



Original Research

RELEVANCE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION TRAINING PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE OF NGOs EMPLOYEES IN UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relevance of monitoring and evaluation trainings on capacity building and project performance of NGOs in Uganda. It was carried out using mixed approach with a descriptive survey method. An inferential and descriptive method of data collection, analysis and interpretation was used. A proportionate sampling method was used to cluster organisation members in groups. Primary data was collected with the aid of semi structured questionnaire with well-guided questions constructed based on the study objectives and research question put herein, and studying participant observations. The study utilized the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data was collected using structured questionnaires disturbed randomly basing on proportionate sampling techniques. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse primary data based on the demographic set up of respondents. The study concludes that monitoring and evaluation training practices significantly enhance the performance of NGO employees in Uganda. These practices are effective and well-implemented, leading to improved project effectiveness. Skilled personnel benefit from clarified project tasks, enhanced teamwork, and greater stakeholder involvement. NGOs should invest in ongoing training programs for all staff involved in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) functions to ensure they remain up-to-date with the latest methodologies and tools. Since managers and program officers are already performing M&E activities well, it is recommended to integrate M&E training into the broader professional development programs for all employees to reinforce its importance and application across various roles.

Key Words: Training Practices, Monitoring and Evaluation, NGOs, Uganda

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Training not only boosts individual performance but also contributes significantly to organizational success by improving the processes of monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Training is recognized as a critical element in the development of human resources within organizations. Noe (2017) posits that training programs designed to enhance employee skills, knowledge, and competencies lead to improved job performance and productivity. Training serves as a mechanism

for employees to acquire new skills and refine existing ones, which in turn fosters a culture of continuous improvement and excellence in the workplace. Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) found that well-structured training programs positively impact individual and organizational performance, leading to greater job satisfaction, higher productivity, and reduced turnover rates.

Monitoring and evaluation are essential processes for assessing the effectiveness of organizational strategies and operations. As Kusek and Rist (2004) note, M&E provide a framework for systematically collecting and analyzing data to inform decision-making and drive improvements. These processes help organizations to identify strengths and weaknesses, thereby enabling them to make evidence-based adjustments and enhancements. Hatry (2013) emphasizes that effective M&E practices are crucial for achieving organizational goals and ensuring accountability and transparency.

Effective training significantly enhances the capability of employees to engage in robust M&E activities. Brown and Sitzmann (2011) highlight that training programs focused on developing analytical and critical thinking skills are particularly beneficial for M&E tasks. Employees who receive such training are better equipped to gather accurate data, conduct thorough analyses, and draw meaningful conclusions that can inform strategic decisions. This ensures that M&E processes are not only rigorous but also yield actionable insights.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Goldstein and Ford (2002) stress the importance of conducting a thorough needs assessment to ensure that training is relevant and aligned with organizational objectives. Continuous learning opportunities, as discussed by Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, and Smith-Jentsch (2012), are also vital for keeping employees updated with the latest M&E techniques and methodologies. Additionally, practical, hands-on training experiences enable employees to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios, thereby enhancing their practical skills and confidence (Burke & Hutchins, 2007).

Despite the clear benefits of training, organizations often face challenges in implementing effective training programs. Limited resources, resistance to change, and difficulties in measuring training outcomes are common obstacles. Blanchard and Thacker (2013) suggest that adopting a strategic approach to training can help overcome these challenges. This includes securing support from top management, involving employees in the training design process, and leveraging technology to deliver training efficiently and cost-effectively. To address the challenges associated with training implementation, organizations need to adopt innovative and flexible approaches. Integrating technology in training delivery can reduce costs and make training more accessible to employees. Moreover, involving employees in the design and evaluation of training programs ensures that the training is relevant and meets their needs. Regular feedback and evaluation of training programs can also help in making continuous improvements, ensuring that the training remains effective and aligned with organizational goals.

According to Obisi (1996), the current trend of competition among organizations around the globe characterized by poor performance in the financial sector organizations for them to survive,

is hinged on good human resource management practice, even though technology has supplemented the cause and reduced the human capital input in this 21st century. Without empowering human resource personnel in terms of skill training and better motivation, technology and computer alone can't take up the mantle of solving problems involving human resource (Amjad, 2010).

As per the research conducted by Koontz, H., O'Donnell, C., & Wehrich, H. in 1982. Evaluating an organization's performance is a managerial responsibility that allows for assessing the effectiveness of the management team in overseeing their subordinates and immediate superiors. In order for a business to successfully and efficiently achieve its objectives, it is necessary to identify and implement methods of managing performance. According to Koontz et al (1982), businesses should choose the most effective way for making judgments on workers' preferences in order to maximize the benefits derived from their use, ultimately leading to the achievement of their goals.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK; CONTINGENCY THEORY

The Contingency Theory was propounded by Fred Fiedler in the mid-1960s. Specifically, Fiedler introduced his Contingency Model of Leadership in 1964. According to this notion, the success of a leader depends on how well their leadership style aligns with the unique situational factors. Project performance is a result of fit between several factors including structures, human resources, technology, strategies, financial resources, and culture among others (Islam, 2012). This theory acknowledges that there is a relationship between variables that greatly influence other variables. It's stressed that project performance is influenced by M & E budgetary processes and its reviews, and are dependent on each other.

Generally, the theory understanding of budgeting and provide heightened indebtedness of the linkage between organization subsystems and interaction in realizing performance goals and objectives. In project environment setup, a number of stakeholders are mandated and concerned with project development and performance, and sharing of measurement and evaluation of project resources and management of M & E human resources personnel in project implementation. From contingency perspectives, project managers are tasked with better planning techniques of allocation and distribution of resources in a project setup and management of information obtained for decision making purposes.

Research design

In order to obtain sufficient data, quantitative and evaluation research approaches was explored to get a right insight so as to achieve sufficient and credible information for the study (Creswell, (2003)). Primary data was collected as well as participant observations, and analyzed to examine the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation on project performance and how the processes affect the operations of non-governmental organizations in Uganda. An evaluation research study approach was undertaken to have a critical analysis and evaluation of events based on particular

studies only. This study was conducted in Uganda in one of the branches of selected NGO regional offices where the participants are based.

Data collection methods and procedures

The study utilized the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data was collected using structured questionnaire distributed randomly based on proportionate sampling techniques. This was done after getting clearance from Mount Kenya University and selected NGO upon submitting introductory letters and Ethical Clearance certificates.

Target population

The target population of this study is 20 NGOs (non-governmental organization) with number of branched networks across the central region especially Kampala. They comprised of manager, regional managers, supervisors, and employees. The main focus of this study is to examine how monitoring and evaluation trainings impact on project performance and how the processes has influenced the operations of non-governmental organizations in Uganda.

Sampling procedures and techniques

The "rule of thumb" by Roscoe, as cited in Sekaran (2003), states that for most research studies, a sample size between 30 and 500 respondents is generally appropriate and sufficient to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. This guideline helps researchers determine a sample size that is manageable while still being large enough to provide meaningful insights and statistical power. A proportionate sampling method was used to cluster organization members in groups. The study used a both purposive sampling and census method.

Table 1: Showing Sample Size and Selection of Respondents per NGO

Category of respondents	Sample population
Chief executive officer	1
Regional supervisors	4
Station managers	4
Supervisors	16
Employees	75
Total	100

FINDINGS

The aim of the research is to determine the significance of training methods in monitoring and evaluation on the performance of workers working for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Uganda. The replies to many questions have been compiled, examined, and interpreted below:

Table 2: Relevance of monitoring and evaluation training practices on of performance of employees of NGOs in Uganda

RESPONSE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
The company employs highly competent professionals who collect data on program performance.	100	3.27	1.808	Very Good
The company has proficient individuals with the capability to examine data.	100	3.21	1.792	Good
The project evaluation personnel has expertise in the daily administration of project assessment instruments.	100	2.82	1.679	Good
Personnel evaluations take into account the performance based on results.	100	2.18	1.476	Poor
The training activities provide the desired results of the curriculum.	100	2.87	1.694	Good
The training procedures provide the intended outcomes of the program.	100	2.99	1.54	Good
Training practices provide technical assistance and direction to project personnel of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).	100	2.82	1.679	Good
Training methods are acknowledged as a substantial, albeit intricate, multidimensional indicator of work satisfaction in NGO projects.	100	2.18	1.476	Poor
Average Mean		2.79	1.49	Good

Source: Primary Data 2022

The following mean ranges were used to arrive at the mean of the individual indicators and interpretation:

Mean Range	Response Mode
3.26-4.00	Strongly agree
2.51-3.25	Agree
1.76-2.50	Disagree
1.00-1.75	Strongly disagree

The monitoring and evaluation training procedures on the performance of workers of NGOs in Uganda were deemed to be of excellent relevance, as shown by the average mean score of 2.79 obtained from table 2. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that training techniques are implemented and consistently evaluated to enhance the success of the project. The business employs highly

competent staff members who collect data on program performance (mean=3.27). The programs are regarded as excellent, indicating that the training techniques have effectively explained project tasks, fostered collaboration, and engaged all stakeholders in the project's operation. The organization possesses highly competent personnel who possess sufficient expertise to analyze data (mean=3.21). This rating indicates that the organization's personnel have the necessary skills and capacity to effectively evaluate project tools. Furthermore, it signifies that the organization's commitment to training practices remains a crucial component of project success. The project evaluation officers possess expertise in the daily administration of project evaluation tools, as evidenced by a satisfactory average rating of 2.82. This indicates that training practices have played a significant role in assessing the NGO's performance level. Furthermore, many project managers across various projects rely on training practices to effectively manage their projects. A 42-year-old male project manager said that he would want to have a better grasp of training procedures in order to improve project performance.

“In order to address the issues within society, we must commit to assisting all individuals or groups that are interested in pursuing employment opportunities. Training procedures foster a shared mindset, leading to a collective attitude. Given our substantial size as a company, I feel that project review inside the office is extensive”.

Seemingly in agreement, another staff, a 30-year-old man said that;

“ .. Having a sufficient and specialized team of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) personnel is vital, and it is crucial for these individuals to possess the appropriate abilities for their tasks. Furthermore, the process of developing M&E training programs requires a diverse array of activities, including as structured training sessions, on-the-job training, guidance from experienced mentors, coaching, and internships..

The results, however, were rated poorly (mean of 2.18) when it came to whether or not result-based performance is taken into account when personnel assessments are made. This suggests that respondents disagree, which is why there has been a decline in the level of commitment shown by employees in NGO projects. Furthermore, the average mean score of 2.87 indicated that the training methods have imposed greater duties, which have enhanced the value and importance of the construction work, when it came to the question of whether they fulfill the targeted results of the program.

The question of whether training procedures have given project staff of NGO's projects technical help and direction had an excellent mean rating of (2.82), suggesting that training practices do in fact provide project staff technical support and guidance. Regarding training procedures, a 46-year-old female employee responded with the accompanying remarks:

“When inexperienced and unskilled individuals evaluate projects, it will inevitably take a lot of time and money, and the outcomes may be irrelevant or impracticable. Thus, this will undoubtedly affect the initiatives' success”.

Last but not least, the results above showed that training practices are acknowledged as a significant, albeit complex, multidimensional predictor of job satisfaction in NGO's Projects. However, the mean (2.18) for these practices was rated poorly, suggesting that the respondents disagreed with this assertion. This is what a 42-year-old male project director said in one of the key informant replies.;

“Project objectives refer to the specific goals or outcomes that you want to accomplish by the conclusion of your project. Your project objectives should be achievable, time-limited, and specified targets that can be quantified upon completion of your project. Project objectives are essential in project management since they provide a clear means of communicating goals both before and throughout the project. Additionally, they serve as a quantitative criterion for evaluating success after the project is completed.”.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that monitoring and evaluation training practices significantly enhance the performance of NGO employees in Uganda. These practices are effective and well-implemented, leading to improved project effectiveness. Skilled personnel benefit from clarified project tasks, enhanced teamwork, and greater stakeholder involvement. The organization's capacity to analyze data underscores the critical role of training in the effectiveness of project evaluation tools. Additionally, project evaluation officers' knowledge in managing these tools highlights the extensive use of training practices to determine NGO performance levels. Overall, the study emphasizes the essential role of continuous training in ensuring the effective operation and success of projects within NGOs in Uganda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's conclusions, the following recommendations are made to further enhance the performance of NGO employees in Uganda through effective monitoring and evaluation training practices:

NGOs should invest in ongoing training programs for all staff involved in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) functions to ensure they remain up-to-date with the latest methodologies and tools. Since managers and program officers are already performing M&E activities well, it is recommended to integrate M&E training into the broader professional development programs for all employees to reinforce its importance and application across various roles.

Special emphasis should be placed on enhancing data analysis capabilities through advanced training sessions, workshops, and practical exercises, given its critical role in effective project evaluation. Training programs should continue to focus on building teamwork skills and encouraging greater stakeholder involvement to ensure comprehensive and collaborative project management.

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