ASSIGNMENT FOUR

NAME: FREDRICK M. MATE

1.

(a) Collecting information or data is just one part of the process of monitoring and evaluation. What is meant by data analysis?

Data analysis is the procedure of methodically applying statistical and/or logical operations to describe and interpret, summarize and sum up, and evaluate data (Sharma, 2018). Sharma (2018) further reposts that data analysis transforms data into information and knowledge, and investigates the relationship between variables. Analyzing data comprises examining it in a manner that shows the relationships, orders, tendency that can be found within it (Development Dimensions Africa, 2018; University of Kansas, 2019a).

(b) ***State any three uses of monitoring and evaluation results.***

According to Development Dimensions Africa (2018) the following are some of the uses of monitoring and evaluation results;

i. The results assist community leadership and other stakeholders to assess the progress towards achieving the project objectives.

ii. They help the project implementers to take note of the areas that require more effort to achieve the goals and detect areas that are not central to the project mission and too much effort is being spent.

iii. They assist the project donors with the opportunity to help re-direct the initiative towards objectives that are more directly related to the project and see and reward the achievements of the project.

(c) Describe any seven factors that may lead to project failure.

There are different reasons why a project and some of these are as follows;

i. Poor planning

Poor planning is one of the reasons why a project may fail (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, 2019). In the absence of a proper scope document, it is difficult to assign duties, monitor the performance of project team (Hasan, 2016). Hasan (2016) further reports that developing a comprehensive plan document that highlights all the requirements by stakeholders is important to deliver a project successful as it facilitates the project team to comprehend what they have perform and sets clear objectives for the team to achieve. According to FDIC (2019) these are the lists of what may be the problem in planning;

- Not breaking down development into phases or steps.
- Failure to prioritize operational activities or objectives.
- Failure to involve stakeholders and get their approval.
- Inadequate funds or poor utilization of funds
- Setting schedules that are unrealistic

ii. Poor communication

Effective communication is crucial to keep the project team members focused, prevent confusions and motivate them (Hasan, 2016). Communication with project team members assists to develop an environment of trust, reduce conflicts, which eventually bring the best out of the project team and lead to the project success.

iii. Unrealistic expectations

Setting unrealistic expectations have caused projects to run down the drain (Hasan, 2016). Setting unrealistic schedules during planning also causes project failures (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation[FDIC], 2019). It is important to consider all the factors and obstacles involved that might adversely influence the project (Hasan, 2016). Hasan (2016) further reports that instead of setting expectations that are not realistic it is important to keep a buffer that allows the project team the liberty of finishing the project without speeding through it. A buffer reduces the team members' workload and allows them to focus on each activity in a better way.

iv. Incompetent project team

Choosing the appropriate project manager and selecting a competent team is important for project success (Hasan, 2016). The incompetence may result from inadequate knowledge on the project. According to FDIC (2019) inadequate knowledge may lead to the following;

- Lacking skills and a proven approach to project management.
- Failure to address potential risks due to lack of experience.
- Failure to estimate, monitor, or control utilization of resources.
- Failure to set up processes to measure and track results.

v. **Lack of leadership and cohesion in the project team**

If all the project team members are moving in different directions then no positive outcome should be expected in the project (Hasan, 2016). Hasan (2016) further notes that it is the responsibility of project managers to unite the project team to attain a common objective. There are different reasons for a lack of cohesion but all of them contributes towards project failure. Some of these according to FDIC (2019) are;

- Failure to define the leadership structure or failure to identify decision makers.
- Failure to develop a governance structure that is appropriate for the project needs.
- Failure to make timely and decisive decisions.
- Neglect of leadership roles.
- Failure to have a strategic vision.
- Lack of clear roles and responsibilities among project team members.
- Inability to resolve conflicts.

vi. **Poor monitoring and risk management**

Assigning roles to the project team members requires constant monitor of the progress and hold them accountable to their work (Hasan, 2016). Once the project team take responsibility for their actions, they perform better and produce better results. Hasan (2016) notes that most project managers are aware that risk management is a crucial part of project management yet, many projects put little or no emphasis on risk management. Out of this, these projects fail to accomplish their targets and fail to observe the specified schedules or budget.

vii. Project lifecycle problems

According to FDIC (2019) the project lifecycle problems include:

- Failure to define the requirements clearly and completely that result in building gaps in the features needed.
- Use of poor technical designs that do not allow for modification.
- Change of requirements late in the project and continued change requests cause the project to lose focus.
- Use of technology components that are incompatible as designed.

2. Identify any six parts of a monitoring and evaluation report

The following are the key sections/parts of an evaluation report;

Section I: Summary/Executive Summary

This is a concise synopsis of the evaluation summarizing main findings and recommendations (Development Dimensions Africa, 2018; University of Kansas, 2019b). The summary should include: the reasons why the evaluation was carried out, what was involved in the evaluation, the major results and recommendations on the evaluation, the audience the evaluation report targets, and the decisions that are needed to be made based on the result. It also includes description of the program, evaluation questions and description of the design, and key findings and action steps (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). According to CDC (2013) this section identifies the intended users and it fosters transparency about the evaluation purposes and who will access the evaluation results and when.

Section II: Background Information about the Program

This section usually includes a logic model, describes the program's stage of development, and a narrative description (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). It can be concluded that this section leads to a shared comprehension of the program, besides the reasons for the evaluation questions and how they are prioritized (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). It is presumed that most readers of the evaluation report will be somewhat conversant with the program, but that may not necessarily be the case (Development Dimensions Africa, 2018; University of Kansas, 2019b). Even those who are conversant with the program may have some misunderstandings, so it is important to take the time to make the goals, strategic plan, organizational structure, and other essential program elements clear. According to the University of Kansas (2019b) typically, this section includes the program origin, goals of the program, the clients involved, administrative structure, program activities, program staff and materials produced by the program.

Section III: Description of the Evaluation

This part documents how the evaluation target was arrived at and presents the explanation and the criteria for how the evaluation questions were prioritized (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). This section explains why the evaluation was carried out and what it intended to achieve (University of Kansas, 2019b). It should also explain anything the evaluation was not intending to do. This section should answer questions like who requested the evaluation, was the evaluation meant to provide for any specific audience, were there any controls to the evaluation in terms of resources, was any particular kind of evaluation design applied, what kind of information was gathered, what kind of methods were used to collect information, and why were these specific methods chosen (Development Dimensions Africa, 2018; University of Kansas, 2019b).

Section IV - Results of the Evaluation

This part gives clarity about how data was analyzed and describes the collaborative process used to interpret results. It also gives purposeful interpretation of the data, which goes beyond mere presentation (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). According to University of Kansas (2019b) this section may include all the data that is gathered, analyzed, recorded, and organized in understandable formats, excerpts from interviews, participant's testimonials from participants and clients, results of questionnaire, and anecdotal evidence. Usually, the interpretation part is left out in an evaluation report, therefore, breaking a valuable connection between results and use (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013).

Section V: Discussion of Results

This section is supposed to cover the interpretation of all the results in terms of the stated goals and as reported in section four of the report (Heriot Watt University, 2014). In case the evaluation is not a big one then sections four and five may be combined. Heriot Watt University (2014) further reports that the results should consistently be related back to the purpose of the evaluation. It is important to report unexpected findings as they can often be the most interesting. This section should answer the following questions, are there alternative explanations to the findings from the data, can the findings be generalized, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention, are certain parts of the program better received by certain groups, are any results related to certain attitudes or learner characteristics, were there any unexpected result?

Section VI: Costs and Benefits (Optional)

This section of the report is optional and should it be included it provides a chance to justify the program's budget (Development Dimensions Africa, 2018; University of Kansas, 2019b). It is included in the report if it was part of the evaluation plan (Heriot Watt University, 2014). Many evaluations do not look at costs but there is an increasing need to include some information about costs because evaluations and program interventions do not take place for free.

Section VII - Conclusions

This part can be the most relevant section in the report apart from the executive summary because some readers will only read the summary and the conclusion section (Heriot Watt University, 2014). Conclusions and recommendations should be outlined in a clear and precise manner and these may be presented as a list as readers can scan through them easily. The key points should be out across in the opening summary and in the conclusion, mention about the reliability of the results, the recommendations about the program and if any predictions or hypotheses can be put forward.

3. Why is feedback an important component of project monitoring and evaluation?

Providing feedback means presenting the data on achievements that are being gotten from the evaluation to those involved in the initiative, that is, line staff and volunteers, besides administrators and board members (University of Kansas, 2019c). Giving feedback should be an ongoing process in order all stakeholders can be kept up-to-date on what is going on as planned and what needs to be improved. There are different reasons as to why it is important to give feedback about monitoring and evaluation findings. For example, giving feedback about implementation progress to project staff, communication with donors to report on the success or challenges of the project, giving feedback to potential participants, or with a general audience, to pass the information about how stakeholders can benefit from a project (Lammert J, Heinemeier S., & Fiore T., 2017). Regular and well-structured feedback communication related to evaluation findings are of importance to project implementation in the following ways:

i. Ensure provision of high-quality services

Consistent feedback communication of evaluation findings all through the project cycle can assist in ensuring that the services given are high-quality, relevant, and useful to project stakeholders (Lammert J et al., 2017). Lammert et al. (2017) adds that this is true especially for internal project feedback which in most instances are used to monitor and manage project implementation.

ii. To promote utilization of and demand for project services

Giving feedback about how the project will benefit different stakeholders can assist generate interest and support for the project (Lammert J et al., 2017). Conversely, the effects or coverage of a project can be limited if implementers do not to give effective feedback and communication about project achievements and outcomes.

iii. To ensure accountability for the ongoing project investments

Making sure the stakeholders are aware of project progress assists them to comprehend whether the project is performing what it intended to achieve (Lammert J et al., 2017). When evaluation information associated to costs are included, it assists stakeholders to be aware on how and how well investments in the project are being utilized. In other words it assists community leadership to assess the progress towards meeting the project goals (Development Dimensions Africa, 2018; University of Kansas, 2019c).

iv. Sharing important information with project stakeholders and the field

Feedback about the successes of a project and lessons learned through evaluation can be valuable to others carrying out similar projects and to a greater audience of persons interested in learning about the outcomes of investments of the project (Lammert J et al., 2017).

According to Development Dimensions Africa (2018 and University of Kansas (2019c) other reasons include:

v. To assist identify areas wherein the members of the project may want to add more energy or to identify when too much energy is used in areas less central to the project objective

vi. To provide the chances to celebrate small achievements and assist the project focus on the ultimate goal by seeing cumulative achievements over time.

vii. To provide financiers the opportunity to assist re-direct the project towards activities that are directly associated to the objectives.

viii. To provide financiers the opportunity to identify and reward the achievements of the project.

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