

## **Enhancing the Effectiveness of Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in Zanzibar Through Stakeholders' Engagement**

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### **Abstract**

*The Zanzibar public sector's monitoring and evaluation system engaged numerous stakeholders from diverse organizations. The paper assessed the effect of stakeholder Engagement on the effectiveness of the M&E system in the Zanzibar public sector. The study adopted a positivist philosophy and a quantitative approach. Data were collected through a questionnaire constructed with a points Likert scale from 170 implementers of the Zanzibar Strategy for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction III (ZSSGRP III). Stratified and simple random samplings were used in sample selection. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied for data analysis. The results established that stakeholder engagement had a positive and significant effect on the effectiveness of the M&E system. The findings underscored the importance of engaging stakeholders in all stages of M&E including designing, implementation, and reporting. The study suggested the need for the Zanzibar M&E lead agency to enhance fully stakeholders' engagement throughout the monitoring and evaluation process to nurture their skill mix potential to improve the overall effectiveness of M&E systems in the Zanzibar public sector.*

**Keywords:** *Monitoring and Evaluation System, Public sector, Stakeholders' engagement, public sector monitoring*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems play a critical role in assessing the progress and impact of service delivery in the public sector. It provides valuable insights into the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of programs and policies. Stakeholder engagement refers to the active involvement and participation of relevant individuals and organizations throughout the M&E process. Stakeholder engagement is essential, as various stakeholders possess valuable insights and experiences that can enhance the design and implementation of M&E activities. In

addition, it fosters a sense of ownership and accountability. Likewise, it promotes transparency and trust; and facilitates the utilization of evaluation findings.

For example, (Matsiliza, 2012) noted that, the engagement of stakeholders like Civil society influences the capacity building and learning process where the youth can accrue skills such as life skills, defined self-esteem, confidence, teamwork and decision making. The active involvement of stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation processes can facilitate effective communication to "early wins" to gain support and engage individuals who have not yet been involved. It also ensures that intended beneficiaries have access to the early products and services of initiatives. Likewise, enables the mobilization of additional resources to address any resource gaps that may arise and ensures that the lessons learned are effectively utilized in future decision-making processes (UNDP, 2009).

World Bank underscore the importance of stakeholder engagement through partnership. It emphasizes that, through partnership the M&E system benefits from improvement in communication among stakeholders, improved coordination, and help mobilization of resources towards one common goal (Gorgens & Kusek, 2009).

Extant studies depicted a mixture of results with regard to stakeholders' engagement and the effectiveness of the M&E system. For example Kioko (2017), Ngeru and Ngugi (2019), Mushori, Machira and Matu (2020). Olala (2020) established the positive and significant effect of stakeholder engagement and the effectiveness of M&E in projects. Contrarily, Claude and Didace (2020) found out that, stakeholders' engagement and feedback have no significant effect on the timely completion of the project. Likewise, Maturo (2021), observed the opposite effect of stakeholder participation on the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation in Nongovernmental organizations within the Arumeru District.

The Zanzibar monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system heavily believes in stakeholders' engagement to enhance its effectiveness. It actively involves Private Sectors, Civil Society organizations, Development Partners, Academia and M&E professional organizations. Nevertheless, there is weak data utilization and linkage between data producers and users, which affects the demand, and supply sides of the system (RGoZ, 2020). Likewise, there scant number of literatures in the Zanzibar context to ascertain the effect of stakeholder engagement on the effectiveness of the M&E system in

the Zanzibar public sector. Consequently, this study holds significance worth studying.

## **THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Effective Monitoring and Evaluation System**

The effectiveness of the M&E system is the degree and ability of the M&E system to meet its intended or set objectives. The system can produce expected and relevant information to be used for policy development, evidence-based policy-making and budgeting, management performance and accountability (Mackay, 2010). For this study, the effectiveness of an M&E system is referred to the ability of an M&E system to provide the means for compiling and integrating all the necessary information into the policy cycle, and therefore providing the basis for enabling sound governance and accountability in the policy (RGoZ, 2022).

### **Stakeholders' Engagement**

Stakeholders refers to “stakeholder engagement as the creation of relationships with internal and external individuals and groups — at the local, national and international levels — to ensure cooperation and alignment of interests among parties”. According to UNDP (2020) and for the purpose of this study “stakeholder engagement as an ongoing process that may involve, to varying degrees; stakeholder analysis and planning, disclosure and dissemination of information, consultation and meaningful participation, dispute resolution and grievance redress, stakeholder involvement in monitoring and evaluation and ongoing reporting to affected communities and other stakeholders”.

### **Utilization-Focused Evaluation Theory (UFE)**

The theory was developed by Michael Quinn Patton in 2008 (Ramrez, Kora & Brodhead, 2017). The underlying principle of the theory is that, an evaluation should be judged on its usefulness to its intended users (Ssali, 2016). Evaluation should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and the process so the primary intended user should be engaged at the beginning of the evaluation. Patton (Ramrez, Kora & Brodhead, 2017) argues further that, research on evaluation demonstrates that: intended users are more likely to use evaluations if they understand and feel ownership of the evaluation process and findings.

In the same vein, Ramirez and Brodhead (2017) highlight that the engagement of key stakeholders leads to the desired outcomes of utilization of evaluation findings. The theory also emphasizes the utilization and actual

use of evaluation findings as a result of constant consultation with the intended beneficiaries of the evaluation (Patton, 2008).

UTE is praised for its application in a variety of evaluative purposes i.e. Formative, summative and developmental, it is people-centered and insists on the use of evaluation findings for all stakeholders (Efeoglu et al., 2018) . Contrarily, UFE is accused because apparently that, different intended uses serve different purposes and typically different intended users on one hand. On the other hand, matching the evaluation purposes, resources and timeline to optimize use is another challenge (Patton, 2010).

Even though some scholars (Kioko, 2018; Gamba, 2016; Ssali, 2016) did apply UFE, they failed to link adequately the conceptual framework and the theory and consequently, it is weak in theoretical contribution. Besides the draw UFE has been utilized by a number of researchers. For example, McCullouch, (2022) used UFE to undertake a study on a Focused Evaluation of Second Chance Mississippi. Stakeholders managed to identify evaluation questions and finally the findings managed to answer those evaluation questions. Okul, and Nyonje (2021) adopted UFE in assessing organizational leadership style and the utilization of evaluation results. Evaluation utilization under consideration covered instrumental use, conceptualization use and persuasive use. Tshatsinde (2015) used UFE to assess the Utilization of Evaluation Findings in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform in South Africa. Similarly, Tumusiime (2016) used UFE to examine how the utilization of evaluation findings contributes to the performance of the public sector agencies using the Uganda Bureau of Statistics. Kabuye and Basheka (2017) assessed institutional design and utilization of evaluation results in Uganda's public universities just to mention a few UFE highlights the importance of stakeholder involvement throughout the evaluation process and encourages evaluators to adapt their methods and deliverables to meet the specific needs of stakeholders. It can guide M&E practitioners including researchers in exploring how to make the M&E system more relevant, timely, and accessible to decision-makers and other users.

UFE led the author to set premises that: *engagement of key stakeholders leads to desired outcomes*

The essence of stakeholder engagement is Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE). UFE purports that, the primary indented user of the evaluation must clearly identify and be personally engaged at the beginning of the evaluation process to make sure that, their primary indented uses of evaluation are taken on board.

## **Empirical literature Review**

Kioko (2017) through a descriptive study on the assessment of factors influencing effective monitoring and evaluation established that stakeholder participation positively and significantly affects the effectiveness of M&E of projects funded by the County Government of Machakos. It was ranked number three among the determinants. Similarly, Olala (2020) through desk review observed that, stakeholder involvement is among the critical factors that affect the implementation of monitoring and evaluation of a project. The study recommends enhancing stakeholders' involvement in the implementation of project monitoring and evaluation systems.

Kanyamuna, et al (2020) based on a qualitative study indicated that, even though the role of actors outside the government was recognized, in WoGMES), it was rather weak and fragmented. The system lacks formalized arrangements pertaining to how these actors needed to engage the government in strengthening the function of monitoring and evaluation across the public sector. The study recommends the importance of meaningful engagement of parliament, civil society and donors for increasing the pace of strengthening the country's system for monitoring and evaluation.

Ngeru and Ngugi (2019) conducted a mixed study on the determinants of effective implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems in County Governments in Kenya. Among other things, the study found out that, there was a significant and strong relationship between stakeholders' participation and implementation of M &E systems. The study recommended strengthening the governance structures, forming community-level project monitoring, and evaluation management committees, and the sensitization of beneficiary communities of projects and programmes to participate in the monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes.

Solomon (2021) found out a positive and significant contribution of stakeholder participation on the effectiveness of M&E practice in TechnoServe Ethiopia, coffee initiative program. The study recommends the critical importance of the involvement of different stakeholders during various stages of monitoring and evaluation including the preparatory phase for securing mass support and ownership. Mushori, Machira and Matu (2020) established similar findings in the Government Funded Infrastructural Development Projects East constituency in Nakuru County. The study recommends the need to sensitise stakeholders to participate in the M&E process. In addition, appropriate strategies to involve stakeholders should be introduced to ensure that a bigger proportion of the stakeholders are involved

Claude and Didace (2020) conducted a study on project monitoring and evaluation of project success in local government in Rwanda. The study found out that, stakeholders' engagement and feedback had a positive and significant effect on the timely completion of the project. The study recommends for the management to increase stakeholders' participation in all stages of the project lifecycle. Likewise, Maturo (2021) through a descriptive study established that, stakeholder participation had positive effect on the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation in Nongovernmental organizations within the Arumeru district.

Kanyamuna (2021) conducted a study to assess the functional status of the M&E system in Zambia's public sector. The study employed a descriptive research design with a mixed approach. Both the diagnostic checklist developed by Holvoet and Renard (2005) and the five-point LEAD scoring system. The study proposed a new model of Zambia's WoGM & ES where the engagement of stakeholders becomes imperative. The study suggests stakeholders to become instrumental in the establishment and maintenance of a country's M&E system. The proposed model identified that development partners (DPs), civil society organizations, research institutions, academia, and other relevant entities and individuals can offer valuable support through various mechanisms such as; financial assistance, capacity building, systemic improvements, and coordination efforts. Subsequently, the model suggests each stakeholder should be actively engaged, ensuring a holistic approach that spans all levels of government, including national, line ministry, provincial, and district structures.

Killo (2021) reveals that stakeholder involvement in the M&E processes team has a significant and positive effect on the performance of the tobacco contact farming project ( $b= 0.226$ ,  $t=3.604$ ,  $p< 0.01$ ) in the tobacco contract forming project in the Katavi region. The study recommends that the M&E framework should consider an inclusion policy that will enhance effective stakeholder involvement. The findings are incongruent with Saguda (2021) established a positive and significant influence of stakeholder participation on the effectiveness of M&E on public reform initiative programs in Tanzania. He concludes that, stakeholder participation plays a crucial role in enhancing the performance of the M&E system in the context of public reform initiatives in Tanzania's public service management. Contrary to many studies under review Arbogast (2021) depicted that, the level of stakeholders' involvement in the M&E design phase was very low at the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA). This probably led to poor performance in M &E systems in

TRA. The study also disclosed more that, stakeholders were not involved in the M & E data collection process and feedback

The study conducted by Bonareri (2020) in Makueni country Kenya established that, stakeholders' participation has a positive and significant effect on an effective M&E system. The study recommends developing a system of identifying and managing stakeholders in the M&E process for effective control of stakeholders' participation. The study suggests that, stakeholder participation has a positive and significant effect on the effectiveness of the M&E system in the context of country development projects. However, the study focuses on the context of Makueni County and its specific country development projects. This is likely to limit the transferability of the findings to the Zanzibar public sector, as there are various differences in the organizational structure, and stakeholder dynamics, among many others. Similar findings were found by Roba and Odolla (2022), established a positive and significant effect of stakeholders' involvement on the performance of water projects in Marsabiti County in Kenya. The study recommends including all stakeholders in project monitoring and evaluations in all stages as they play an active role in project sustainability. However, despite the existing literature on stakeholders' engagement and its impact on the effectiveness of M&E systems in the region, there appears to be a research gap concerning the specific context of Zanzibar's public sector. Specifically, much of the reviewed literature is either project-specific, organization-specific, or regional in focus. Given that the existing literature is not specifically centered on the Zanzibar public sector, there may be variations in stakeholder dynamics, organizational structures, and contextual factors that could influence the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement in M&E. Therefore, conducting research that directly explores stakeholders' engagement in the Zanzibar public sector and its impact on M&E effectiveness would contribute to filling this gap. The findings of this research could inform policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders in the Zanzibar public sector in developing targeted strategies, policies, and interventions to enhance stakeholder participation and improve the effectiveness of the M&E system specifically tailored to the unique context of Zanzibar.

**Independent Variable**

Stakeholders' engagement

**Dependent Variable**

Effectiveness of public sector monitoring and evaluation system

**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework

## METHODS

The study adopts a positivist research philosophy, which emphasizes empirical focus, objectivity, neutrality, generalizability, and rigour. It follows an explanatory causal research design and a quantitative approach. In addition, quantitative and deductive reasoning, which involves logically deriving conclusions from a set of premises, was applied as a research approach. The deductive approach was suitable for this study as it allows for precise measurement of variables and outcomes. By specifying hypotheses and accurately measuring variables, researchers can test their predictions with a high degree of precision. Additionally, the deductive approach facilitates replication of the study findings with new data to validate the results.

The study was conducted in the islands of Unguja and Pemba in Tanzania, focusing on institutions implementing and coordinating the monitoring and evaluation of ZSGRP III. The study population consisted of 297 officials from these institutions. Stratified and simple random sampling was used to select the sample, considering the different roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the ZSGRP III M&E system. The population was divided into three strata based on decision-making, coordination, and implementation levels. Yamane's formula was applied to determine the sample size as

follows 
$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$
, where the number of samples, N= population size and e is the level of precision (Israel

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(n)^2}, n = 297/1+297(0.05)^2 = 170$$

Primary data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale. Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate measures such as mean, maximum, minimum, and standard deviation. Inferential statistics, including linear regression analysis, were employed to examine the effect between variables, hypotheses testing and conclusions.

Regression Model

$$ME = \beta_0 + \beta_1 UTIME + \alpha$$

Where by  $\beta_0$  = Y-intercept

$\beta_1$  are coefficients (constants)

ME = Monitoring and evaluation

UTIME = Utilization of M&E information

$\alpha$  represents the error term (the probabilistic nature of the model)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Sample Description

**Gender:** The survey consisted of both male and female respondents. Among the participants, 89 (56.3%) of respondents were male, while 69 (43.7%) were female.

**Age (years):** The respondents' age distribution is divided into five age groups. The highest group consists of respondents aged 31-40, accounting for 68 (43.0%) of the total respondents. The next most represented age group was 41-50, comprising 50 (31.6%) of the respondents. Other age groups included 21-30, 14 (8.9%) respondents; 51-60 26 (16.5%) 26 of the respondents and 56-60, 12 (7.6%) of the respondents.

**Marital Status:** The majority of the respondents identified as married, comprising 146 (92.4% of the respondents). In contrast, a smaller proportion, 12 (7.6%) was identified as single.

**Education Level:** The respondents' educational backgrounds varied. The distribution shows that 4 (2.5%) of the respondents had a secondary level of education, 19 (12.0%) of the respondents held a diploma, 47 (29.7%) of the respondents obtained a degree, 75 (47.5%) of the respondents achieved a master's degree, and 13 (8.3%) possessed a PhD.

**Types of Organization:** The study included respondents from a variety of organizations implementing the public sector M&E system in Zanzibar. The majority of participants, 53 (33.5%) were from Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDA). Another significant group consisted of 23(14.6%) respondents who were associated with the Office of the Chief Government Statistician (OCGS). Local Government Authorities accounted for 17 (10.8%) respondents while Development Partners comprised 8 (5.1%) of the respondents, Private sector, higher learning institutions, and NGOs were represented by 5 respondents each (3.2%, 3.2%, and 3.2% respectively).

**Position:** The respondents held various positions within their respective organizations. The highest representation was found among Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officers, with 35 (22.2%) of the respondents. Planning Officers accounted for 32 (20.3%), of the respondents, followed closely by Statistical Officers with 31(19.6%) of the respondents. Program/Project Managers comprised 17 (10.8%) of the respondents, while 8 (5.1%) respondents held positions as Permanent Secretaries (PS), Directors of Planning, Policy, and Research (DPPR), or Managers. Other positions such as Budget Officers, ICT Officers, and various other roles were represented by

smaller numbers of individuals, with percentages ranging from 2.5% to 6.3% as depicted in Table 4.1.

**Table 1: Sample Description**

Gender	Item	Frequency	%
	male	89	56.3
	female	69	43.7
<b>Age (years)</b>	21-30	14	8.9
	31-40	68	43.0
	41-50	50	31.6
	51-60	26	16.5
	56-60	12	7.6
<b>Marital status</b>	married	146	92.4
	single		
<b>Education Level</b>		12	7.6
<b>Types of organization</b>			
<b>Position</b>			
	Item	Frequency	Percentages
<b>Level of education</b>	secondary	4	2.5
	diploma	19	12.0
	degree	47	29.7
	masters	75	47.5
	PhD	13	8.3
<b>Types of organization</b>	MDA	53	33.5
	PRIVATE SECTOR	5	3.2
	LGA	17	10.8
	NGO	6	3.8
	DP	8	5.1
	higher learning institution	5	3.2
	OCGS	23	14.6
<b>Position</b>	PS	8	5.1
	DPPR	8	5.1
	Manager	4	2.5
	M&E Officer	35	22.2
	planning officer	32	20.3
	program/project manager	17	10.8
	statistical officer	31	19.6
	Others	10	6.3
	ICT officer	4	2.5
	officer budget	9	5.7

**Source:** Field data 2022

## **Descriptive Statistics**

The descriptive statistics provided insights into various aspects of stakeholder engagement in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities for the Zanzibar Strategy of Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction III (ZSGPR III).

M&E agencies are often involved in designing and implementing the ZSGPR III M&E System, which has a mean rating of 3.64 and a standard deviation of 1.096. This suggests that there is generally a positive level of involvement from M&E agencies, with some degree of variability in responses. In relation to the M&E lead agency frequently organizes training to cater for the M&E needs of ZSGPR III stakeholders, the mean rating is 3.2. standard deviation of 1.247. This indicates a moderate level of training provision, and some variability in stakeholders' perceptions. In the case of Local M&E consultants were given the opportunity for contract award for ZSGPR III M&E activities, which has a mean value of 2.89 and standard deviation of 1.198. This indicates the neutral stand of the respondents some variation in opinions regarding this opportunity.

With regards to external consultants these were frequently used to cater for the M&E services for ZSGPR III, which has a mean rate of 3.64 and a standard deviation of 1.124. This implies that external consultants play a significant role, and there was a moderate level of agreement among respondents. For M&E results and findings were communicated to stakeholders, and had a mean rating of 3.52 and a standard deviation of 1.075. This suggests that there was generally effective communication of M&E results, with a moderate level of agreement among stakeholders. ZAMEA provides M&E training for ZSGPR III to its members frequently, had a mean rating of 2.69 and a standard deviation of 0.970. This implied that respondents were indifferent if ZAMEA provided training to its members, although there was some variation in respondents' perceptions as indicated in Table 2.

Generally, the findings indicated a positive level of stakeholders' engagement in the effectiveness of the M&E system for ZSGPR III, even though there were areas with varying perceptions. For example, there was room for improvement in areas such as local consultant engagement and ZAMEA's training provision to ensure a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to stakeholder engagement in M&E activities.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics Results

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
M&E agencies are often involved in designing and implementing the ZSGPR III M&E System	3.64	1.096	1	5
The M&E lead agency frequently organizes training to cater for the M&E needs of ZSGPR III stakeholders	3.21	1.247	1	5
Local M&E consultants are given the opportunity for contract awards for ZSGPR III M&E activities	2.89	1.198	1	5
External consultants are frequently used to carter the M&E services for ZSGPR III	3.64	1.124	1	5
M&E results and findings are communicated to the stakeholders	3.52	1.075	1	5
ZAMEA provides M&E training for ZSGPR III to its members frequently	2.69	.970	1	5
ZAMEA's partnership with the M&E lead agency and other stakeholders is very promising for ZSGPR III M&E capacity building	2.70	1.160	1	5
ZAMEA's partnership with other national and international VOPE is very promising to support ZSGPR III M&E capacity building	2.70	1.045	1	5
Local higher learning institutions are engaged in training M&E needs for MKUZA	2.69	1.015	1	5

**Source:** Field data, 2022

Regression analysis was conducted between the predictor variable (Stakeholders engagement) and the response variable (M&E). The regression model derived accounts for 39.8% of the variance in the dependent variable ( $R^2 = 0.398$ ) as depicted in Model summary Table 3. The model, as indicated by R, showed a moderate positive linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.631 <sup>a</sup>	.398	.394	.56649

a. Predictors: (Constant), STAKEH  
 STAKEH= Stakeholders' engagement

**Source: Filed data, 2022**

The overall model was also statistically significant, as indicated by the F-statistic ( $F(1, 156) = 103.261, p < 0.05$ ) as depicted in ANOVA as depicted in Table 4.- The F-statistic tests the overall significance of the regression model. It is calculated by dividing the mean square of the regression by the mean square of the residuals. The higher the F-statistic, the more likely the model is significant. Here, the F-value was 103.261. the p-value was very

low (close to zero), indicated by ".000b". This suggests that the regression model was statistically significant. Therefore, the regression model was statistically significant, as indicated by the very low p-value (0.000). The F-statistic of 103.261 suggests that the explanatory power of the model is substantial.

**Table 4:** ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.137	1	33.137	103.261	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	50.062	156	.321		
	Total	83.199	157			

a. Dependent Variable: ME

b. Predictors: (Constant), STAKEH

STAKEH= Stakeholders' engagement

Source: Filed data, 2022

The Regression analysis results also indicated a significant and positive relationship between stakeholder engagement (STAKEH) and the dependent variable ( $\beta = 0.631$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) as depicted in coefficients depicted in Table 5. The result indicated an increase in stakeholder engagement was associated with a corresponding increase in the dependent variable.

**Table 5: Regression Coefficients Results**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.016	.202		9.980	.000
	STAKEH	.552	.054	.631	10.162	.000

STAKEH= Stakeholders' engagement

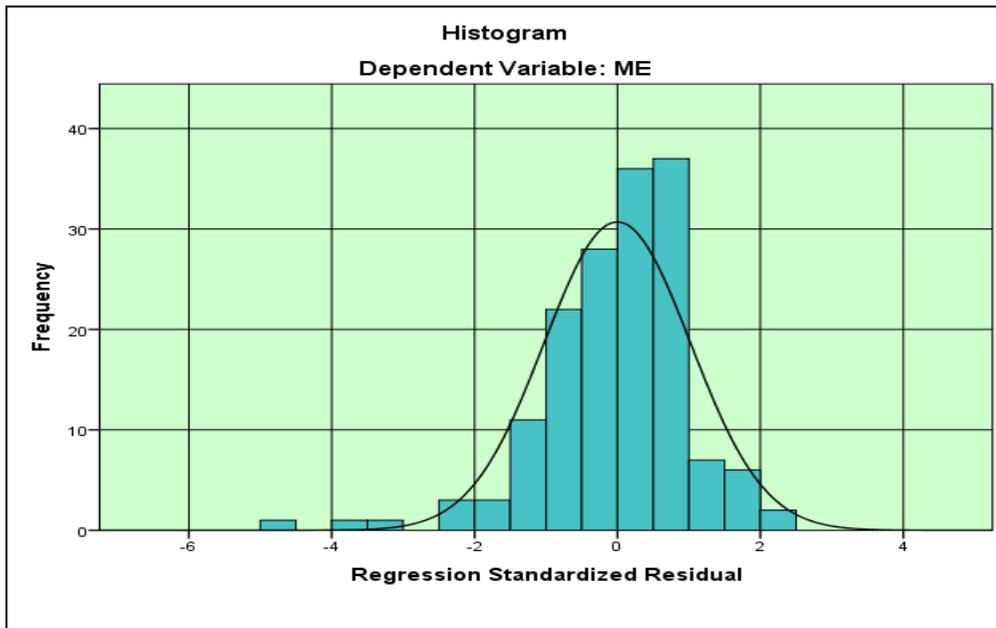
Source: Filed data, 2022

These findings suggest that stakeholder engagement plays a significant role in influencing the dependent variable.

## Testing regression assumptions

### Normality

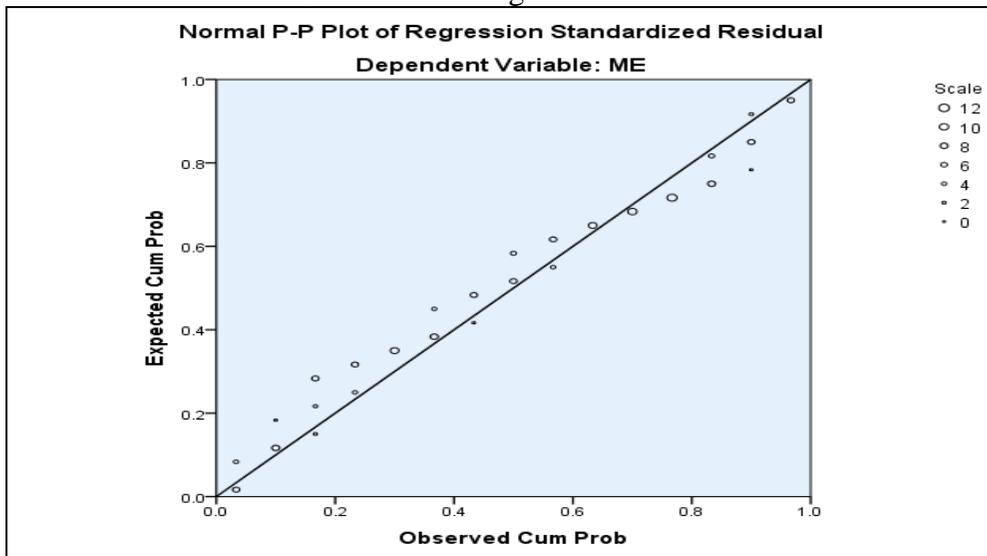
A histogram was used to test normality. Normal distribution typically exhibits symmetry, with frequencies balanced on both sides of the center resembling a bell-shaped structure as depicted in Figure 2



**Figure 2:** Histogram for normality test  
**Source:** Field data (2022)

### Linearity Test

Linearity assumption was tested by P-P plot. The pattern of the points on the P points looked closely follow a straight line, suggesting a linear relationship between the variables as indicated in Figure. 4.2



**Figure 3:** P-P Plot for Linearity Test  
**Source:** Field data (2022)

## **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

The study findings indicated a significant and positive relationship between stakeholder engagement and the effectiveness of M&E indicating that an increase in stakeholder engagement was associated with a corresponding increase in enhancing effectiveness of public sector monitoring and evaluation systems. The findings are congruent with various existing studies. For example Kioko (2017) established that stakeholder participation positively and significantly affects the effectiveness of M&E of projects funded by the County Government of Machakos . Furthermore, the study concurs with Onsomu(2020), Bonareri and Kisimbii (2020),Abebe and Bekana (2022), Makau, Mackenzi, and Nicole, Killo (2021) among many others. The study findings and supporting literature suggest that involving stakeholders in the M&E process is beneficial and contributes to improved effectiveness in monitoring and evaluation efforts.

Theoretically, the study supports the premise set by UFE regarding stakeholders. UFE focus on stakeholder engagement in the context of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes. UFE places a strong emphasis on actively involving stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, which aligns with the objective of understanding the role of stakeholder engagement in the effectiveness of the M&E system recognizes that stakeholders have valuable insights, experiences, and perspectives that can greatly contribute to the evaluation process. By engaging stakeholders from the outset, UFE aims to increase their ownership and buy-in, making them more likely to utilize the evaluation findings and actively participate in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, UFE encourages a collaborative and participatory approach to evaluation, which fosters a sense of shared responsibility and accountability among stakeholders. This approach can help build trust, improve communication channels, and promote transparency between policymakers, evaluators, and stakeholders. By actively engaging stakeholders in the evaluation process, the study can promote a culture of open dialogue, mutual learning, and knowledge exchange, which can ultimately lead to more effective and sustainable M&E systems.

Therefore, the study findings aggregate knowledge of UFE to a wider perspective of monitoring and evaluation.

## **CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION**

Study findings indicate that policies promoting stakeholder engagement in M&E can enhance the effectiveness and quality of decision-making

processes. By actively involving key stakeholders from state and non-state actors, can tap into their valuable insights and experiences, leading to decisions that are more informed, improved program outcomes, and increased transparency and accountability. The study also urges M&E to enhance and strengthen mechanisms and platforms for stakeholders to actively participate in decision-making processes, providing them with opportunities to contribute their insights and experiences. M&E lead agency in Zanzibar should consider the importance of fully engaging stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, from planning to reporting, to ensure that their perspectives and needs are considered.

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