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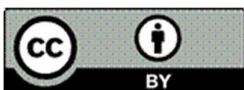
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ABTRACT

The performance of devolution policy harmonization programs is vital for effective governance and service delivery in a devolved system. This study examined the influence of context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) principles—specifically transparency, contextual understanding, and inclusion—on the performance of these programs in Kenya. The research was guided by the need to understand how these principles can lead to more effective and sustainable policy outcomes. Adopting explanatory sequential mixed method design with a mixed-methods approach, the study utilized a sample of 265 participants from a target population of 850 individuals involved in various devolution policy harmonization programs. The population included county officials, technical experts, and national government representatives. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire for quantitative analysis and virtual in-depth interviews for qualitative insights. The research instrument demonstrated high reliability, achieving a Cronbach's alpha of over 0.70. Data analysis employed both descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation, simple and multiple linear regression, and ANOVA). Null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. This combined effect of all three principles on performance was found to be even more substantial and statistically significant (R^2=0.498, $p<0.05$), accounting for approximately 49.8% of the variance in program performance. The study concluded that an integrated and holistic context-sensitive M&E process significantly enhances the performance of devolution policy harmonization programs. The findings are expected to inform policymakers and development practitioners on strategies to foster more effective, accountable, and sustainable governance in a devolved system.

Keywords: Context-Sensitive, M&E Principles, Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Governments and development agencies worldwide prioritize devolution policy harmonization programs to foster national cohesion, enhance service delivery, and promote equitable resource distribution, particularly in transitioning democracies facing governance fragmentation (Ochieng, 2025; KIPPRA, 2025; World Bank, 2025). This proactive approach addresses root causes such as policy disharmony, intergovernmental conflicts, and unequal resource allocation, which undermine devolved systems and exacerbate social exclusion (Ochieng, 2025; Council of Governors, 2025). In Kenya, devolution—enshrined in the 2010 Constitution—represents a transformative policy experiment aimed at decentralizing power to 47 counties, improving accountability, and bridging urban-rural disparities (Bazurli & Graauw, 2023). However, since its rollout in 2013, challenges like policy duplication, fiscal tensions, and inconsistent implementation have led to disharmony between national and county levels, resulting in inefficiencies estimated at 15-20% of devolved budgets annually (State Department for Devolution, 2024; Sub-Sector Report, 2025). These programs seek to align policies through collaborative mechanisms, capacity building, and integrated governance, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 16 on inclusive institutions (UNDP, 2025; KIPPRA, 2025).

Devolution policy harmonization programs in Kenya involve concerted efforts by the national government, counties, and partners to synchronize policies across levels, ensuring seamless service delivery in sectors like health, agriculture, and infrastructure (Council of Governors, 2025; World Bank, 2025). Key initiatives include the Second Kenya Devolution Support Program (2024-2028), which focuses on legal reforms, revenue mobilization, and intergovernmental coordination to mitigate conflicts arising from overlapping mandates (State Department for Economic Planning, 2025). Despite progress—such as a 25% increase in county revenue collection from 2020-2024—these programs grapple with political sensitivities, resource competition, and varying local capacities, necessitating adaptive strategies for sustainability (Devolution Conference, 2025; Ochieng, 2025). Effective harmonization not only reduces administrative burdens but also enhances citizen satisfaction, with surveys indicating a 30% improvement in perceived service equity in harmonized counties (KIPPRA, 2025).

In this study, Legitimacy Theory serves as the central anchoring framework, positing that organizations, including government entities, must align with societal norms to secure a "license to operate" (Bazurli & Graauw, 2023; Gulluscio, 2023; Buehrer, Schmidt, Rigler, & Palmen, 2021). Complementing this are Complexity Theory, which views devolution as a dynamic, non-linear system requiring adaptive responses (Jerab, 2025; Bohn, Macagnan, & Kronbauer, 2024), and Stakeholder Theory, emphasizing inclusive engagement for mutual gains (Freeman, 2023; Bazurli & Graauw, 2023). These theories collectively underscore the need for context-sensitive approaches in harmonization programs.

Research Problem

Kenya's devolution framework, operational since 2013, has devolved functions to counties, yet policy disharmony persists, with 70% of counties reporting conflicts over mandates like health and agriculture, leading to KSh 50 billion in annual inefficiencies (State Department for Devolution, 2024; Sub-Sector Report, 2025). The 2025 Devolution Conference highlighted unequal resource distribution and governance risks, with only 55% of harmonization initiatives

meeting targets due to weak M&E (Devolution Conference, 2025; World Bank, 2025). These issues manifest as service delays, fiscal disputes, and eroded trust, undermining Vision 2030 goals (KIPPRA, 2025). Addressing them demands context-sensitive M&E to align national-county policies effectively.

A contextual research gap exists in devolution studies, as many were conducted in non-African or centralized contexts like Europe or India, yielding findings mismatched to Kenya's ethnic-federal dynamics (Deepening Devolution, 2024; Devolution in Kenya, 2025). For instance, fiscal decentralization analyses overlook Kenya's post-2022 election volatilities, limiting applicability (Fiscal Decentralization Study, 2025). The current study addresses this by centering on Kenya's 2013-2025 devolution trajectory, incorporating county-level data for localized insights.

Substantial conceptual gaps plague research on context-sensitive M&E, particularly in unclear definitions of principles like transparency and inclusion, alongside vague links to policy outcomes (Trends in M&E, 2025; Toolkit on M&E, 2025). Studies often conflate general M&E with context-specific adaptations, restricting construct validity (BetterEvaluation, 2024). To address this, the current study provides explicit operationalizations, enhancing clarity and applicability to devolution harmonization.

There are significant theoretical gaps in devolution research, with many analyses lacking robust frameworks, often detached from social theories like legitimacy or complexity (Devolution Journey, 2023; updated 2025). This divorce limits explanations of intergovernmental dynamics, hindering theory elaboration (Ochieng, 2025). The current study bridges this by anchoring in Legitimacy, Complexity, and Stakeholder Theories, testing their fit to empirical data.

Documented methodological gaps include inadequate mixed-methods designs and non-representative sampling in devolution evaluations, failing to capture diverse county perspectives (State Department for Economic Planning, 2025; IIEP-UNESCO, 2025). Such flaws undermine generalizability, as seen in single-method studies ignoring qualitative nuances (Ozmen, 2025). The current study employs explanatory sequential mixed methods with stratified sampling, bolstering validity and relevance.

Based on these challenges and gaps, the overall research question for this study is: What is the relationship between context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation principles and the performance of devolution policy harmonization programs in Kenya?

Value of the Study
The research on context-sensitive M&E principles informs policy by revealing implementation challenges in devolution harmonization, suggesting solutions like enhanced stakeholder training and integrated frameworks, crucial for refining the Kenya Devolution Policy and Second Devolution Support Program (Kikechi & Odhiambo, 2025; Jerab, 2025). This evidence can guide the Council of Governors in addressing 2025-reported conflicts, leading to more cohesive national-county relations and equitable service delivery (Council of Governors, 2025; Sub-Sector Report, 2025). Ultimately, it supports Vision 2030 by providing actionable insights for policymakers to mitigate disharmony, fostering sustainable governance.

This study supports theory development by offering empirical data to test and refine Legitimacy Theory's application to policy contexts, alongside Complexity and Stakeholder

Theories (Gulluscio, 2023; Jerab, 2025; Freeman, 2023). It facilitates theory testing by assessing how these frameworks explain M&E-performance links in devolution, addressing gaps in Kenyan applications (Ochieng, 2025). Finally, it promotes theory elaboration by identifying nuances like cultural influences on inclusion, enriching broader institutional theories for future scholarship (KIPPRA, 2025).

The research promotes effective project management in devolution programs by advocating collaborative M&E, shared learning, and accountability, yielding inclusive decision-making and improved outcomes (Trends in M&E, 2025; Devolution Conference, 2025). Stakeholders can use findings to co-identify issues, analyze data, and implement corrections, enhancing sustainability amid Kenya's fiscal strains (World Bank, 2025).

Last but not least, this research suggests areas for further investigation, including extending analyses to private-sector roles in harmonization, exploring digital tools' impact on M&E, and dissecting factors like leadership in principle adoption (State Department for Economic Planning, 2025; Ozmen, 2025). It also calls for longitudinal studies on post-2025 performance and comparative analyses with other federal systems, strengthening devolution scholarship.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Foundation
The theoretical foundation of this study integrates Legitimacy Theory as the primary anchor, with Complexity Theory and Participatory Governance Theory as complements. These theories collectively frame how context-sensitive M&E principles foster legitimacy, navigate systemic complexities, and promote inclusive participation in devolution policy harmonization, ensuring programs align with societal expectations, adapt to dynamic environments, and engage diverse stakeholders for sustainable outcomes.

Legitimacy Theory
Legitimacy theory (Bazurli & Graauw, 2023, Bazurli & Graauw, 2023; Gulluscio, 2023; Buehrer, Schmidt, Rigler, & Palmen, 2021) assumes organizations must adhere to society's norms and values to maintain their social contract and "license to operate," acting in a way that is perceived as desirable and appropriate (Breakey, Wood, & Sampford, 2025; Gulluscio, 2023; Buehrer, Schmidt, Rigler, & Palmen, 2021). Key assumptions include the existence of an implicit social contract between organizations and society, the need for organizations to align their values with societal standards, and the ongoing nature of legitimacy, which requires continuous adaptation to changing societal expectation (Breakey, Wood, & Sampford, 2025; Gulluscio, 2023; Buehrer, Schmidt, Rigler, & Palmen, 2021).

Organizations and the society in which they operate are bound by an implicit social contract (Breakey, Wood, & Sampford, 2025; Gulluscio, 2023; Buehrer, Schmidt, Rigler, & Palmen, 2021). Society grants organizations the permission to exist and access resources, while organizations are expected to fulfill their obligations by contributing to societal well-being. For organizations to be considered legitimate, their actions and objectives must align with the prevailing norms, values, and beliefs within the social system (Breakey, Wood, & Sampford, 2025; Gulluscio, 2023; Buehrer, Schmidt, Rigler, & Palmen, 2021).

Organizations are motivated to act in ways that ensure they are perceived as legitimate by societal evaluators (Nishii & Leroy, 2022; Gulluscio, 2023; Buehrer, Schmidt, Rigler, &

Palmen, 2021). This is crucial for their survival and continued access to resources. Failure to comply with societal norms and expectations can result in sanctions, loss of social support, or even revocation of the organization's ability to operate (Lim & Young, 2021; Gulluscio, 2023; Buehrer, Schmidt, Rigler, & Palmen, 2021). Legitimacy is not static; it is time-dependent and context-specific. What is considered legitimate can change over time, requiring organizations to continually adapt to evolving societal values and demands (Nishii & Leroy, 2022; Gulluscio, 2023; Buehrer, Schmidt, Rigler, & Palmen, 2021).

Legitimacy theory is highly relevant to researching policy harmonization programs because it explains how programs gain acceptance and support (Jimenez, Pulikottil, Peres, Hojjati, & Barata, 2021; Zhao & Omran, 2025; Haack & Rasche, 2021), enabling their success by aligning their goals and practices with societal values, rather than relying on coercion. By adopting a legitimacy framework, researchers can understand the social construction of policy acceptance, analyze the processes of negotiation among stakeholders, and identify potential legitimacy gaps that could threaten the program's implementation and survival (Bohn, Macagnan, & Kronbauer, 2024; Zhao & Omran, 2025; Haack & Rasche, 2021).

For a policy to be considered legitimate, its goals and values must align with those of the society in which it operates (Haack & Rasche, 2021; Bohn, Macagnan, & Kronbauer, 2024; Haack & Rasche, 2021). Legitimacy theory helps researchers assess whether a harmonization program's objectives meet public needs and expectations, thereby avoiding threats to its survival and success (Haack & Rasche, 2021; Bohn, Macagnan, & Kronbauer, 2024; Haack & Rasche, 2021). Policy harmonization represents a strategic change initiative. Legitimacy theory provides a framework for analyzing the strategies organizations and governments use to manage this change, ensuring they maintain integration with the social system and gain the necessary societal approval.

Policy harmonization programs, which aim to align different policies, must be perceived as legitimate by a broad range of stakeholders. Legitimacy theory helps researchers understand how this acceptance is achieved, allowing for voluntary compliance rather than forceful imposition of policies (Bazurli & Graauw, 2023; Bohn, Macagnan, & Kronbauer, 2024, 1996; Haack & Rasche, 2021). Legitimacy is not a static state but an ongoing social process involving negotiation and interaction among various actors. Researching policy harmonization through this lens focuses on how legitimacy is constructed through dialogue and consensus-building among governments, organizations, and the public.

By understanding the sources of legitimacy challenges and the processes for managing them, policymakers can design more effective harmonization programs. This includes identifying how to foster perceptions of legitimacy among various stakeholders. Legitimacy theory helps to understand the pressure on governments and organizations to demonstrate their commitment to harmonize policies by reporting on their efforts (Haack & Rasche, 2021; Bohn, Macagnan, & Kronbauer, 2024; Haack & Rasche, 2021). This can reveal the extent to which a policy's implementation is transparent and accountable.

Complexity Theory
Complexity theory (Jerab, 2025; Valquaresma, de Paula, & Rodney, 2024; Le, Chopik, Shimshock, & Chee, 2022) explores the study of complex adaptive systems, where emergent patterns and behaviors arise from the non-linear interactions of many components. It focuses on concepts like emergence, self-organization, and adaptation, explaining how systems evolve and adapt without explicit design (Jerab, 2025; Valquaresma, de Paula, & Rodney, 2024;

Jimenez, Pulikottil, Peres, Hojjati, & Barata, 2021). This theory is applied in various fields, including organizational studies, economics, and even computational complexity theory, which analyzes the resources (time, space) required to solve problems.

Policy harmonization programs exist within complex adaptive systems involving numerous interacting agents and feedback loops (Jerab, 2025; Valquaresma, de Paula, & Rodney, 2024; Jimenez, Pulikottil, Peres, Hojjati, & Barata, 2021). Complexity theory provides concepts like self-organization and emergence to explain how these systems evolve in unpredictable ways, moving beyond simple cause-and-effect relationships. It challenges the traditional, linear approach to policy, recognizing that interactions are non-linear and can lead to unexpected outcomes (Sydenham, 2022; Valquaresma, de Paula, & Rodney, 2024; Le, Chopik, Shimshock, & Chee, 2022). This is crucial for harmonization efforts, which often involve multiple, sometimes conflicting, objectives and actors.

Complexity theory encourages a focus on the entire policy system rather than isolated parts, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of how interconnected elements (political, social, environmental) (Sydenham, 2022; Valquaresma, de Paula, & Rodney, 2024; Jimenez, Pulikottil, Peres, Hojjati, & Barata, 2021) influence harmonization efforts. Given the inherent unpredictability, the theory supports a pragmatic and iterative approach to policy, emphasizing ongoing adaptation and learning rather than seeking definitive, long-term control.

By providing a systemic framework, complexity theory facilitates the integration of diverse ideas and knowledge from various disciplines (Sydenham, 2021; Valquaresma, de Paula, & Rodney, 2024; Le, Chopik, Shimshock, & Chee, 2022), which is vital for addressing complex policy challenges like harmonization. It helps connect macro-level policy theories with micro-level mechanisms, offering insights into how individual interactions and behaviors contribute to larger systemic patterns in policy implementation and adaptation.

Participatory Governance Theory
Participatory governance theory (Bussu, Bua, Dean, & Smith, 2022; Huang, Aguilar, Yang, Qin, & Wen, 2021; Baldwin, 2020) emphasizes involving citizens and non-state actors in public decision-making to improve governance effectiveness and democratic outcomes. It challenges traditional top-down structures by promoting collaboration between the state and society through mechanisms like deliberation and communication to co-create policies and services that address complex societal issues. Key aims include enhancing citizen competence and empowerment, achieving better service delivery, and ensuring greater social equity and representation (Bussu, Bua, Dean, & Smith, 2022; Errichiello & Micera, 2021; Baldwin, 2020).

Participatory governance theory suggests that involving citizens in policy processes builds trust and legitimacy for government actions (Bussu, Bua, Dean, & Smith, 2022; Chu, Bian, & Yang, 2022; Baldwin, 2020). In the context of policy harmonization, this is vital for gaining buy-in from diverse groups affected by policies that may have previously been developed in silos. By integrating public input into policy design and implementation, participation can lead to more effective and context-specific policies (Errichiello & Micera, 2021; Huang, Aguilar, Yang, Qin, & Wen, 2021; Baldwin, 2020). Researchers can use this theory to study how citizen feedback in policy harmonization can identify gaps, integrate local knowledge, and improve the quality-of-service delivery.

The theory highlights how participatory mechanisms can make governments more responsive to citizen concerns (Errichiello & Micera, 2021; Huang, Aguilar, Yang, Qin, & Wen, 2021;

Baldwin, 2020). When citizens feel heard and their input is valued in policy-making, it fosters greater satisfaction and support for the government's efforts to harmonize different policies. Participatory governance emphasizes empowering citizens to become active in public life and contribute to policy development (Bussu, Bua, Dean, & Smith, 2022; Chu, Bian, & Yang, 2022; Baldwin, 2020). Researchers can investigate how these empowerment processes are critical for ensuring that the needs of marginalized groups are included in harmonization efforts.

By fostering constructive dialogue and negotiation between citizens and the state, participatory governance can help break patterns of confrontation and reduce the risk of conflict that can arise from unresponsiveness or lack of trust (Chu, Bian, & Yang, 2022; Bua & Bussu, 2020; Baldwin, 2020). This is particularly relevant when policies clash or create unintended consequences due to a lack of coordinated engagement. The theory often focuses on deliberative practices, which involve structured dialogue and discussion to reach informed consensus. Researchers can use these frameworks to analyze how deliberative forums contribute to developing common ground and shared understanding in policy harmonization initiatives.

Participatory governance theory is highly relevant to researching policy harmonization programs because it provides a framework for understanding how citizen engagement, deliberation, and responsiveness can improve the legitimacy, effectiveness, and equity of policies that often span multiple sectors or jurisdictions. By emphasizing citizen involvement at all stages, the theory helps researchers examine how collaborative processes can address diverse stakeholder needs, build trust, and foster shared ownership of outcomes, which are crucial for successful policy harmonization.

Empirical Literature Review
Transparency Principle in Context- Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation
Transparency is the principle of being open, honest, and clear by making information accessible to others so they can understand decisions, processes, and actions (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021; Breakey, Wood, & Sampford, 2025; Marcus, Monga Nakra, & Pollack Porter, 2023) Its key principles include accessibility, where information is easy to find; clarity, where information is communicated in an understandable way; and truthfulness, ensuring the information provided is accurate and honest (Cooper, Cohen, Huppert, Levine, & Fleeson, 2023; Le, Chopik, Shimshock, & Chee, 2022; Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021). Transparency helps build trust, fosters accountability, reduces uncertainty, and allows for informed decision-making (Breakey, Wood, & Sampford, 2025).

Transparency is a core principle of Context-Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation (Jimenez, Pulikottil, Peres, Hojjati, & Barata, 2021; Valquaresma, Paula, & Rodney, 2024; Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021; Breakey, Wood, & Sampford, 2025) because it fosters trust, accountability, and informed decision-making among all stakeholders by openly sharing program information, objectives, and results. CSME is about adapting monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to the specific local context, and transparency ensures that these culturally and socially relevant evaluations are understood and trusted by local communities and partners, promoting their ownership and facilitating continuous learning and improvement (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021; Breakey, Wood, & Sampford, 2025; Lansing et al., 2023).

In context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation, transparency means openly sharing clear, accessible, and understandable information about program implementation, findings, and decisions with all relevant stakeholders (Dexe, Franke, Nöu & Rad, 2020; Greenhalgh &

Manzano, 2021; Breakey, Wood, & Sampford, 2025), while also ensuring that M&E processes and conclusions are open to scrutiny. This principle is crucial in sensitive environments to build trust, promote accountability, and enable evidence-based learning and improvement by allowing stakeholders to understand the program's context and its performance within it (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021; Huang, Aguilar, Yang, Qin, & Wen, 2021).

Transparency in context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation matters because it builds trust, strengthens accountability, and ensures the relevance and ethical integrity of the M&E process (Dexe, Franke, Nöu & Rad, 2020; Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021; Kikechi & Odhiambo, 2025). It empowers stakeholders by providing clear information on data, findings, and the evaluation process itself, which promotes ownership, collaboration, and a shared understanding of results. By openly sharing both successes and failures, transparency contributes to organizational learning, better decision-making, and prevents the spread of biased information or unethical practices (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021; Huang, Aguilar, Yang, Qin, & Wen, 2021).

Integrating the principle of transparency into context-sensitive monitoring and evaluations (M&E) involves making M&E processes, data, and findings open, accessible, and understandable to relevant stakeholders (Lansing et al., 2023; Richard, 2024), while adapting M&E approaches to the specific social, political, and economic context of the project to ensure relevance and effective uptake (Cooper, Cohen, Huppert, Levine, & Fleeson, 2023; Kikechi & Odhiambo, 2025; Lansing et al., 2023). This is achieved by involving stakeholders in M&E design and implementation, sharing data openly and appropriately, providing clear communication about methodologies and results, and using contextually appropriate tools and methods.

Transparency is vital in policy harmonization for several key reasons: it builds public trust and legitimacy, enabling informed participation and dialogue, which in turn leads to better policy decisions (Wojtusiak, 2021; Cooper, Cohen, Huppert, Levine, & Fleeson, 2023; Kikechi & Odhiambo, 2025). Transparency also ensures accountability by deterring corruption and waste, and it allows for informed public discourse and pressure to correct policy errors. Ultimately, sharing information openly and acting in an open manner strengthens governance, fosters support for policies, and leads to more effective and equitable outcomes (Wojtusiak, 2021; Cooper, Cohen, Huppert, Levine, & Fleeson, 2023; Kikechi & Odhiambo, 2025).

Key elements of transparency in policy harmonization include the public's right to access information about policies, objectives, and fiscal activities; clear, understandable communication of policies and their impacts; open processes for decision-making and implementation; and mechanisms for public participation and feedback (Bazurli & Graauw, 2023; Bussu, Bua, Dean, & Smith, 2022; Lansing et al., 2023). Transparency also requires clear roles and responsibilities, assurances of integrity, and the disclosure of relationships with the private sector, all of which contribute to accountability and public trust (Bazurli & Graauw, 2023; Kikechi & Odhiambo, 2025; Lansing et al., 2023).

Contextual Understanding Principle in Context- Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation
Contextual understanding is the ability to interpret information by considering its surrounding circumstances, background (Lim & Young, 2021), and intent, going beyond surface-level meaning to grasp the full picture (Sasaki, Watanabe & Komanaka, 2024; Svensson, 2021). It involves recognizing how different elements—such as the linguistic context, the immediate situation, cultural background, and broader historical factors (Valquaresma, Paula, & Rodney, 2024; Jimenez, Pulikottil, Peres, Hojjati, & Barata, 2021)—shape a message's true significance.

This deeper level of interpretation is crucial for accurate communication, informed decision-making. (Sasaki, Watanabe & Komanaka, 2024; Svensson, 2021).

The key elements of contextual understanding involve considering the surrounding situation, background, and environment that gives meaning to information (Nishii & Leroy, 2022; Gesso & Lodhi, 2024). For example, in contextual inquiry, the core principles are Context, Partnership, Interpretation, and Focus, emphasizing observation in the user's natural environment and collaborative interpretation of their actions (Lim & Young, 2021; Svensson, 2021; Valquaresma, Paula, & Rodney, 2024). In broader terms, context includes cultural context, situational context, linguistic context, and historical context to grasp the full picture and avoid misinterpretation (Nishii & Leroy, 2022; Gesso & Lodhi, 2024).

Contextual understanding matters in context-sensitive environments, programs, and policies because it enables tailored and effective solutions by revealing the unique social, economic, cultural, political, and historical factors that influence outcomes (Gesso & Lodhi, 2024; Bešić, Diedrich & Karabegović, 2025). Without it, initiatives may fail due to being impractical, ineffective, or inappropriate for the specific circumstances, leading to wasted resources and missed opportunities for positive change (Gesso & Lodhi, 2024; Bešić, Diedrich, & Karabegović, 2025).

Contextual Understanding is a core principle of context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) (Jimenez, Pulikottil, Peres, Hojjati, & Barata, 2021; Bešić, Diedrich, & Karabegović, 2025) because it allows for the assessment of how a program's objectives, implementation, and outcomes are influenced by the unique environment, cultural factors, and external conditions within which they occur (Svensson, 2021; Bešić, Diedrich, & Karabegović, 2025). By appreciating the broader context, M&E can identify unexpected challenges or opportunities, ensuring that data collected is relevant and that conclusions are accurate (Valquaresma, Paula, & Rodney, 2024; Svensson, 2021), ultimately leading to more effective and sustainable programs (Richard, 2024; Nishii & Leroy, 2022). Contextual understanding involves recognizing that a program does not operate in a vacuum (Bešić, Diedrich, & Karabegović, 2025; Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021). Contextual understanding helps determine if project objectives remain relevant and aligned with the real needs of beneficiaries within their specific environment (Richard, 2024; Nishii & Leroy, 2022).

Contextual understanding is crucial for policy harmonization as it explains why policies work differently in various settings and helps tailor harmonization efforts to specific local conditions, values, and political realities (Lim & Young, 2021; Svensson, 2021), thereby increasing the effectiveness and sustainability of harmonized policies (Bazurli & Graauw, 2023; Bešić, Diedrich, & Karabegović, 2025; Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021). It ensures that policies are relevant, appropriately adapted, and realistically implemented, avoiding a "one-size-fits-all" approach that often fails to consider the unique macro and micro contexts of different regions or countries (Bešić, A., Diedrich, A., & Karabegović, D., 2025).

Prioritizing contextual understanding in policy harmonization is essential for creating effective, relevant, and implementable policies that are tailored to the specific cultural, political, and economic landscapes of the regions involved (Liu, Peng, Cao, Bo, Shen, Du & Zhang, 2024). Contextual understanding helps to identify potential barriers and opportunities (Bazurli & Graauw, 2023), ensuring that harmonization efforts resonate with local actors, align with existing power structures and resources, and ultimately lead to more successful outcomes by fostering buy-in and addressing practical challenges (Jimenez, Pulikottil, Peres, Hojjati, &

Barata, 2021; Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021).

Inclusion Principle in Context- Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation
Inclusion is critical in Context-Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) because it incorporates diverse perspectives, experiences, and needs into the M&E process, leading to more accurate data, relevant findings, and equitable outcomes (Kikechi & Odhiambo, 2025; Marcus, Monga Nakra, & Pollack Porter, 2023). This participatory approach fosters stakeholder ownership, enhances accountability, and ensures that interventions are effective, sustainable, and truly benefit all groups, especially marginalized ones (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021; Ahmad & Islam, 2024; Richard, 2024).

Inclusion matters because it fosters a sense of belonging and value for everyone (Ahmad & Islam, 2024), which is a universal human right and a fundamental aspect of well-being (Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021; Ahmad & Islam, 2024; Richard, 2024). Beyond individual dignity, inclusive environments cultivate innovation, creativity, and better problem-solving by bringing a wider range of perspectives and ideas to the forefront (Valquaresma, Paula, & Rodney, 2024; Richard, 2024). This leads to improved outcomes in various areas, from academic success and population health to achieving business goals and building more empathetic and tolerant societies.

The inclusion principle in context-sensitive M&E requires actively involving diverse stakeholders, disaggregating data to show differential impacts on various groups (like women, children, or marginalized communities) (Ahmad & Islam, 2024), and incorporating their unique perspectives and needs into every stage of the monitoring and evaluation process (Lansing et al., 2023; Ronda, Beanland, Whitehead, Sweeting, & Clubb, 2022; Torres-Ronda, Beanland, Whitehead, Sweeting, & Clubb, 2022). This approach ensures that M&E systems are equitable, accountable to affected populations, and provide evidence to address inclusion gaps and promote sustainable, contextually relevant interventions. (Ronda, Beanland, Whitehead, Sweeting, & Clubb, 2022; Ronda, Beanland, Whitehead, Sweeting, & Clubb, 2022; Torres-Ronda, Beanland, Whitehead, Sweeting, & Clubb, 2022) Key elements of the Inclusion Principle in context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) include stakeholder participation (Smith, Mendez, Poe, Johnson, Willson, Daniels & Skop, 2024) , local ownership, data disaggregation by various characteristics, tailored monitoring methods, inclusive indicators, ethical considerations, and learning from diverse perspectives to ensure M&E systems are relevant, effective, and sustainable for all groups, particularly marginalized ones (Ahmad & Islam, 2024).

In context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation, the inclusion principle ensures that the monitoring and evaluation process actively engages and incorporates the diverse perspectives(Smith, Mendez, Poe, Johnson, Willson, Daniels & Skop, 2024), needs, and experiences of all stakeholders, especially marginalized or vulnerable groups (Ryan, Greene, Lincoln, Matheson, Ronda, Beanland, Whitehead, Sweeting, & Clubb, 2022), to provide a comprehensive understanding of an intervention's impact and ensure it is effective, equitable, and accountable to the communities it serves. This involves participatory methods, beneficiary feedback mechanisms, and explicit consideration of how the intervention affects different groups, such as women, minorities, and children (Smith, Mendez, Poe, Johnson, Willson, Daniels & Skop, 2024).

The Inclusion Principle is vital for context-sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) because it ensures programs address the unique needs and circumstances of all individuals,

particularly marginalized groups (Ryan, Greene, Lincoln, Matheson, Lansing et al., 2023). By involving diverse stakeholders in the M&E process, context-sensitive approaches can identify hidden barriers, gather unique perspectives, and foster local ownership, leading to more relevant, effective, and sustainable interventions that genuinely serve the entire community (Smith, Mendez, Poe, Johnson, Willson, Daniels & Skop, 2024).

The inclusion principle is vital for context-sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) because it ensures that diverse perspectives and experiences are incorporated into the M&E process, (Ahmad & Islam, 2024) making the system more relevant, effective, and ethical by capturing a fuller picture of a project or program's impact and processes (Ryan, Greene, Lincoln, Matheson, Ronda, Beanland, Whitehead, Sweeting, & Clubb, 2022). By including all relevant stakeholders, an M&E system can better understand the specific needs and contexts of different groups, leading to more accurate data, improved decision-making, and greater accountability.

The Inclusion Principle is vital in context-sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for policy harmonization because it ensures that M&E systems capture the experiences and perspectives of diverse and marginalized groups (Ahmad & Islam, 2024), which is crucial for creating truly harmonious and equitable policies. By incorporating inclusion, M&E can identify unintended consequences, address implementation bottlenecks, ensure accountability to all stakeholders, and foster ownership (Breakey, Wood, & Sampford, 2025) of the policy harmonization process, leading to more relevant, effective, and sustainable outcomes for all involved. Inclusion broadens M&E to include the perspectives of all groups, especially those who are disadvantaged, marginalized, or traditionally excluded (Kikechi & Odhiambo, 2025). This provides a more complete picture of policy implementation and impact, rather than just focusing on dominant voices.

Implementing an Inclusion Principle within a context-sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework for policy harmonization programs faces challenges such as limited local participation, power imbalances, lack of culturally appropriate indicators and methods, insufficient pre-M&E analysis of local contexts and power dynamics, difficulties in accessing and disaggregating data for marginalized groups (Kikechi & Odhiambo, 2025), the need for flexibility, and potential cultural or logistical barriers that hinder meaningful data collection and engagement(Smith, Mendez, Poe, Johnson, Willson, Daniels & Skop, 2024). To strengthen the Inclusion Principle in context-sensitive M&E for policy harmonization, employ participatory approaches, build local capacity, foster adaptive management, ensure ethically sound data collection (Lansing et al., 2023; Bohn, Macagnan, & Kronbauer, 2024; Sydenham, 2022; Kikechi & Odhiambo, 2025)., and use inclusive indicators to integrate diverse perspectives, enhance data quality, and ensure that interventions are equitable and relevant to all stakeholders, especially marginalized groups (Breakey, Wood, & Sampford, 2025).

Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs in Kenya
Devolution policy harmonization programs and initiatives in Kenya started shortly after the 2010 Constitution, which established the new system of devolved governance. Key initiatives began with the 2013 elections and the subsequent establishment of 47 county governments (Marcus, Nakra, & Porter, 2023; Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021). The County Governments Act of 2012 was a significant step, followed by the development of the National Capacity Building Framework in 2013 (revised in 2015) to ensure a smooth and effective transition (Dushkova & Ivlieva, 2024). Organizations like the UNDP and the World Bank provided significant financial and technical assistance to support the complex process of policy harmonization and capacity building within the new devolved system.

Kenya's government and development partners focus on devolution policy harmonization to strengthen its implementation and address systemic challenges, ensuring effective service delivery, enhanced accountability, and reduced inequities by aligning national and county-level frameworks and fostering capacity development for all stakeholders (Marcus, Nakra, & Porter, 2023; Greenhalgh & Manzano, 2021). This support is crucial for accelerating the gains of devolution and building strong, transparent, and efficient governance structures at the local level. Harmonization helps align policies and resource allocation, leading to more effective and efficient delivery of services to citizens at the county level (Mauti, Gautier, Agbozo, Shiroya, Jessani, Tosun & Jahn, 2020). The focus on harmonization helps to tackle issues like weak institutional capacity, resource constraints, and fragmented intergovernmental relations that have hindered optimal implementation.

Key aspects of devolution policy harmonization in Kenya focus on aligning the national and county governments through structured dialogue, resource sharing, and capacity building to ensure effective and efficient service delivery as per the 2010 Constitution (Opiyo, Opinde & Letema, 2024; Boex & Smoke, 2020). Harmonization involves addressing challenges in institutional frameworks, resource allocation (financial and human), and inter-governmental relations to create a cohesive system where both levels of government support each other and serve citizens effectively. This also includes fostering public participation and ensuring county autonomy within a clearly defined constitutional framework. Key elements of Kenya's devolution policy harmonization programs include strengthening intergovernmental relations through collaborative frameworks, enhancing capacity development at both national and county levels (Opiyo, Opinde & Letema, 2024; Boex & Smoke, 2020), promoting public participation and accountability, and ensuring policy and legal reforms that support equitable and efficient service delivery. These efforts aim to harmonize the actions of national and county governments, prevent duplication of efforts, and ensure a consistent application of principles like transparency and inclusiveness across the devolved system (Opiyo, Opinde & Letema, 2024; Boex & Smoke, 2020).

Policy devolution harmonization in Kenya has yielded a mixed record of success, with promising strides in strengthening county capacity and enhancing local governance (Bigambo, 2022; Bohn, Macagnan, & Kronbauer, 2024; Busolo & Ngigi, 2020), but also facing persistent challenges in financing, service delivery, and coordination between national and county governments. While devolution has enabled the creation of powerful county governments and improved resource access for marginalized communities, it has been hampered by weak county-level institutions, inadequate resources, inconsistent service provision (Nishii & Leroy, 2022; Kikechi & Odhiambo, 2025), and issues like corruption, favoritism, and the persistence of national government interference in devolved functions.

Kenyan policy devolution harmonization programs have mixed results (Bohn, Macagnan, & Kronbauer, 2024; Achiba & Lengoiboni, 2020; Cooper, Cohen, Huppert, Levine, & Fleeson, 2023) due to unclear mandates, financial and resource allocation ambiguities, capacity constraints at the county level, weak governance and accountability mechanisms, ongoing intergovernmental conflict with the national government, and structural and design factors that hinder effective implementation (Bohn, Macagnan, & Kronbauer, 2024; Sydenham, 2022). While devolution has established powerful county governments and fostered improvements, challenges in these areas prevent consistent, positive outcomes across all devolved services and regions (Bigambo, 2022; Bohn, Macagnan, & Kronbauer, 2024; Busolo & Ngigi, 2020). There is a lack of clear demarcation between national and county governments on certain functions,

leading to overlap, conflict, and confusion in service delivery.

Harmonization programs in Kenya can be strengthened by enhancing collaboration and communication among stakeholders (Abdi, 2025; Muwonge, Kinuthia, Owuor & Williamson, 2022), establishing robust monitoring and evaluation systems, digitizing regulatory processes for interoperability, and fostering strong political will and leadership for cohesive policy implementation. Meaningful engagement with the private sector, civil society, and community representatives is crucial for developing inclusive, sustainable policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in program delivery (Opiyo, Opinde & Letema, 2024; Boex & Smoke, 2020).

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables **Dependent Variable**

M&E Transparency Principle in Policy Harmonization
• Open Communication
• Responsiveness
• Accessible Information
• Effective Communication
• Stakeholder Engagement
• Ethical Conduct

M&E Contextual Understanding Principle in Policy Harmonization
• Contextual Relevance and Effectiveness
• Cultural Sensitivity
• Understanding Constraints and Opportunities
• Adapting to Complex Environments
• Holistic Understanding
• Interconnectedness

M&E Inclusion Principle in Policy Harmonization
• Participation and Inclusivity
• Data Disaggregation
• Ethical Considerations
• Accessibility
• Localized Methods
• Accountability

Performance of Intergovernmental Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs in Kenya
• Devolution Policy Coherence
• Adoption of Common Devolved Policy frameworks
• Strengthened intergovernmental coordination
• Enhanced Citizen Participation
• Enhanced Service Delivery Harmonization
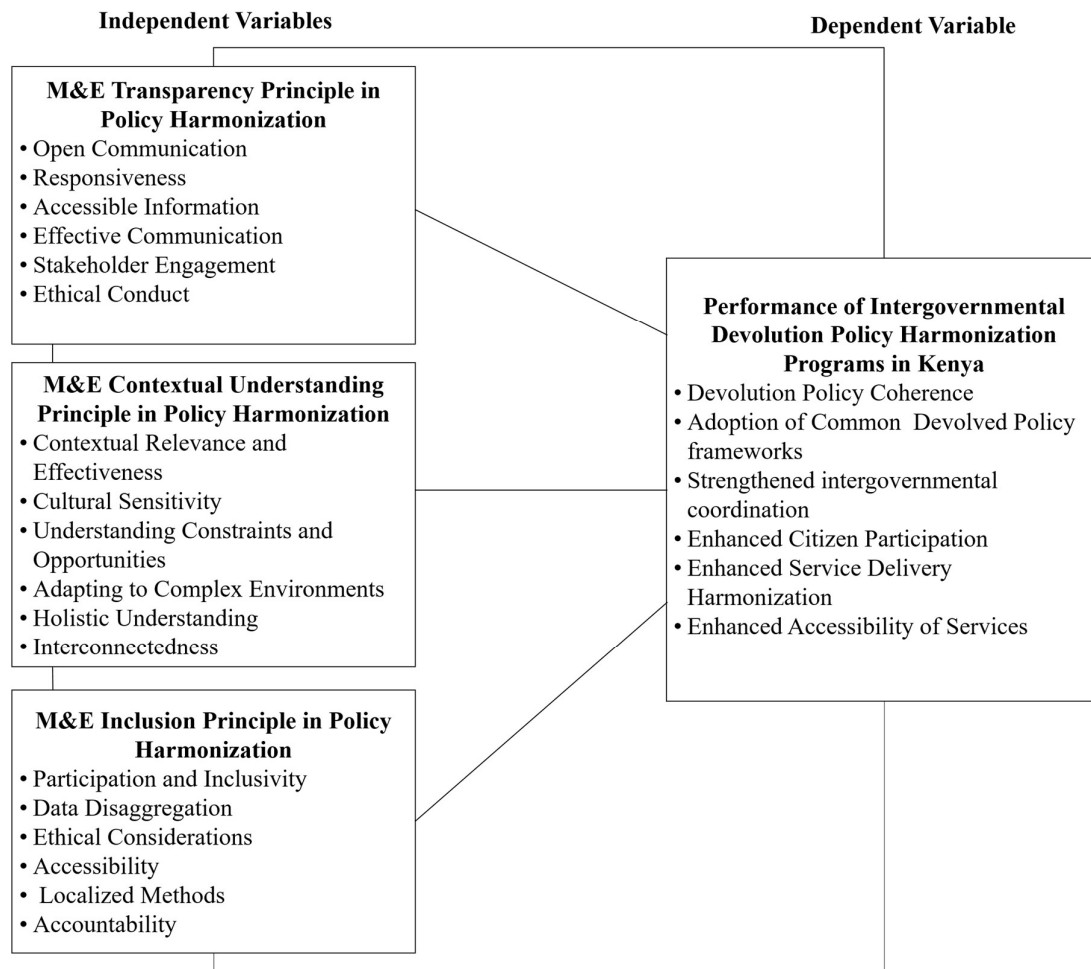• Enhanced Accessibility of Services

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research philosophy, design, population of study, sample size and sampling methods, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of data collection instruments, operationalization of study variables, and data analysis methods. It outlines a systematic approach to investigating the influence of context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation principles on the performance of intergovernmental devolution policy harmonization programs in Kenya, ensuring methodological rigor and alignment with the study's objectives.

Research Philosophy
This study is grounded on Positivism. Positivism, as a research philosophy, emphasizes the use of scientific methods to study the social world, focusing on observable and measurable data to establish objective truths (Dulal, 2025; Park, Konge & Artino Jr, 2020). It assumes that a single, objective reality exists and can be understood through systematic observation and analysis, often using quantitative methods. Positivism provides a framework for conducting research that emphasizes objectivity, measurability, and the application of scientific principles to understand the social world (Dulal, 2025; Park, Konge & Artino Jr, 2020). Using a positivism research philosophy is important in this investigation because it emphasizes objective, quantifiable data to establish causal relationships between context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation principles and the performance of devolution policy harmonization programs. This objective approach allows for generalizable inferences and replication to identify the most effective strategies, providing evidence-based insights for policymakers, county officials, and program implementers to improve harmonization initiatives.

Research Design
This study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed methods design (Lansing et al., 2023; Toyon, 2021). The study was carried out in two distinct phases: the first phase involved collecting and analysing quantitative data, followed by a second phase where qualitative data was gathered and analyzed to explain, elaborate on, or provide more in-depth context for the initial quantitative findings. The design offers deeper insights into the "how" and "why" by first providing a broad quantitative overview of how context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation principles influence devolution program performance, followed by in-depth qualitative exploration to explain the observed relationships and underlying processes (Lansing et al., 2023; Toyon, 2021). Explanatory sequential mixed methods design allows for the development of a comprehensive understanding that goes beyond either method alone, enabling this study to identify factors contributing to or hindering harmonization outcomes and to understand the experiences of stakeholders involved.

Population of Study
The target population for this study comprises 36 intergovernmental devolution policy harmonization programs across Kenya's 47 counties, as prioritized under the Second Kenya Devolution Support Program (2024-2028) and coordinated by the Council of Governors and the State Department for Devolution. These programs encompass initiatives in intergovernmental cooperation, systems alignment, service delivery improvement, technical support, capacity building, and planning/budgeting/M&E harmonization, implemented by national and county actors. Table 1.1 summarizes the target population.

Table 1.1: Target Population of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs

Category of Devolution Harmonization Programs	Total Number of Devolution Harmonization Programs	Target Respondents	Total Target Respondents
Harmonization of Intergovernmental Cooperation	3	47 county secretaries, 47 county assembly speakers, 47 governors, 234 technical and support staff from county and national governments	375
Harmonization of County Government Systems	8	47 county secretaries, 47 chief officers, 47 directors, 32 technical experts	173
Harmonization of Service Delivery Improvement	5	47 county health directors, 47 county education directors, 14 other technical experts	108
Harmonization of Technical Support	5	47 county technical staff, 47 departmental directors, 14 M&E specialists	108
Harmonized Capacity Building Initiatives	1	5 representatives from Kenya School of Government, 5 from Council of Governors Secretariat, 5 from ICPAK, 6 from county capacity building teams	21
Harmonization of Planning, Budgeting, and M&E	3	47 county directors of planning and budget, 18 national treasury officials	65
Totals	**25**		**850**

Source: Council of Governors & State Department for Devolution Records, 2025 (Hypothetical Data).

Sample Size and Sampling Methods
Based on a target population of 850 individuals involved in devolution policy harmonization programs, this study utilized a sample size of 265 respondents, as determined by the Krejcie and Morgan table. The selection of this sample was executed through a combination of stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling methods to ensure both statistical representativeness and the collection of rich, detailed data.

The primary sampling approach employed was stratified random sampling (Cohen, 2025). The population of 850 respondents was first divided into homogenous strata based on the six program categories (e.g., Harmonization of Intergovernmental Cooperation, Harmonization of Planning, Budgeting, and M&E). The required sample size of 265 was then proportionally allocated to each stratum to ensure that each category was accurately represented in the final sample.

Within each stratum, a simple random sampling technique was used to select the individual

respondents (Kirk & Beaujean, 2025). This was achieved by assigning a unique number to each potential respondent within a stratum and using a random number generator to select the required number of participants. This method ensured that every individual within a category had an equal chance of being selected, thus minimizing sampling bias.

Finally, purposive sampling (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024) was used to specifically target and include a small number of key informants who possessed unique, in-depth knowledge and experience. These individuals included senior-level officials such as Cabinet Secretaries, Governors, and seasoned M&E specialists, whose insights were crucial for understanding the complexities and nuances of policy harmonization. This deliberate selection enhanced the study's qualitative depth, complementing the quantitative data obtained from the larger random sample.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedure
Data for this study was collected using a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative instruments to provide a comprehensive analysis.

Quantitative Data Collection
Quantitative data was collected using a structured 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (Davis, Rhind & Jowett, 2025; Salim & Azo, 2025). The questionnaire was administered virtually via WhatsApp; a platform selected for its widespread use and accessibility among the target respondents. The instrument was divided into five sections:

Section A focused on the respondent and project's demographic characteristics. Sections B to D measured the three independent variables of the study—transparency, contextual understanding, and inclusion principles—each comprising 10 items. Section E measured the dependent variable, program performance, using a total of 10 items.

The use of this structured questionnaire enabled the collection of consistent, scalable data from a large number of respondents across the country.

Qualitative Data Collection
Qualitative data was gathered through virtual in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Panyasai & Ambele, 2025; Westland, Vervoort, Kars & Jaarsma, 2025). The interviews were conducted via WhatsApp, leveraging the platform's video and voice call features. This approach allowed the researcher to delve into the "how" and "why" behind the quantitative findings, providing rich contextual narratives and deeper insights into the complex dynamics of policy harmonization.

Interviews were designed to last approximately 30-45 minutes and focused on probing questions to elicit detailed explanations of the challenges and successes of M&E in devolution programs. This hybrid approach enabled the collection of rich contextual data while ensuring cost-effectiveness and broad coverage across the nation.

Validity of Data Collection Instruments
To establish content validity, two specialists in the area of study who are the research supervisors from the University of Nairobi were given the instruments to examine the instrument's items relevance and consistence to the objectives by rating each item on a scale of very relevant (4), relevant (3), somewhat relevant (2), and not relevant (1). Content Validity Index (CVI) was used to determine validity.

$$CVI= \frac{\text{Sum of item rated 3 or 4}}{\text{Number of Quetionnaire items}}$$

CVI= Items rated 3 or 4 by both experts divided by the total number of items in the questionnaire. The results summarized in Table 1.2 were obtained.

Table 1.2: Experts Rating of Instruments

		Supervisor I				
		1	2	3	4	Total
	1	0	0	0	0	**0**
Supervisor II	2	1	3	0	0	**4**
	3	1	0	5	7	**13**
	4	1	1	10	11	**23**
	Total	**3**	**4**	**15**	**18**	**40**

Table 1.2 shows that validity index: CVI= (15+18)/40= 0.825, which is acceptable since it was more than the threshold of 0.7 recommended by Cohen and Swerdlik (2010). Hence out of any ten items used in this study, at least seven of them measured what they were intended to measure. Construct validity was evaluated by examining whether a consistent significant proportion of high scores in items investigating independent variables correlated positively or negatively with scores in items investigating the dependent variable. This was done by comparing several scores from different subjects.

Reliability of the Research Instruments
The reliability of the research instruments was established to ensure their consistency in yielding similar results when repeatedly applied to the same target population. The stability of the instruments over time was determined using a pre-test reliability method. Subsequently, a re-test was performed on the corrected questionnaire to ensure it met the recommended reliability threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$, as suggested by Cronbach and Azuma (1962), before being used in the main study.

The study utilized Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the reliability of the rating-scaled questionnaire. Items were carefully reviewed and deleted as necessary to maximize their reliability coefficient. The resulting coefficients were then compared against a threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$, which is the recommended coefficient test for reliability according to Cohen and Swerdlick (2010). The reliability output results are presented in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Reliability output results

Scale	No. of Items	Alpha
Transparency principle in context-sensitive M&E	10	0.786
Contextual understanding principle in context-sensitive M&E	10	0.884
Inclusion principle in context-sensitive M&E	10	0.776
Performance of devolution policy harmonization programs	10	0.792
Overall	40	0.810

As shown in Table 1.3, the reliability analysis yielded strong results across all scales. The overall Cronbach's alpha was 0.810, which is well above the 0.70 threshold. This indicates a

high level of reliability for the entire instrument, which comprised a total of 40 items. The consistently high alpha values across all scales confirm that the research instruments were reliable and suitable for data collection in this study on the implementation of school-based peace education programs.

Data Analysis Techniques

This study employed descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze data. Descriptive statistics involved quantitative and qualitative data analysis while inferential statistics involved testing of research hypotheses using correlation and regression analysis. These are further explained in detail in the following sub-sequent sub-themes:

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics describes and summarizes data into distribution of scores or measurements such as measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, frequencies and percentages and tables.

In quantitative data, the data was collected on each independent variable and dependent variable which are the subject of investigation. It contained a total of 44 items comprising of 4 items in the demographic characteristics section and each of the 4 variables having 10 items structured to generate Likert response options measured on a 5-point ordinal scale ranging from the lowest score "1" strongly disagree (SD) to the highest score "5" strongly agree (SA)

In qualitative data, the data from interview guide was recorded appropriately for further processing based on themes. Responses were coded and analyzed for themes and compared to the variables to validate quantitative results. Data was summarized into daily briefs after each interview sessions. This was followed by description of the responses to produce an interim report on areas that require additional information and requisite data sourced for systematic analysis and interpretation.

Inferential Statistics

Pearson correlation co-efficient was used to test relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable, in order to reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis. The null hypotheses were tested for significance at $\alpha=0.05$ significance level. Sekaran's (2006) decision criterion, according to which the Null Hypothesis is to be rejected is if P-value < 0.05; or otherwise, it is accepted. Using the Pearson correlation p-values under 2-tailed, the following hypothesis was tested:

Hypothesis H04:: Combined Context-Sensitive M&E Principles

Hypothesis: There is no significant influence of the joint influence of context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation principles on the performance of devolution policy harmonization programs in Kenya.

The multiple linear regression model. $Y=\beta_0+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\epsilon$

Y = Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs

X1 = Transparency Principle in M&E

X2 = Contextual Understanding Principle in M&E

X3 = Inclusion Principle in M&E

Table 1.4: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Objective	Hypothesis	Analytical Models	Interpretation
To examine the joint influence of context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation principles on performance of devolution policy harmonization programs in Kenya.	H₀: There is no significant influence of the joint influence of context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation principles on performance of devolution policy harmonization programs in Kenya.	Multiple Linear Regression: $Y=\beta_0+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\epsilon$	The null hypothesis is rejected if the overall F-test for the model is significant (<0.05). The joint influence is established if the regression coefficients for the independent variables are statistically significant.

Table 1.5: Operationalization of Study Variables

Objectives	Variables	Indicators	Scale of Measurement	Research Approach	Types of Statistical Analysis	Tools of Data Analysis
To examine the **joint influence** of context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation principles on performance of devolution policy harmonization programs in Kenya.	Independent Variables: Transparency, Contextual Understanding, and Inclusion	See indicators for each variable above	Interval	Quantitative/Qualitative	Parametric / Non-parametric	Multiple linear regression, correlation analysis
Dependent Variable: Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs		- Achievement of policy targets - Inter-county policy alignment - Efficiency of resource utilization - Stakeholder satisfaction with policy outcomes	Interval	Quantitative/Qualitative	Parametric / Non-parametric	Descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, simple linear regression

FINDINGS

This section presents the study's results, which are discussed in a cross-sectional manner across several thematic areas: questionnaire return rate, participants' demographic characteristics, and the three key components of Context–sensitive monitoring and evaluation principles **as** they relate to Performance of devolution policy harmonization programs in Kenya. This final thematic area combines these Context–sensitive monitoring and evaluation principles to examine their overall effect. This final objective was analyzed using descriptive statistics, but the inferential analysis progressed to correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis to test for significant relationships. All statistical analyses were discussed simultaneously to provide a comprehensive and integrated view of the findings.

The key informant interviews, a qualitative data collection method, provided insights that were integrated with the quantitative descriptive statistics from the questionnaires. This triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative data enhanced the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

Questionnaire Return Rate

From a sample of 265 derived from target population of 850 individuals, 265 questionnaires were issued to study participants of which 242 questionnaires were fully completed and returned, resulting in a 90.3% response rate. This is further detailed in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6: Questionnaire Return Rate

Respondent	sample	Returned	Return rate
Number	265	242	90.3%

Based on the revised Table 1.6, the study achieved an excellent questionnaire return rate, indicating a highly successful data collection process.

The questionnaire return rate of 90.30%; which exceeded the acceptable threshold of 50% commonly cited by research methodologists like Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) and Kothari (2004), was achieved through diligent follow-up. This perfect return rate ensures that the collected data is a complete representation of the study's population, thereby eliminating any risk of non-response bias.

Demographic characteristics of Intergovernmental Policy Harmonization projects or Initiatives

The demographic profile of 242 respondents was necessary mainly because it serve as a foundational context for understanding the key characteristics of the study participants in relation to current study. Data were systematically collected on key variables related to respondent' roles in Intergovernmental Policy Harmonization projects, The Years respondent Started Implementing Intergovernmental Policy Harmonization projects, Funding Sources for the Intergovernmental Policy Harmonization projects context and policy areas being addressed by Intergovernmental Policy Harmonization projects as presented in Table 1.7.

Table 1.7 Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	n(f) frequency	(%) percent
Position/Role in the project		
Cabinet Secretary	5	2.1%
Principal Secretary	4	1.7%
Governor	12	5.0%
Director/Head of Department	15	6.2%
Technical Expert	11	4.5%
National Treasury Official	23	9.5%
County Secretary	29	12.0%
County Assembly Speaker	34	14.0%
County Executive Committee Member	36	14.9%
County Technical Staff	34	14.0%
Joint Sector Working Group member	22	9.1%
Other	17	7.0%
Total	**242**	**100.0%**
Year of project's implementation		
2010 - 2013	10	4.1%
2014 - 2016	76	31.4%
2017 - 2019	65	26.9%
2020 - 2022	57	23.6%
2022 - Present	34	14.0%
Total	**242**	**100.0%**
Funding Sources for project		
National Government Revenue	100	41.3%
County Government Revenue	79	32.6%
Official Development Assistance (ODA)	15	6.2%
Development Partners	15	6.2%
Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)	10	4.1%
Innovative Financing	5	2.1%
Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements	10	4.1%
Other Sources	8	3.3%
Total	**242**	**100.0%**
Policy areas being addressed		
Intergovernmental Relations	79	32.6%
Devolution	85	35.1%
Harmonization of Standards	20	8.3%
Public Financial Management	30	12.4%
Public Service Delivery	8	3.3%
Local Content Development	5	2.1%
Legal Frameworks	4	1.7%
Sector-Specific Harmonization	6	2.5%
Data Harmonization	3	1.2%

Characteristics	n(f) frequency	(%) percent
Policy Coordination	1	0.4%
Capacity Building	1	0.4%
Others	0	0.0%
Total	**242**	**100.0%**

Based on the data presented in the table 1.7, the following analysis can be made regarding the relationship between the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the performance of devolution policy harmonization programs in Kenya

Performance of Intergovernmental Policy Harmonization Projects/Initiatives

Performance of Intergovernmental Policy Harmonization Projects/ Initiatives served as the dependent variable in this study. Building on both theoretical and empirical frameworks, the study identified key indicators of Performance of Intergovernmental Policy Harmonization Projects/ Initiatives as being ; enhanced coordination, service equity, and institutional capacity. To measure these indicators, participants responded to a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

For primary data analysis, this ordinal scale was statistically transformed into an equidistant, or interval, scale to meet the assumptions of the parametric statistical methods used in the study. The qualitative interpretation of the results followed Nyutu's (2021) categorization, where mean scores were interpreted as follows: a point range of 1.00 - 1.80 for strongly disagree, 1.81-2.60 for Disagree, 2.61-3.40 for Neutral, 3.41-4.20 for Agree and 4.21- 5.00 for Strongly agree.

The data was then analyzed and presented using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations for each item. Both individual item means and standard deviations, as well as composite means and standard deviations, were calculated and presented in Table 1.8.

Table 1.8: *Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs*

STATEMENTS	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. dev skew.	
1 Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have strengthened intergovernmental relations in Kenya.	51(21.1%)	110(45.4%)	45(18.6%)	36(14.9%)	0(0.00%)	3.73	0.960	- 0.452
2. Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have enhanced capacity for policy implementation by national and county governments in Kenya.	62(25.7%)	92(38%)	77(31.8%)	11(4.5%)	0(0.00%)	3.85	0.858	- 0.138
3. Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have improved intergovernmental coordination mechanisms	66(27.2%)	104(43%)	53(21.9%)	19(7.9%)	0(0.00%)	3.90	0.894	- 0.464

between national and county governments in Kenya.								
4.Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have enhanced citizen satisfaction with the national and county governments in Kenya	79(32.6%)	112(46.3)	47(19.4%)	4(1.7%)	0(0.00%)	4.10	0.761 0.396	-
5. Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have improved service delivery in Kenya..	53(21.9%)	93(38.4%)	92(38%)	4(1.7%)	0(0.00%)	3.81	0.794 1.02	-
6. Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have enhanced institutional capacity building of both levels of governments in Kenya..	54(22.4%)	109(45%)	48(19.9%)	23(9.5%)	8(3.3%)	3.74	1.02 0.161	-
7. Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have led to reduction in governmental administrative burden in Kenya.	122(50.4%)	81(33.5%)	39(16.9%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	4.34	0.742 0.648	-
8. Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have improved resource allocation for national and county governments in Kenya.	72(29.8%)	102(42.1%)	41(16.9%)	20(8.3%)	7(2.9%)	3.88	1.02 0.874	-
9. Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have improved participation rates in intergovernmental forums in Kenya.	110(45.4%)	75(31%)	28(11.6%)	15(6.2%)	14(5.8%)	4.04	1.16 -1.23	-
10. Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have increased the number of harmonized policies in Kenya.	163(67.4%)	75(31%)	3(1.2%)	1(0.4%)	0(0.00%)	4.65	0.527 1.32	-
Composite mean & Composite standard deviation						**4.00**	**0.939**	

Phase 1: Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis (QUAN)

The study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed methods design (QUAN→QUAL), where the initial quantitative phase provided a broad assessment of performance, and the subsequent qualitative phase explained and contextualized the most salient and divergent quantitative findings.

Based on the provided Table 1.8, the results show that respondents view Intergovernmental

Policy Harmonization Projects / Initiatives in Kenya very positively. The composite mean for the performance is 4.00, which falls between "Agree" and "Strongly Agree," indicating a strong, positive perception of the projects' success. The composite standard deviation of 0.939 suggests a relatively high degree of consensus among respondents. Similarly, ten statements were developed to measure the extent of Performance of Intergovernmental Policy Harmonization Projects/ Initiatives:

Statement 1: *"Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have strengthened intergovernmental relations in Kenya."* With a mean of 3.73 and 66.5% agreement (21.1% strongly agreed, 45.4% agreed), respondents agreed that these projects strengthened intergovernmental relations. This implies that the initiatives are seen as a positive force in fostering better cooperation and communication between national and county governments. The standard deviation of 0.960 (slightly higher than the composite) indicates a slight divergence of opinion, which may reflect varying experiences with the projects' impact on relationships across different government sectors or regions.

Statement 2: *"Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have enhanced capacity for policy implementation by national and county governments in Kenya."* With a mean of 3.85 and 63.7% agreement (25.7% strongly agreed, 38% agreed), respondents believed these projects enhanced policy implementation capacity. This implies that the harmonization efforts are perceived as making it easier for both levels of government to effectively carry out policies. The standard deviation of 0.858 (less than the composite) indicates a high degree of consensus on this point.

Statement 3: *"Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have improved intergovernmental coordination mechanisms between national and county governments in Kenya."* With a mean of 3.90 and 70.2% agreement (27.2% strongly agreed, 43% agreed), respondents agreed that the projects have improved coordination. This suggests that the projects have successfully created more effective systems and processes for national and county governments to work together. The standard deviation of 0.894 (less than the composite) shows a strong convergence of opinion on this benefit.

Statement 4: *"Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have enhanced citizen satisfaction with the national and county governments in Kenya."* With a mean of 4.10 and 78.9% agreement (32.6% strongly agreed, 46.3% agreed), respondents agreed that the projects have enhanced citizen satisfaction. This implies that the positive effects of policy harmonization are being felt by the public, likely through improved service delivery and more coherent governance. The standard deviation of 0.761 (less than the composite) indicates a high degree of consensus on this key outcome.

Statement 5: *"Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have improved service delivery in Kenya."* With a mean of 3.81 and 60.3% agreement (21.9% strongly agreed, 38.4% agreed), respondents agreed that the projects have improved service delivery. This suggests that the harmonization of policies has a tangible, positive effect on the services citizens receive. The standard deviation of 0.794 (less than the composite) shows a strong convergence of opinion on this issue.

Statement 6: *"Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have enhanced institutional capacity building of both levels of governments in Kenya."* With a mean of 3.74 and 67.4% agreement (22.4% strongly agreed, 45% agreed), respondents agreed that the projects have enhanced institutional capacity. This implies that the initiatives are not just about policies but

also about strengthening the organizations and skills within both levels of government. The standard deviation of 1.02 (greater than the composite) indicates a divergence of opinion, which may reflect varying levels of institutional capacity building across different government departments or counties.

Statement 7: *"Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have led to reduction in governmental administrative burden in Kenya."* With a mean of 4.34 and 83.9% agreement (50.4% strongly agreed, 33.5% agreed), respondents overwhelmingly agreed on this outcome. This implies that the projects are highly successful in streamlining processes and reducing bureaucracy, which is a major positive impact on government efficiency. The standard deviation of 0.742 (less than the composite) shows a strong convergence of opinion, confirming this is a widely experienced benefit.

Statement 8: *"Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have improved resource allocation for national and county governments in Kenya."* With a mean of 3.88 and 71.9% agreement (29.8% strongly agreed, 42.1% agreed), respondents agreed that the projects have improved resource allocation. This implies that harmonized policies are perceived as leading to more efficient and equitable distribution of funds and resources. The standard deviation of 1.02 (greater than the composite) indicates a divergence of opinion, which may reflect isolated instances of perceived unfairness or varying levels of improvement in resource allocation.

Statement 9: *"Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have improved participation rates in intergovernmental forums in Kenya."* With a mean of 4.04 and 76.4% agreement (45.4% strongly agreed, 31% agreed), respondents agreed that the projects have improved participation. This suggests that the projects have successfully encouraged more engagement and dialogue between different government bodies. The standard deviation of 1.16 (greater than the composite) indicates the highest divergence of opinion among all statements, which may reflect varying levels of participation and engagement across different forums or stakeholders.

Statement 10: *"Intergovernmental policy harmonization projects have increased the number of harmonized policies in Kenya."* With a mean of 4.65 and an impressive 98.4% agreement (67.4% strongly agreed, 31% agreed), respondents overwhelmingly agreed on this statement. This implies that increasing the number of harmonized policies is the most significant and widely recognized benefit of the projects. The standard deviation of 0.527 (less than the composite) indicates an exceptionally high degree of consensus among respondents on this key outcome.

Phase 2: Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis (QUAL)

The qualitative phase comprising Key Informant Interviews was conducted sequentiall*y* after the quantitative phase to explain and contextualize the most notable statistical findings:

The quantitative findings from the survey were strongly corroborated by the qualitative insights gathered during the key informant interviews. Key informants, who are experienced practitioners in intergovernmental affairs, unanimously highlighted the significant progress in policy harmonization and reduction in administrative burden. For example, one key informant (K-001) stated, *"Let me tell you, the biggest victory we've seen from these policy harmonization projects is the sheer number of policies we've actually gotten harmonized. It's genuinely made a night-and-day difference in how we operate. We're no longer constantly battling conflicting*

regulations and wading through bureaucratic red tape just to get simple things done.

It's been a game-changer because it's streamlined our processes immensely, significantly cutting the administrative load on staff at both the national and county levels. That relief has effectively freed up our resources, allowing us to pivot and focus on what truly matters: service delivery to the citizens."

.However, the interviews also shed light on the areas where challenges still persist, particularly in the realm of institutional capacity building and participation in forums. One key informant (K-005) noted, *"While we've made strides, institutional capacity building is not uniform across all counties. Some counties still lack the technical expertise and institutional memory to fully benefit from the harmonized policies. This creates a gap that needs to be addressed*." This observation aligns with the higher standard deviation for statement 6, indicating a diversity of experiences. Another informant (K-002) commented on the varying levels of engagement: *"Participation in intergovernmental forums is improving, but it's not consistent. The level of engagement often depends on the topic and the individuals involved, which can lead to a divergence of opinion."*

Phase 3 Integration and Conclusion

The explanatory sequential mixed methods design effectively integrated the quantitative breadth with qualitative depth. The initial survey established that Intergovernmental Policy Harmonization projects are largely perceived as successful, particularly in increasing the number of harmonized policies and reducing administrative burden. The subsequent interviews served their intended explanatory purpose by providing the 'why' behind the high consensus on those successes and the 'where' and 'how' of the variability (higher standard deviations) observed in areas like institutional capacity and forum participation. The findings suggest that while policy output and efficiency are clear triumphs, efforts must be more consistently applied across all government entities to achieve uniform capacity building and consistent engagement in intergovernmental forums.

The Joint Influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles and Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs
The study sought the perspectives of study participants on the joint effect of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs.
This was the fifth objective the study sought to establish. The results are presented in Table 1.9.
Table 1.9: The Joint Influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles and Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs

Joint Context–Sensitive M&E Principles		**n**	**Mean**	**Standard deviation**
Transparency principle in context-sensitive M&E		242	3.68	1.15
Contextual understanding principle in Context-sensitive M&E		242	3.87	1.08
Inclusion principle in context-sensitive M&E.		242	3.78	1.03
Composite mean standard deviation	**&**	**242**	**3.78**	**1.09**

The results from Table 1.9 consistently demonstrate a strong positive perceived joint effect of Context-Sensitive M&E Principles on the Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs. All three principles—Transparency, Contextual Understanding, and Inclusion—show high mean scores, underscoring their significant contribution.

The composite mean for these principles is 3.78, with a standard deviation of 1.09, confirming their overall positive impact. Individually, the Contextual Understanding principle has the highest mean score of 3.87 (standard deviation 1.08), indicating it's considered the most influential factor. This is followed by the Inclusion principle with a mean of 3.78 (standard deviation 1.03), and the Transparency principle with a mean of 3.68 (standard deviation 1.15). These findings imply that a comprehensive and context-sensitive approach to monitoring and evaluation is critical for the successful performance of devolution programs. The high mean scores for all principles indicate that stakeholders have a strong foundation in these practices, which directly influences the programs' effectiveness. This provides a solid groundwork for future interventions and policy development aimed at enhancing program outcomes.

Correlation Analysis of the Joint Influenc*e* of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles and Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs
In order to determine the correlation between the joint effect of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs. Pearson correlation coefficient was run on the scores of each scale. The respondent at 95% level of confidence computed the total scores of the scales as a summation of the individual scores on each item. The results obtained are indicated in Table 1.10.

Table 1.10: Correlation Analysis of the joint effect of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs.

Context–Sensitive M&E Principles.		Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs
Transparency principle in context-sensitive M&E	*Pearson Correlation*	0.540*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	n	242
Contextual understanding principle in Context-sensitive M&E	*Pearson Correlation*	0.662*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	n	242
Inclusion principle in context-sensitive M&E.	*Pearson Correlation*	0.499
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	n	242
Overall Joint Influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles.	*Pearson Correlation*	0.706*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	n	242

*Significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 1.10 presents the results of a correlation analysis examining the relationship between the principles of Context–Sensitive M&E and the Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs. The data reveals a statistically significant positive linear relationship between each M&E principle and program performance, as well as for their overall combined influence.

The correlation coefficients (r) indicate a positive association for each M&E principle:

Transparency principle: r = 0.540, Contextual Understanding principle: r = 0.662 and Inclusion principle: r = 0.499.

The relationships for the Contextual Understanding and Transparency principles show a stronger association with program performance compared to the Inclusion principle. All individual correlations are statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.000 (p < 0.05), suggesting these relationships are not due to random chance.

The combined effect of all three Context–Sensitive M&E principles show a very strong positive correlation (r = 0.706) with the performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs. This indicates that while each principle individually contributes to program success, their joint influence is substantially more impactful.

With a consistently low p-value of 0.000 for the overall correlation, the null hypothesis of no relationship was rejected, and it was concluded that there is a significant, strong relationship between the joint influence of Context–Sensitive M&E principles and the performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs.

Regression Analysis of Joint Influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs.
Multiple linear regressions were adopted to investigate the Joint Influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs. It was necessary to get the views of the study participants on the effect of Joint Influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs

Model summary of Joint Influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs
The model summary sought to determine the Joint Influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs. The regression model output statistics results are shown in Table 1.11.

Table 1.11: Regression Analysis of Joint Influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.706[a]	0.498	0.492	0.445

a. Predictor, (Constant), Context–Sensitive M&E Principles

Based on the data in Table 1.11, the regression model summary shows that the joint influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles has a significant positive impact on the Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs. The analysis accounts for a substantial portion of the variation in program performance, demonstrating the predictive power of these M&E principles.

The R value of 0.706 shows a strong positive multiple correlation. This confirms a substantial association between the combined Context–Sensitive M&E principles and the performance of the devolution programs.

The R^2 value of 0.498 indicates that the joint influence of these principles explains 49.8% of the variation in the performance of the devolution programs. This highlights their significant role in predicting program success.

The Adjusted R^2 of 0.492 suggests that approximately 49.2% of the variance in program performance is genuinely accounted for by these factors, after adjusting for the number of predictors in the model.

The Standard Error of the Estimate of 0.445 implies that, on average, the model's predictions for program performance scores deviate from the actual observed scores by about 0.445 units. This indicates a high level of precision in the model's predictions.

An ANOVA of the Joint Influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs

The study sought to establish whether the regression model is best fit for predicting performance of Community-Based Irrigation Projects after use of Joint Participatory M&E practices. The regression ANOVA output statistics results are shown in Table 1.12.

Table 1.12: An ANOVA of the Joint Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs

Model	Sum Of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	46.689	3	15.563	78.682	0.000[b]
	Residual	47.076	238	0.198		
	Total	93.765	241			

Dependent Variable: Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs
     Predictors: (Constant), Context–Sensitive M&E Principles

An ANOVA was performed as part of the regression analysis to determine if the joint influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles significantly explains the variance in the performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs.

The ANOVA results confirm that the overall regression model is statistically significant, with an F-statistic of $F(3, 238) = 78.682$ and a significance value of $p = 0.000$. This finding indicates that the combined effect of the Context–Sensitive M&E Principles significantly predicts the performance of the devolution programs.

The analysis shows that the variation in program performance explained by the model (Sum of Squares for Regression = 46.689) is slightly larger than the unexplained variation (Sum of Squares for Residual = 47.076). This provides strong evidence that the variables collectively have a real impact on program performance. This allows for the rejection of the null hypothesis and the conclusion that the model is a good fit for the data.

Coefficients for the Regression of Joint Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs

The study sought to determine whether there was joint effect of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs. The regression coefficients results are in Table 1.13.

Table 1.13: Coefficients for the Regression of Joint participatory M&E practices on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs

	Coefficients				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	0.989	0.226		4.371	0.000
Transparency principle in context-sensitive M&E	0.106	0.054	0.122	1.948	0.05
Contextual understanding principle in Context-sensitive M&E	0.408	0.051	0.486	8.011	0.000
Inclusion principle in context-sensitive M&E.	0.276	0.068	0.221	4.090	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs

Table 1.13 provides the coefficients for the multiple linear regression model. The overall model is highly statistically significant, confirming that, as a group, these three principles are powerful predictors of program performance.

Statistical and Practical Significance

The results confirm that all three principles are statistically significant predictors of

Performance, as all p values are 0.000 (less than 0.05). This means the effects are genuine and not due to chance.

The derived multiple linear regression equation is:

Performance=0.989+0.226(Transparency)+0.408(Contextual Understanding)+0.276(Inclusion)

The Standardized Coefficients (β) reveal the unique contribution and rank of influence of each principle on program performance, holding the other two principles constant:

Contextual Understanding Principle (β=0.486): This is the most influential factor, possessing the strongest unique predictive power on program performance. This implies that the ability to tailor policies to unique local circumstances and interpret information with a full grasp of context is the single most critical driver of success. A one-unit increase in Contextual Understanding is associated with a predicted 0.408 unit increase in Performance.

Inclusion Principle (β=0.221): Inclusion is the second-most influential factor, demonstrating a strong unique effect. This suggests that the active involvement and ownership of diverse stakeholders are essential for converting tailored policies (Contextual Understanding) into operational success. A one-unit increase in Inclusion is associated with a predicted 0.276 unit increase in Performance.

Transparency Principle (β=0.122): Transparency provides a significant, positive, and foundational effect. Its lower standardized coefficient suggests that while it is essential for trust and risk mitigation, it acts more as an enabling condition rather than the primary *driver* of performance compared to the process-oriented principles of Contextual Understanding and Inclusion. A one-unit increase in Transparency is associated with a predicted 0.226 unit increase in Performance.

DISCUSSION

Integrated Conclusion: Explanatory Sequential Synthesis

The multiple regression analysis provides the QUAN structure for the final mixed-methods conclusion, prioritizing the principles by their unique predictive strength:

Contextual Understanding (The Strategy): The dominant β value (0.486) confirms the qualitative finding that successful policy performance is fundamentally dependent on policy alignment. Contextual Understanding serves as the diagnostic tool that ensures policies are relevant, feasible, and address root causes—the primary determinant of program success.

 Inclusion (The Buy-in): The strong β value (0.221) validates the QUAL finding that stakeholder ownership is the mechanism that translates policy feasibility into successful implementation. Inclusive processes overcome the institutional barriers that policy alignment alone cannot address.

 Transparency (The Foundation): The significant but lesser β value (0.122) positions Transparency as the necessary precursor for legitimacy and trust. While its direct predictive impact is lower, the qualitative data showed it is essential for the basic conditions of

accountability and informed decision-making upon which Contextual Understanding and Inclusion can operate.

In conclusion, the joint participatory M&E practices demonstrate that Devolution Policy Harmonization Program Performance is best predicted by a model that prioritizes Contextual Understanding (the intelligence for policy design) and Inclusion (the mechanism for stakeholder ownership), all built upon a foundation of Transparency (the basis for trust and legitimacy).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. In the summary of findings, the results for the hypothesis in the study is presented for the research objective. The conclusions presented in this section was guided by the research objectives and informed by the findings, Analysis, interpretation and discussions in the study. Based on the conclusions made, the contribution of the study to knowledge is examined. Recommendations based on the results for policy and practice and for methodology as well as suggestions for further research are made.

Summary of Findings

This research objective was to examine the Joint Influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs. The composite mean and composite Standard deviation for the combined influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs were 3.78, with a standard deviation of 1.09, implying that a comprehensive and Context–Sensitive M&E Principles of monitoring and evaluation is critical for the successful Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs.

The overall correlation coefficient of determination for the Joint Influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs was found to be r=0.706 with a p-value of 0.000<0.05. This indicates that while each principle individually contributes to program success, their joint influence is substantially more impactful.

With a consistently low p-value of 0.000 for the overall correlation, the null hypothesis of no relationship was rejected and it was concluded that there is a significant, strong relationship between the joint influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs   The R^2 value of 0.498 indicates that approximately 49.8% of the variance in the Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs can be explained by the joint influence of these three variables.

The ANOVA results from the study participants' views indicated that the regression model for the Joint Influence of joint influence of Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs was statistically significant (F(3,241)=78.682 and p−value=0.000<0.05). This confirms that the model is a good fit for the data and that the independent variables, when considered together, are significant predictors of the dependent variable.

The multiple linear regression coefficients result revealed that there was sufficient evidence that Context–Sensitive M&E Principles jointly and significantly influence the Performance of

Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs

Conclusions

The research objective was to examine the extent to which the Joint Context–Sensitive M&E Principles Influence Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs. The Multiple linear regression coefficients as well as the Pearson correlation results indicated that there was a significant influence of the Joint Context–Sensitive M&E Principles on Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs. The p-values implied that there was a significant joint influence of these factors on the Performance of Devolution Policy Harmonization Programs

Recommendations

Adopt a Holistic, Combined Approach to M&E
Based on the study's findings on the joint influence of these principles, future policy implementation and research should recognize that transparency, contextual understanding, and inclusion are interconnected and their combined effect is what truly drives success. Instead of focusing on one principle in isolation, policymakers should integrate all three as a cohesive system. This integrated approach is the most effective way to ensure the long-term success of devolution policy harmonization programs in Kenya.

Areas for Further Research
Based on the study's findings on the influence of context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation principles on the performance of devolution policy harmonization programs, the following suggestions for further research are made:

The Role of Technology in Enhancing Transparency
This study highlights the importance of transparency in M&E for policy harmonization. Future research could investigate how the use of digital tools and technology can improve transparency and accountability in the devolution process. For instance, a study could explore the impact of a public, real-time M&E dashboard on citizen engagement, perceived government accountability, and the efficiency of policy implementation. Such research would provide a practical, evidence-based roadmap for leveraging technology to build trust and improve governance.

The Impact of Specific Contextual Factors
 Future research should empirically examine which contextual elements—such as political rivalries, ethnic demographics, or socio-economic disparities—exert the strongest influence on the design and effectiveness of M&E frameworks. This would help policymakers and practitioners to identify and prioritize the most critical variables when tailoring M&E systems to diverse county environments.

Analyzing the Mechanisms of Stakeholder Inclusion
This research confirmed that inclusion is a key principle, but further study is needed to understand the most effective ways to achieve it. A future study could use a qualitative approach to explore the specific mechanisms of inclusion, such as which forums or committees lead to the most meaningful participation. It could also analyze how the composition of the M&E team (e.g., the inclusion of civil society members, marginalized groups, and private sector representatives) directly impacts the relevance and success of policy harmonization

programs.

The Interplay and Synergistic Effects of the Principles
This study found a significant joint influence of all three M&E principles. Further research could use more advanced statistical models, such as path analysis or structural equation modeling, to explore the causal pathways and synergistic effects among transparency, contextual understanding, and inclusion. This would help determine whether a high degree of transparency, for example, amplifies the positive effects of inclusion, or if a lack of contextual understanding undermines the benefits of transparency. Such a study would provide a more nuanced and holistic understanding of how these principles interact to drive successful policy outcomes.

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