Institutional Factors Influencing Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in NGOs in Uganda: A Case of TASO Mbarara and Rukungiri Service Centers

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ABSTRACT

The participatory approach to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is considered core to project development and implementation because it seeks to involve people who will be affected by the project throughout its entire process. Over the years, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have played a significant role in implementing community-centered projects in Uganda. However, the level of community participation has been mainly limited to needs assessments, consultative meetings during the design of the project and baseline studies. This has greatly hindered project sustainability and effectiveness in achieving the intended objectives due to less ownership of the interventions by local people, a phenomenon attributed to institutional-based factors. The study examined the influence of institutional factors (leadership styles and staff competencies) on Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) and explored how organizational structure influences PM&E and the stakeholder perspectives towards PM&E at The AIDS Support Organization (TASO) in Mbarara and Rukungiri service centers. The researchers adopted a mixed methods approach with a concurrent triangulation model involving a sample of 76 respondents whose views were obtained using questionnaires and 10 participants in key informant interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in SPPS version 20.0, while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The study found that leadership styles and staff competencies had a statistically significant relationship with PM&E. Qualitative findings further revealed that organizational structure in terms of policies and roles determines the extent of participation, the frequency, and how stakeholders are engaged. Stakeholder perspectives aligned towards technical skills needed for meaningful participation in M&E, policy limitations, and financial constraints influenced participation at all stages. Rigorous stakeholder mapping and analysis by institutions is key in

understanding interests and capacities of stakeholders which can be addressed and aligned to enhance participatory monitoring and evaluation.

Keywords: Institutional factors, participatory monitoring and evaluation, NGOs, TASO

1. Introduction

The concept of participation in the increasing worldwide demand for M&E in development interventions is one that has been broadly recommended because of its ability to foster satisfaction with project performance among all stakeholders (Sangole et al., 2014). Participatory monitoring and evaluation refers to the involvement of all stakeholders in design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and decision-making of project interventions. PM&E approaches in community interventions have existed previously in the form of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and were regarded as cost-effective ways of obtaining information and insights from the local people. Hilhorst and Guijt (2006) argue that in order to achieve meaningful involvement of stakeholder groups at all stages of project implementation, the implementing agencies should build capacity to ensure primary stakeholders remain in the driver's seat during the project life cycle.

With the advent of increased donor funding in health, HIV/AIDS service delivery, relief, and development interventions in Uganda, proven participatory methodologies in community projects have been dominantly practiced on the recommendation of governments and funding partners(The World Bank, 2016).The increase and need for meaningful engagement is required for enhancing local participation, ownership and enriching outcomes of evaluations and decision-making(Shah & et al, 2006).Despite the tremendous adoption demands and application of participatory approaches, the shift from the conventional M&E remains a slow process. There are fewer cases of PM&E at levels of project implementation with limited participation in the processes, as noted by Mutyaba (2011). This is attributed to various institutional-based factors in management, leadership and skills gap which still pose major hindrances to effective engagement of all stakeholders at different levels in M&E, which is key in enhancing project sustainability, ownership, and capacity building(Basheka & Byamugisha, 2015;UNICEF et al., 2016;Bwengye & Thornhill, 2015).

This article presents findings of a mixed methods study that examined the influence of institutional factors (leadership styles and staff competences) on Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation(PM&E) and explored the stakeholder perspectives on how organizational structure influences PM&E at The AIDS Support Organization (TASO) service centers in Mbarara and Rukungiri. The article begins with theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study,

followed by the research methodology, and the key findings. It covers the discussion of key findings as well as the conclusion and recommendations.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual underpinnings of the study

The study was guided by the systems theory of Management elaborated by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1973 which provided a framework for conceptualizing Participatory monitoring and evaluation in the context of modern organizations. The theory considers an organization as an open-ended system that interacts with the external environment in the process of transforming inputs and resources to obtain outputs consumed and beneficial to the environment. The environment/ beneficiaries give feedback which the organization relies on for its own efficiency and effectiveness. Chikere and Nwoka (2015) argue that modern organizations are considered as systems with various departments such operations, finance, and M&E, among others, and, as such, need to be coordinated together towards the realization of a common goal which also forms the basis for collective participatory action in M&E. Organizational stakeholders are viewed as a core part of the environment that institutions must interact with for survival. The stakeholders such as clients, customers, local leaders, and governments act as beneficiaries of the organization's outputs and generate routine and periodic feedback necessary for the institution to adjust, adapt and survive (Whitney & et al.2015).

The theory provides a framework where an organization is analyzed in terms of its internal and external behavior while dealing with different stakeholder groups in the implementation of community-centered interventions through data collection, developing indicators, measuring change as well as taking corrective action. Vernooy et al. (2006) note that institutionalizing PM&E requires greater integration with the organization's processes and interlinked collaborations among various organizational structures with stronger connections to communities and agendas of political change. The structural arrangement of the operational M&E system for an organization, encompassing the M&E approach, i.e., participatory, collaborative, or technocrat-based, further contributes to how effectively the objectives of an organization will be achieved (Ssekamatte, 2018).This, therefore, underscores the contribution of a well-laid-out organizational structure stipulating staff roles, responsibilities, and M&E policies that are key contributors to implementation of PM&E approaches within an organization.

Mele et al. (2010) argue that the organization through the stewardship of its leaders and governing councils is responsible for directing the subsystems and departments towards the achievement of the common goal and utilizing feedback from the environment to improve the quality of service. They add that meaningful interactions among departments and stakeholders result in a more effective participatory process.

In spite of the rapid growth and acceptance of monitoring and evaluation in Uganda and Africa, the concept of PM&E remains an evolving phenomenon, as pointed by Guijt et al. (1998).They argue that cases of PM&E in development interventions where there is both meaningful and effective participation are still lacking. Various authors (UNICEF, 2016; Omunu, 2008;Bwengye & Thornhill, 2015) attribute this to limited comprehensive knowledge and skills among staff, implementers as well as the community in conducting and moderating PM&E sessions. The argument is further enshrined in Nodulman et al. (2015),who conclude that expert opinions and user perceptions are supreme rather than passive in community-centered interventions; therefore, the need to have capacity building assessments for stakeholders involved in program implementation will greatly enhance PM&E.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation requires the involvement of all stakeholders in organizational processes at key stages of the project life cycle. Estrella et al.(2000) define PM&E as a process anchored on the notion of participation that focuses on not only what is being monitored and evaluated but more on who is measuring and how different concerns and interests of stakeholders are negotiated and represented. This does not differ much from Hilhorst and Guijt (2006) who view the effectiveness of PM&E as anchored in the involvement of stakeholders in setting goals, tracking progress, and proposing corrective action. The uptake of PM&E in development programs has attracted wider applause and recommendation from funding agencies such as the United Nations, USAID, and EU. The World Bank (2016) further emphasizes that the participatory process should involve designing and development of tools and techniques to be used by local-level community stakeholders in M&E such as community mapping, testimonials, and participatory rural appraisal. This will contribute greatly to enhancing ownership of interventions by all stakeholders, hence increasing the success rate and sustainability of the project. This study assesses PM&Ein terms of the three aspects of participatory planning, participatory implementation, and participatory decision-making.

Participatory planning is a joint process whereby activities or a project is designed by all participating individuals or communities together with the project staff. As multiple stakeholders come together in the monitoring and evaluation process, negotiation contributes towards the building of trust and changing perception, behaviors, and attitudes among stakeholders, which affects the way they contribute to the project (Sokol-Oxman, 2015).During this phase, beneficiary communities or representatives are engaged in participatory appraisal to identify their needs/problems and later suggest possible solutions, challenges, and opportunities as well as how responsibilities will be shared among different partners.

Estrella et al. (2000) further note that negotiations facilitate arriving at consensus during indicator development and work planning which is key in the representation of perspectives, views and opinions while selecting indicators.

Participatory implementation occurs during the implementation phase of the project and involves identifying and selecting participants, households, and groups of individuals to be involved, clearly stipulating the various roles of the beneficiaries.

The World Bank (2016) and Guijt et al. (1998) stress that this process dwells on a transparent approach of making known all the ongoing community-based activities and methods of selecting who participates such as social mapping. Estrella et al.(2000) further highlight that if a participatory method is to be interactive, it has to be locally adjusted. Negotiations across various stakeholder groups are always encouraged to obtain a balance between the interests of the locals and the external technical assistance from implementers.

Participatory decision-making as a core attribute focuses on instruments to support systematic reflection, learning, generation of knowledge, and process-oriented management at the community level (Guijt and Gaventa, 1998; Estrella et al., 2000;Sangole et al.,2014).

It involves participants defining indicators for tracking progress, collecting, and analyzing data on progress of interventions, reviewing, and sharing feedback through community meetings, and client satisfaction surveys to facilitate decision-making. Stakeholders also agree on dissemination plan, reporting and use of findings. If an outsider is involved, his or her role should be to facilitate the process and offer technical guidance (Bundy et al., 2017).

This type of PM&E approach is distinctive because of its emphasis on developing a system that is managed and supported by local communities for their own purposes and assessment. This systematic incorporation of stakeholder-driven engagement relies on leadership as a key enabler. The diversity of institutional leadership and management style exhibited by each entity plays a key role in enabling participatory involvement in M&E processes. Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014 argue that participative/democratic approaches utilize open communication channels that are all-inclusive to encourage organizational stakeholders to contribute to organization processes. Even thou this may seem the preferred approach, the extent and quality of participation varies greatly when compared with more passive and laissez-faire approaches where stakeholders have full freedom to act on their own (Wong & Giessner, 2016).Whereas granting freedom for subordinates and other partners to freely exercise their powers is considered a motivational factor for innovation and expression of ideas, Wellman & LePine (2017) note the lack of direction, less involvement and shirking of leadership responsibilities by managers/leaders may arise which distorts organized approaches for utilizing feedback and coordinating meaningful participatory involvement.

Furthermore, highly authoritative self-centred approaches to governance such as Autocratic leadership styles which are deemed dictatorial deter participation.(Chukwusa,2018) notes that

impeding success, use of directives, strict supervision and self-decision making with little, or no consultations closes the windows for feedback and diverse opinions. In modern organizations leadership should accommodate, value, and respect divergent opinions which arise from collaborative engagements with organizational stakeholders, Hence the need for clear organizational structures which embrace participatory negotiations, consultations, and involvement (Faiz et al., 2017).

The reviewed literature on theoretical and empirical inclination of institutional factors by various scholars (Ayellah, 2015; Ochieng, 2018; Gopee & Galloway, 2017) highlights the immense need for stakeholders to participate meaningfully in monitoring and evaluation of interventions by NGOs based in their communities. However, empirical evidence on the relationship and interactions of leadership styles in institutional participatory processes is both scanty and weak. More so, the organizational structures encompassing roles and staff competences fall short on how various stakeholder opinions and expectations are harmonized during participatory decision making in project processes. It should be noted that many studies (Omunu, 2008; Sangole et al., 2014) have previously focused on PM&E as entirely community-based, hence regarding most contributors to PM&E as emanating from the community. The geographical setting of the related studies on PM&E in Uganda have been anchored on rural-based communities where implementing agencies mainly focused on poverty and livelihood needs of communities, hence generating a one-sided view of PM&E as just community participation. Mutyaba (2011),for instance, in assessing M&E practices of NGOs implementing HIV/AIDS projects limited his study to best practices in M&E and financial resources, yet contemporary practices in M&E have since greatly evolved with focus being put on achieving set targets in the most efficient manner without compromising quality(Salamzadeh et al., 2015). Furthermore, there is scanty information on the contribution of organizational structure, nature of roles, responsibilities, and the M&E structure to PM&E.

Therefore, this study fills the knowledge gap by providing information on PM&E as viewed from an institutional perspective in Uganda and, most importantly, generates empirical evidence for the relationship between leadership styles, staff competence and PM&E.It also highlights how the organizational structure and underlying stakeholder perspectives influence the application of participatory monitoring and evaluation in modern NGOs.

The desire to remedy the gap that exists in institutionalizing PM&E formed the basis for this research with the following objectives:

- To examine the influence of leadership styles on participatory M&E at TASO Mbarara and TASO Rukungiri service centers;

- To determine the contribution of staff competence on participatory M&E at TASO Mbarara and TASO Rukungiri service centers;

- To explore how organizational structure influences participatory M&E at TASO Mbarara and TASO Rukungiri service centers;

- To explore the perspectives of stakeholders towards participatory M&E at TASO Mbarara and TASO Rukungiri service centers.

The study was conducted in the context of modern organizations in a competitive donor-driven environment where accountability, ownership and stakeholder involvement were paramount. Therefore, the study findings provide influential insights in understanding the existing organizational-based factors hindering participation. This is beneficial to NGOs, program managers, funding agencies and the government in enhancing stakeholder relations and highlighting best practices for meaningful engagement. The gaps highlighted in the study provide a steppingstone to researchers in the field of PM&E and hence contributes to the body of knowledge. The rest of the article covers the research methodology and design, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

3. Research Methodology and Design

The study was conducted in Mbarara and Rukungiri Districts, southwestern Uganda where the two service centers (TASO Mbarara and TASO Rukungiri) of The AIDS Support Organization (TASO Uganda) are located. The two HIV service centers provide services to over 13,000 people living with HIV and also support communities in southwestern Uganda with HIV prevention, treatment, and care services (TASO, 2019).The two centers are part of the larger TASO operations that work with various partners and stakeholders such as the Board of Governors, Centre Advisory committees, and Client councils which are mandated to support in successful realization of organizational goals (TASO Uganda, 2017).

The study adopted a mixed methods approach incorporating a concurrent triangulation model. This approach was adopted because it avails the opportunity to converge and merge the collected data in analysis so as to explore and probe further contradictions and outcomes that can be explicitly explained through interviews and other qualitative methods (Creswell, 2014).

The study comprised a sample of randomly selected 76 respondents for quantitative interviews using the questionnaire survey. The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula and Simple random sampling was used to obtain respondents from each category that consisted of staff (M&E staff, other Technical staff) and governance members (Client Council and Centre Advisory Committee). The structured questionnaire consisting of a 5-point Likert scale was used

to obtain responses on levels of agreement and satisfaction with involvement in key monitoring and evaluation processes and whether the institutional factors of leadership styles, staff competencies, and organizational structures enable involvement. Furthermore, the questionnaire provided an opportunity to obtain categorical responses on the various institutional processes where stakeholders have participated actively (Dattalo, 2008).

A total of 10 participants were purposively selected for key informant interviews who were comprised of program staff (Heads of Departments, center Programme Managers), Governing Council members (Chairperson Centre Advisory Committee) and Client Representatives (Chairperson Clients' Council) who were obtained from the human resource and personnel records of TASO Uganda.

Purposive sampling was used to select key based on the distinct qualities an informant possessed(Palys,2008) that were of interest to the researcher. The key informant interviews were able to solicit in-depth information from participants regarding how stakeholders are involved, their general perceptions opinions, and views regarding institutional processes, frequency of involvement, technical skills, and leadership of the organization and how they contribute to participatory involvement in M&E. . Unlike the questionnaires which provided limited options for the respondents to rate or express their opinion, interviews provided opportunity for the interviewees to clarify what they meant, there and then (Darlington & Scott, 2002). Its conversational nature allowed for more probing and clarity on responses being provided.

The study was conducted with approval and clearance from the TASO Research Ethics Committee(TASOREC/077/19-UG-REC-009) and Uganda Management Institute(UMI).The questionnaire was pretested on 10 selected volunteer staff, consisting of 10% of the target population to determine the non-response patterns, reliability, and timing before actual data collection, the findings were used to re-design the questionnaire for final use (Heale & Twycross, 2015).A research assistant received a 2-day training on conducting interviews in a health setting, ensuring privacy, obtaining consent, and orientation in data management processes while dealing with HIV-affected and infected individuals.

The collected data was stored in password-protected computers, quantitative data was reviewed and entered in a validated Data capture screen designed in Ms Access, cleaned, and imported into Ms Excel and SPPSS for analysis. These statistical packages were key in providing the descriptive statistics of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, presenting graphical interpretations such as charts and graphs. Testing of hypotheses and exploring relationships between the variables was done using regression analysis in SPSS. Linear regression analysis was further used to examine whether leadership styles and staff competencies have an influence on PM&E; and if yes, to what extent. Qualitative data obtained from Key informant interviews

was organized, sorted, and categorized into patterns and coded into themes. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data results were triangulated to answer the specific research questions and a narrative explanation of the predictor variables and their association with the PM&E was provided.

4. Results

Out of the 76 respondents for quantitative interviews ,71% were staff, 11% were Clients' Council members, 11%Centre Advisory Committee members and 8% were HODs. The gender demographics included 59% males and 41% females. In terms of educational level, 50% were bachelor's degree holders, 32% diploma holders, 13% secondary education, 3% had attained master's degree and 3% had attained a certificate level of education. In terms of age distribution, the majority (40.8%) of the respondents were in the age range of 25 to 35 years, 30.3% were in the range of 36 to 45 years; and 28.9% were aged 45 and above.

These characteristics reflect that the majority of organizational stakeholders (50%)were degree holders, highlighting that organizational stakeholders at basic minimum had attained secondary education and were able to comprehend and meaningfully participate and represent in organizational processes. This was in line with the TASO stakeholder guidelines which stipulate that for Governing Council members to be eligible to serve, they must possess a minimum of secondary education for Clients' Council and a degree for CAC members.

Institutional factors and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

Leadership styles and participatory monitoring and evaluation

Leadership styles were assessed in terms of the three common dimensional perspectives of participative/democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles and their relation to participatory monitoring and evaluation processes. Descriptive findings on leadership styles within the organization revealed with a mean of 1.79 that 88% of stakeholders considered the leadership style at TASO as participative (democratic) as compared to 12% who viewed itas authoritative. Concerning stakeholder involvement in planning, implementation, performance reviews and decision-making, the majority of respondents (71.1%) were satisfied with their involvement, 25% very satisfied, and 3.9% dissatisfied.

From the analysis of key informant interviews ,the key emerging themes included the existence-of periodic meetings with decision making arms of the organization, inclusive representation from key stakeholder groups and policy considerations for stakeholder engagements. The observations revealed that TASO, through a participative leadership style, has put in place structures which have enabled consultations through various communication channels such as

quarterly meetings with the Clients' Council and the Centre Advisory Committee. Direct involvement of beneficiary stakeholders, known as expert clients, during clinics and community sensitization and mobilization activities as stipulated in the Meaningful/Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (MIPA/GIPA) policy enhanced participatory implementation and decision-making. A participant explained the participatory processes of stakeholder groups in the institution:

> The Clients 'Council meets every quarter to discuss clients' issues and is comprised of members from each sub-county and district within the coverage of TASO. We have a representative Kanungu, one for the youth, and also for people with disabilities. We have clients' comments books where issues are documented during clients' visits to the clinic and the book is shared with the counsellor in charge of clients. (Participant 1, Male, Clients' Council).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Leadership Styles

How would you describe the current leadership style at TASO?	Frequency	Percent
Authoritarian	9	12%
Participative	67	88%
Do the leadership structures stakeholders 'opportunity to voice their opinions on organizational issues?	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Sometimes	16	21%
YES	60	79%

Table 2: Summary Statistics of Satisfaction with PME Processes

N=76	How satisfied are you regarding your involvement in program performance reviews, planning and decision-making?					
	1-Very satisfied	2-Satisfied	3-Neutral	4-Dissatisfied	5-Not satisfied at all	Mean
frequency	19	54	0	3	0	1.79
Percent	25%	71.1%	0%	3.9%	0%	

Leadership styles and participatory monitoring and evaluation

Hypothesis testing 1:Leadership styles within an institution   will have an influence on Participatory Monitoring and evaluation

Null hypothesis: Leadership styles have no influence on participatory Monitoring and evaluation

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of leadership styles on Participatory Monitoring and evaluation.

Consistent with the hypothesis, leadership styles were found to significantly influence participatory monitoring and evaluation (β=0.091,P=0.043).Leadership styles contributed 9% (β=0.091) of the variation in PM&E.

Table 3: Model Summary of Regression Between Leadership Style and PM&E

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.591[a]	0.483	0.465	0.693

Table 4: Regression coefficients between Leadership and PM&E

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.837	0.286		6.419	0.000
	leadership	0.192	0.246	0.091	0.782	0.043

Participant responses from key informant interviews are consistent with quantitative findings that a participative leadership style provides a favorable environment for stakeholders to get involved and participate using existing leadership structures and channels. A major emerging theme pointed towards functional governance structures and enabling environment for consultations as components of a leadership style that enabled stakeholder engagements in routine and periodic monitoring, assessments, and decision-making.

The existence of functional governance structures

The existence of oversight and governing structures such as Governing Council meetings, Annual General Meetings, and staff General meetings have enabled participatory inclusion of stakeholder groups to carry out consultations, performance reviews, and support supervision These existing policy structures within the organization were mentioned as key aspects of leadership that enabled the meaningful involvement of partners in organization monitoring and

evaluation. Therefore, whereas leadership provides a favorable environment for PM&E stakeholders to get involved and participate, the study findings show that it may not guarantee when, how, and where stakeholders will be involved in program implementation.

> I am happy that as council members our contribution has been recognized, we have a voice and the management of TASO has continuously facilitated us during our quarterly meetings, we have a voice and some level of influence, though sometimes we are limited in some areas where technical expertise is involved, we believe senior management should look into the scope of our assignment and frequency of meetings, more time should be given for these meetings. (Participant 2, Female, Centre Advisory Committee Member).

Staff competencies and participatory monitoring and evaluation

The survey descriptive findings from respondents' rankings on staff competences and the need for skills and training in M&E to enhance the quality of PM&E outcomes revealed with a mean of 1.22 that the majority of respondents (80%) completely agreed, 18% partially agreed, compared to 2% who disagreed. These results imply that,to a greater extent, respondents appreciated that monitoring and evaluation is an influential program component that requires some level of understanding in terms of processes and thus mentorships, coaching and refreshers are needed to enhance PM&E outcomes

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on Staff Competencies and PM&E

	N	COMPLETELY AGREE	PARTIALLY AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	MEAN
THERE IS A NEED FOR SKILLS TRAINING IN PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES AMONG STAFF TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF PME OUTCOMES	60	19	54	0	3	0	1.22
	100%	80%	18%	0%	2%	0	

Hypothesis testing 2: Staff competencies have an influence on participatory monitoring and evaluation

Null Hypothesis: Staff competencies have no influence on participatory monitoring and evaluation

A simple linear regression was conducted to examine the influence of staff competencies on participatory monitoring and evaluation at TASO Mbarara and TASO Rukungiri.

staff competencies were found to significantly influence PM&E ($\beta=0.007, P=0.039$), consistent with our hypothesis that staff competencies have an influence on participatory monitoring and evaluation. Staff competencies contributed 3% of the variation in PM&E.

Table 6: Model Summary of Regression Between Staff Competences and PM&E

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.487[a]	.453	.427	.740

a. Predictors: (Constant), competences

Table 7: Regression Coefficients Between Staff Competencies and PM&E

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.053	.275		7.468	.000
	competences	.011	.212	.007	.052	.039
a. Dependent variable: PM&E						

From the analysis of key informant interviews, two major themes emerged as key dimensions of staff competencies that influence the extent of participatory involvement in monitoring and evaluation: skills gaps and expertise in participatory engagement with stakeholders.

Skills gap

Many study participants during key informant interviews mentioned the limitation arising from skills as a hindrance to participatory monitoring and evaluation. Highly technical processes at planning stage such as proposal development and setting indicators require knowledge which some stakeholders do not possess. Where most stakeholders were highly engaged in monitoring

phases of the organizations through performance review meetings, their level of contribution on technical matters was limited, however, they were able to express opinions based on how the organizational activities impacted them such as quality of service delivery and patient satisfaction the need for capacity building among some Client council members and Centre advisory committee members is further explained by qualitative findings from interviews where one key informant noted:

> Many people don't understand M&E activities, We thought M&E was confined to only the department, but eventually, we realized it encompasses all of us. Therefore, if you can call up workshops, and trainings and disseminate information so that people can know what's involved as a result you will find that we are all concerned and willing to participate (Participant 2, Male, HOD).

Expertise and appreciation of participatory processes

The ability to meaningfully engage the organizational stakeholders and also sustain relations with partners including clients, and governing council members also emerged as a key ingredient that influences how collectively stakeholders participate in monitoring and evaluation. maintaining good stakeholder relations and possession of expertise in joint mobilization, understanding the interests of various partners helps the organization to categorize stakeholders according to interests. A need for a thorough stakeholder analysis and mapping would be key in increasing beneficial involvement by different stakeholder groups

> Over time, experience obtained in participating in and organizing performance reviews, community engagement activities with clients, and periodic budgeting, and joint work planning has strengthened their relations with technical staff and improved their working relations with fellow clients and other stakeholders. Non-technical partners often appreciate being oriented and treated as key partners throughout the process ,otherwise the project risks facing resistance from the local community and delays in implementation (Participant 3, Male, HOD).

Organizational structure and participatory monitoring and evaluation

Research question: How does organizational structure influence participatory M&E?

The qualitative objective of the study sought to explore how the organizational structure influence PM&E. Data was obtained from key informant interview whereas document reviews provided the framework for conceptualizing the organizational structure attributes.

From the review of the Board of Trustees Governance Manual; stakeholder contribution, roles, and guidelines stipulate periodic involvement of the Centre Advisory Committee and Clients' Council. The manual provides for Quarterly meetings whose role is to provide advisory support to the center. The organizational structure was assessed in line with three attributes of institutional policies, staff roles guiding involvement, and the M&E structure as aligned towards participatory integration of all stakeholders.

Descriptive findings on organizational structure and PM&E from respondents revealed that the majority (92%) of respondents acknowledged and concurred (47% strongly agree and 45% agree) that TASO policies promote meaningful involvement of stakeholders compared to 7% who were neutral and 1% who disagreed. The findings were backed by a mean of 1.62 as seen in Table 8.

In relation to satisfaction regarding feedback mechanisms within the organization for participatory engagements, 90% of the respondents were satisfied (22% very satisfied and 68%satisfied) with the feedback mechanisms for addressing stakeholder issues; hence, the majority(mean=1.93) as compared to 3% who were not satisfied in Table 8

More so, from Table 8, respondents were asked if they are always involved in the projects' stages right from the start to the end, in planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and decision-making. 66% of the respondents agreed with the statement,26 5 were neutral and 8% disagreed.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics on Organizational Structure and PM&E

	N	1-Strongly Agree	2-Agree	3-Neutral	4-Disagree	5-Strongly Disagree	mean
TASO policies promote meaningful involvement of stakeholders in the organization's performance	76	36	34	5	1	0	1.62
		47%	45%	7%	1%	0%	
Am always involved in the project from the start to the end	76	15	35	20	5	1	2.24
		20%	46%	26%	7%	1%	

How satisfied are you regarding the feedback mechanisms for addressing stakeholder issues at TASO	N	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Not satisfied at all	1.93
	76	17	53	0	6	0	
		22%	68%	0%	3%	0%	

More so, key stakeholders of the organization concurred with the quantitative findings, with responses from key informant interviews further affirming that stakeholder policies have guaranteed the setting up of stakeholder committees such as the Clients' Council and the Centre Advisory Committee with representation on the organization's governing boards as noted by one participant:

> The policies of TASO allow the Clients 'Council chairperson and secretary to seat on the Centre Advisory Committee meetings and present issues,(….) As the chairperson, my work is to monitor clients' welfare at the center and ensure that clients are receiving a good service. (Participant 4,Male, Clients' Council).

Findings from the interviews with key informants and stakeholder groups generated four emerging themes that point to how organizational policies contribute to the differing trends in participation across various organizational stakeholders.

The emerging themes include:

(a) Scope of participation, roles of various stakeholders in participatory processes

In spite of an existing guiding document on stakeholder involvement, the TASO Board of Trustees Governance Manual falls short of clarity in stipulating stakeholder roles in relation to monitoring and evaluation. One participant remarked:

> The Centre Advisory Committees at the center level have no influence; Management determines the participation of CAC, and they decide when governance should meet. The input of the Centre Advisory Committee during budgeting and decision-making at the planning level is low, with limited consultations. Only in local resource mobilization can you bring an idea, and it takes precedence, Most times, management sets the pace(Participant 5, Male, Centre Advisory Committee).

(b) Policy limitations in participation across all stages

From the majority of the respondents during key informant interviews, it was noted that the policies and stipulated guidelines play a vital role on how stakeholders are engaged, the activities they participate in and the extent of involvement in decision-making. Whereas stakeholders feel they can make more contribution especially in planning, their participation is limited to once a quarter. One respondent notes:

> We are not fully involved, we have to wait to be called for Centre Advisory Committee meetings every quarter; other engagements are not mandatory, and the guidelines limit the frequency of involvement(Participant 6,Male,Centre Advisory Committee).

Most non-staff stakeholders seemed not very comfortable with the extent of involvement; they acknowledged that as governance, their input in decision-making is passive since management at the center level reports to senior management and directors, and not the Centre Advisory Committee.

This implies that organizational policies on stakeholder involvement influence greatly how far their involvement goes in relation to the stages of the project. The majority of stakeholder concerns are on the governance level and thus their input would most likely be limited to oversight, approval, authorizations, and a few instances of decision-making. Their input in project planning monitoring and evaluation is low.

(c) Skills and expertise in technical areas and activity timelines

Many key interview participants, both staff and non-staff stakeholders, describe M&E beyond just participation. They assert that the division of labor across departments confines staff to doing their specific program roles and thus have little interest in M&E. Further findings from key informant interviews point out the need for technical skills and knowledge in M&E processes so as to participate better.

> Monitoring and evaluation activities require skills and regular refresher trainings. There are lots of changes in HIV/AIDS programming; if funds would allow induction workshops and training for all stakeholders, that would be very beneficial.(Participant 7, Male,HOD).

Combining findings from both quantitative and qualitative datasets, it should be noted that the organizational internal processes inform of existing policies, roles, responsibilities and operational guidelines and policies managing stakeholder involvement will influence how each stakeholder group participates, when they participate, the extent of involvement and which activities they participate in. Therefore, there is need for clear-cut definition of the organizational stakeholders' roles and policy alignment in terms of guidelines governing participation across

program stages; especially planning, and monitoring and evaluation as these greatly influence PM&E.

(d) Stakeholder perspectives on participatory monitoring and evaluation

The study explored the perspectives of stakeholders towards PM&E at TASO centers with a focus on exploring attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. The analysis of the findings produced three major themes as discussed below:

i.   Policy and guidelines for engagement

Interaction with key stakeholders revealed that participation is entirely guided by the management of TASO and limited by the existing policies. Most participants reported that their participation is inconsequential and entirely limited to advocacy and local resource mobilization. Their involvement is subject to the needs and demands of the organization and happens when they are called upon. Most CAC members and Clients' Council members generally conceptualized their involvement as selective participation in a few areas of the program and less frequently to be regarded as sufficient and in some cases a passive role. One participant stated:

> Governance committees are convenience committees, if I am a Centre Advisory Committee member, and I am called upon as at when you want, this means that I advise when I am called to. As a membership organization, CACs are elected by the people (owners) and should have a mandate to influence affairs. Management at center level doesn't owe allegiance to CAC; they owe allegiance to senior management and directors.(Participant 5,Male CAC Member).

This view is shared by staff and HODs who strongly believe that stakeholder expectations should be defined. Management acknowledges the roles of stakeholder groups and has continuously engaged them through their quarterly meetings, Annual General Meetings(AGM), performance review activities, advocacy, and resource mobilization. However, the existing gap was noted in the scope of their work as per the policy.

> While reviewing the policy, stakeholder expectations should be defined. There is a need to widen the scope of their work, improve TORs, and broaden the policy so that they can participate in other areas(Participant 8, Female, Program Manager).

ii.   Donor priorities and financial implications

It was noted from the study that with the advent of full-fledged donor funding, stakeholder participation in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation was frequent and impactful. The influence of donor funding is largely blamed for the reduced stakeholder

involvement in planning. The donors largely dictate the financial operations of the organizations, especially budgeting, stakeholder activities, and nature of involvement. Less attention has been given to their role as stakeholders as most activities are done by technocrats (staff) and this has greatly crippled stakeholders' participation. One respondent said:

> Majority of the CAC would love to be engaged in other organizational activities due to their competencies so that they can have a contribution; however, the limited finances in terms of facilitation limit the frequency of involvement… Even trainings and sensitization programs cannot be done(Participant 7, Male,HOD)

iii. Technical competences and skills

The emerging themes further reveal that some stakeholders feel comfortable with the less engagement in monitoring and supervision due to their limited technical competence and knowledge in medical and psychosocial activities. M&E being a cross-cutting activity, staff generally concurred that ongoing mentorships and coaching are needed, especially on new and emerging changes in HIV/AIDS programming.

> As CAC members, we usually have an induction workshop for the new members where an orientation on TASO policies and procedures is done, Most of the aspects of TASO are medical; as such, we may not have a big input. If financial resources were available, training and workshops on new changes, and CPDs would help much(Participant 9, Male, Centre Advisory Committee).

5. Discussion of Findings

The study examined the influence of institutional factors on participatory monitoring and evaluation among Non-government Organizations (NGOs) in Uganda. The results revealed that leadership styles have a significant influence on participatory monitoring and evaluation. However, leadership styles were found to be a weaker determinant of PM&E. The significant evidence generated from respondent findings and interview themes suggested that a participative leadership style at TASO avails stakeholders an opportunity to be meaningfully involved through various existent leadership structures such as the Clients' Council and Centre Advisory Committees. These stakeholder groups participate through various feedback channels such as quarterly meetings with TASO management and clients' representatives. These results build onto existing evidence of Winkler(2010) who asserts that general organizational leadership aspects and individual behavior of superiors and managers shape the decision-making process. Stakeholders are likely to value involvement if the leadership structures in place appreciate their contribution. Furthermore, contradictions and variations on the influence of the types of leadership styles on participatory monitoring and evaluation processes at various stages of the

project where there was less stakeholder involvement were attributed to the scope of involvement arising from policy limitations and technical competencies. While previous studies have focused on the role of democratic leadership styles in facilitating joint monitoring and evaluation activities as alluded to by Wong & Giessner (2016), these results highlight the need for streamlining key structural components such as policies as enablers to meaningful participation by stakeholders.

This view is supported by Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014) who note that responsible leadership and leaders must build partnerships that benefit multi-stakeholders by defining their roles, obligations, and responsibilities. This, however, remains evasive if efforts to address staff competencies and skills of stakeholders are not suited for enhancing involvement (Sokol-Oxman, 2015).

Therefore, it can be construed that if limitations in policy and roles of stakeholders are addressed and staff equipped with skills in participatory engagement, the existing organizational leadership structures play a key role in guiding how stakeholders are most likely to participate. If the leaders acknowledge the contribution of stakeholder input through consultations and put in place channels for feedback and participation throughout the project processes, accountability, and decision-making are likely to be enhanced (Sangole et al.,2014).

The study demonstrated a significant relationship between staff competencies in terms of experience and PM&E processes. When staff have the right and relevant skills and experience in both technical participatory engagements and dealing with stakeholders, the various stakeholder groups are likely to participate meaningfully and make significant contribution at all stages of the project. This, therefore, means that when staff competences and skills improve, PM&E will be enhanced. The findings are consistent with Bwengye and Thornhill (2015) who argue that capacity building interventions are key in ensuring the performance of beneficiaries and stakeholders. This, therefore, means, as noted from the study, that organizations need to conduct continuous sensitization, mentorships and induction for staff engaged in health service delivery so as to increase their knowledge in monitoring and evaluation processes (Ochieng, 2018).

The results show that the organizational structure in terms of policies governing stakeholder involvement and roles at various project processes determine the level of participation, the extent of involvement and decision-making. Major emerging themes from the qualitative data analysis pointed to the role of policies in determining the frequency of participation in overall project activities, the scope of participation and the extent to which stakeholders participate across all stages in planning, monitoring and evaluation. These findings furthermore blend and contribute a clearer understanding of the guiding principles in PM&E which are hinged on flexibility in engagement of stakeholders depending on the need, skills and roles during implementation as

alluded to by Hilhorst and Guijt, (2006).General consensus across all stakeholder groups revealed that the specific roles of both staff and stakeholders especially in a functional organizational structure were limited to departments and thus unless they were equipped with skills in participatory engagements and M&E, they were less likely to engage meaningfully.

The results agree with both Onyango (2018) &Gibson & et al.(1997)who asserts that the divorce in organizational participatory principles and processes of learning, negotiation, and participation within the organizations greatly cripples efforts to benefit from PM&E outcomes. Therefore, if the scope of work and stakeholder roles are clearly defined, policies aligned and reviewed to accommodate participation at all stages and Terms of References (TORs) for engaging stakeholders are well articulated, the involvement of stakeholders throughout the project is likely to be enhanced. Although few studies have been done on organizational structure and PM&E, results from the study further indicated that TASO centers have operational guidelines on frequency of involvement whereby at least the CAC and Clients 'Council meet quarterly to discuss organizational issues, share feedback, and review performance. Existing internal structures underpinning the M&E component and roles across stakeholders providing the necessary generation of knowledge and feedback to inform decision-making at the governance level are inexistent and could do better with a policy review (Ssekamatte, 2018).

In exploring stakeholder perspectives, the study found that the participation of stakeholders was selective and influenced by management. Participation by Clients' Council members was mainly in implementation and generating feedback from the clients who are the primary beneficiaries, whereas the CAC was limited to local resource mobilization, advisory, reports review and a few instances of monitoring, control, and supervision. This existing phenomenon was attributed to policy limitations on the scope of involvement. These findings have been alluded to by several authors; Lange et al.(2018), Winkler (2010), andVernooy et al.(2006) who stressed the need to have clearly defined obligations, expectations,and roles of multi-stakeholders that are all-encompassing of their opinion if participatory ownership and decision-making areto be enhanced. The emerging themes also point towards the contributions of donor funding on existing stakeholder practices, highlighting, in particular, the budget cuts, stringent policies and operations requiring less involvement of stakeholders, and strict timelines for key participatory activities like budgeting, hence limiting involvement. These findings are consistent withWathne & Hedger (2009) who note that an effective donor understands and adapts to the context of each country, donorsshould consult respective governments and NGOs before coming up with initiatives, which shouldnot compromise the capacity of local CSOs.

This study however is subject to several limitations;

The study findings are based on the two TASO centres of Mbarara and Rukungiri, which deals with HIV/AIDS service delivery, it should be noted that organisational practices significantly differ across NGOs dealing in other core services areas such as Humanitarian, Business, Education, among others. It is unlikely that the feedback generated from TASO is representative enough of both stakeholder perspective and practices from other NGOs, this limited the generalization of findings. Secondly the study mainly looked at institutional factors in terms of leadership styles, staff competences, organisational structure and stakeholder perspectives, that influence participatory M&E, however, there are other quite a number of other institutional factors that could influence participatory monitoring and evaluation, due to time constraints others were omitted, therefore the findings from the study may not give conclusive evidence and backing of influence on participatory Monitoring & Evaluation.

The strength of our study in adopting a mixed methods approach to obtain stakeholder perspectives and triangulate with respondents' findings on institutional practices provides a strong basis for understanding participatory monitoring and evaluation in the context of contemporary NGO practices. Further studies are recommended to establish the extent of influence of external factors within the organizations other than those conceptualized in the study using a wider and diverse study setting other than HIV service entities to obtain a comprehensive view of PME .

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The current leadership styles have a significant influence on participatory monitoring and evaluation at TASO Mbarara and TASO Rukungiri centers. Even though the leadership may not clearly guarantee which activities stakeholders should engage in and at what stage of the project due to policy limitations on scope of involvement and technical competencies needed in health service delivery,it provides a forum for stakeholders to come together, share feedback and make a contribution on organizational affairs.A participative/democratic leadership style at TASO Rukungiri and TASO Mbarara centers enabled management to engage in consultations and seek stakeholder feedback through quarterly meetings with Centre Advisory Committees(CACs) and the Clients' Council as well as weekly meetings with employees.This created a general feeling of satisfaction with the leadership structures at both TASO centres and the involvement of stakeholders which areparamount in promoting ownership of interventions, effectiveness and sustainability.

Staff competencies,skills, training, and expertise have an influence on participatory monitoring andevaluation at the two TASO centres.The study revealed that if staff are trained,offered continuous mentorships at work,inductions, and on-jobtraining in participatory aspects of M&E, they develop the competence and confidence to participate with knowledge in planning activities

such as workplan development and budgeting, monitoring, supervision and make a significant contribution during perfomance reviews and evaluations.There was general consensus from particiapnts in the study across all stakeholder groups that PM&E is an evolving new and core phenomenon in projects and HIV/AIDS service delivery and thus emphasis on personnel capacity building is regarded as very fundamental.It can thus be concluded from the study that the way staff in particular feel equipped with knowledge,technical skills and information in a certain aspect of project work greatly influences their participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

In terms of how the organisational structure influences participatory monitoring and evaluation, the researchers found that aspects within the organisation, in particular policies and roles, have an influence on PM&E at the two TASO centres.Organisational policies concerned with stakeholder involvement greatly determine the extent of involvement, frequency of participation and scope of participation of stakeholders across the organisation's processes. If the roles of staff and the M&E staff as embedded in the M&E structure and responsibilities of the stakeholder groups do not clearly specify the need for participation in monitoring and evaluation, staff in particular tend to concentrate on their duties within their departments.As noted in the findings, the less involvement in budgeting,workplandevelopment and planning activities was largely attributed to the existing policy governing both the CAC and Clients' Council. Therefore, in order to enhance PM&E, there is need for a clear-cut definition of roles and TORs for stakeholders as well as review of the stakeholder engagement policies to widen their scope of involvement.

Stakeholder perspectives in regard to their involvement and participation are very vital in modern-day organizational practices.The study found that stakeholders view participation as selective across the project life cycle.It is very likely for stakeholders to participate fully in a few aspects of the project such as advocacy,resource mobilization and advisory compared to planning,resource allocation and evaluation. This was attributed to limitations in expertise and competencies,policy limitations and stringent donor demands and restrictions on financing.

The study, therefore, presents opportunities for reflection among modern NGOs in the current context of donor-driven environment and resrce-constrained settings in Uganda on how best stakeholders can effectively be involved throughout the entire project life cycle. Important to note, the study deliberates on the underlying factors accountable for the success of PM&E,a key driver of project sustainability in community-centred interventions.

The researchers makethe following recommendations:

i. There is need for to review guidelines, TORs and policies for engaging stakeholders by boards and management of TASO.This will be key in defining the extent of participation by center-based Centre Advisory Commitees (CACs) and Clients' Councils.The organisation needs to clearly have a documented guiding policy that stipulates the roles of the CACs and Clients' Councils.Definition of the scope of work, terms of engagement and key outputs is very crucial in measuring stakeholder contribution.This will not only create satisfaction and clarity on the involvement of stakeholders but will also provide a framework for the distribution of roles across program activities, which will provide a common direction and goal among stakeholders.

ii. To address the emerging concern of limited funding from donors that has stalled participatory monitoring andevaluation by limiting stakeholder involvement in certain crucial activities such as planning, budgeting, and decision-making, donor-funded NGOs like TASO should intensify local resource mobilisation, build patnerships with other local and international charitable organisations such Rotary so as to achieve some level of autonomy.It should be noted that the increasing shift in donor priorities that comes with stringent policies has left the role of local stakeholders much wanting. Therefore, as a membership organisation that vests the mandate in the people and benefits from voluntary membership subscription, the organisation needs to uphold the role of stakeholders throughout itsprocesses if it is to benefit from the members'financial,social and advisory contribution.

iii. In order to address the challenge of technical competences hindering participatory monitoring and evaluation across all stakeholder groups,NGOs should develop a continuous capacity development plan for staff that is cost-effective to periodically refresh staff skills;this can be throughjob coaching, mentorships and online courses.This is very crucial in addressing the ever-growing monitoring and evalution needs of NGOs dealing with health and development projects.It should be noted that the collective role of M&E is very pivotal in donor-funded organisations where growing emphasis is being put on results-based financing. This, therefore, means that if stakeholders are to be meaningfully involved, and not passive,they need to be acquainted with operations and practices of their orgamisation.

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