective M&E planning can contribute to better project implementation and the achievement of intended results. However, project performance may also depend on other factors, such as resource availability, stakeholder participation, and the capacity of project implementers.

5.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that M&E planning practices are important for improving the performance of education projects in Karongi District, Rwanda. M&E planning emerged as a significant predictor of project performance, which underscores the need for clear objectives, well-defined performance indicators, baseline studies, and regular monitoring schedules to guide project implementation and track progress. The study further concludes that timely data collection and reporting help project teams make informed decisions by providing reliable and timely information. However, challenges related to irregular data collection and inconsistent feedback sharing indicate that reporting systems and feedback mechanisms require further improvement. In addition, the findings highlight the importance of using M&E results to address challenges, revise project plans, and improve implementation. When monitoring findings are not adequately incorporated into decision-making, opportunities to correct problems and improve project outcomes are likely to be missed. Overall, the study concludes that better performance of education projects in Karongi District depends on effective M&E planning, reliable data collection and reporting, and the practical use of M&E findings. Strengthening these areas can help project implementers make better decisions, use resources more effectively, and achieve the intended project objectives.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that education project implementers in Karongi District develop comprehensive M&E plans at the design stage of every project. Such plans should specify clear objectives, measurable performance indicators, baseline values, targets, monitoring schedules, and the persons responsible for data collection and reporting, in line with the results framework guidance of the World Bank (2023). Project managers should conduct baseline studies before implementation and review performance indicators periodically to reflect changing project conditions. Performance indicators should be documented and shared with all implementers so that progress is assessed against common benchmarks. Karongi District authorities and development partners should strengthen routine data collection, timely reporting, and feedback mechanisms. Monitoring findings should be discussed in regular review meetings and used to revise project plans and to take corrective action during implementation. The Ministry of Education and district education offices should invest in the M&E capacity of project staff and school leaders through training and technical support, given that limited technical expertise and unclear indicators constrain effective M&E in Rwandan schools (Ndayisaba & Njenga, 2026).

Future studies should examine how specific dimensions of M&E planning influence education project outcomes in other districts and contexts, and should consider additional factors such as resource availability and stakeholder participation.

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