
**EVALUATION CAPACITY BUILDING AND EVALUATION
INDEPENDENCE AMONG PUBLIC BENEFIT
ORGANIZATIONS IN HOMA BAY COUNTY, KENYA.**

^{1*}Fredrick Olal, ² Dr. Lucy Ngugi

^{1*}Post Graduate Student, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

Email of corresponding author: ifredochieng@yahoo.com

²Lecturer, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

kamau.lucyw@ku.ac.ke

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aimed at determining the effect of evaluation capacity building (ECB) on evaluation independence among Public Benefit Organizations (PBOs) in Homa Bay County as a quest to find solution to lack of evaluation independence.

Statement of the problem: Most internal evaluations in organizations are assumed to be independent and devoid of influence. Literature however reveals cases of evaluators being confronted by stakeholders to alter or misrepresent their evaluation findings. A study by Pleger, Sager, Morris, Meyer and Stockman (2017) comparing findings from USA, UK, Germany and Switzerland found that even in these developed countries, evaluators are confronted with attempts to modify their findings. Kenya being a developing country is not left out. HomaBay County for instance has recorded weak M&E structures and political interferences in its projects (Homa Bay CIDP, 2013-2017). In view of these, Independence of evaluations is at stake. The fear is that unless a solution is found, interferences are likely to continue hence threaten the credibility of evaluations. Since projects in HIV and poverty eradication that PBOs in HomaBay mostly deal with have wide implications and draws interests of vast number of stakeholders, it is critical that they observe evaluation independence. The study was also pegged on the fact that the state of evaluation independence in these PBOs is unclear and remains undocumented.

Study Methodology: A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The target population comprised 39 PBOs in Homa Bay County. Data was collected using semi structured questionnaires from all the 51 M&E staff working in these PBOs who served as respondents.

Results of the study: The findings indicated that Homa Bay County PBOs are committed to building evaluation capacity and that their evaluations are moderately independent. ECB aspects

including M&E financing, stakeholder participation and evaluation environment were found to positively and significantly affect evaluation independence. Staff development however showed no significant influence on evaluation independence at 0.5 significance level.

Conclusion: ECB positively and significantly affect evaluation independence thus attest to be a promising solution to lack of evaluation independence.

Recommendations: The study recommended that PBOs invests more in ECB to guarantee evaluation independence as a prerequisite for credible evaluations.

Keywords: *Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB), Evaluation Independence, Public Benefit Organizations (PBOs), Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).*

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) over time have gained traction and become fundamental components in projects. In spite of the increasing value attached to evaluations in determining if a project/ programme is on course and is achieving its objectives, it is surprising that not much attention is given to some challenges it faces. Among the tricky situations is reporting of findings when the results are not pleasing (Legorreta, 2015). In such cases, the temptation to manipulate evaluation findings to make it palatable arises. This undermines the value of evaluation evidence. A leeway to such manipulation is lack of independence in evaluations. The current attention to credibility of evaluations has led to concerns about evaluation independence.

An evaluation is said to be independent if conducted by people and units free of control of programme management and implementers (United Nations Development Program [UNDP, 2016a). Further, the evaluation unit should be located separately in relation to other management functions of the organization so as to free it from uncalled-for influence (Perrin, 2018). UNDP (2016a) merged both dimensions and depicted evaluation independence as a dual concept comprising formal and substantial aspects where the former implies the structural separation of evaluation function from other management functions while substantial independence refers to the freedom of the evaluator from influence aimed at misrepresenting evaluation findings.

Lack of evaluation independence has been found to cause problems such as coercing evaluators into already made decisions, conducting evaluations unethically and pursuit of vested interest. The most common challenge is where evaluators are under pressure from stakeholders to modify evaluation findings (Pleger, Sager, Morris, Meyer, & Stockmann, 2017). It is argued on the other hand that evaluation independence is capable of minimizing some categories of bias even those in extreme cases (Scriven, 1991, as cited in Picciotto, 2013). In a responsive environment, it inculcates confidence, safeguards the process of learning and directs stakeholders' attention to the results (Picciotto, 2013). According to Perrin (2018), independence is as central to the credibility of evaluation as it is to auditing. It should thus be of concern given the vital role M&E plays. Perrin (2018) however observed that M&E enjoys not independence as do audits.

Since the realization of the role of independence in evaluations, efforts have been made to make it a reality globally. From 1990s onwards, multilateral development agencies for instance UN have developed policies and guidelines to promote evaluation independence (Social Impact Inc., 2016). The need to provide evaluation independence has also resulted in separation of evaluation units from management functions in some organizations while others prefer the use of external evaluators (consultants) to guarantee independence. Naidoo (2018) observed that an evaluation

culture is rapidly growing in Africa. Kenya for instance has shown remarkable steps in adoption of M&E (Kithinji, 2015). NGOs in Kenya have especially been in the frontline in championing for M&E. Picciotto (2013) however observed that evaluation independence is seldom addressed in many organizations but where is, it has only been looked at in the general sense. The concern is that this restricted take on evaluation independence has consequences since it ignores pressures that evaluators are subjected to in today's world (Picciotto, 2013).

In this study, structural separation of evaluation function from other management functions as well as giving evaluators access to organizational information sources comprised some of the criteria for determining evaluation independence. AICPA (2018) also identified seven classes of threats that should be evaluated whenever threats to independence are being assessed. They include; self-reviews, advocacy, adverse interest, familiarity, undue influence, financial interest and management participation threats. Figure 1 summarizes these indicators of independence.

Formal Independence indicator:

Refers to the structural separation of evaluation function from other management functions

Substantial Independence indicators:

Information access: Giving evaluators access to organizational information sources during evaluations

Adverse interest threat: Interests / actions that occur between parties in evaluation (evaluators and stakeholders) which are opposing, such as, intending to or commencing litigation.

Advocacy threat: Actions promoting particular stakeholders interests or position in attempt to sway the evaluation findings.

Familiarity threat: Attempt by Management or stakeholder to exploit their close relationship with the evaluators to alter /manipulate the evaluation methodology or findings

Financial interest threat: Is where the evaluator or management manipulates the evaluation budget, design, or findings to gain financially directly or indirectly

Management participation threat: management using its position to take over the role of the evaluator including implementation, decision making, writing or rewriting reports.

Self-review threat: is where the evaluator or evaluation team review or alter the evaluation findings to suit their interest.

Undue influence: Refers to coercive attempts by management or stakeholders towards the evaluator aimed at making them give in to their demands or to support their already made decisions concerning the evaluation process or findings

Figure 1: Indicators of Evaluation Independence

Frey (2018) defined evaluation capacity building (ECB) as an approach used to help people learn how to conduct an evaluation and think evaluatively in the process. Kithinji (2015) opined that

ECB is carried out to equip evaluators with skills for carrying out effective M&E. Morkel and Ramasobama (2017) outlined a number of triggers for initiating ECB some of which include the demand for functional M&E systems, the call to embrace evidence in M&E and the need make improvement in program activities. According to Kithinji (2015), ECB comprises numerous activities including; professional development, resources and supports, and organizational environment. UNESCO (2015) argues that staff participation is also another method for building an evaluation culture and capacity. These views on ECB were used to generate independent variables for the study. The variables include M&E financing, stakeholder participation, staff development and evaluation environment. According to Morkel and Ramasobama (2017), the recognition that development projects need to be informed by good evidence has led to an increase in capacity building in M&E. Omondi (2016) argues that an organization's capacity either supports or cripples its performance. An assessment of the underlying capacity could thus be a leap towards addressing the challenge of independence if an evaluation is to be successful.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Evaluation is rooted in a number of principles that include independence, credibility and utility (UNDP, 2016a). Most internal evaluations are assumed to be independent and devoid of influence. Literature however reveals cases of evaluators being confronted by stakeholders to alter or misrepresent their findings. UNDP findings revealed that over 40% of consultants they contracted reported some unacceptable actions that interfered with independence of their evaluations (Baastel, 2014). A study by Pleger, Sager, Morris, Meyer and Stockman (2017) comparing findings from USA, UK, Germany and Switzerland found that even in these developed countries, evaluators are confronted with attempts to modify their findings. Kenya being a developing country is not left out with most evaluations in NGOs being marred with lack of professionalism (Karani, Bichanga, & Kamau, 2014). Homabay County for instance has recorded weak M&E structures and interferences in its projects (Homa Bay CIDP, 2013-2017). In view of these, Independence of evaluations is at stake. The fear is that unless a solution is found, interferences might continue hence threaten the credibility of evaluations.

Empirical studies have been conducted in Kenya on factors affecting M&E for instance a study by Muiga (2015). These studies however do not adequately address lack of evaluation independence. Since most organizations build evaluation capacity with the aim of improving M&E (Kithinji, 2019), This study focused on investigating the influence of capacity building on evaluation independence as a way of addressing the empirical gap so as to safeguard evaluations.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this study was to determine the effect of evaluation capacity building on evaluation independence among PBOs in Homa Bay County, Kenya.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What effect does M&E financing have on independence of evaluations among PBOs in Homa Bay County, Kenya?
- ii. What effect does stakeholder participation have on independence of evaluations among PBOs in Homa Bay County, Kenya?
- iii. To what extent does staff development affect independence of evaluations among PBOs in Homa Bay County, Kenya?

- iv. How does evaluation environment affect evaluation independence among PBOs in Homa Bay County, Kenya?

2.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1.1 Stakeholder Theory

This theory was conceived by Ian Mitroff and R. Edward Freeman though separately. Stakeholder theory holds that an organization's stakeholder comprise anyone who might be affected by the organization and its work. It emphasizes treatment of all stakeholders with honor, impartiality, as well as being generous to them (Harrison, Freeman, & Cavalcanti Sá de Abreu, 2015). This is because such treatment appeals to them to return the favor with good conducts and positive attitudes towards the organization (Harrison et al., 2015). The applicability of this theory in this study is drawn from evaluation best practice which advocates for stakeholder participation in evaluations and given that stakeholders can influence the success of a proposed change.

2.1.2 Systems Theory

Systems theory was advanced by Ludwig Bertalanffy in 1940's. The theory sees an organization as open and a system comprising of subsystems which interact and depend on each other where a change in one part affects the other parts. Based on this theory, an evaluation is a joint venture between the client subsystem (commissioners) and the concerned public (stakeholders). That the behavioral pattern of an organization depends on its interactions with the environment. Since an organization relies on the environment for its inputs and outputs, it must establish a way of adjusting to its demand (Chikere & Nwoka, 2015). According to Caffrey and Munro (2017), systems thinking acknowledge that evaluations are complex. Challenges such as independence can therefore, be handled by considering the contexts and interactions within the system.

2.1.3 Values Engaged Evaluation theory

Jennifer Green developed this theory to be a democratic perspective that hugely responds to the context of evaluation and consider the values of stakeholders. Since evaluations are political, the theory strives to include in evaluation: values, viewpoints and concerns of all stakeholders. The theory is relevant to this study given the quest to include all relevant stakeholders in evaluations who may have different values and given that evaluation independence depends largely on the context at which an evaluation is carried out. In this theory, evaluators do not disregard political and contextual aspects of evaluation, instead, they tackle them head-on (Greene, 2015).

2.2 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.2.1 ECB and Evaluation Independence

According to Muiga (2015), M&E financial allocation should be made clear in the project budget. The provision ensures M&E activities are undertaken as planned and that M&E is not treated as an afterthought. To actualize M&E budgeting, top management support is necessary. This is because budgeting is sometimes associated with self-interests or penny pinching controls including failure to; respond to financial requests, provide funds in a timely manner or provide adequate allocation. Karani, Bichanga and Kamau (2014) cited lack of commitment by managers as one challenge facing evaluations. This leaves evaluators at the mercy of managers and increases their vulnerability to manipulation. Given that most project managers work with tight budgets Njeru and Wanyonyi (2018) suggested that M&E efforts be well prioritized. In a case study on Practices and challenges facing M&E, Lemma (2017) identified one of the impediments to evaluation

independence as being unable to allocate sufficient budget to M&E. He concluded that organizations with big funds for M&E tends to be more organized which promote evaluation independence. A study by Blomqvist (2014) in Nepal investigating NGOs strategic responses to donor pressure revealed that donors apply pressure to prove that their money is well spent. However, since most NGOs cannot do without donor funding, they have designed unusual strategies to adapt to the pressure. One way in which they prove their legitimacy is by conducting M&E. This study concluded that evaluations can be manipulated for selfish gains.

UNDP (2016b) observed that stakeholder participation in M&E ensures ownership, learning and sustainability of results. Wanjiru (2016) saw that in a project management environment, stakeholder has an interest in the proposed change and can influence or impact the success of that change. Fumey (2016) pointed out that since participants may contribute either negatively or positively to projects, it is necessary to find out their attitudes and knowledge of the projects. Kithinji (2015) hypothesized that ECB can change such attitudes. According to Legorreta (2015), politics in evaluation essentially arise due to the interaction between stakeholders and the pursuit of their interests; this implies that though, the best evaluation is a collaborative effort, interactions stakeholders have with evaluators may create opportunities for them to pressurize evaluators to misrepresent findings. Care must therefore be taken since stakeholders may yearn for results that are in opposition to their mandates. A study by Mushori (2015) in Kenya revealed that stakeholder participation is significant to M&E effectiveness, however when they are involved too much in evaluations, they can cause undue influence. A study by Muiga (2015) revealed that politics significantly influence M&E with the inputs from politicians not necessarily positive. It is thus crucial to determine the extent and purpose before political inclusions are made in M&E. These studies by Muiga and Mushori focused on public service hence the need to validate findings in other spheres including non-governmental organizations.

Kithinji (2015) argued that since it's possible to gauge competency of the evaluation team based on their skills, knowledge and attitudes, staff development is necessary to prepare them to carry out adequate evaluations. A study by Muriithi (2017) found that proper job description has a laudable effect on employee performance. That it minimizes disagreements, job clashes, overlaps and conflicts of interest which may interfere with evaluation independence. Jobs should therefore be designed to accommodate M&E. The organization must also invest in experts to champion evaluations and provide assistance (Perrin, 2018). The perception is that consultants have less vested interests, are more objective, and less likely to yield to intimidation. Perrin however, argued that the use of consultants does not guarantee independence as they are subject to financial benefits and contractual agreements.

Kithinji (2015) observed that providing a conducive evaluation environment is essential to motivate evaluators and initiate a change in behavior. According to UNDP (2016a), actualization of principles like independence relies on the context of evaluation, for instance in organizations where evaluation culture is weak, evaluations are rarely welcome and could easily get thwarted: this calls for an increase in demand for evaluations to make it habitual and reduce pressure on evaluators. To improve evaluation environment, the right evaluation culture and leadership should be entrenched in the organization implying that leaders should set the tone for valuing evaluations. According to Hudib (2018), organization leaders have a fundamental role in establishing, building, and sustaining capacity for evaluation. Picciotto (2013) advised that apart from policies to guide the conduct of evaluations, provisions also need to be put in place to shield the evaluation team from threats and apprehension by stakeholder entities given that evaluations are full of conflicts of

interest and pressure. Mapitsa and Khumalo (2017) observed that M&E systems effectiveness have historically focused on technical issues with little emphasis placed on political, organizational factors, as well as on the context in which M&E occur.

2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 2

Independent variables

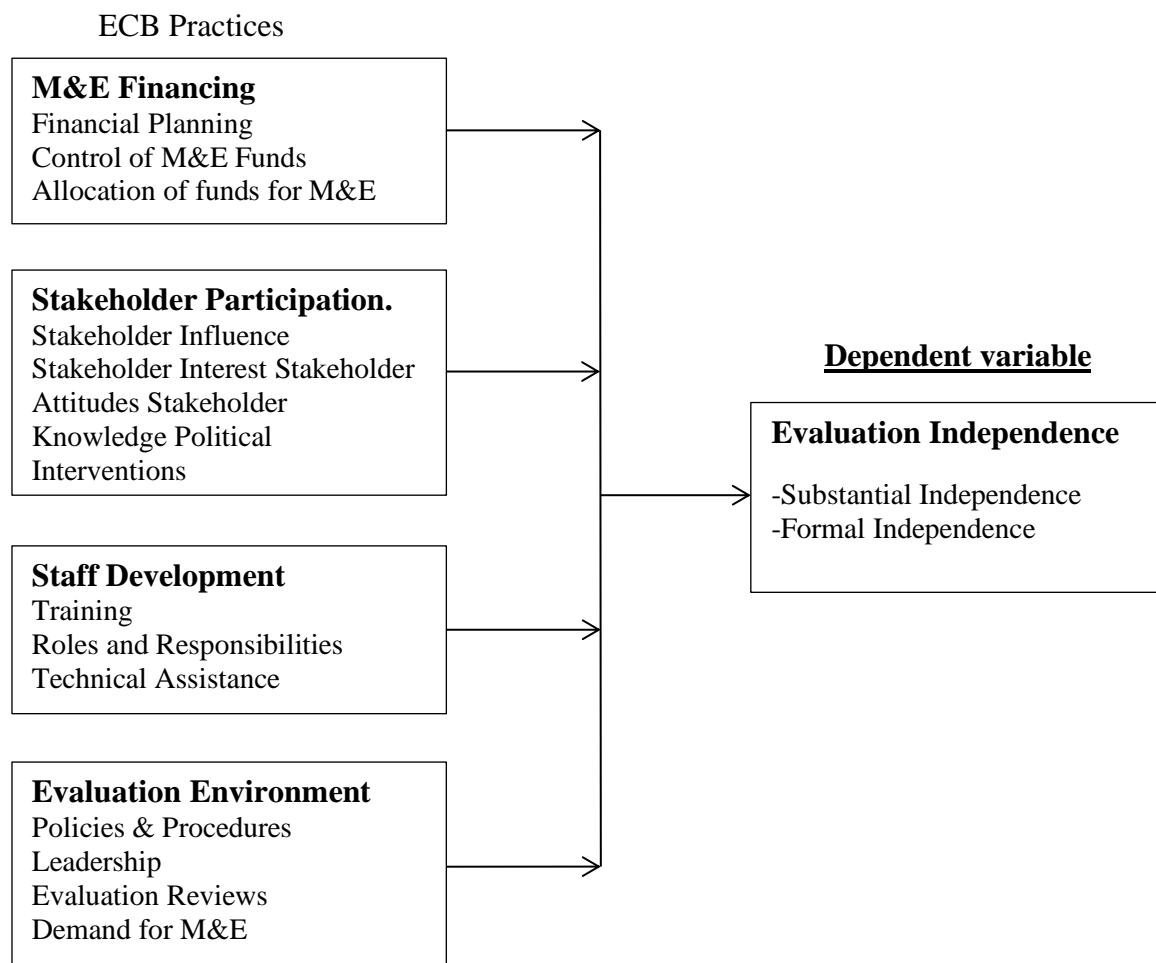


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, descriptive research design was used to steer data collection and analysis. The target population comprised 39 PBOs in Homa Bay County. A census comprising 51 M&E staff (38 men; 13 women) from these PBOs formed the unit of observation since they are the people in whose docket evaluations fall and who could tell whether there is pressure to misrepresent findings. Primary data was collected through survey from 46 M&E staff (36men; 10 women) of the listed 51 using semi structured questionnaires. Data collected was analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive analysis generated frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. Pearson’s correlation was applied to investigate the existence of relationships between variables.

4.1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

4.1.1.1 Evaluation independence

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of Evaluation Independence

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
My organization's M&E unit is structurally separated from other management functions	28.30%	28.30%	4.30%	23.90%	15.20%	2.7	1.489
Evaluators are free to access all organizational information sources during evaluations	6.50%	10.90%	4.30%	60.90%	17.40%	3.72	1.089
Stakeholders do not exploit relationships with evaluators to alter evaluation findings	10.90%	21.70%	17.40%	30.40%	19.60%	3.26	1.307
Evaluators are never coerced / suffer from undue influence to misrepresent findings	13.00%	17.40%	8.70%	41.30%	19.60%	3.37	1.339
The evaluation unit usually conduct evaluations without management interferences	8.70%	28.30%	23.90%	23.90%	15.20%	3.09	1.226
There are procedures in place to prevent stakeholders from manipulating and gaining financially from M&E budget	15.20%	21.70%	17.40%	34.80%	10.90%	3.04	1.282
The organization has in place communication strategies to minimize disputes between evaluators and stakeholders	8.70%	21.70%	28.30%	34.80%	6.50%	3.09	1.092
Evaluations are conducted without favor to any stakeholder group(s)	10.90%	17.40%	8.70%	45.70%	17.40%	3.41	1.275
Evaluators are willing to issue quality and uncompromising evaluation reports.	6.50%	4.30%	6.50%	45.70%	37.00%	4.02	1.105
Average						3.3	1.245

Source: Survey Data (2019)

From the results presented in Table 1; the evaluation function in Homa Bay county PBOs was found to be moderately independent (Average Mean=3.3). Formal independence gave the lowest rating with a mean of 2.7 depicting it as the least actualized aspect of evaluation independence. This implies that PBOs do not think much of structurally separating their evaluation units from other management functions. The struggle to attain formal independence could be as a result of its complexity based on the fact that structural separation takes more than the willingness but also material and financial resources. Substantial independence on the other hand was moderately manifest with all its indicators having a mean greater than 3. This shows that PBOs put more emphasis on substantial independence compared to formal independence. Respondents agreed to a great extent that evaluators are willing to issue quality and uncompromising evaluation reports (Mean=4.02). The results suggests this indicator as the highest contributor to evaluation independence followed by the freedom to access organizational resources during evaluations (Mean=3.72). The respondents agreed to a moderate extent on other indicators; that evaluations are conducted without favor to any stakeholder group (Mean=3.41), that evaluators do not suffer from undue influence (Mean=3.37) and that stakeholders do not exploit their close relationship with evaluators to alter evaluation findings (Mean=3.26). There was however indifference on whether organizations have communication strategies for minimizing disputes between stakeholders and evaluators (Mean=3.09), whether evaluations are conducted without management interferences (Mean=3.09) and whether there are procedures in place to prevent stakeholders from manipulating and gaining financially from the M&E allocation (Mean=3.04).

4.1.1.2 M&E Financing

Evaluation is a resource consuming activity. It must therefore be provided with good financial allocation and support. Monitoring and evaluation financing focused mainly on budgeting, financial allocations for M&E, Management Support for monitoring and evaluation and adherence to budgeting guidelines. Table 2 provides a summary of the responses obtained from the M&E staff about monitoring and evaluation financing in their organizations.

Majority of the respondents as shown in Table 2 opined that M&E financing is moderately effected and is not treated as an afterthought (Average mean=3.25). They agreed to a moderate extent that PBOs budget for M&E during the planning stage of the projects (Mean=3.48), That the M&E budget is included in the project budgets (Mean=3.46) and that the M&E budget is reviewed promptly as need arises (Mean=3.17). They however disagreed with the statement that their organizations separate monitoring budget from the evaluation budget (Mean=2.72). The respondents agreed to a great extent that the M&E team adapts promptly to new guidelines for M&E budgeting (Mean=3.76). This suggests adaptation to guidelines as the highest contributor to M&E financing. It may be attributed to the fact that most donors nowadays require an inclusion of M&E budget in the project proposals (Shihemi, 2016). Respondents also agreed to a moderate extent that top management in PBOs show positive attitudes and support allocation of finances for M&E (Mean=3.28). They indicated that top management takes moderate time to respond to requests from M&E team (Mean=3.35) and that they are moderately willing to invest money to strengthen the M&E unit. Concerning allocation of M&E finances, the respondents disagreed with the statement that their organizations allocate adequate and realistic financial resources for M&E (Mean=2.96). This paints a picture that the demand for monitoring and evaluation has not yet hit the ceiling hence less regards to its financing. It may also be a result of the moderate support and attitudes indicated on the part of the top management.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of M&E Financing

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
My organization budget for M&E during the planning stage of the project	8.70%	19.60%	10.90%	37.00%	23.90%	3.48	1.295
M&E budget is included in the project budget	6.50%	21.70%	10.90%	41.30%	19.60%	3.46	1.224
Monitoring budget is usually separated from evaluation budget	26.10%	19.60%	17.40%	30.40%	6.50%	2.72	1.328
Top management show positive attitude and supports greatly allocation of finances for monitoring and evaluation	8.70%	13.00%	30.40%	37.00%	10.90%	3.28	1.109
Top Management respond promptly to financial requests of M&E team	4.30%	19.60%	19.60%	50.00%	6.50%	3.35	1.016
M&E budget is reviewed promptly as need arises	13.00%	17.40%	15.20%	47.80%	6.50%	3.17	1.198
The organization allocates adequate and realistic financial resources for M&E	8.70%	28.30%	28.30%	28.30%	6.50%	2.96	1.095
M&E team adapts promptly to new Project/donor guidelines for M&E budgeting	2.20%	10.90%	15.20%	52.20%	19.60%	3.76	0.97
The organization shows a willingness to invest money to strengthen M&E unit	13.00%	17.40%	23.90%	37.00%	8.70%	3.11	1.197
Average						3.25	1.159

Source: Survey Data (2019)

4.1.1.3 Stakeholder Participation

The study investigated participation by asking if stakeholders are involved in evaluations, if they are supportive of evaluations and if they use their influence to interfere with evaluations. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of Stakeholder Participation

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
Stakeholders are involved in M&E activities	8.70%	15.20%	10.90%	45.70%	19.60%	3.52	1.23
The organization materials available supports data sharing with stakeholders	4.30%	15.20%	19.60%	45.70%	15.20%	3.52	1.07
Stakeholders involved in M&E activities usually have adequate knowledge of the project	17.40%	21.70%	19.60%	30.40%	10.90%	2.96	1.3
The stakeholders involved show positive attitude towards evaluation activities	4.30%	6.50%	21.70%	52.20%	15.20%	3.67	0.97
The stakeholders show lack of self-interest in the evaluations they are involved in	17.40%	39.10%	13.00%	19.60%	10.90%	2.67	1.28
Stakeholders do not use their influence to sway evaluation outcomes	8.70%	19.60%	19.60%	45.70%	6.50%	3.22	1.11
The evaluation unit is sufficiently removed from political pressures, both external and internal	17.40%	13.00%	19.60%	30.40%	19.60%	3.22	1.38
Average						3.25	1.19

Source: Survey Data (2019)

The study revealed that PBOs in Homa Bay moderately allow stakeholders participation in their evaluations (Average mean=3.25) as presented in Table 3. The respondents agreed to a great extent that stakeholders are involved in M&E activities (Mean=3.52) and that PBOs in Homa Bay county share their data with stakeholders (Mean=3.52). This implies that stakeholders who are not involved directly in M&E also get to know the on goings through the data shared. The respondents however disagreed with the statement that stakeholders involved have adequate knowledge of the projects (Mean=2.96). Questions are thus raised on the modes of sharing and the contents of data shared. Concerning stakeholder support, the respondents agreed to a great extent that stakeholders show positive attitudes towards M&E activities (Mean=3.67), however they indicated that stakeholders harbor some self- interests in evaluations (Mean= 2.67). The implication is that merely participating in M&E may not guarantee evaluation independence unless it is accompanied by the right behavioral attributes. Nevertheless, the respondents agreed to a moderate extent that stakeholders do not use their influence to sway evaluation outcomes (Mean=3.22) and that these

PBOs have removed political pressures from their evaluations (Mean=3.22). The moderation in stakeholder involvement in these PBOs could thus be a result of the fear of stakeholder self-interests, influence and lack of adequate knowledge in projects.

4.1.1.4 M&E Staff Development

The descriptive statistics of staff development is as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of Staff Development

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
My organization has adequate M&E personnel to conduct evaluations	17.40%	19.60%	21.70%	30.40%	10.90%	2.98	1.291
The organization has clearly defined roles / responsibilities for its M&E staff	6.50%	13.00%	10.90%	47.80%	21.70%	3.65	1.159
The organization conducts training regularly to equip the M&E staff with relevant skills and knowledge	10.90%	19.60%	28.30%	37.00%	4.30%	3.04	1.095
M&E staff are knowledgeable in the day to day management of evaluation system	6.50%	6.50%	17.40%	47.80%	21.70%	3.72	1.089
Training of M&E staff is critical for evaluation independence to be realized	8.70%	15.20%	15.20%	39.10%	21.70%	3.5	1.243
The organization regularly uses evaluation consultants (technical experts) for its evaluations	8.70%	26.10%	26.10%	28.30%	10.90%	3.07	1.162
The use of consultants in evaluations promotes evaluation independence	4.30%	13.00%	26.10%	39.10%	17.40%	3.52	1.07
Average						3.35	1.158

Source: Survey Data (2019)

The results in Table 4 shows that PBOs in Homa Bay County fairly develop their M&E staff (average mean =3.35). The indicator with the highest contribution to M&E staff development was being knowledgeable in the management of M&E system (Mean=3.72). This indicator was followed closely by organizations having clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the M&E

staff (Mean=3.65). Indicators with moderate contribution to staff development included the use of consultants in evaluation and its contribution to evaluation independence with an aggregate mean of 3.295 and training of M&E staff (Mean=3.27, Standard deviation=1.169). The findings however indicated that PBOs in Homa Bay County lack adequate M&E personnel to carry out their evaluations. This gave the lowest rating (Mean=2.98, Std. Dev=1.291) and raises questions on how these PBOs manage to conduct evaluations with limited number of M&E staff.

4.1.1.5 Evaluation Environment

Evaluation environment was looked at as the available measures in support of evaluations as well as the attitude and culture of public benefit organizations towards evaluations. Eight indicators were used to investigate the environment under which evaluations in Homa Bay county PBOs occur. They include; provision of a conducive atmosphere for evaluations, the existence of policies and compliance to them, enforcement of the code of ethics, evaluation reviews, provisions to protect evaluators from capture by stakeholders, leadership, the use of guidelines and adherence to them in evaluations and the demand for evaluations.

Table 5 summarizes the descriptive statistics of evaluation environment.

Overall, respondents felt that Homa Bay County PBOs provide conducive environments for their evaluations (Average mean =3.27). This is based on the results obtained in Table 5. Respondents saw code of ethics enforcement as the major contributor to having a conducive evaluation environment with the highest mean of 3.78. They also agreed to a great extent that Homa Bay County PBOs provide a conducive atmosphere for evaluations (Mean=3.67) and that there is a high and sustainable demand for evaluations (Mean=3.59). The high rating in these three indicators shows the desire PBOs in Homa Bay County have to make their evaluations a success. Respondents agreed to a great extent that their organizations have policies on evaluation in place (Mean=3.50), however there was an indication of indifference (Mean=3.09) concerning compliance to these policies and procedures. This concurs with the view that developing countries even with policies in place experience shortcomings in implementing policies (Usman, Kamau & Mireri, 2014). Respondents agreed that PBOs to a little extent carry out evaluation reviews (Mean=3.07) and use manuals in their evaluations (Mean=3.07). However they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that leaders set the tone for utilizing evaluation results (mean=3.00). Having provisions to shield evaluators gave the lowest score (Mean of 2.7).

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of Evaluation Environment

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
The organization provides a conducive environment for program evaluations	4.30%	17.40%	13.00%	37.00%	28.30%	3.67	1.19
The organization has / conforms to some policies or guiding principles on evaluation	6.50%	13.00%	19.60%	45.70%	15.20%	3.50	1.11
Policies / procedures are complied with in evaluations	13.00%	19.60%	19.60%	41.30%	6.50%	3.09	1.19
The code of ethics is enforced during evaluations	6.50%	4.30%	10.90%	60.90%	17.40%	3.78	1.01
The organization conducts reviews / meta-evaluation after every evaluation exercise	21.70%	17.40%	6.50%	41.30%	13.00%	3.07	1.42
The organization has provisions to shield evaluators from threats and capture by stakeholders in evaluation	30.40%	15.20%	15.20%	32.60%	6.50%	2.70	1.38
The organization uses manuals to make clear the steps and procedures in their evaluations	10.90%	26.10%	19.60%	32.60%	10.90%	3.07	1.22
Leaders in the organization sets the tone in utilizing evaluation results	23.90%	13.00%	15.20%	34.80%	13.00%	3.00	1.41
There is sustainable demand for evaluation in the organization	10.90%	6.50%	21.70%	34.80%	26.10%	3.59	1.26
Average						3.27	1.24

Source: Survey Data (2019)

4.1.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson’s correlation was used to assess the nature of relationships between variables and the outcomes are outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: Correlation Analysis

		Evaluation Independence	M&E Financing	Stakeholder Participation	Staff Development	Evaluation Environment
Evaluation Independence	Pearson Correlation	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
M&E Financing	Pearson Correlation	.826**	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
Stakeholder Participation	Pearson Correlation	.772**	.734**	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000			
Staff Development	Pearson Correlation	.654**	.815**	.625**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		
Evaluation Environment	Pearson Correlation	.823**	.876**	.744**	.803**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Data (2019)

The results in Table 6 showed that all the four independent variables each had a strong positive correlation with evaluation independence (dependent variable).

4.1.3 Model Summary

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.878a	0.77	0.748	0.44648

Source: Survey Data (2019)

Evaluation capacity building was found to be satisfactory in explaining evaluation independence among Public Benefit Organizations in Homa Bay County. This is supported with an R square of 0.77 as shown in Table 7 meaning that the regression model explains 77% of the variations in the dependent variable.

4.1.4 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Analysis of Variance was used to determine the overall significance of the regression model. The results are depicted in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Analysis of Variance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	27.379	4	6.845	34.337	.000
Residual	8.173	41	0.199		
Total	35.552	45			

Source: Survey data (2019)

The results in Table 8 indicates that the model is statistically significant with $p < 0.05$ ($p = 0.000$) and $F(4,41) = 34.337$. This implies that evaluation capacity building (ECB) can be relied on to predict Evaluation Independence.

4.1.5 Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine the effect of ECB on evaluation independence and the results presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Regression Table for ECB Activities against Evaluation Independence

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.274	0.354		0.773	0.444
M&E Financing	0.446	0.179	0.434	2.492	0.017
Stakeholder Participation	0.340	0.137	0.289	2.49	0.017
Staff Development	-0.223	0.171	-0.178	-1.304	0.200
Evaluation Environment	0.371	0.172	0.371	2.16	0.037

Source: Survey data 2019

The results presented in Table 9 shows that M&E financing and evaluation independence are positively and significantly related ($\beta = 0.446$, $p = 0.017$). This implies that increasing M&E financing by one unit increases evaluation independence by 0.446 units. This result concurs with Lemma (2017) who found that organizations that allocate more funds for M&E are more likely to attain evaluation independence. The results also show that Stakeholder participation and evaluation independence are positively and significantly related ($\beta = 0.340$, $p = 0.017$), thus a unit increase in stakeholder participation increases evaluation independence by 0.34 units. UNDP (2016b) provided an explanation that participation makes stakeholders own both the evaluation process and outcomes which minimizes their chances of meddling in it. The results indicated that evaluation environment and evaluation independence are positively and significantly related ($\beta = 0.371$, $p = 0.037$). The implication is that improving the evaluation environment by one unit improves evaluation independence by 0.371 units. Evaluation independence therefore depends on the evaluation context. Given that evaluations are full of pressures, the desire to minimize interferences in them calls for making the evaluation environment conducive. This study however established no significant relationship between staff development and evaluation independence ($\beta = -0.223$, $p = 0.2$). This could be due to the fact that staff development focuses more in transforming evaluators (victims of lack of evaluation independence) rather than stakeholders (source of pressure to misrepresent evaluation findings). The effort may thus not yield a lot of impact. From the results, the following regression function was obtained.

$$Y = 0.274 + 0.446X_1 + 0.340X_2 + -0.223X_3 + 0.371X_4$$

Where:

Y = Evaluation independence,
X₁ = M&E Financing,
X₂ = Stakeholder participation ,
X₃ = Staff development and
X₄ = Evaluation environment.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the broad objective, the study concluded that evaluation capacity building positively and significantly affects evaluation independence among PBOs in Homa Bay County. The study also concluded that three aspects of ECB that is; M&E financing, Stakeholder participation and evaluation environment significantly influence evaluation independence, however, staff development has no significant effect on evaluation independence at .05 significance level.

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The results indicated that stakeholders in evaluations lack adequate knowledge in Projects despite the fact that PBOs share their data with them. PBOs should thus reconsider their modes of sharing data along with the contents being shared. PBOs should also devise proper strategies for stakeholder involvement as a way of dealing with the reported self-interests in evaluations. PBOs should consider employing more M&E staff to avert the reported shortage. They should lay emphasis on separating evaluation units from other management functions as the first step in achieving evaluation independence. Most of all, PBOs should invest more in ECB especially M&E financing, stakeholder participation and betterment of the evaluation environment to attain independence. Lastly, leaders should set the tone in evaluations to promote evaluation culture.

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