

Households' Involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation Decision-Making and Performance of Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer Project

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Abstract

Despite implementing CCT project for 10 years in the efforts to reduce poverty rate, previous studies revealed commonly that participatory M&E impacted on successful implementation of community projects in Tanzania, however, the beneficiaries were excluded. No prior findings existed that assessed the impact of households' engagement in M&E decision making on performance of Conditional Cash Transfer project. Absence of evidence leaves the researchers uninformed. Therefore, the research aimed at addressing the knowledge gap through the assessment of households' engagement in M&E decision making on the performance of Conditional Cash Transfer project. The study employed two theories namely the theory of change and a ladder of citizen participation. The theory of change emphasizes on capacitating the households on M&E decision making skills through training them on M&E while a ladder of citizen participation focuses on vesting the power to households for them to make decisions regarding the Conditional Cash Transfer project. The study applied pragmatic paradigm with a blended research design strategy. Both probability and non-probability sampling strategies were embraced. Yamane formula was used to obtain a sample size of 400 heads of households while eight Village Committees and eight Monitoring Officers were selected by using purposive sampling. Data were collected through administered questionnaires, key in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The findings established a significant influence between households' involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation decision-making ($t=4.970$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$) on the performance of the of Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer Project. It was concluded that households' involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation decision-making would play a significant role in the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project. The findings supported the theory of change on the importance of engaging the households in M&E for clearly understanding the path to performance. The study findings were consistent with empowering the beneficiaries and engaging them in M&E through

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Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E). Empirical evidence showed that hierarchical leadership paralyzed the actualization of many programs because of leaving the community aside during the implementation of N&E. PM&E is the catalyst for programs performance because of community ownership and ability to define the project performance on their local ways. Therefore, implementers of the project should review and improve M&E system by adding the component that incorporates the involvement of households at the decision levels for influencing the performance of the of Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project.

Keywords: Households; Monitoring and Evaluation; Poverty; Performance; Conditional Cash Transfer.

I. Introduction

Tanzania established the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer programme to reduce poverty and its impacts on households. Globally, approximately 36% of the world population lived in poverty in the 1990s, with many individuals surviving on less than US\$1.90 per day (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, [2018](#); World Bank, [2018](#)). By 2018, an estimated 1.3 billion people were living in multidimensional poverty (UNDP, [2019](#)). Reports from East Asia and the Pacific by the World Bank ([2018](#)) revealed that economic growth in these countries improved significantly, with China serving as a notable example, having reduced poverty levels from 62% in 1990 to less than 3% by 2015.

In Africa, the World Bank ([2018](#)) reported that 54% of the population lived in poverty in 1990, a figure that declined to 41% by 2015. However, rapid population growth at an annual rate of 2.7% exacerbated extreme poverty, increasing the number of extremely poor people from 278 million in 1990 to 413 million in 2015 (Beegle & Christiaensen, [2019](#)). Rising poverty levels hindered poverty reduction efforts, particularly as approximately 82% of poor individuals lived and engaged in farming activities in rural areas (Campos, Villani, Davis, & Takagi, [2018](#)).

In Tanzania, daily expenditure for approximately 26 million people was below US\$1.90 per person. Poverty reduction projects underperformed, with Mansouri and Rao ([2003](#)) identifying top-down project implementation approaches as a key contributing factor. In Africa, despite numerous poverty alleviation initiatives, Valentine, Shukla, and Eugene ([2016](#)) observed that many organizations failed to consult beneficiaries or involve them in monitoring and evaluation processes. Consequently, poverty levels continued to rise, with UNDP ([2019](#)) ranking Tanzania among countries with high poverty rates. The World Bank ([2019](#)) further reported that a substantial proportion of extremely poor individuals reside in rural areas.

Despite the implementation of the Conditional Cash Transfer project, limited information exists regarding the extent of household involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making. This study therefore assessed the influence of households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making on the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project. With respect to the theoretical framework, the Theory of Change emphasizes households' engagement in establishing outcomes through training programs and workshops on monitoring and evaluation, as well as a clear results pathway of Conditional Cash Transfer project performance. In contrast, the ladder of citizen participation emphasizes the transfer of decision-making power to households in Conditional Cash Transfer projects. Thus, while the Theory of Change underscores both household involvement and decision-making. The ladder of citizen participation places greater emphasis on community empowerment through capacity building in the form of training and workshops programs. This endeavor enhances households' awareness on monitoring and evaluation for them to participate in decision-making.

Aim And Originality of the Study

Tanzania introduced the Conditional Cash Transfer project, a publicly owned initiative, with the objective of covering an average of 15% of people living in extreme poverty by 2025 (Mushi, Mwaita & Makauki, [2019](#)). However, the Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment Report ([2017](#)) revealed that by 2015, only 1.1 million poor individuals were receiving financial assistance through the project. This finding implies that the target of reaching 15% had not been achieved. One of the factors contributing to this underperformance, among others, was the exclusion of households from the preparation and implementation of their projects.

Despite the implementation of the project, the World Bank ([2019](#)) reported that the poverty rate had increased to 26.4%. Poverty levels continued to rise, with the World Bank ([2022](#)) reporting an increase to 27.1% by 2020, compared to 26.4% in 2018, although a slight decrease of 0.7% was later observed. This trend provides the background for the present study, as project performance data indicate that poverty levels remain high. The Human Development Index and Multidimensional Poverty Index ranked Tanzania among countries with the highest levels of poverty (UNDP, [2019](#)).

Several studies (Noori, [2017](#); Rimberia, [2012](#); Mutale et al., [2017](#); Thwala, [2010](#); Nyaguthii & Oyugi, [2013](#); Ahenkan, Bawole & Domfer, [2013](#)) revealed that local people's participation in monitoring and evaluation influenced projects performance. However, these studies did not establish the specific influence of community involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making on projects performance, as they primarily focused on general aspects of monitoring and evaluation. Conversely, other studies (Alfred, [2015](#); Nyonje, Ndunge & Mulwa, [2012](#); Barasa & Jelagat, [2013](#); Aupe, Awiti & Aketch, [2019](#); Tengan & Aigbavboa, [2017](#); Kananura et al., [2017](#)) examined community involvement in monitoring and evaluation in relation to general project performance, but not specifically monitoring and evaluation decision-making.

Accordingly, the objective of this study assessed the extent to which households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making influences the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project.

Research Problem

Despite the implementation of the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) project in Tanzania for more than ten years as an effort to reduce household poverty levels, households have largely been excluded from monitoring and evaluation decision-making. Studies by Noori ([2017](#)), Rimberia ([2012](#)), Mutale et al. ([2017](#)), Thwala ([2010](#)), Nyaguthii and Oyugi ([2013](#)), and Ahenkan, Bawole, and Domfer ([2013](#)) provided the evidence that the participation of local people in M&E contributed to the achievement of project objectives. Conversely, other studies, including Alfred ([2015](#)), Nyonje, Ndunge, and Mulwa ([2012](#)), Barasa and Jelagat ([2013](#)), Aupe, Awiti, and Aketch ([2019](#)), Tengan and Aigbavboa ([2017](#)), and Kananula et al. ([2017](#)), examined community involvement in overall project performance, but their scope covered all the aspects of projects rather than M&E specifically.

These researchers shared common findings indicating that although participatory approaches positively influenced the successful implementation of community projects in Tanzania, local people were often excluded from meaningful involvement (Mbogela, Kira & Ngomuo, [2022](#); Rabé & Adalbertus, [2012](#); Mgoba & Kabote, [2020](#)). Despite the existence of the CCT project in Tanzania, available data showed that poverty levels remained high (World Bank, [2019](#)). According to Oino, Towett, Kirui, and Luvega ([2015](#)), poverty continued to rise due to the low involvement of beneficiaries in poverty reduction projects.

Accordingly, Vernoooy et al. ([2003](#)) established that stakeholder engagement in assessment processes significantly influenced the achievement of community-based projects, while Mansouri and Rao ([2003](#)) emphasized that project performance depends on the extent of citizens' involvement in measuring project impacts. In Tanzania, there were no prior empirical studies specifically that examined the impact of households' participation in M&E decision-making on the performance of the Conditional Cash Transfer project. The absence of such evidence limits the understanding of how households' involvement in M&E decision-making influences project performance. Therefore, this study assessed households' involvement in M&E decision-making and its influence on the performance of the Conditional Cash Transfer project in order to address this knowledge gap.

II. Literature Review and Development of Hypothesis

Stakeholders in development projects participate in decision-making processes to diagnose challenges and propose appropriate actions (FAO, [2002](#)). As noted by Murphree ([2009](#)), it is beneficial for both project implementers and beneficiaries to include project recipients in the design and execution of monitoring and evaluation. Through this practice local people would be capacitated to make informed decisions that contribute to project improvement. Additionally, Chirenje, Giliba, and Musamba ([2013](#)) explained that the inclusion of local people in managing their projects takes into account their rights and needs, thereby increasing project legitimacy and ownership.

Beneficiaries' engagement in decision-making has been proved to enhance ownership, performance, and the maintenance of project benefits. Evidence presented by Muniu, Gakuu, and Rambo ([2017](#)) indicated that the inclusion of beneficiaries in decision-making was constrained by low attendance at meetings, as local people were not granted the power or mandate to appoint committees members from the community to work alongside project management in determining project direction and performance, particularly in community water projects. As a result, beneficiaries remained largely unaware of project impacts beyond being recipients, which contributed to the underperformance of many development projects once external funding ceased.

Isham and Kahkonen ([2009](#)) asserted that the extent of beneficiaries' participation in project monitoring and evaluation decision-making could be assessed by examining how recommendations and advice from community members, conveyed through their representatives in monitoring and evaluation committees, are incorporated into final projects decisions. Project implementers are therefore obliged to provide feedback to communities on how decisions reflected the opinions and recommendations originating from community members. Similarly, Mak, Cheung, and Hui ([2017](#)) reported that out of 241 respondents, 68.7% were not involved in project decision-making because residents were not consulted in public project decisions.

Conversely, a study by Kamau and Mungai (2019) demonstrated that beneficiaries participated to a greater extent in the design and execution of projects in Nyeri County, Kenya. These projects were supported by government initiatives aimed at engaging local people, providing funding, and ensuring frequent supervision. Communities are considered important and respected when they participate in supervising their projects through monitoring and evaluation and attend decision-making meetings. This process suggests that community members not only perceive themselves as project owners but are also prepared to coordinate and supervise projects after external funding ends. Therefore, households need to participate in monitoring and evaluation decision-making in order to gain experience in assessing project performance levels and making necessary project improvements.

Theory Of Change and a Ladder of Citizen Participation

The study employed the Theory of Change as the primary theoretical framework, complemented by the ladder of citizen participation. The Theory of Change posits that for change to occur, there must be contributory interdependence within an initiative, linking outputs, outcomes, and impacts. The theory addresses the relationship between households' engagement in establishing logical linkages of impacts through the logical framework in monitoring and evaluation and informed decision-making, as well as the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer Project.

In contrast, the ladder of citizen participation emphasizes vesting decision-making power in households with respect to Conditional Cash Transfer Project decisions. Control and authority are granted to citizens in project decision-making from the initiation stage of projects. This framework represents progressive steps through which local community members attain full control over their projects.

III. Methodology

The researcher applied descriptive cross-sectional and correlational study designs. The descriptive cross-sectional design was used by selecting Kagera Region for the study out of the 26 regions, as Bhattacharjee (2012) observed that this design allows researchers to study the entire population or a part of it. In addition, the study selected a correlational design to assess the relationship between households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making and the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project. Thus, the descriptive cross-sectional design provided a snapshot of the study topic, while the correlational design assessed the relationships between variables.

Quantitatively, a sample of 400 respondents was obtained using Yamane's (1967) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size; N = population size; and e = level of precision. The sample size was determined at a 95% confidence level with a precision of 7.5% and a variability of 50%.

$$n = \frac{61,240}{1+61,240(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 400$$

The researcher interviewed 400 household heads using a structured questionnaire. This tool enabled the collection of data from a large number of respondents and incorporated all study objectives and corresponding variables for quantitative analysis. Qualitatively, the researcher employed focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Village Committee members from eight districts were selected to form focus group discussions consisting of ten participants each, yielding a total of 80 respondents. Furthermore, all eight Monitoring Officers from the eight districts were purposively selected for in-depth interviews due to their experience in coordinating the Conditional Cash Transfer project at the districts level.

The questionnaires were pre-tested by sampling 40 households (10% of the sample size). For a pilot study to be acceptable, the sample must constitute at least 10% of the total sample size (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). Geita Region was purposively selected for pilot testing because of its proximity to Kagera Region and its similar characteristics in terms of household poverty levels. Respondents for the pilot study were selected using simple random sampling. Following the pilot test, the research instruments were reviewed and refined.

Content validity was assessed using the Content Validity Index (CVI). According to Armstrong et al. (2005) and Waltz, Strickland, and Lenz (2005), a CVI value of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable. The findings indicated a CVI of 0.775, which was therefore accepted. Since the computed CVI exceeded the 0.70 threshold, the instrument demonstrated adequate content validity. With regard to internal consistency, the researcher employed

Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Reliability is considered acceptable when the coefficient is 0.70 or higher (Taber, 2018). The computed Cronbach's alpha for households' involvement in M&E decision-making was 0.765, indicating satisfactory reliability.

Data analysis

The analysis involved cross-tabulation and measures of central tendency in line with the study objectives. Data were also analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Simple linear regression analysis tested the study hypothesis. The subsequent subsections covered the questionnaire return rate, demographic characteristics of respondents, and the relationship between households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making and the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project.

Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis, and the findings were triangulated to bridge gaps and provide complementary technical insights alongside the questionnaire data.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate their age bracket within the following categories: 18–26, 27–35, 36–44, 45–53, and above 53 years. In addition, the study assessed respondents according to gender. A summary of the study findings is presented in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Age and gender of Respondents

Respondents' Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-26	4	1
27-35	13	3
36-44	62	16
45-53	80	20
Above 53	241	60
Total	400	100
Gender		
Male	77	19
Female	323	81
Total	400	100

Note: Author's own work

With regard to respondents' age, the majority of respondents, 383 (95.8%), were above 35 years, while only 17 (4.3%) were below 35 years. The relatively low number of respondents below 35 years may be attributed to rural–urban migration, as many youths moved to urban areas in search of employment and economic opportunities. In contrast, respondents above 35 years were more likely to have established families and, therefore, demonstrated a greater commitment to household responsibilities.

Regarding gender, 77 respondents (19.3%) were male, while 323 respondents (80.8%) were female. The higher proportion of female respondents may be associated with higher rates of divorce and spousal abandonment, particularly among husbands who migrated to urban areas. Consequently, a large number of female respondents were responsible for managing their households as heads of families.

The study further assessed respondents' marital status, level of education, and occupation. The findings are presented in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Marital status, level of education and occupation of Respondents

Respondents' Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Marital status		
Married	134	33.5
Single	1	0.25

Widowed	187	46.75
Divorced	78	19.5
Total	400	100
Level of education		
No schooling	191	47.75
Primary	206	51.5
Secondary	3	0.75
Total	400	100
Occupation		
Farmer	361	90
Small businesses	39	10
Total	400	100

Note: Author's own work

The majority of respondents, 187 (46.8%), were widowed, followed by 134 (33.4%) who were married, 78 (19.5%) who were divorced, and only 1 (0.3%) who was single. The high proportion of widowed respondents may be attributed to higher mortality rates among men who migrated to urban areas.

Respondents' level of education was generally low, with the majority, 206 (51.5%), having primary education, while 191 (47.8%) had not attended school, and only 3 (0.8%) had secondary education. The low level of educational attainment may be associated with poverty and school dropout rates.

Regarding occupation, the majority of respondents, 361 (90.3%), were engaged in farming, while 39 (9.8%) were involved in small-scale business activities.

Analysis of households' Involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation decision-making

Households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making was measured using the following indicators: monitoring and evaluation plan review skills, performance gap analysis skills, indicator review skills, and planning and budgeting skills. The results are presented in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. Level of households' involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation decision-making

SN	Item	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
1	Households' M&E plans review skills	400	360 (90.0%)	15 (3.8%)	21 (5.2%)	4 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1.17	0.555
2	Households' performance gap skills	400	380 (95.0%)	15 (3.8%)	4 (1.0%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1.07	0.310
3	Households' indicators review skills	400	384 (96.0%)	11 (2.8%)	4 (1.0%)	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1.06	2.95
4	Households' planning and budgeting skills	400	389 (97.2%)	11 (2.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1.03	0.164
Means of Means								1.08	0.994

Note: Author's own work

Respondents strongly disagreed regarding households' M&E plan review skills ($M = 1.17$, $SD = 0.555$), performance gap analysis skills ($M = 1.07$, $SD = 0.310$), indicator review skills ($M = 1.06$, $SD = 0.295$), and planning and budgeting skills ($M = 1.03$, $SD = 0.164$). Overall, respondents also strongly disagreed that households were involved in monitoring and evaluation decision-making ($M = 1.08$, $SD = 0.994$).

Analysis of the Performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project

The performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project was measured using the number of jobs created, the amount of food harvested, income earned from the harvest, households' ability to finance health care, the number of hospital deliveries, and the number of children who completed school. The results for this variable are presented in [Table 4](#).

Table 4. Results on Performance of Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project

SN	Indicator	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
1	Number of employment created	400	148(37%)	57(14%)	6(2%)	156(39%)	33(8%)	2.67	1.497
2	Quantity of food harvested	400	74(19%)	84(21%)	0(0%)	180(45%)	62(15%)	3.18	1.412
3	Income earned from the harvest	400	222(55%)	49(12%)	0(0%)	106(27%)	23(6%)	2.15	1.455
4	Households' ability to finance health care	400	273(68%)	41(10%)	1(0%)	76(19%)	9(2%)	1.77	1.264
5	Number of hospital delivery	400	155(39%)	55(14%)	5(1%)	171(43%)	14(4%)	2.59	1.445
6	Number of children who completed schools	400	110(28%)	35(9%)	0(0%)	169(42%)	86(22%)	3.23	1.559
Composite mean								2.6	1.439

Note: Author's own work

The mean score ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.439$) indicates that respondents generally agreed with most indicators reflecting project performance, including job creation, increased cultivation, and higher income levels. In addition, households reported improved capacity to finance health care, increased hospital deliveries, and a higher number of children completing school. Responses clustered relatively close to the mean, as reflected by the standard deviation. Therefore, respondents confirmed that the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project contributed to improvements in their socio-economic situation.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀: "Households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making does not significantly influence the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project."

Pearson correlation analysis was used to measure the direction and magnitude of the relationship between households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making and the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project. The results are presented in [Table 5](#).

Table 5. Correlation Analysis

		M&E Decision-making	Performance of Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project
M&E Decision-making	Pearson Correlation	1	.242**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
	Pearson Correlation	.242**	1

Performance of Tanzania	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
Conditional Cash Transfer project	N	400	400

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note: Author's own work

Households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making was found to be significantly and positively correlated with the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project ($r = 0.242$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 400$). This indicates that increases in the level of households' involvement in M&E decision-making are associated with improvements in the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project.

Linear Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the extent to which households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making predicts the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project. The results of the linear regression analysis are presented in [Table 6](#).

Table 6. Linear Regression Analysis of Households' involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation decision-making on the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project

Mode	R	Adjusted R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				Sig. F Change
				R Square	F Change	df1	df2	
1	.242 ^a	.058	.16226	.058	24.701	1	398	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Monitoring and Evaluation Decision-making

b. Dependent variable: Performance of Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project

Note: Author's own work

The results presented in Table 5 indicate that households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making had an adjusted R^2 value of 0.056. This implies that 5.6% of the variation in the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project is explained by the level of households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making.

The Coefficients Test

The regression coefficients were used to test the statistical significance of households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making in relation to the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Coefficients of Households' Involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation decision-making and the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	.388	.009		45.586	.000	.371	.405
	M&E Decision-making	.625	.126	.242	4.970	.000	.378	.873

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project

Note: Author's own work

The results indicate that a one-unit increase in households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making is associated with a 0.242 increase in the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project. This relationship was statistically significant ($t = 4.970$, $p = 0.000$). Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming that households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making has a significant influence on the performance of the Conditional Cash Transfer project.

Qualitative Data Findings

The findings from the interviews revealed that households' engagement in decision-making would improve project performance. Accordingly, monitoring and evaluation processes should include household representatives who are adequately capacitated with decision-making skills derived from project progress reports. As noted by Monitoring Officers:

"For the households to engage in deciding on their project, first they must be part of the monitoring and evaluation team, and secondly, capacity building must be provided to them. However, this has never been considered by Conditional Cash Transfer project officials at the district level."

The importance of providing capacity building on decision-making skills to households prior to their engagement in decision-making was also emphasized by Village Committee members. The Village Committee members suggested that the involvement of capacitated households in decision-making would enhance project performance. As expressed by a Village Committee member:

"Outcomes will be attained if households participate in discussing project progress reports. The officials' practice of inviting households merely as listeners in decision-making meetings must be stopped. Therefore, capacity building is important for them to participate in decision-making."

During focus group discussions and key informant interviews, it further emerged that households were not involved in monitoring and evaluation decision-making due to a lack of decision-making skills. As noted by a Village Committee member:

"Project beneficiaries have no skills for assessing program performance and making decisions because they were not capacitated. Project officials believe beneficiaries are untrainable to engage in decision-making for their program."

Similarly, Monitoring Officers highlighted that beneficiaries are often excluded from report preparation and decision-making processes:

"In most cases, project beneficiaries receive performance reports but are not part of the report preparation team or decision-making. What happens is that project officials are the ones making decisions on behalf of households."

IV. Discussion

The findings revealed that households were excluded from monitoring and evaluation decision-making, consistent with the observations of Chirenje, Giliba, and Musamba (2013), who reported that beneficiaries in Africa were excluded from making fundamental decisions, particularly during budget preparation stages. Similarly, the present study found that households were completely excluded from reviewing monitoring and evaluation plans, analyzing performance gaps, reviewing indicators, and participating in planning and budgeting processes, whereas Chirenje, Giliba, and Musamba (2013) specifically emphasized exclusion during budget preparation. These findings are further supported by Bonnie, Lewis, and Dennis (2017), who reported the disregard of communities in decision-making processes due to the absence of effective strategies for community engagement.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of collaborating with community members in M&E decision-making. For instance, FAO (2002) explained that beneficiaries' participation in decision-making enables the diagnosis of challenges and the proposal of appropriate actions for program improvement. The current findings are consistent with focus group discussions, which emphasized the need to engage households in M&E processes to enable meaningful participation in program decision-making. In addition, De La Torre and Unfried (2014) asserted that including communities in the collection of monitoring and evaluation information and in formulating recommendations for improvement ensures alignment between community expectations and program goals. This aligns with the present study's emphasis on household participation through capacity building prior to engagement in M&E activities.

Furthermore, Murphree (2009) and Chirenje, Giliba, and Musamba (2013) recommended the inclusion of beneficiaries in managing their own programs as a means of empowering them in decision-making, a position supported by the current study's findings advocating for households' inclusion in monitoring and evaluation teams. Kananura et al. (2017) further demonstrated that beneficiary involvement in M&E enhances skills in data collection and analysis for corrective decision-making, which is consistent with the present study's assertion that

households should not merely act as listeners but should actively participate in information dissemination processes.

The findings are also comparable to those of Kamau and Mungai (2019), who observed that beneficiaries participated in project initiation and implementation with frequent supervision. Conversely, Muniu, Gakuu, and Rambo (2017) reported that beneficiary involvement was constrained by low attendance at program meetings due to the lack of power and mandate to appoint representatives. This differs from the present study, which found that households attended meetings but participated only as listeners, as they were excluded from M&E teams responsible for preparing program reports. Moreover, Isham and Kahkonen (2009) recommended that the extent of involvement in decision-making should be assessed based on how community representatives' recommendations and advice are incorporated into final managerial decisions. This recommendation aligns with the study's findings, which emphasize the importance of engaging local communities through representatives rather than relying solely on District Monitoring Officers at district, ward, and village levels.

Overall, while many previous studies have addressed the contribution of local people to community interventions, relatively few have specifically examined community involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making in relation to program performance. The existing literature remains relevant in highlighting broader aspects of community participation in decision-making; however, this study uniquely contributes by focusing specifically on households' involvement in M&E decision-making and its influence on program performance.

V. Conclusion

The study assessed the influence of households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making on the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project. The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between households' involvement in M&E decision-making and the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project. Pearson correlation analysis revealed that improvements in households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making were associated with improvements in the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project.

Linear regression analysis further indicated that 5.8% of the variation in the attainment of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project was explained by the level of households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making. The regression coefficients showed that a one-unit increase in households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making was associated with a 0.242 increase in project performance. The findings demonstrated a statistically significant relationship, with a t-value of 4.70 and a p-value of 0.000. Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that households' involvement in M&E decision-making significantly influences the performance of the Conditional Cash Transfer project.

Research Implication on the Theory

The study demonstrated a significant relationship between households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making and the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project. The findings support the Theory of Change by underscoring the importance of engaging households in monitoring and evaluation decision-making to clearly understand the pathways leading to improved performance. Communities are often perceived as illiterate and viewed merely as recipients of projects; however, the Theory of Change emphasizes transforming communities through capacity building in monitoring and evaluation, followed by their inclusion in monitoring and evaluation teams through representatives.

The ladder of citizen participation was reflected in the findings, as engaging beneficiaries in their programmes enables them to understand their intended goals and the pathways for achieving them through active participation in monitoring and evaluation. Community involvement in the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project therefore represents a successful approach that aligns with the participatory monitoring and evaluation model, whereby beneficiaries are capacitated with monitoring and evaluation skills to enable meaningful participation in monitoring and evaluation decision-making. Programmes should not end at capacity building alone but should further empower communities by ensuring their inclusion in monitoring and evaluation report review and decision-making processes aimed at improving livelihoods. While the Theory of Change emphasizes training communities in monitoring and evaluation, the ladder of citizen participation highlights the importance of involving empowered community members in monitoring and evaluation teams to ensure active participation and effective tracking of project progress.

Research Implication on the Policy and Practice

The evidence from this research aligns with Tanzania Development Vision 2025, which aims to promote human-centered development grounded in sustainable and shared growth that is free from poverty. The Vision emphasizes

citizens' participation in socio-economic development processes. The findings of this study also contribute to efforts to reduce poverty, as articulated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, where citizens' involvement is prioritized. Tanzania responded to the Sustainable Development Goals by establishing the Tanzania Social Action Fund, which focuses on income poverty reduction and the improvement of household social services.

The findings of this study may facilitate the review of public and donor-funded project policies, particularly with regard to ensuring that monitoring and evaluation teams at the local level include capacitated project beneficiaries. The results revealed that households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation statistically and significantly influenced the performance of the Conditional Cash Transfer project. However, respondents strongly disagreed that they were engaged in monitoring and evaluation processes. Accordingly, the study recommends a review of existing policies to incorporate beneficiaries' representatives into project monitoring and evaluation teams.

Furthermore, the research findings may inform policymakers on the importance of applying participatory monitoring and evaluation approaches by engaging communities in monitoring and evaluation activities to track project progress and communicate outcomes to local community members. Community-based projects are more likely to perform effectively when community members participate in planning and tracking project progress and actively follow up with fellow community members.

Calls for Future Research

The study established that the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project has been implemented using a top-down approach, resulting in low levels of household engagement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making. Accordingly, the study recommends a review of existing policies to incorporate provisions for households' involvement in monitoring and evaluation decision-making processes.

In addition, the study recommends that further research should examine monitoring and evaluation practices and the extent to which M&E information is utilized in decision-making in order to enhance the realization of the intended impacts of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project. As the project is implemented by a publicly owned institution, this study further recommends conducting comparative studies on beneficiaries' involvement in M&E decision-making and its influence on project performance by examining both publicly owned institutions and non-governmental organizations that engage beneficiaries in monitoring and evaluation decision-making.

Finally, future studies should investigate institutional practices related to the use of M&E information and compliance with decision-making processes in relation to the performance of the Tanzania Conditional Cash Transfer project.

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Author (s) Contribution Statement

The authors revised the manuscript, read and approved the final document for submission. The correspondent author, Professor Christopher Gakuu developed and edited the manuscript according to the recommended guidelines. Professor Harriet Kidombo participated in reviewing and approving the manuscript for submission.

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