



EXPLORING THE DETERMINANTS OF CONVENTIONAL AND PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION: A CASE STUDY OF WORLD VISION ETHIOPIA (WVE)

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Endale Sebsebe Mekonnen, declare that *Exploring the determinants of conventional and participatory monitoring and evaluation: A case study of World Vision Ethiopia (WVE)* is my original work, that I am the sole author, presented to the Institute for Social Development, University of the Western Cape, and no such work has been presented to this university or to earn any degree in any university. All the sources I have used or quoted are acknowledged by complete list of references.



ENDALE SEBSEBE MEKONNEN

February 2023



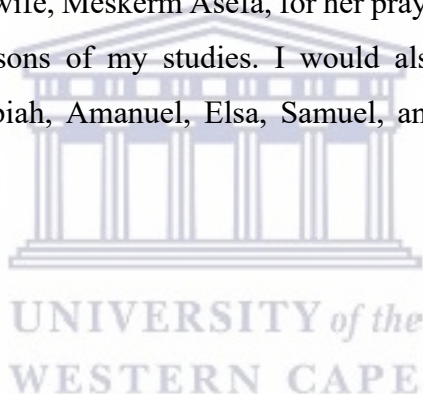
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|------|--|
| ADP | Area Development Program |
| AP | Area Program |
| DME | Design Monitoring and Evaluation |
| DPA | Development Program Approach |
| FR | Female Respondent |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MEAL | Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning |
| MR | Male Respondent |
| PM&E | Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation |
| PRA | Participatory Rural Appraisal |
| SNNP | South Nation Nationalities and Peoples |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| WV | World Vision |
| WVE | World Vision Ethiopia |

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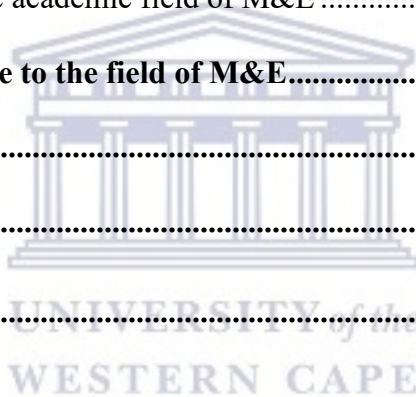
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ABSTRACT

For the success of development programs at any level, the process of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plays an indispensable role. Although it has been exercised for decades in different contexts, its multidisciplinary features and variegated applications made it a complex enterprise. The complexity is due to multidisciplinary nature, differing methodological, philosophical stance and theoretical assumptions. The two approaches—conventional and participatory monitoring and evaluation—said to be diametrically opposite in their epistemological, methodological stance, and practices resulting in meeting different purposes. A great deal of study has been done in the area of identifying the weaknesses of both approaches, but there has been no study about the possibility of combining the determinants of these two approaches, to craft a better approach that responds to differing needs of stakeholders at different stages of the monitoring and evaluation process. This dissertation undertook to fill this gap. The research aimed to identify the determinant elements of traditional and participatory monitoring and evaluation approaches that could be combined, to craft a hybrid approach that encapsulates the features of both approaches.

To this end, the researcher chose World Vision Ethiopia (WVE), one of the largest international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ethiopia functioning in many parts of Ethiopia, as the focus of this study. The research was conducted in three regions: Sidama; Southern Nation, Nationalities, and People (SNNP); and Oromia. The research used a theoretical and conceptual framework that was developed by the researcher based on reviewed literature on the theory of monitoring and evaluation, the concept of participation and context. The researcher used emergent realism as the theoretical and epistemological stance for this particular research. The study employed a mixed method of research: quantitative and qualitative methods. The researcher analyzed the quantitative data by standard descriptive statistical analysis, using SPSS data analysis software, whereas the qualitative data was first coded using Nvivo data analysis software, based on the determinants identified in the course of theoretical analysis, and literature review. The results of the two sets of data are presented and synthesized in the discussion section.

The main finding of the research is that virtually all the determinants of conventional and participatory monitoring and evaluation identified in this research are combinable, although the epistemological paradigms may differ. The study concludes that the determinants, which the researcher identified—such as ownership, purpose of monitoring and evaluation, creation of

indicators, methodology, participation of stakeholders, the role of the expert, and the use of the result of the monitoring and evaluation—can be combined. The research makes significant contributions in narrowing down the knowledge gap regarding the determinants of conventional and participatory monitoring and evaluation. It also makes paramount contributions in minimizing the weakness of both approaches.



KEYWORDS

Accountability

Community

Conventional

Determinants

Development

Evaluation

Monitoring

Participation

Transparency



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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and context

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a process that helps improve performance and achieve results (Boruch, McSweeney & Soderstrom, 2016; Chen, 1990; Cook & Campbell, 1986; Dinbabo, 2014; Henry & Rog, 1998; Mark & Henry, 2013). Its goal is to improve current and future management of outputs, outcomes and impact (Dinbabo, 2014). At the core, M&E is multidisciplinary; and its importance is without question. Agriculture, education, politics, governance, management, leadership, business administration, health, economics, and many other disciplines employ M&E in their own contexts for planning, monitoring and evaluating projects' efficiency and effectiveness (Mark & Henry, 2013). In particular, governments, development organizations, international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) perceive it as fundamental for any project undertaken to bring social and economic change in a society (Cronbach, 1980).

Granting that M&E situated itself within development programs as an indispensable instrument for the efficiency and effectiveness of an intervention, nevertheless, due to its variegated approaches, the problem of deciding on the best approach has been the bone of contention among scholars and practitioners. This problem has been ascribed to epistemological, theoretical, and ideological stances which affect methods, results, and use (Merton, 1968; Noble, 2000). The approaches generally are divided into two categories: conventional vs participatory approaches. This dissertation aims to explore the possibility of combining the key determinants of both approaches so that a better approach might be achieved that might contribute to addressing the needs of both approaches.

To this effect, the study chose the World Vision Ethiopia (WVE) project programs as a case study from three regional governments: Sidama; South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP); and Oromia. WVE is one of the largest international NGOs actively functioning in Ethiopia for the last 45 years.

The research is designed around four blocks. Following the introductory chapter, the second block provides the theoretical foundation for the research, discussing: the theory of M&E, theories of participation, theories of context, and a literature review on the practice of M&E comparing

conventional and participatory M&E. This block holds fundamentally important theories and literature against which the interpretation of the result of the research and its conclusion are made. The third block entails case study analysis, research philosophy, and research design; the final block contains an analysis of the data and a discussion of the results, followed by a summary and conclusion of the research.

This chapter offers a broad introduction to the research, entailing the background of the study, the rationale of the study, problem statement, research questions, and conceptualization of terms. It provides a brief background of the issues in the field of M&E studies that have been under discussion for decades by a myriad of scholars and practitioners. It then offers a brief background and information regarding where the case study of this research was conducted to frame the research in context.

1.1.1. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a growing discipline, although it claims to be a matured field of study (Hogan, 2007) that needs rigorous research and studies. But it is hardly possible to trace its historical development, although it has been done for thousand years. Madaus et al. (1983) pointed out that formal evaluation started prior to the 1900s and divided its stages of development into seven periods: the age of reform (prior to 1900), the age of efficiency and testing (1900–1930), the Tylerian age (1930–1945), the age of innocence (1946–1957), the age of development (1958–1972), the age of professionalization (1973–1983), and the age of expansion and integration (1983–2000). It was found mainly in the field of education (Hogan, 2007) but later it became part of social initiative programs ranging in its approach from suggested checklists to comprehensive prescriptions (Hogan, 2007).

As the use of M&E abounds in development organizations, opposing, at times complementary, assumptions, ideology, paradigms, theories, approaches, and methods have not only abounded but also became the source of contention among scholars and practitioners (Alkin, 2012). An example of the result of such disagreement is that evaluation is categorized into five groups: objective-oriented, management-oriented, consumer-oriented, expertise-oriented, adversary-oriented, and participant-oriented (Hogan, 2007).

According to Hogan (2007), each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses. For instance, the objective-oriented evaluation focuses on the goals and objectives of programs and attempts to evaluate whether the goals and objectives are achieved. But this approach is criticized because all objectives cannot be measured and the selection of objectives is subjective or open to bias; above all, they limit the scope of evaluation for objectives, blinding the evaluator to see the important outcomes that are not directly related to the goals of the evaluation. The management-oriented approach attempts to support the organization's leaders to make the appropriate decision and its weakness is its assumption that the important decision can be identified in advance and it also falls into the trap of partiality on the part of top decision-makers and managers. The consumer-oriented approach evaluates the effectiveness of products and serves as consumer advocacy. Evaluation is divided as formative and consummative, whereas the former focuses on improving the program, while the latter provides information with judgment to the consumer or decision-maker regarding the worth or merit of a program.

The expertise-oriented approach is the oldest and is used by many institutions to judge a program, and its weakness is that the evaluator is taken as an expert judge, which can be contaminated with subjectivity or bias. The adversary-oriented evaluation approach is to find results through an opposing view. The participant-oriented approach is one that emphasizes the importance of participants in the process of evaluation. That is, the least powerful stakeholders must be involved in the evaluation and allow stakeholders to be part of solving problems. It is criticized for its minimal use of instrumentation and group data, the subjectivity of the evaluation process, conflict among the participants, and participants manipulating the process. The emerging trends of evaluation include: using qualitative methods, internal evaluation, the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, multi-method evaluation, and theory-based evaluation (Worthen et al., 2004). However, such trends still have several pitfalls that cripple it, to address the needs of all interested stakeholders in the result of M&E.

Generally, the different approaches can be divided into two: conventional (positivist) and participatory (constructivist). The two approaches have been practiced for some time now, although the former has been in the field for decades. However, they are not adequately responding to the needs of better approaches in M&E, not least because both of them have shortcomings when used separately. Estrella and Gaventa (1998) conducted an extensive study and concluded that

there is a continuum between conventional and participatory M&E. Importantly, studies have not yet been conducted to explore whether there would be a possibility of combining them or not, since there is continuity between the two approaches which, at times, have the same determinants. Therefore, recognizant of this knowledge gap, this research attempts to explore the determinants of conventional and participatory M&E that can possibly be combined.

1.1.2. Overview of the context of the case study

Ethiopia is one of the key East African countries. In terms of population size, after Nigeria, Ethiopia is the largest populated country in Africa. The Central Statistical Agency (CSA) population projection for Ethiopia from 2007 to 2037 projected that the population of the country would reach 106,983 million by 2022 (CSA, 2013). Nonetheless, there is no current accurate census carried out by the Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency, except for several divergent estimations that have been made, ranging from 112 million to 117 million (World Bank, 2022a). Administratively, the country is structured around ten regional administrations. This research was conducted in three regions: Oromia, SNNP, and Sidama. Oromia is the largest populated region; the second is Amhara; SNNP is the third, followed by Sidama.

Although Ethiopia boasts the fastest economic growth in Africa, its per capita income is about \$783 (World Bank, 2018). Its economic growth averaged 10.3% a year from 2006/07 to 2016/17 with a gross domestic product (GDP) approximated at 10.9% in the 2017 financial year (World Bank, 2018). The fiscal policy emphasizes allocating “spending to sectors with strong potential for poverty reduction and growth, such as education, health, agriculture and infrastructures” (Sennoga, 2018: 3) to create a conducive environment for value-added production. According to the World Bank’s recent report, however, Ethiopia still has the fastest growing economy in Africa, with 6.3% growth in FY2020/21. Nonetheless, it remained an economically challenged country, with a per capita gross national income of \$890 (World Bank, 2022b). Although it aimed at rapid growth, development challenges abounded, affecting its economic growth and poverty reduction plans. The lack of manufacturers, limited job creation and exports, an underdeveloped private sector, and political unrest resulted in a crawling poverty reduction effort.

Although there is currently no updated data regarding reduction of poverty in Ethiopia by the Ethiopian Government, the Planning and Development Commission (PDC) at the federal level,

made a poverty analysis from 1995/96 to 2015/26. The report depended on two sources: the Welfare Monitoring Survey (WMS), which is conducted every three to five years beginning from 1996. The survey tracks households' characteristic and non-income dimensions of poverty; and the Household Income and Consumption Expenditure Survey (HICES) (PDC, 2018). According to the report of the federal PDC, poverty in Ethiopia has dropped from 45.5% in 1995/96 to 29.6% in 2010/11 and then further declined to 23.5% in 2015/16, with measuring based on real total consumption expenditure per adult (PDC, 2018: x).

Non-monetary poverty assessment (such as health, nutrition, education and literacy, sanitation, access to services, and assets) also indicated improvement. For instance, child nutrition demonstrated significant improvement since 2000 reaching 38% of stunting in 2016. Nonetheless, stunting remains the experience of a high proportion of Ethiopian children (PDC, 2018: xi). Education expanded in a significant measure by tripling enrollment in primary school since 1994 with 85.3% of Ethiopian primary-age children attending primary school. Likewise, secondary school indicates an increase in enrollment, albeit its growth at a significantly low level. Using unsafe water sources such as wells, rivers, lakes, and rainwater is still high in Ethiopia, that is, more than 35% of the population still drink unsafe water.

In rural areas, female-led households are poorer than male-led households, that is, 16.3% versus 14.2% respectively. However, in the urban areas the incidence of poverty for male-led households is 26% and 20.4% for female-led households (PDC, 2018: xii). The discrepancy between female-headed households in the urban areas and rural female-headed households and between female-headed households and male-headed households is ascribed to ownership of land by females in the rural areas and safety-net programs. Despite some improvement in poverty reduction, “the incidence, depth, and severity of poverty increased with household size for both rural and urban areas in both 2010/11 and 2015/16 and all other previous surveys” (PDC, xii). Illiteracy is also one of the causes for the depth and severity, hence it is claimed that education has a direct and clear correlation with consumption. Further, owning land, cattle, poultry, or beehives increases the reduction of poverty at a household level.

Apart from the government, NGOs are also among the major actors in the poverty reduction struggle and developments in Ethiopia. Although many NGOs in Ethiopia were started by faith-

based organizations, such as the Christian Relief & Development Association (CRDA, 2006), several other NGOs established their humanitarian and poverty reduction programs. It was after the collapse of the Derg (a military committee) in 1991 that the number of NGOs impressively increased in the country; for instance, in 1998 around 240 national and international NGOs were officially registered with the government (Clark, 2000). In addition to their increasing number in Ethiopia, their contribution towards a consistent and increasing eradication of poverty makes NGOs indispensable actors in the development enterprise in a developing country like Ethiopia. Among the renowned and large international NGOs, there is World Vision Ethiopia, which engaged itself in the Child-well-being project for the last 45 years in Ethiopia. Running their development program M&E is part and parcel of their programs, plans and measuring their efficiency, effectiveness and impacts of projects undertaken.

However, the most daunting challenges in the course of poverty eradication is avoiding corruption and inefficiency, on the one side, and increasing learning, informed decision-making, effectively and efficiently using the meager resources available within the country, that are coming into the country for economic growth for the betterment of the lives of the more than one hundred million people of Ethiopia, on the other. A study was conducted in 2012 on dragonizing corruption on key sectors of the Ethiopian government, including the rural water supply office. The study that was done on a postconstruction survey of 26 boreholes in Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' (SNNP) region revealed that there was corruption, inefficiency and ineffectiveness of a government project (Plummer, 2012). The current prime minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed, publicly announced that the proliferation of corruption within the government development projects is endangering the country and it is thus his administration's priority to fight against corruption (Rahman, 2018). Some of the causes of the corruption were lack of accountability and transparency, and lack of citizen participation. Out of 180 countries, Ethiopia ranks 107 in Transparency International's 2017 Corruption Perception Index (Rahman, 2018).

A key instrument that works toward tackling such challenges and moving toward a meaningful development goal is an effectively designed and contextualized M&E system in Ethiopia. M&E is a key element in the transformation of the public sector to be efficient, effective, and responsive to citizens and parliament (Porter & Goldman, 2013). Porter and Goldman (2013) argue that for M&E to contribute to achieve these goals, African governments must increase their demand for

result-oriented M&E. However, it is prognosticated that the need for M&E will increase in Africa more than ever before due to the recognition of the utility of evaluation to good governance (Basheka & Byamugisha, 2015) due to the pushing factors against governments from a tension between rent-seekers and those who demand improved performance. Porter and Goldman (2013) have also argued that situations in Africa are changing with respect to the demand for accountability of governments, which in turn is changing governments' demand for evidence-based information for decision-making.

Therefore, M&E is an indispensable instrument to the success of poverty eradication endeavors in Ethiopia and beyond. If this is the case, without an appropriate approach to M&E, the desired result will not be achieved. With a myriad of scholars and practitioners who are actively seeking in their research for a much better approach that might work for development programs, this research joins this endeavor by undertaking a case study on World Vision Ethiopia, an organization that has monumental practical experience in M&E within the aforementioned background and context.

1.2. Rationale of the study

In addition to adding to the accrued body of knowledge on the approaches of M&E, the research is of great significance in a number of ways. First, addressing differing needs of all the stakeholders (e.g., academic, government, international donors, donor agencies, local beneficiaries, etc.) in M&E has been a formidable challenge to the M&E practitioners due to partitive approaches (conventional versus participatory). Therefore, the outcome of this research provides useful insights on M&E approaches regarding how the difference between conventional and participatory approaches can be narrowed down and their determinants be combined to address all the stakeholders' needs. Second, based on the findings of the research, the study seeks to impact the M&E system by proposing an approach that could be used for the purpose of designing an effective M&E process that produces results that address the needs of those who are directly and indirectly affected by these results. Recommendations emanating from the research will contribute towards identifying areas that need further studies in the field of M&E.

1.3. Problem statement, research questions, aims and objectives

1.3.1. Problem statement

Several problems buffer the M&E enterprise particularly in the area of epistemology, methods, and practices partly because at its core M&E is a multidisciplinary profession, practiced from different perspectives, for different purposes. A great deal of scholarly work indicates that there is no consensus on the purpose of evaluation. Differing proposals are provided regarding its purpose: for informing decision-making (e.g., Stufflebeam, 2000), for improving management (e.g., Wholey, 1981), for those who utilize the result of the evaluation (e.g., Patton, 1997), for producing knowledge (e.g., Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Cronbach, 1980; Suchman, 1967), and for valuing (e.g., Scriven, 1986). Further, the role of the evaluator is also unclear. Differing claims are given: an evaluator is a judge (e.g., Stufflebeam, 2000), facilitator, consultant, or negotiator (Patton, 1997), or knowledge producer (Suchman, 1967: 7). The level and extent of stakeholder participation in the evaluation is still debated and there is no conclusive agreement regarding who will be the participant in the M&E process, the decision-makers, users, beneficiary representatives, or all the beneficiaries (Estrella & Gaventa, 1998).

Although participatory M&E makes an attempt to achieve collaborative decision-making and group consensus as a social process of negotiation, there is a question of who owns, uses, and controls the knowledge and against what criteria development work is supposed to be measured; who chooses the criteria is also unclear. The problems, therefore, are issues of power – who controls and influences the M&E process – because in the social dynamics there are power differences or unequal social relationships and positions (Estrella & Gaventa, 1998; Ikebuaku, & Dinbabo, 2020; Mwaniki, and Dinbabo, 2019). Several shortcomings have been registered against participatory M&E, although it made ostentatious claims against the conventional approach. Therefore, none of the approaches are satisfactory for M&E. Hence, there is a need for a better approach to properly address the majority of the stakeholders. The question of whether a trade-off exists between the participatory approach and scientific rigor (conventional approach) in M&E is not yet addressed. The question of whether both approaches can be combined, has never been answered.

This study has identified the following key areas of concern: first, to date there is no consensus regarding methods and theories of M&E; second, virtually all theories, epistemology, methods, and approaches of M&E are produced from of scientific investigation attempting to produce objective, value-free and quantifiable information; third, there is no agreement with regard to the role of an evaluator, the purpose of evaluations, and users of the result of evaluation; fourth, the trade-off between participatory (constructivist) and rigors M&E (positivist) has not yet come to terms; fifth, there is no conclusive agreement regarding who will be the participants in the M&E process,– the decision-makers, users, or beneficiary representatives, or all the beneficiaries; sixth, there is an issue of power – who controls and influences the M&E process, because in the social dynamics there are power differences or unequal social relationships and positions (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005).

This research did not attempt to address all the above knowledge gaps in the field of M&E but attempts were made to explore participatory and traditional (‘top-down’) M&E determinants that could be combined to develop a better approach that encapsulates the features of the two approaches.

1.3.2. Aim of the research

The aim of the research study was to identify the determinant of traditional and participatory M&E approaches that can be combined to contribute to the exploration of a better approach that encapsulates the features of the two approaches.

1.3.3. Specific objectives

The following were the objectives of this study:

- to empirically explore whether World Vision Ethiopia’s M&E approach has combinatory determinants of M&E or not;
- to suggest a hybrid approach that encapsulates the features of both approaches;
- to provide recommendations for the way forward to policy-makers and other stakeholders in Ethiopia.

1.3.4. Research question

Major research question: What determinants of conventional and participatory M&E approaches can be combined in developing a better approach for M&E?

Specific questions pertaining to the case study:

- Does World Vision Ethiopia's M&E approach have combinatory determinants of M&E?
- What M&E determinants can be obtained from WVE's M&E approach that can be combined to craft a hybrid approach that encapsulates the features of conventional and participatory approaches?

1.4 Definition of monitoring and evaluation

Although M&E goes hand in hand with development projects, they have slight differences in terms of function. Monitoring is “a systematic procedure for checking for the effectiveness (outcomes) and the efficiency (outputs and impacts) of an intervention during implementation” (Gaskin-Reyes, 2017: 1). The World Bank (2007: 1) defines it as “a continuing function that aims primarily to provide... an on-going intervention with early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of results.” Others understand it as measuring activities from the very beginning of a project by continuous use of systematic collection of data to provide management and stakeholders with reports of the progress and achievement of objectives with indicators regarding an ongoing development intervention (Jacobs et al., 2010: 36). Hence, monitoring is a routine process in the life of an intervention that gathers and processes information, measures and reports progress, improves efficiency, corrects errors or makes adjustments, and produces learning to optimize the intended objectives. In monitoring, performance indicators play key roles because they track the progress and attainment of targets.

Evaluation is about episodic assessment designed to determine the value of a given intervention. Sera and Beaudry (2007: 1) define evaluation as the “systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, program, or policy, and its design, implementation and results.” Evaluation focuses on impact (a change an intervention brought to its target group), the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability and produces replicable knowledge gained because of

the intervention of a new design. Evaluation uses predetermined criteria to identify whether the intended change has been achieved. Hence, the concepts of monitoring and evaluation are not that different, as both involve evaluation while the former progressively tracks with critical eyes the progress of an intervention for the purpose of taking immediate measures within the life of an intervention, whereas the latter focuses on the change the intervention has produced. Kuppens (2016: 14) observes that the conceptual link between monitoring and evaluation and concludes that both complement each other. Whereas monitoring oversees the implementation process at any given time, evaluation scrutinizes and gives evidence why given outcomes and impacts are achieved or not achieved.

1.5. Chapters and outline of the research

The research is divided into three major blocks. The first block provides a general introduction (chapter one); the second block deals with the theoretical and conceptual framework and comprises two chapters (chapters two and three); the third block entails the case study, research philosophy and research design (chapters four and five). Block four deals with data analysis (chapters six and seven); and the final chapter presents a summary of the research findings, conclusion and recommendations (chapter eight).

Chapter One: This introductory chapter deals with the background of the study, rationale, research problem, research question, research aim, objectives, and structure of the research. In general, it introduces the study and shows the gap between conventional and participatory M&E.

Chapter Two: This chapter deals with the theoretical and conceptual framework of M&E for the research. It presents ontological, epistemological paradigms, and participation theories on M&E, and their effects on methods, purpose, results, and of the M&E work. It also identifies key determinants and the study's conceptual framework.

Chapter Three: This chapter reviews academic publications on empirical studies in the area of context, indigenous knowledge, conventional and participatory M&E. The chapter investigates the gaps, issues, challenges, and limitations of M&E approaches and argues for the value of this dissertation.

Chapter Four: This chapter provides the description of the case study. It provides an overview of World Vision International and World Vision Ethiopia regarding the history of the organization, area of intervention and function, theoretical foundation, and contribution to development; it also discusses key documents pertinent to M&E.

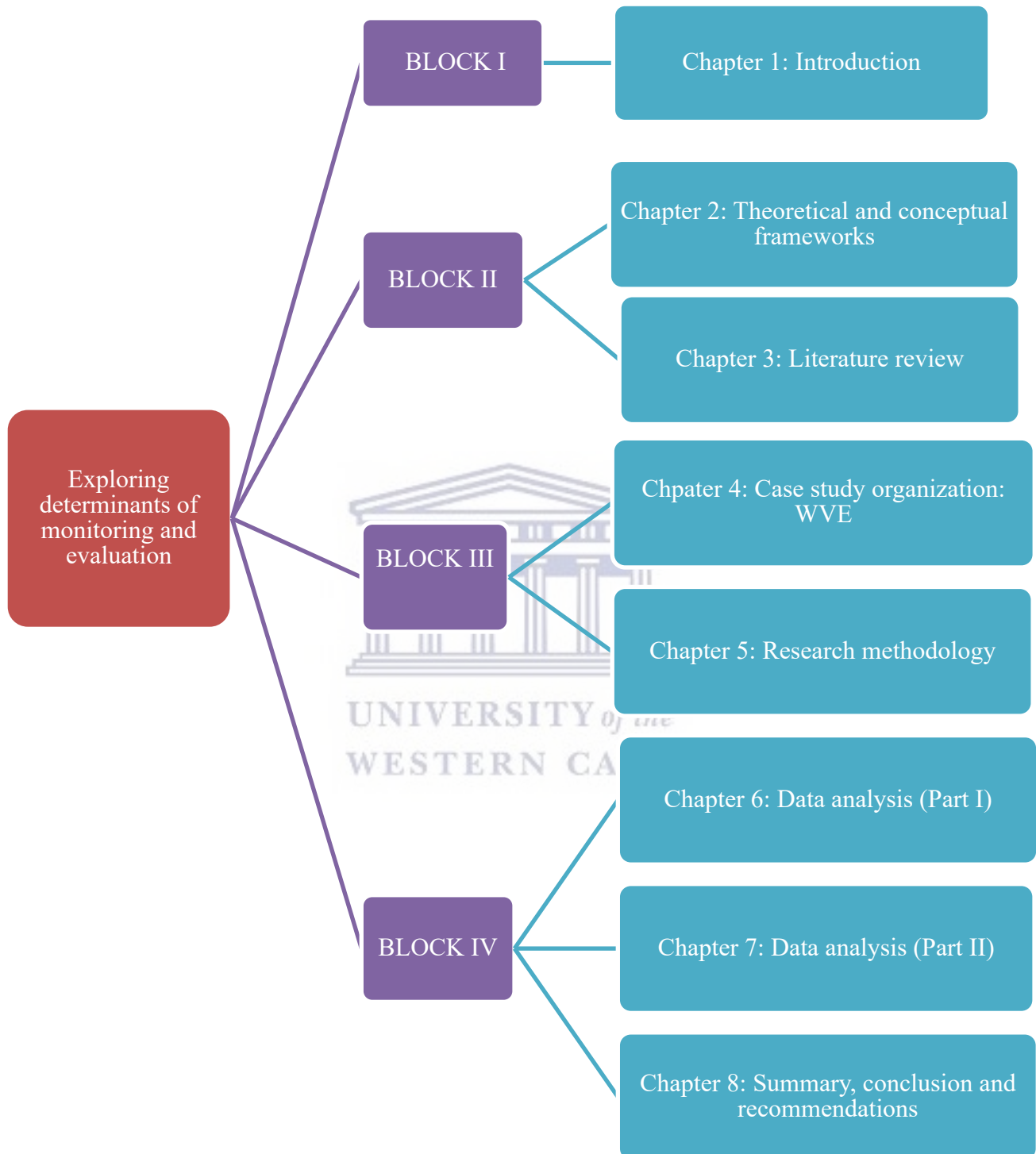
Chapter Five: The chapter presents the philosophical stances of the research, the research design and methodology, data collection methods, population size, data analysis, and ethical statement.

Chapter Six: This chapter provides the analysis of data on key determinants: demography, ownership, purpose, creation of indication, and the study's research methodology. Both quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed under one theme synthesizing them in the discussion pertaining to the research question and theoretical framework, based on conceptual frameworks adopted for the research.

Chapter Seven: This chapter is a sequel to chapter six, dealing with the rest of the determinants: participation, the role of the expert, local context, and use of M&E findings. It presents the data from the quantitative and qualitative methods separately and synthesizes this data in the discussion.

Chapter Eight: The chapter offers a summary of the result, conclusion of the research and its recommendations. It also suggests possible measures to be taken by the policy-makers and all stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of the participatory M&E in Ethiopia.

Figure 1: Graphic representation of chapters and their flows



Source: Author's own compilation (2022)

1.6. Chapter summary

Undoubtedly, M&E is an indispensable factor for the success of all development endeavors. Nonetheless, its multi-faceted philosophical, conceptual, epistemological, ideological, and practical approaches caused it to have variegated and at times opposing positions and practices that made the discipline fluid and short of meeting scientific norms. This research does not claim to produce a panacea for the problem, but it explores the determinants of conventional and participatory M&E traditions that might be combined to fill the gap between them and to narrow down their differences by extracting their strengths to craft a better approach. To this end, the ensuing chapters undertake different issues that need to be explored, researched, analyzed, and finally synthesized.



CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

If you do not know much about evaluation theory, you are not an evaluator. You may be a great methodologist, a wonderful philosopher, or a very effective program manager. But you are not an evaluator. To be an evaluator, you need to know that knowledge base that makes the field unique. That unique knowledge base is evaluation theory (Shadish, 1998: 5–6)

2.1. Introduction

The theoretical foundation of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is paramount to the understanding of the field of M&E and of research carried out in the field. This chapter critically examines several theories and paradigms that have been working for decades and those recently developed. Special emphasis is placed upon the theories and concept of participation. The purpose of the examination of these theories, paradigms, and concepts is to identify the theoretical and conceptual basis for the interpretation of the data. In the first part of the chapter, the evaluation theory is critically analyzed, followed by the analysis of the concept of participation. Finally, a conceptual framework and key determinants of M&E are formulated as the result of the analysis.

2.2. Evaluation theory

William Shadish argued that evaluation theory is fundamentally important to be an effective evaluator. He corroborated his contentions on six grounds: it grants language to communicate among evaluators; it encapsulates varied issues that have been dealt with in the field of evaluation; it defines and sets themes of discussion; it serves as an identity that distinguishes the field of evaluation from other disciplines or provides professional identity; it locates evaluators to present their unique niche in the evaluation enterprise; and it attempts to answer ideas unique to evaluation (Shadish, 1998). Above all, paradigms and theories inform evaluation and its practice (Chilisa et al., 2016). However, evaluation theories, as important as they are for evaluation, are not well received and understood by practitioners.

The terms and concepts of evaluation paradigms, theories and approaches must be cleared at the outset for the sake of clarity. For a very long time, the term “paradigm” was not clearly defined, but it was Thomas Kuhn in 1962 who first coined the term. Egon C. Guba (1990: 17) defines it as

“a basic set of beliefs that guides action, whether of the everyday garden variety or action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry.” Mertens and Wilson (2019: 36) explain paradigms as “broad metaphysical constructs that include sets of logically related philosophical assumption”, whereas theories “provide frameworks for thinking about the interrelationships of constructs and are more limited in scope than paradigms. Hence a variety of theoretical perspectives can be associated with a particular paradigm.” Issues in evaluation are grounded on varied philosophical assumptions that construct a specific paradigm. There are four sets of philosophical assumptions: axiology (the nature of ethics), ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge, and the relationship between the knower and the known), and methodology (systematic approach to gathering information) (Mertens & Wilson, 2019).

The most debated ones in the evaluation field are epistemological and ontological assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). But the four paradigms are instrumental in the evaluation of the different worldviews that evaluators maintain, namely: positivist, post-positivist, constructivist, pragmatist, and transformative. Theories guide to determine the purpose of evaluations and define acceptable evidence for decision-making processes in the evaluation. A good evaluation theory should meet the following criteria: knowledge (what an evaluator needs to do to produce credible knowledge), use (how the knowledge gained by evaluation should be used by the stakeholders), valuing (how an evaluator constructs their value judgment), practice (what an evaluator actually does in practice), and social program (defining the nature of social programs and their role in solving problems) (Shadish et al., 1991).

Unlike Shadish, Alkin (2013) along with Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1988) maintain that a more appropriate designation for evaluation theories might be approaches or models; and models are “a set of rules, prescriptions, and prohibitions and guiding frameworks that specify what a good or proper evaluation is and how it should be done” (Alkin, 2013: 4). But Alkin’s argument is not convincing, particularly because M&E involve persons who have a basic set of belief that guides their action and employs a working framework that helps them to see the interconnectedness of their constructs in the process of M&E. These paradigms, theories, models and approaches shall be critically analyzed being subsumed under their major tenet as they are mandatory for the interpretation of the findings and the exploration of the determinants from different theoretical backgrounds.

2.2.1. Judgment-centered

Social inquiry attempted to make a distinction between fact and value. Searching for fact is the focus of the social inquiry but the question that is raised in evaluation is regarding valuing, that is, value claims, the nature of universal or justifiable claims and the constructivist perspective that claims that truth or facts are guided by meaning constructed by people at a particular time and place (Alkin, 2012: 31). In this division, two classes of scholars shall be reviewed: those who focus on methods influenced by those who believe that value-free judgment (positivist) can be achieved and those who insist that there is no value-free objectivity (constructivist). However, three scholars are prominent in understanding these two epistemological stances: Scriven (1986) and Guba and Lincoln (1989). They have conceptually influenced other scholars and thus shall be discussed separately as a foundation for both groups.

Michael Scriven (1986) conceives of evaluation as a trans-discipline that possesses its own uniqueness and its function and central feature is valuing. He contends that without value judgement there is no evaluation, for the work of the evaluator is to pass on judgment on the evaluand based on the observable data regarding its effectiveness. He insists that “evaluation *established the existence of superior merit*, it has nothing to do with *establishing the causation of the superiority*” (Scriven, 1986: 15–19, italics in original). He argues that it is the job of the evaluator to judge whether the intervention under question is good or bad. In his own words: “Bad is bad and good is good and it is the job of evaluator to decide which is which” (Scriven, 1986: 19). For Scriven, a program should be evaluated with regards to the extent to which it is able to meet the needs of the society. He is criticized for perceiving valuing based on the concept of prescriptive theory of valuing and downplay the descriptive, that is, what people think about a program. In doing so, he ignores the stakeholders who need the findings of the evaluation for decision-making.

Elliot Eisner (1976: 136–137), like Scriven, argues that an evaluator must pass judgement about the value of a program. Nonetheless, he differs from Scriven in that, for the evaluator to be a judge, they must have experience and expertise in the area. However, he rejects an experimental and quasi-experimental approach, arguing that such method aims at getting laws or law-like generalizations; therefore, it “treats qualities of particular situations as instrumentalities.” Such

approach downplays the particulars and converts qualities to quantities. Things that matter in importance cannot be measured quantitatively.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) view stakeholders as the fundamental individuals who are to be involved in valuing. Guba and Lincoln argue that there is no single reality. Realities are multiple, and individuals construct their own perceptions of reality. Evaluators are “orchestrators of a negotiation process that aims to culminate in consensus on better informed and more sophisticated constructions” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 110). They claim that this kind of evaluation is “fourth generation evaluation”, which insists that claims, concerns and issues of stakeholders as the organizing elements of the evaluation and employing constructive methodology produce judgmental consensus among stakeholders who hold different views (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 184). The proposed constructive methodology is a hermeneutic circle that refers to “a continuous interplay of data collection and analysis” (Alkin, 2012: 39). Facts and values are interdependent. Facts do not have meaning without values; there cannot be a separation between “observational and valuational languages” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 105). Therefore, the evaluator is considered to be a vehicle for negotiating value.

The stance with respect to the role of the evaluator and the stakeholders is crucial as it depends on a philosophical predilection that influences the whole system of M&E. A value-free judgment might be theoretically plausible but it is practically unattainable. Considering an evaluator as an absolute judge severs a great portion of information and evaluation insight that comes from context-specific stakeholders. Therefore, the question of whether an evaluator should be considered as a judge, a facilitator, or a negotiator is a matter of epistemological commitment.

2.2.2. Method-centered

Ralph Tyler is recognized as one of the founders of modern program evaluation (if 1940 is regarded as modern). Tyler perceived evaluation mainly from an education field and coined the term “educational evaluation” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1988). His evaluation view is termed as objectives-oriented or objectives-referenced evaluation (Alkin, 2013). This is because he defined “evaluation determining whether objectives had been achieved” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1988: 17). Later evaluation theories were heavily influenced by Tyler’s theory of evaluation, that is, objective-based evaluation; hence, focus on methodology naturally ensued it.

Among the prominent scholars of social science methods, are Donald Campbell and Julian Stanley (1963) who produced a ground-breaking study in the elimination of bias in research conduct in field settings. Their 1963 publication exerted a tremendous impact upon social science; before then, social science used to apply physical sciences methods. Campbell and Stanley (1963) advocated three conditions to conduct research design: conditions necessary to conduct, internal and external validity, and experiments are not perfect and therefore should not be used in every situation. Therefore, instead of “true experiments” they regarded such experiments as “quasi-experimental designs.” However, it was Edward Suchman who introduced Campbell’s work to the field of evaluation.

Suchman (1967) observed the need for a scientific approach to evaluation as research had become a milieu for solving problems. Nevertheless, he distinguished between “evaluation” and “evaluative research.” The former refers to a common-sense process of assessment or appraisal of value, whereas the latter refers to using “scientific research methods and techniques for the purpose of making an evaluation” (Suchman, 1967: 7). The word evaluative serves as an adjective describing the kind of research being made. Suchman (1967) claims that a successful evaluation depends upon its usefulness to the administrator in improving service because evaluation is a servant to an administrator and functions in that particular domain. Suchman, however, complains that there is no clear definition of evaluation as it is confused with terms such as assessment, appraisal, and judgment. The other confusion with the definition is the mixture of conceptual and operational definitions of evaluation. He puts forth the notion that conceptual definitions provide lists of characteristic description of evaluation as a “cognitive and affective process,” whereas operational definitions are concerned with “the purposes of evaluation and the procedures involved in conducting an evaluation study” (Suchman, 1967: 28).

Another evaluation theorist is Robert Boruch (2016). For Boruch evaluation is similar to that of scientific research because social interventions demand systematic use of research design to measure the extent of a social problem, assess implementation, and to identify its efficacy and cost- effectiveness ratio. He claims that a randomized experiment is an unbiased estimate of a social program’s effect (Boruch et al., 1978). Likewise, Thomas Cook (1986) has been a proponent of quasi-experimental design. In fact, Thomas Cook has understood the impact of context in

evaluation research and prescribes the importance of using different designs and methods based on the characteristics and contexts of a particular evaluation process undertaken.

Rossi, *et al.* (1999) produced a textbook, based on the work of Campbell and Stanley (1963) – his sixth edition includes the role of stakeholders, qualitative data collection, and evaluation utilization. Rossi, however, is not fully experimentalist but he contributed to the concept of theory-driven evaluation and to a comprehensive approach to evaluation and yet, still he views evaluation as social research. However, his approach is so comprehensive that it is almost impossible to implement (Alkin, 2013). As a response to this criticism, Rossi developed a concept of “tailored evaluations,” that is, only methods that fit to the stage of a program can be applied. But his contribution to theory-driven evaluation is tremendous. Among others, Rossi discusses monitoring explicitly. He defines it as a “systematic documentation of key aspects of program performance that are indicative of whether the program is functioning as intended or according to some appropriate standard” (Rossi et al., 1999: 192). Furthermore, he explicitly states the relationship between monitoring and evaluation: “*Program monitoring is an essential evaluation activity. It is the principal tool for formative evaluation designed to provide feedback for program improvement and is especially applicable to relatively new programs attempting to establish their organization clientele, and services*” (Rossi et al., 1999: 191, italics in original). Rossi espouses that monitoring is a process evaluation and it is an important complement to impact evaluation.

Lee J. Cronbach, a student of Ralph Tyler, has also made a tremendous contribution in the area of methodology and social science research. His study is connected to the policy research, particularly in his publication (Cronbach, 1980) that addresses issues in the area of decision-making. Evaluation is perceived as an essential part of policy research to shape the policy-making communities. He formulated domains of evaluations: units (population), treatments, observations (outcomes), and settings (UTOS) (Cronbach and Shapiro, 1982). Cronbach put forth the notion of “bandwidth,” which refers to the concept of comprehensive approach to evaluation focusing on the relevant issues, rather than an attempt to achieve an accurate smaller number of issues. Rejecting Campbell and Stanley’s experimental design and Scriven’s comparison programs, he argues that UTOS (manifestly different population) can be achieved through causal explanation either through causal modeling or “thick description” of qualitative methods. Cronbach stresses that excellent information is of paramount importance, which includes: clear, timely, reliable,

valid, and wide-ranging information (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1988: 119). For Cronbach, an evaluator is a critical reader with information that should be taken into account to drive a conclusion regarding the evaluand.

Carol Weiss, informed by her research in the political decision-making context, argues that the most effective evaluation is the one that stands the test of time. Weiss contends that evaluation can be done through an impressionistic inquiry, questionnaires, or interview (according to her, it is superficial), or through accepted standards of programs (e.g., accreditation of programs) but none of them respond to the real question, namely, “how well the program accomplishes its purposes, objective evidence on outcomes is needed” (Weiss, 1972: 6). Weiss argues that what is important in evaluation is not the research in itself but the program being researched. Weiss insists that the purpose of evaluation is to provide information for decision-making regarding a program, or provides direction for future action; therefore, it has political overtones (Weiss, 1972). She perceives evaluation as a kind of policy study (Christie & Alkin, 2013) and has a strong conviction that evaluation is a carefully conducted research, as she demonstrated it in her book *Evaluation Research* (1972).

Huey Chen (1990) was the first to introduce a theory-driven evaluation. He argues that theory is neglected in evaluation enterprises, whereas it is crucial in research, arguing that “theory is a frame of reference that helps humans to understand their world and to function in it... Theory provides not only guidelines for analyzing a phenomenon but also a scheme for understanding the significance of research findings” (Chen, 1990: 17). Program without theory, argues Chen, is simply a predetermined research step and mechanically applied to all programs without considering the programs’ “content, setting, participants, implementing organizations.” Therefore, such evaluation ends in input and output – a black box evaluation missing the transformative process in the middle (Chen, 1990: 18). An output and input assessment of a program fails to identify the underpinning causes that generate the effect because it does not attend to the context of the program and thus it does not indicate the deficiencies of programs for future improvement. Chen’s work is a response to the dissatisfaction of evaluators with the randomized controlled experiment that dominated since Campbell and Stanley launched it in 1966 and to alternative theories that have rejected such approach.

Several scholars in the field (e.g., Henry & Rog, 1998; Julnes & Mark, 1998; Mark & Henry, 2013) have espoused realist evaluation or emergent realist evaluation (ERE) in the evaluation theories. They claim that it is a new approach that “captures the sensemaking, making contributions from post-positivism and the sensitivity to values from constructivist traditions” (Henry & Rog, 1998: 1). It prescribes principled discovery, uses explanation as a means for driving findings, views qualitative and quantitative methods as means to sensemaking knowledge, makes connection between evaluation and ultimate goals of programs, and attempts to balance between sensemaking and value inquiring (Henry & Rog, 1998: 1). Realist evaluation argues that the dichotomy between the two dominant paradigms of epistemology, namely, positivist and radical constructivist (post-modernism) can be bridged through neo-realism, which shares from both paradigms. From the constructivist evaluation, it maintains that human experience of the world is not direct; hence, human experience reality is constructed. From the empiricist evaluation, it posits that there is a real world which exists apart from human construction (Julnes & Mark, 1998: 37). Pawson and Tilley (1997: xii) have argued that evaluation is “at watershed” and needs a rescuing theory and methodology. They propose that realistic evaluation would solve the problem that evaluation is facing, both philosophically and methodologically. Evaluation deals with real initiatives, needs realist methodology, and needs to be realistic (applied research responding to the needs of practitioner, stakeholders, participants, and the public). For realism, the basic formula is “mechanism + context = outcome” (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: xv). Realist evaluation is a mediator between the positivist and the constructivist paradigm, which does not stick to one specific methodology, but employs any reasonable method that deemed to be convenient to the context under question.

In general, the randomized controlled experiment method or experimentalist in context of M&E, although it does not exclude context as such, is a positivist commitment to value-free experiment-seeking laws that can be applied in any context. It focuses on quantity; therefore, it does not give adequate evaluative stance for matters that cannot be quantified. In so doing, it does not give adequate attention to the influence of context programs. It also does not concern itself with how a given program can be improved. Alternative approaches which are basically stemmed out of experimentalist and positivist methods are toting value-free methods, albeit some improvements are introduced. However, emergent realist evaluation seems to be a promising proposal to solve the conundrum that entangled evaluation methods.

2.2.3. User-centered

Grounding his foundation of the theory of evaluation on social accountability and influenced by Michael Patton's approach (discussed at length later in this section), Alkin (1972: 107) defines evaluation as *"the process of ascertaining the decision areas of concern, selecting appropriate information, and collecting and analyzing information in order to report summary data useful to decision-makers in selecting among alternatives"* (italics in original). Evaluation involves accountability. Alkin and Klein (1972: 2) define accountability as *"a negotiated relationship in which the participants agree in advance to accept specified rewards and costs on the basis of evaluation finding as to the attainment of specified end"* (italics in original). Evaluation is understood as a process and accountability as a negotiated contract among the participants. Accountability, for Alkin and Klein (1972: 3–4), has three segments: goal and objectives accountability, program (process) accountability, and outcome accountability. Goal accountability is the responsibility of the upper levels of management (establishing goal). Process accountability is the responsibility of implementation and following the process and procedure of achieving the established goal. Outcome accountability is the responsibility of the extent to which an established goal is achieved. Accountability and evaluation are intertwined in their concept in that both speak of achieving goals, except that accountability speaks of responsibility. Among the three accountabilities, goal and outcome accountabilities are the focus of most evaluation efforts, whereas process evaluation is a concern for monitoring.

One of the most prominent models in social accountability theory is Stufflebeam's (2002) CIPP model – context, input, process, and product. Its goal is to design evaluations that inform decision-making. Context evaluation is concerned with needs, problems, and opportunities that define goals, priorities and judge the importance of outcomes. Input evaluation refers to evaluating alternative means to meet identified needs, whereby planning and resource allocation is established. Process evaluation assesses implementation of plans, guides activities, and explains outcomes. Product evaluation scrutinizes intended and unintended outcomes, keeps the process on track, and decides effectiveness. Stufflebeam (2002) assumes that this model would meet the accountability requirements and contributes knowledge in the area of service. For Stufflebeam (2002: 280) conceptually, evaluation is "a systematic investigation of the merit and/or worth of a program, project, service or other objects of interest," whereas operationally it is a process that delineates,

obtains, reports and applies descriptive and judgmental information regarding the evaluand's merit and worth for the purpose of guiding decision-making, supporting accountability, disseminating effective practices, and increasing knowledge. Thus, for Stufflebeam, evaluation includes monitoring as well because it is concerned with the beginning and the process of an intervention.

Stufflebeam's (2002:280) philosophical underpinnings are democratic principles of equality and fairness; hence stakeholders are key in the evaluation process. Stakeholders are understood as "those who are intended to use the findings, persons who may otherwise be affected by the evaluation, and those expected to contribute to the evaluation." Stakeholders should be relevant groups and should be engaged in hermeneutic and consensus-building processes to define the evaluation questions, clarify criteria of merit and worth, contribute needed information, and help interpret findings (Stufflebeam, 2002). Stufflebeam describes objective evaluation that leads to correct conclusion, namely: an evaluation is an objective evaluation if it is based on agreed criteria of merit; if it involves stakeholders; and if it is done with professional standards. He also introduces a notion of meta evaluation, which is an evaluation in accordance with professional standards by which evaluators should be conducting their work. If this is accepted, Stufflebeam insists, the CIPP can serve different sectors.

Stufflebeam's model is the basis for the rest of evaluation approaches and models. The strength of this evaluation model is comprehensive in its approach because it entails monitoring; it is also concerned with process and engages relevant stakeholders. Nonetheless, the extent of participation of stakeholders is not clear in the model, for the stakeholders are mainly those who are in the decision-making position (Alkin, 2013). However, his model does not clearly state whether the beneficiaries are involved from the formative to the summative stages of the evaluation process.

Joseph Wholey (1981), whose concern is a larger-scale program evaluation, has also focused on managers and policy-makers. Stakeholders are not his major concern. Like Stufflebeam, his attention is toward decision-makers for the purpose of improving management (Wholey, 1981). Wholey defines program performance as "resources invested, program activities undertaken, and outcomes and impacts of those program activities – including both progress toward program objectives and side effects." Furthermore, he understands evaluation as "measurement of program performance (efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness), the making of comparisons based on

those measurements and the use of resulting information in policy-making and program management” (Wholey, 1981: 92). For Wholey, evaluation has to be done sequentially: first, the pre-assessment stage (knowing the feasibility of the evaluation); second, rapid-feedback (extant and easily collected information); third, performance (or outcome); fourth, monitoring (measuring program performance); and fifth, intensive evaluation (Alkin, 2013). Wholey also perceives evaluation as a comprehensive enterprise that should be done sequentially. Furthermore, he regards monitoring as part of evaluation. Nonetheless, stakeholders and beneficiaries are not the concern of his evaluation approach and neither has it accommodated participation.

A prominent proponent of the utilization perspective of evaluation, is Michael Patton (1997). This study discusses Patton’s concept of utilization-focused evaluation at length, as it challenges the traditional perspectives of evaluation. Stufflebeam (2002) and Wholey (1981), among others, focused on the decision-making level of evaluation. However, Patton (1997) argued that evaluation has to be done for those who are real users or “intended primary users.” In other words, Patton insists that the use of evaluation can only be enhanced when people who have a stake in and care about the result of the evaluation, are identified and involved directly in all stages of the evaluation process. The title of his book *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* (Patton, 1997) clearly states the focus and concern of his approach.

Utilization-focused evaluation is concerned with the use of the result of evaluation. Hence, it presumes that “what happens from the very beginning of a study will determine its eventual impact *long before a final report is produced*” (Patton, 1997: 20, italics in original). It is a comprehensive approach and crafts a built-in evaluation framework for the intervention from the outset. However, utilization-focused evaluation is personal and situational in that the evaluator is a facilitator and a negotiator and creates a working relationship with the intended user to determine what kind of evaluation is needed. But the evaluator must keep accuracy, feasibility, and propriety to meet evaluation standards. The evaluator as facilitator, facilitates judgment, not at a distance and is an independent judge, for no evaluation is value-free. At the core, utilization-focused evaluation aims to answer the question: whose value matters? Hence, it frames the evaluation, identifies the primary users, and involves them from the very beginning of an intervention or program. Utilization-focused evaluation is situational, for it does not advocate any particular model,

methods, or theory. Rather, it argues that any appropriate method, theory, or model can be used for a particular context or situation (Patton, 1997: 21–22).

Patton rejects the definition offered by Stufflebeam (2000) regarding evaluation, that is, to determine the worth, merit, or value of something. Patton contends that the traditional definition of evaluation is very narrow as it simply aims at determining the extent to which an intervention attains its goals. There are other issues beyond attaining a specific goal, such as implementation, program process, unanticipated consequences, and long-term impact. Stufflebeam's (2000) definition of evaluation does not allow for analyzing why an intervention's merit or worth is to be judged; it also does not indicate what needs to be done after a judgment is passed on the merit and worthiness (Patton, 1997).

Furthermore, Patton (1997) disagrees with Rossi et al.'s (1999) definition of evaluation because they define evaluation in terms of research. Patton contends that research, particularly social science research, aims to produce knowledge, test theories, and establish truth that can be generalized across time and space. But evaluation differs from research because it is decision-oriented and aims to inform “decisions, clarify options, identify improvements, and provide information about programs and policies within contextual boundaries of time, place, values, and politics... research aims to produce knowledge and truth. Useful evaluation supports action” (Patton, 1997: 24). Patton further critiques Rossi et al.'s (1999) definition for not attending to the issue of context, needs, and values of intended users, decision-making support and use of evaluation. Nonetheless, Patton (1997) insists that evaluation must be data-based and that this is non-negotiable.

For Patton (1997: 23), evaluation is:

... the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programs. Utilization-focused program evaluation (as opposed to program evaluation in general) is evaluation done for and with specific, intended primary users for specific, intended uses.

The key concepts here are: systematic collection of information, broad topics, judgment, and uses. However, Patton's definition and approach is not embraced by all evaluators. Some argue that the definition of evaluation must be clear and concise, like that of Stufflebeam. Other words confuse and change the focus of evaluation, not least because they confuse the goal of evaluation, that is, rendering judgment. Helping the interventions community is a good idea, but not the goal of an evaluation. If an evaluator trains clients, and develops staff, then such person is not an evaluator, but a trainer or a developer. In such a role of evaluator, a close relationship between the evaluator and stakeholders distorts the judgment of the evaluator and deters the evaluator from providing honest, negative feedback and corruption would happen (Patton, 1997).

Patton (1997), however, has rebutted arguments that there are different types and purposes of evaluation; therefore, the role of evaluator differs accordingly. Evaluators can function as a scientist (focusing on acquiring impeccable data), be consultative (oriented to help and develop programs), and for purposes of surveillance and compliance (highly independent and critical, aiming at protecting the public interest). All three kinds of evaluators are rooted in different traditions: social science research, pragmatic field practices, and program and financial auditing, respectively. If the aim of the evaluation is to generate knowledge, then the evaluator's role is that of a methodological expert. If the aim of the evaluation is on deciding the merit and worth of a given program, then the evaluator functions as a judge. If the evaluation is committed to address public accountability concern, the role of the evaluator is that of an independent auditor, inspector, or investigator. But if the purpose of the evaluation is to prove the intervention, then the evaluator is a facilitator and plays a consultative role. Patton categorizes the utilization-focused evaluator's role as a negotiator (1997).

Furthermore, Patton (1997) contends that evaluation can be divided into two general purposes: academic- and service-oriented. The former focuses on knowledge production, which is exercised at universities; hence, it is methodologically rigorous, and aims at contributing to social science theory. Service evaluators are independent evaluators who aim at serving stakeholders' needs, program improvement, and use qualitative methods to assist program decisions. But Patton is also accused of clouding the clarity of the original utilization-focused evaluation approach by adding approaches such as empowerment, mobilization of social action, and development evaluation in his later works (Christie & Alkin, 2013). Nonetheless, this study maintains that Patton (1997) has

made a great contribution to M&E theories and concepts, particularly focusing on the intended users and deciphering the purpose and role of an evaluator and evaluation.

Cousins and Earl (1992) followed in the footsteps of Patton and enhanced the utilization approach. They also introduced the concept of participatory evaluation, which they define as “applied social research that involves a partnership between trained evaluation personnel and practice-based decision-makers, organization members with program responsibility, or people with a vital interest in the program... primary users” (Cousins & Earl, 1992: 399). However, later Cousins and Whitmore (1998: 5) expanded on the definition of participation, pointing out that, “when doing an evaluation, researchers, facilitators, or professional evaluators collaborate in some way with individuals, groups, or communities who have a decided stake in the program, development project, or other entity being evaluated.” Although the concept of participatory evaluation is an extension of the stakeholder-based model (Patton’s model), Whitmore argued that it differs from it, in that, whereas the stakeholder-based model engages a large number of interested persons from the organization, participatory evaluation works with a small number of primary users. In the stakeholder model, the evaluator role is consultative and investigative, but in participatory evaluation the evaluator is the coordinator or facilitator and provides technical support, training, and quality control.

The work of evaluation is a shared responsibility with the participant – the evaluator provides professional skills and practitioners bring context (Cousins and Earl, 1995). Moreover, Cousins and Earl (1992) distinguish between social scientific inquiry and participatory evaluation, arguing that social scientific inquiry is ideological and normative in form and function, whereas participatory evaluation is not ideologically bound. Although participatory evaluation is rooted in social accountability, its theoretical foundation comes from organizational learning, which assumes that knowledge is socially constructed, that is, “people act upon their images of reality, not necessarily upon the information they process... knowledge is represented as abstracted similarities and shared meaning rather than... details of discrete events” (Cousins & Earl, 1992: 401). The goal of participatory evaluation is learning and is thus part of organizational development and change.

Cousins and Whitmore (1998) identify two streams of participatory evaluation (PE), namely: practical participatory evaluation (P-PE) and transformative participatory evaluation (T-PE). The former, developed in the United States and Canada, assumes that evaluation aims at decision-making and that stakeholder participation enhances the relevance, ownership and utilization. Utilization is conceived as instrumental, conceptual, and symbolic; and the impact of evaluation would be used by undifferentiated groups of users as well as decision-makers. The latter employs participatory principles “in order to democratize social change” and is distinct from P-PE ideologically and historically. Ideologically, T-PE is a reaction against the positivist model of inquiry and the work is framed within the concept of power and transformation. It is developed in developing countries such as India and Brazil, and in several African countries. Its main considerations are: who creates and controls knowledge; the connection between knowledge, power and control; the validity of local knowledge; the distance between the evaluator and the evaluand; and questioning biases and assumptions. The function of evaluation is to transform power relationships and to promote social action and change. In so doing, it takes an interest in the target groups or populations; evaluation is therefore educational. Cousins and Whitmore (1998) concluded that the differences between these two approaches are primarily ideological and historical but on the secondary level they overlap and have close similarity.

The contribution of Cousins and Earl (1992, 1995) is vital, even though they illustrate the concept of participation by selecting a small group within the users to reach their finding on the evaluation process. However, in a later study (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998) their definition embraces a wider group of participants. Still, participation is geared to address and solve managerial problems and support the decision-makers and is less concerned with the beneficiaries’ desire and satisfaction as well as the negative and positive consequences of a given intervention in the society or target group.

Preskill and Torres (2000), rooted in social accountability, branched out from Patton’s (1997) concept of evaluation. They focus on evaluation as a means of transformational learning and explicitly state that this approach “is inherently responsive to the needs of an organization and its members” (2000: 31). Evaluation is a process of identifying, examining, and understanding information that is needed to achieve organizational goals. Hence, the evaluator is a facilitator to increase the understanding of the process of evaluation, implementation of the findings, and things

to be implemented. In fact, the theory is based on constructive learning theory, which argues that learning occurs when individuals or groups within a social context make sense of the experience.

Jean King (Christie & Alkin, 2013) is influenced by the participatory approach, as espoused by Cousins and Earl (1992, 1995) and Patton (1997), but differs as she has an overt concern for use, as opposed to her predecessors. She advocates an interactive evaluation practice (IEP). Interactive evaluation is an act of engaging the participant in the process of decision-making, reflecting, and taking action (Christie & Alkin, 2013). King posits that evaluation is a process of systematic inquiry to provide information regarding characteristics, activities, or outcomes of a program or policy for valued purpose (Christie & Alkin, 2013). Furthermore, King suggests that the key factors in participatory evaluation, include: maintaining a participatory environment throughout the evaluation process, creating shared meaning among participants, and building trust among the participants and the evaluator. She contends that an evaluator is not just a facilitator but a decision-maker, actor, and reflective practitioner who directs and assesses evaluation progress.

John M. Owen and Faye C. Lambert (1998) also place an emphasis on the importance of the role of evaluators. They argue, *pace* Preskill and Torres (2000) who advocate purposeful evaluation, an evaluator needs to be adaptive to the stakeholder needs and concerns because it enhances the evaluation use; in so doing, the evaluator contributes to the success of organizations in both the private and the public sectors (Owen & Lambert, 1998; Beyene, & Dinbabo, 2020;). While organizational development evaluators such as Preskill and Torres are concerned with use and stakeholders' involvement, Owen and Lambert are more concerned with the evaluator's role in planning, negotiating, designing and conducting evaluations. The distinction between evaluator as consultant and judge is militated because evaluators are now adopting a more participatory framework that addresses the interest of stakeholders in the process of evaluation, which in turn "clears the way for co-creating of prescriptions between evaluator and organization" (Owen & Lambert, 1998: 363).

Fetterman (1996), unlike other aforementioned scholars, advocates that empowerment evaluation concept, techniques and findings are used to promote improvement and self-determination using qualitative and quantitative methods. The focus on program evaluation and its goal is to nurture self-determination rather than dependency so that program participants – even

clients – conduct their own evaluation. Therefore, an outsider evaluator serves as a coach or additional facilitator and provides the participants with tools and knowledge for continuous self-assessment and accountability. Therefore, in this concept evaluation, there is training, facilitating, advocating, illuminating and liberating that make users self-sufficient. He argues that the end result of assessment is not about judging the merit and worth of a program for values; and worth is volatile and inconsistent; instead, evaluation is an ongoing process; therefore self-evaluation and practices with its dynamic and responsive approach should be internalized and institutionalized (Christie & Alkin, 2013). Thus, Fetterman (1996) perceives evaluation as a process that should be done by the community of an organization, trained by a professional evaluator. In so doing, Fetterman's understanding of evaluation encompasses monitoring as well, because he sees evaluation as a process that encourages the stakeholders' involvement in the progress of the program, as well as its end, and makes evaluation a part of the organization's culture.

M&E based on social accountability focuses on meeting the users' needs and the role of the evaluator. But there is no agreement among the scholars regarding the definition and purpose of evaluation, the role of the evaluator, and the composition of the participants in the evaluation process. Although data is considered to be important in evaluation, most the scholars have distanced their concept of M&E from Stufflebeam's positivist approach since their contention of Patton.

2.2.4. Social justice-centered

The main concerns of this paradigm are the issues of power, inequalities, human rights, and social justice being rooted in critical theory, which deals with “the issue of power and justice and the ways the economy; matter of race, class, gender; ideologies; discourses; education; religion and social institutions; and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005: 306). Despite its evolving nature of this theory, it is committed to the analysis of competing power interests between individuals and groups with a society not least concerned with “who gains” and “who loses” in a given situation, and to expose the forces that prevent individuals and groups from shaping the decisions that crucially affect their lives. This is because it assumes that power is the basic constituent of human existence that shapes the oppressive and productive nature of the human condition. It conceives that power does not exert physical force but it also expresses itself through social psychology to win people's consent to dominate through cultural

institutions such as media, the school, the church, and the family. Particularly, it critiques instrumental or technical rationality, because instrumental rationality is interested in method and efficiency, rather than in purpose insofar as it is committed to “how to” rather than “why should” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005).

However, social justice-centered evaluation is a concomitant of many philosophical strands that address issues of power, in relation to feminism, indigenous people, postcolonialism, and queer theories. These theories purport to contribute to the transformative paradigm, albeit some would not agree (Mertens & Wilson, 2019). Methodologically, it has no single commitment; rather, its main concern is the participation of the stakeholder and addressing the power issue in the process of evaluation.

2.3. Concept of participation

The concept and definition of participation has not been clear, although it has long history. Especially in the 1960s and 1970s, debates over the meaning of participation were abounding, which resulted in different frameworks and several ways of applying them. But the problem did not disappear. In 1970, for instance, Pateman (1970: 1) noted that “the widespread use of the term ... has tended to mean that any precise, meaningful content has almost disappeared; ‘participation’ is used to refer to a wide variety of different situations by different people.” Carpentier (2012: 165) agrees that this situation has not altered; in many fields and disciplines “participation is still used to mean everything and nothing, remains structurally under theorized and its intrinsically political nature – as part of the democratic-ideological struggle on the democratic nature of democracy – remains unacknowledged.” Educators Thomas et al. (2012), attempted to investigate the root of the concept of participation. But in the field of development, such investigation has not been done, except discussing the types of participation and their application.

They argue that the superficial use of the term deters from a better understanding and use of the concept of participation (Thomas et al., 2012). It is hardly possible to exhaustively study the concept of participation in the arena of scholarship in different fields of studies. However, the importance of understanding participation in the field of development and M&E, is without question as it has recently become a buzzword. To this effect, the ensuing section undertakes an

exploration of the concept of participation, by way of summary (with a risk of simplification) as an attempt to identify relevant concepts of participation for M&E.

The first concept of participation is the original perspective of participation. Morris Berman (1984), a renowned cultural critic, coined a phrase – participative consciousness, which refers to the sense of belonging in this world, unity with environment, and a sense of psychic wholeness. Such conception of participation is called the original perspective of participation, or at times, it is called the primitive mind (Thomas et al., 2012). In this mode of conceiving participation, the difference between subject and object is blurred and refuses the concept of contradiction (which is a norm in Western thinking). Participation as a sense of belonging is understood as a process that comes upon human beings and human beings open themselves to it and look back and see that they are part of it. This is because, before the revolution of science, human beings perceived themselves as an inseparable part of their environment. According to Berman (1984), humanity perceived the world as a place of belonging and therefore they are not alienated or observant of it; rather, they are direct participants in its drama. Everything is seen as homogenous and connected, for all participate in the same essential nature and receive their meaning from involvement in the cosmos (Copleston, 1985). In the original participation perspective, learning occurs through emotional identification with a phenomenon (Thomas et al., 2012) over and against scientific modes of learning, which insist on distancing from the object of learning.

Against the scientific worldview that perceives the world in contradiction, the original participation perspective view does not accept contradicting existence, that is, a thing cannot be another contradictory thing at the same time. Rather, the two contradictory states coexist, for instance, a love-hate relationship (Thomas et al., 2012). Levy-Bruhl (1965) also studied native peoples around the world and came with the concept of the law of participation and observed that “persons and things of primitive thought form part of one another to the point even of identity” (Levy-Bruhl, 1965: 5). This means that there is an intimate relationship between a person and a thing to the point that an individual person can be both self and another. In such perception of participation, “participation is felt, it is lived.” Participation is not just a lived experience, but it is also a reciprocity that requires a collaborative endeavor. Participation, for many cultures, is a reciprocity endeavor, that is, “all those touched by the culture must participate – not only the people, but the animals, rocks, and ancestors are also intimately involved – to the point that

participation is necessary for the very existence of their reality” (Thomas et al., 2012: 10). Therefore, in the original concept of participation, a sense of self as an independent entity is lost; it entails an intertwining of person and environment, a blending of self and other. It is the idea of not only being open to the other and submission by each one, but also a contribution by both self and the other in the creation of the a new whole (Thomas et al., 2012).

2.3.1. Sense of belongingness and relationship

Participation as a sense of belonging, openness to others and the environment, reciprocity, identification of oneself with the other, emotional attachment, a way of life, a necessity for existence in the world and for the creation of a new whole, are important concepts that can be gleaned from the original participation view to be incorporated in the analysis of participation in development M&E. In development, participation seems to be involved in a given project to bring about change. However, participation as belonging, confirms that participation is a way of life on its own right. The question is, with whom does one participate – with a project or a project goal, or with the community that is involved in the project. *Participation as a concept of belonging has to do with being part of the whole, not just to have power over some decision-making process, but it is rather a way of life and a necessity that cannot be separated from day-to-day activity.* Belonging is related to destiny and it is a creation of meaning with the surrounding, whether it is an animate or inanimate being. It requires openness and embracing the other. *It is relational.* Chambers (2006) suggests that trust must be developed in order to have real participation. That is, a sense of belonging and confidence needs to be developed in order for participation to be exercised meaningfully. Participation as a sense of belonging is not to control, but it is a reciprocal dependency for the sake of survival.

The perception of participation seems to be context-specific, where development is taking place and whose way of life is targeted to transform, and how participation is understood. If Levy-Bruhl’s (1965) exploration of the meaning of participation among indigenous peoples around the world is taken into consideration, objects, beings, and phenomena are deemed to have meanings in terms of participation. *Changes will be resisted if this participatory relationship with these animated and non-animated beings is interrupted.* On the other hand, if the participation is felt, and lived, it has deeper meaning than just completing a project and assuring its sustainability. Participation is not objective or distant but it is an integral part of day-to-day life that reciprocally

affects the way of life of indigenous persons. Not only indigenous people, but society as a whole experience participation on a daily basis, through meeting economic, social, psychological, and aesthetic needs. Reciprocity is a necessity for existence in any society. In other words, participation requires submission to one another or to the members of the participant group, in the creation of the intended result or in the creation of the whole.

The second concept of participation is the philosophical perception of participation, which regards it as a relation. A respected Platonic scholar, Charles Bigger (1968), pointed out that among conceptual problems in philosophical discourse, no other problem received a closer study by scholars than the concept of participation, but it has not produced any solution. The philosophical concept of participation is complex and differs from the original concept of participation, but some generalization can be attempted with the risk of simplification. Leo Sweeney (1988) made comments on terminological issues. He argued that the word “participation” is not a direct translation of *methexis* (a Greek word used by Plato). *Methexis* is derived from the verb *metechein*. The English word “participation” is a transliteration of the Latin word *participatio*, which is derived from *participare*, which means “to take a part.” Sweeney (1988: 2) posits that the English meaning is misleading in the philosophical discourses of participation, not least because the Greek word *metechien* means “to have along with, to have in common with (by inference), to be dependent on, to be in relationship with. Thus, the noun *methexis* indicates a state of having in common with, of dependence upon, of being related to.

Bigger (1968: 7) defines Platonic participation as a naming relation, and argues that participation is “the name of the ‘relation’ which accounts for the togetherness of diverse ontological types in the essential unity of a single instance.” Thus, participation is the relation itself! According to Bigger, a platonic understanding of participation is not just a description of a relationship between two sorts of already existing things; rather, for a relationship to occur between two things, they must have something in common. For further clarification, Bigger identifies three principles that may define and explain the concept of Plato’s participation: the principle of relativity, the ontological principle, and the principle of mingling. The ontological principle grounds its premises on the concept that the world cannot be divided into parts and retain its meaning. It is against any division of the world. Since the world is perceived as a system and an intelligible whole, sundering its parts or modification, or displacement corrupts the whole. The relationship of these constituents

exists as an interaction between entities, which entails power. The participation of the parts to retain the whole, is regarded as power. Power means “to affect and to be affected” (Bigger, 1968: 126). It entails a being that affects, and that will be affected by another being. Participation, from an ontological perspective, is a restatement of the definition of being as power, that is, to be implicated in that which acts or is acted upon.

2.3.2. Transformative participation

Although Bigger (1968: 128) claims that the principle of relativity is key to define participation particularly because through it all the other two principles could be demonstrated, it is hardly possible to explicate and articulate it with accuracy. However, the principle of mingling, Bigger (1968: 135–138) explains, is “the description of the actuality of participation itself. Two things, one the agent¹ and the other the patient, mingle one with other, and this is the grounds for the novel ingression of form.” This means, it is “a principle of internal relatedness of forms derived from diverse routes, one derived from the agent and the other from the patient, in virtue of which a new and novel unity, itself formally characterizable, is thereby constituted.” According to this principle, participation is active and flexible and perceived as a process capable of transformation. In the process of mingling, parts experience changes and they become no longer distinguishable; and the resulting whole is more than what was originally contributed by the participants. Succinctly, Bigger (1968: 115) concludes that, “this is what participation is all about, the way things mingle.”

Louis Lavelle (1973), a relatively recent philosopher, argues that participation is an ongoing action; it is an action in the world. Lavelle (1973: 25) asserts that “to be, one must act, that is go out from oneself in thought, action, or love.” The process of coming occurs in a mutual relationship. Thomas et al. (2012: 16) explain this process as “through engagement in relationship with others, an interaction is created that allows each participant to change and to advance toward greater knowledge.”

In sum, Plato’s later year notion of participation is closer to that of Lavelle, as participation entails a dynamic process involving actions and changes, a mingling between form and fact, a creation of

¹ An agent is an initiator of some action, capable of acting with volition, whereas the patient is the entity undergoing the effect of some action, often undergoing some change of state. Ingression is the act or process of entering or intruding.

a whole different than the sum of the parts. Therefore, *participation is perceived as a relationship, interaction, the power to affect and to be affected, mingling in the creation of something new and greater, and action* in the world that enrich the concept of participation and widen its understanding.

2.3.3. Ontological participation

The platonic concept of the ontological principle of participation has some bearing on participation in development and participatory M&E. Perceiving the world as a unified and intelligible whole and dependent on one another provides a philosophical and conceptual framework to the understanding of participation. The assumption that ‘us’ and ‘them’ or the beneficiary vs the benefactor, and the professional vs the indigenous bifurcation disappears in M&E, and even in development if the world is perceived as a unified whole and dependency on one another is a way of existence, and action in the world that creates something greater than the parts. Further, Plato’s notion of participation as power that is an interaction between entities is a significant concept in M&E. Participation as power that affects and being affected speaks volumes in the concept of participation. Participation in M&E needs to understand the dynamics of beings (humans in this case) having power that normally acts and will be acted upon. The issue of power dynamic in participatory M&E is the subject of intense debate, which is addressed later in this section. But suffice to note that the concept of participation also involves power that affects participants, that is, parties that participate affect one another in the process.

2.3.4. Aesthetic of participation

The third concept of participation comes from the study of the aesthetic that understands it as an engagement in experience. An aesthetics scholar, Arnold Berleant (1991) at some point agrees with Plato’s concept of participation like mingling, but he focuses on unity, continuity, and integration of the nature of participation. Participation creates perceptual unity between the perceiver and the perceived object. According to Berleant, participation is not oneness; it is perceptual unity. Participation involves environmental experience, involving persons, places, subjects, and objects that are “fully merged and indistinguishable. It transcends all divisions” (Berleant, 1991: 89). It also involves interaction between person and place within the environment, through action and response. The unity that is created through action and response results in

something larger than the original components, because *participation is conceptualized as a constructive process to bring about something larger and newer.*

From an aesthetic point of view, participation is not only active activity, but it is also *an immersion of mental and emotional aspects of the participant.* For instance, in the case of film, the appreciator seems to be passive and silent but is mentally and emotionally engaged and immersed in the story, which might be perceptibly expressed in tears, anger, flinching, or laughter as a response to the story on the screen. Participation is, therefore, identification with the other and being part of the story, and it loses sense of real time, past and present, self and others (Berleant, 1991). Paul Woodruff (1988), likewise, underscores that participation involves *watching, thinking, choosing, and making decisions.* Identification in participation requires “sufficiently matching oneself and identifying with the group” (1988: 243). Participation requires inviting, encouraging entry, evoking interest, and pulling the other in (Berleant, 1991). This happens, as John Dewey (1916, 1929, 1934, 1938, 1950) observed, that participation is a personal response that arises from sharing common experience, common communication, and from an aroused personal interest.

David Martin (1972), however, indicated that participation can be hindered by conceptual reversion. One might be reminded of something negative experienced; because of participation, such reflection to the past interferes conceptually and psychologically, creating imaginative feelings that ultimately hinder from being a participant. Without ignoring Martin’s caveat on the negative nature of participation, the concept of participation in aesthetic philosophy uncovers the important nature of participation that makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the meaning and nature of participation. Among others, participation entails: perceptual unity, contribution, mental and emotional involvement, action and reaction, reciprocity, experiences, environmental experience, identification with the other, being part of the story, mutual interaction, invitation, encouraging entry, evoking interest, opening oneself to the otherness of the other, and a voluntary cooperative venture to be altered and transported in mutual interaction towards something bigger and newer.

2.3.5. Participation and democracy

The fourth concept of participation is found in politics. In the political arena, participation cannot be discussed without the idea and practice of democracy because the definitions and manifestation

of political participation are dependent on the theory of democracy (Pateman, 1970). Participatory democracy is educating people (Pateman, 1970). Participation from a political point of view involves the relationship between institutions and individuals. Through participation, individuals are socialized into social and political democratic processes. Participation is seen as a means of educating democracy, for it is believed that people learn democracy through doing it (Pateman, 1970: 31). In participatory democracy, participation has a limited role because the participation of citizens in democracy is simply to elect their leaders (Pateman, 1970: 13–14). This is because the majority of citizens have apathy and are disinterested in political processes. Such attitude is considered to be valuable because it keeps the political system and power contained at the national level. This point of view is criticized, but centralizing citizens' participation as a means of educating the citizens is emphasized. However, power and educative aspects of participation are intertwined in political democracy.

Carpentier (2012) also believes that the key site for exploring the concept of participation is the theory of democracy for it is concerned with the inclusion of people within the political decision-making processes. The maximalist version of democratic participation shows the intimate connection between participation, power and decision-making processes, in a variety of different articulations (Carpentier, 2012: 166). Addressing democratic theory, particularly of its maximalist version, Carpentier describes the key characteristics of participation to contribute towards its theoretical formulation (2012).

In outlining the characteristics of participation, Carpentier notes that the defining element of participation is power. The inclusion of people in “the implicit and explicit decision-making process” (Carpentier, 2012: 170) is central to participation. Before Foucault (1978), power was regarded as the preserve of a specific societal group, but Foucault argued that power is an ever-present characteristic of social relations. Second, according to Carpentier (2012: 171) “*participation is situated in processes and localities, and involves specific actors*” (italics in original). Participation exists in all fields and at all levels in different contexts. For instance, contexts like micro-level and macro-level participation require the involvement of specific actors, and need specific localities and processes. Third, “*the concept of participation is contingent and itself part of the power struggles in society*” (italics in original). Fourth, “*participation is not to be seen as part of the democratic-populist fantasy*” (italics in original). This is about total equality

and the disappearance of the elites. For example, a position that strongly argues for media participation does not mean the elimination of media professionalism or journalism (Carpentier, 2012: 171, italics in original). Fifth, “*participation is invitational.*” Participation should not be enforced. The difference between invitation and persuasion should be taken into consideration, as the latter entails a desire for control and domination. Invitation seeks to inform and inspire. Potential participants have the right not to participate and this should be respected. Sixth, “*participation is not the same as access and interaction*” (italics in original). Carpentier argues that participation is different from interaction and access because they have different theoretical origins and meanings. Participation is structurally different from access and interaction, albeit that they are important conditions of the possibility of participation. Access is physical presence in many different forms within the structured organization or community, whereas interaction refers to social communication with other humans or objects. At some level, interaction has the possibility of dimension of power that may not be translated to decision-making processes. Interaction pertains more to socio-communicative relationships. Sociologists maintain that the social is formed by interaction of actors on the basis of interests, purposes, values, or common knowledge.

Carpentier concludes that participation does not have a fixed notion but is deeply embedded within political realities and thus “is the object of long-lasting intense ideological struggle” (2012: 174). It has an inextricable connection with power and requires power distribution, but it does not mean total equalization and enforcement.

Ann Richardson (1983) conducted a study on the definition of participation in greater detail than most authors within the political literature. In social policy, participation implies that citizens are involved in formulating and implementing policy decisions with the goal of affecting decision outcomes (Thomas et al., 2012). This definition is further elaborated by breaking it into two: first, participation is assumed as an action (by the participant) that involves cognitive and physical presence; concern for an issue is not participation but physical presence is necessary for social policy. Second, it involves interaction (action with or between others) rather than individual action.

Two forms of participation are identified in the political participation: direct and indirect. The former involves face-to-face interaction between government and citizens, and the latter involves

activities such as voting and pressure-group membership; that is, citizens do not have direct contact with decision-makers. However, Pateman (1970) speaks of full participation describing it as all group members having equal power to make decisions and influence their outcome. Furthermore, Pateman (1970) argues that partial participation, on the other hand, is the influence of a one-member decision-making process and the final decision is made by one person. Richardson calls such participation *pseudo or unreal* participation (Richardson, 1983: 23–27). In pseudo participation, members are forced to abide by the decisions already made independently by group leaders. The group leader persuades others to agree on a direction toward a particular outcome (Pateman, 1970; Richardson, 1983). In other words, in unreal participation members appear to be participating in the decision-making process but the decision is actually predetermined.

The role of power in participatory processes determines the extent of participation. However, Richardson (1983) argues that power does not have significance as a component of what participation means (definition) but in *the practice of participation* power is useful in analyzing participation because power serves as a variable of participation and influences the effect of participation – its consequence rather than its essence. Contra Richardson, Arnstein (1969: 216) defines participation as power, employing a ladder as a metaphor of levels of citizen participation. According to Arnstein, each rung of the ladder represents a gradation of power. At the lowest rung, participation is just manipulation, with no real participation of members in decision-making; at this level, participants are being educated (Arnstein, 1969: 217). The middle rung represents a sham participation, that is, participants have voice but there is no certainty that their voices have any influence in decision-making processes.

One of the most engaged disciplines regarding the concept of participation is the field of development. Participation has been central and a recommended practice in development enterprises for a long period of time. In the development field the definition of participation is ambiguous and there is considerable disagreement over its meaning. The definition of participation ranges from “acceptance of foodstuffs by refugees, to community members taking the initiative to form a long-term economic partnership” (Thomas et al., 2012: 7). The meaning of participation is poorly understood or assumed to be understood. Participation is a myth, rather than a reality in development projects because “the concept of participation defies universal interpretation”

(Oakley, 1991b: 115). Since the uses of participation are widespread and broaden its scope, it is hardly possible to encapsulate it within one definitive term (Oakley, 1991a).

Lane (1995: 188) defines participation as the empowerment of participants to “influence all decisions taken at all levels and in all spheres which affect their lives, and to initiate action to enhance their quality of life. This participation must be voluntary and must include the ability to change the existing environment.” Oakley (1991b) provides three definitions of participation in the development arena: (a) Participation is “an active process by which a beneficiary or client group influences the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish” (Paul, 1987). This definition understands participation in terms of economic gain or benefit. Hence, participation is the contribution to a project to enhance the possibility of the success of the project to get personal economic benefit. (b) Participation is the involvement in decision-making processes, implementing programs, sharing the benefits of the programs, and evaluating the programs (Cohen and Uphoff, 1979). This concept of participation focuses on participation in decision-making, implementation, benefits, and evaluation. Such concept is exercised by government and international agencies. (c) Participation is an organized effort to “increase control over sources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control” (Pearse and Stiefel, 1980). This concept of participation has less concern for an immediate economic concern. Such participation is exercised by NGOs.

Majid Rahnema’s (1997) caveat that the word participation can easily be used for manipulative purposes needs to be taken seriously. But Ute Kelly (2004) thinks that participation as a social process can be used to equalize power relations, respect, the chance to speak, the obligation to listen, and the opportunity to influence the agenda. Rahnema (1997) defines the participatory ideal qualitatively, such as giving attention, sensitivity, goodness or compassion supported by regenerative acts such as learning, relating, and listening. Participation for Rahnema is not “a preordained pattern or deal designed by others, or even one designed by one’s own illusions and conditioned ideals ... [rather it] should represent the open-ended quest and interaction of free and questioning persons for the understanding of reality” (Rahnema 1997: 128). Roland Bunch (1982: 26–27) defines participation as “the opposite of *doing for* people is participation *by* the people.

And this participation must occur in both decision-making and program execution” (italics in original?)

The above discussion and analysis have evinced that the concept and definition of participation are complex and cannot be stated in a single statement. However, its core meaning and concept gleaned from different disciplines can be summarized as follows: the concept of participation involves sense of belonging, reciprocity, mingling with the other, to have commonality and relationship, interaction to create new knowledge, action and power to affect and to be affected or mingling in the creation of new things, engagement in experience, and to be emotionally immersed in a thing.

2.4. Purpose of participation

There are two categories of proponents of the participatory model: one perceives participation as a means and the other as an end. The former understands it as a means to achieve organizational efficiency while the other sees it as furthering the goals of “empowerment, equity and democratic governance” (Puri, 2004: 2511). At the rhetorical level, the second seems to be dominant in the current situation, given the “people-centered policies, civil society and social capital” (Puri, 2004: 2511). For example, proponents of the social-capability approach have made a useful distinction regarding the concept of participation: efficiency-based participation differs from agency-based participation. The former uses participation as an instrument to achieve goals or ends (state-defined public interest) whereas the latter is concerned with the role of human agency in policy and political change. Hence, agency-based participation is about empowerment, equitable distribution of costs and benefits among those who are affected by policies and politics. In the current situation, Puri (2004) suggests that these two categories of participation address two different contexts. While efficiency-based participation addresses the state as a policy-making institution, agency-based participation addresses people (but such classifications do not seem to be viable categorizations). The former (efficiency-based participation) regards human beings as a means of production, while the latter (agency-based participation) perceives it as an “end” in itself.

Political theorists espouse instrumental rather than developmental benefits of participation (Thomas et al., 2012). Current political science perceives participation as a mechanism by which “needs and preferences of citizens are communicated to political decision-makers and by which

pressure is brought to bear on them to respond” (Puri, 2004: 2511). The instrumental function of participation focuses on the final decision that resulted from the process of political participation, which focuses on consequence or outcome (Thomas et al., 2012). However, there are other political participations that focus on procedure of participation; that is, members have the right to engage in the process of participation. According to Richardson (1983), there are two types of consequential participation: developmental and instrumental effects. The former includes “an increased sense of participant psychological well-being and self-awareness, improved articulation and democratic skills, and greater sense of ownership and attention to underlying social issues” (Thomas et al., 2012: 5). Pateman (1970) emphasizes that psychological and developmental aspects are important consequences of participation. She also thinks participation is more of a process and flexible in its consequences; therefore, full, partial, and pseudo participation are different arrangements of participation and learning occurs in all aspects of participation.

The instrumental function of participation focuses on the final decision resulting from the process of participation. The greater participation of members results in highly informed and effective decisions. But opponents of instrumental participation argue that participants offer more than information; they can disrupt power and they may not have similar goals as the management. Critics also argue that in instrumental participation it is difficult to identify what kind of participation is employed, particularly because the consequence of participation varies and it is unpredictable. The main reason that participation does not ensure outcome is that “participants bring their own interests, ideas, and perspectives which are different from each other” (Thomas et al., 2012: 6). This is not to deny the fact that in pseudo participation the outcome is already known and predictable, but it is to argue that the variable in the participation process is not only power but also interests of the participants that influence the result. The nature of the source of power does not only come from owning the resources but also from the creative use of the resources. Changes in perspective might occur during the participatory process due to strong arguments or simply due to personal involvement. Those who have less power might also determine the outcome due to the skill of using the available resources but also due to the creative use of the resources.

Participation is a buzzword in development projects, but the practice does show otherwise. In many cases, project participation is more of an emotional commitment than a practical aspect of the project (Oakley, 1991b). It is stronger in rhetoric than practical reality; a lip service to the idea but

less of a commitment to make changes that are required to implement participation. If it claimed to be practiced, it is common to find little or no evidence as to how the term “participation” is understood. For instance, in some projects, it is understood as an input along with other inputs. Therefore, it is difficult to identify the outcome in terms of participation. It is fundamentally important for those who seek to promote participation in a project, to clarify the kind of participation or the nature of the participation expected (Oakley, 1991b).

In the development field, there are at least four perspectives of participation. First, participation is considered a voluntary contribution by the people in one or another of the public programs supposed to contribute to national development, but the people are not expected to take part in shaping the program or criticizing its contents. This perspective understands that development will be enhanced if people voluntarily take some work without having voice regarding the purpose and the ways in which the project is done. Second, participation is people involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing programs, their sharing in the benefits of development programs and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programs in the rural development. Third, participation is concerned with ... the organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements those hitherto excluded from such control (Pearse & Stiefel, 1980). The above two perspectives (numbers 2 and 3) conceive participation as having a say in all the processes of the project: designing, managing, and evaluating the output. Fourth, community participation is an active process by which beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish (Paul, 1987). The second, third, and fourth positions perceive participation from the perspective of empowerment. But the first definition of participation perceives participation as a means whereas the other definition accepts participation as an end, albeit at different degrees.

Many scholars of development (Dinbabo, & Badewa, 2020; Adeniyi & Dinbabo, 2020), however, perceive participation as an end in itself, that is, empowering the community. Participation as an end is understood as a process and it aims at developing and strengthening the capabilities of the participants to intervene more directly in development initiatives (Oakley, 1991b). It is “an active and dynamic form which enables people to play an increasing role in development activities”

(Oakley, 1991b: 116). On the other hand, participation can serve as a means to increase efficiency or effectiveness of predetermined development projects. The use of participation as a means is to achieve some predetermined goal or objective (Oakley, 1991b). It stresses on the result of participation and its goal is to harness the existing physical, economic and social resources to achieve the objective of development program. Hence, the participation is a short-term exercise. People are mobilized to accomplish tasks at hand, then participation vanishes. Its lifetime is as long as the project exists and evaporates afterwards. It is passive. In either case, participation involves power shifts, and education, albeit power shift in means-oriented participation is too limited (Thomas et al., 2012).

If participation is taken as a means, then the issue of power relationship is untouched. This means that project design (goals and targets), and management are largely in the hands of the authorities. The role of the participants is to work for the authorities for the success of predetermined project goals. Therefore, the power relation between the donor and the recipient remains the same like that of top-down development. Above all, the notion of participation as a means and a benefit of a given project does not understand the power relationship among the members in the community. There is a high probability that the benefit will go to those who are more powerful members of the community. This can be challenged and thwarted if participation is conceived as an end as it empowers those who are in the lowest rungs in the ladder. In fact, this approach is politically neutral insofar as it does not address the power relationship. Participation as an end is politically charged as it challenges the unequal power relations and calls for a transformation in power relations between the donor and the recipient. But still, the question remains: whose ends are aimed to be achieved through participation?

Means-oriented participation, power, and information flows from the top down, whereas in ends-oriented participation, power and information flow from the bottom up, whereby community members initiate and control actions (Lane, 1995). Those who conceive participation as a means to achieve a program goal miss the political aspect of participation and its connection to the context of development and societal structures (Hickey & Mohan, 2004; Kelly, 2004). For instance, Lane's (1995) view of NGO patterns of participation is similar to that of Paul (1987) and Oakley (1991b), who regard participation as a means to accomplish predetermined project goals (Thomas et al., 2012). For example, modernization projects use participation to increase the community's

acceptance and use of resources and information from the project (Thomas et al., 2012). Other development projects espouse participation as a central concept for development to capacitate the people to address their needs through self-reliant action. Nonetheless, the projects are controlled by the project staff – at least the early stage. Lane (1995) observes that African NGOs consider participation as an essential end in itself.

Thomas et al. (2012) contend that participation in development is a means and none of the description of participation in development context comes closer to the kind of ‘end’ experience as reflected in the historical original meaning of participation. The reasons for using participation as a means by development professionals, agencies, and governments, are to make projects easier or less expensive or to provide benefits to both participants and those initiating and financially supporting the project.

The idea of empowerment has also been contested by Nelson and Wright (1995: 7), who argue that empowerment conveys “the idea that some can act on others to give them power to enable them to realize their own potential.” Empowerment is very difficult to define, notwithstanding its popularity; therefore, it has been given alternative explanations. Some define it as developing the skill and ability of the participants “to manage better, to have a say, or negotiate with the existing development delivery system” (Oakley, 1991b: 16). Others understand it as enabling participants “to decide upon and to take actions they believe are essential to their development” (Oakley, 1991b: 117). Rahnema (1997), however, admits that despite several pitfalls of participation, it can still seem beneficial. Likewise, Henkel and Stirrat (2001: 182) observe that participation purported to be an end (as empowerment of people) can in reality make people “empowered to be elements in the greater project of ‘the modern’: as citizen of the institutions of the modern state; as consumers in the increasingly global market; as responsible patients in the health system; as rational farmers increasing GNP; as participants in the labor market, and so on.” In all these attempts of empowerment, Henkel and Stirrat (2001: 182) state that the goal is “to reshape the personhood of the participants” despite its claim of being benevolent.

However, Oakley (1991b) argues that participation is an essential element in development projects, although they are fragmented and use different terms to express it due to their extreme locality. Oakley (1991b) therefore identifies four essential contributions of participation in development:

efficiency, effectiveness, self-reliance, and coverage. With regard to efficiency, participation minimizes misunderstanding and disagreement. Time and energy spent by professional staff to explain and convince people of project benefits, can be avoided. It is cost-effective because professionals will not be occupied by detailed project administration. However, cost-effectiveness is questioned because government and agencies transfer project costs to local people.

Participation makes projects effective because it allows the local people “to determine objectives, to support project administration and make their local knowledge, skills and resources available to the project” (Oakley, 1991b: 118). Effectiveness has to do with the successful completion of objectives. Another benefit of participation is self-reliance. Participation breaks the mentality of dependency and promotes self-awareness, and confidence, and causes participants to examine their own problems and attempt to solve them in their own way. Participation increases a sense of control over issues and prepares them to plan and implement. Participation also extends project coverage as it draws in more people to be part of the development activities.

Parfitt (2004) points out that organizations – government, development agencies and NGOs – admit that participation needs to be emancipatory to empower the community – at least at the rhetorical level, with the exception of NGOs. On the other hand, those who emphasize empowerment or participation as a means also want the community to meet objectives and measure their benefit. Hence, Parfitt (2004) argues that there must be some kind of balance between the two extremes: participation as an end and as a means.

However, Parfitt (2004) questions how to reconcile the demands for rules, regularity and efficient delivery of outputs on the side of development organization and the demands of empowerment of the local community on the other hand. Solutions proposed include Leurs’s (1998) suggestion about providing training advocating an approach that focuses on the facilitator to be self-critical, presumably to correct the routinization of participation. Moreover, Parfitt (2004) argues that training does not bring change if a top-down organizational hierarchy is in place that pressures the facilitator to produce results in a given time, which compels the facilitator to revert to a top-down approach to meet the requirement of the organization. A viable solution might be changing the ways the organization functions – from bureaucracies to learning organizations; from an obsession with “tightly defined, quantifiable product, or output, towards a greater concentration on process

and capacity building” (Parfitt, 2004: 549). The proposal is to reward personnel who are willing to learn and demonstrate participatory behavior both in the office and in the field (such as tolerance, openness, adaptability) and to create feedback mechanisms, flexible budgeting, and self-critique.

While a learning organization creates a conducive environment for participatory practices, Parfitt (2004) questions whether they are sufficient condition for good participation. Elements of debate (uncoerced rational dialogue), analysis, and critique are central to the process of participation. Conditions of participation are inclusiveness, openness, and avoidance of coercion. However, still these conditions do not resolve the means vs end ambiguity of participation, not least because participation inherently holds means/end ambiguity. Projects in one way or another involve some elements of participation, either minimal or extensive, and also aim at producing some development output. Parfitt (2004), however, is not optimistic in avoiding the ambiguity of means vs end of participation. Introducing Derrida’s concept of contradiction and ambiguity as an important concept, Parfitt, convincingly concludes that there is no other way to follow either/or but both are important aspects of participation as they are inherent and cannot be avoided.

2.5. Levels, characteristics and issues of participation

Levels of intensity in community participation, according to Paul (1987), have four stages: information sharing, consultation, decision-making, and initiating action. Information sharing is about sharing information to the beneficiary by the project staff. At the consultation level beneficiaries are consulted on different issues regarding the project. In this stage, beneficiaries have the opportunity to contribute their input which may or may not affect the management and outcome of the project. At the decision-making level, beneficiaries may affect management decisions and outcomes of a project. The initiating-action level is the highest form of participation on the part of the community members because beneficiaries are proactive and initiate project design, action, and decisions. Nelson and Wright (1995) describe participants as “a presence, as objects of transformation, as beneficiaries of pre-set programs, as contributors of labor, as politically co-opted legitimizers, and as people trying to determine their own choices and direction” (as paraphrased in Thomas et al., 2012: 11). Further, the “term beneficiary to refer to participants connotes an assumed relationship between development workers and participants

characterized by power imbalance and one group doing something ‘for’ the other rather than equality, despite claims and definitions to the contrary” (Thomas et al., 2012: 9).

Jules N. Pretty (1995) puts forward seven characteristics and levels of participation in development programs and projects. The first type of participation is manipulative participation, which is a phony participation where unelected people’s representatives are present in official boards but have no power. The second type is passive participation, where participants are told what has been already been decided or happened without their voices being heard; administration or project management unilaterally announces the decision, and information regarding the project is shared only with external professionals. Consultation is the third type of participation, whereby participants are consulted by answering some questions, but do not share decision-making; professionals are not obliged to include the participants’ views; rather, they define problems, processes of information gathering, and control analysis. Participation for material incentives is the fourth type of participation, by which participants contribute resources and get material incentives as a return. For instance, farmers contribute fields and labor and receive food or cash as a return rather than participating in learning and decision-making. The fifth type of participation is functional participation, through which external exigencies achieve their project goals and reduce costs. In this kind of participation there might be some level of interaction and involvement of the participants in decision-making but the participants’ involvement is after key decisions have already been made by external agents and yet participants are coopted as a means of achieving external goals. The sixth kind of participation is interactive participation, where participations are not seen as a means but as the subjects, since they are involved in analysis, developing plans, making decisions, controlling available resources, and maintaining structures or practices. The final type of participation is self-mobilization, where people take the initiatives without external organization. They may establish contacts with external institutions for support regarding resources and technical advices.

According to Pretty (1995), although the term “participation” is popular and forms part of the normal language of many development organizations and agencies – both non-governmental and governmental organizations – it has created a bewildering paradox, especially because this term has been employed to justify both controlled, external decision-making as well as capacitating and empowering the decision-making of local stakeholders. It is also used for data collection and for

interactive analysis. Pretty muses that people are often dragged into participation without their interest, under the pretext of participation. Pretty uncovers another area of paradox of participation: on the one hand, authorities need people's agreement and support; on the other hand, they fear people's wider and deeper involvement. Such fear creates stage-managed participation. In particular, Pretty (1995) observes that,

... in conventional rural development, participation has commonly centered on encouraging local people to sell their labour in return for food, cash or materials. Yet, these material incentives distort perceptions, create dependencies, and give the misleading impression that local people are supportive of externally driven initiatives (1995: 1252).

Chambers (2006: 9) provides a participation ladder, outlining roles and responsibilities (see Table 1). His analysis sheds light on the level and type of participation regarding the particularities of roles and responsibilities.

Table 1: Participation ladder with roles and responsibilities

| | Outsiders' objectives | Roles/Relationships | | Actions | | Ownership |
|-------------------------------|--|----------------------|---------------------|----------|--------------|-----------|
| | | Outsider | Local people | Outsider | Local people | |
| TOTALITARIAN | State political control | Dictator | Slave | Command | Comply | Outsiders |
| NOMINAL | Cosmetic legitimization | Manipulator | Puppet | ↑ | ↑ | ↑ |
| EXTRACTIVE | Obtain local knowledge for better planning | Researcher/planner | Informant | | | |
| INDUCED | Gain action through material incentives | Employer | Worker | | | |
| CONSULTATIVE/ INSTRUMENTAL | Improve effectiveness and efficiency | Rational economizer | Collaborator | | | |
| PARTNERSHIP | Share responsibility and power | Co-equal partner | Co-equal partner | | | |
| TRANSFORMATIVE | Facilitate sustainable development by local people | Facilitator/Catalyst | Analyst/Actor/Agent | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| SELF-MOBILIZING | Support spontaneous action | Supporter | Owner/Controller | | | |

Source: Chambers (2006)

Chambers' participation ladder identifies key levels of participation and their components. However, he left it open to decide the type of actions and ownership of the project to the interpreter of the typology. The two extremes and opposing polar situations are the totalitarian type on the one extreme and the self-mobilizing type on the other. Chambers does not infer that the two are impossible and non-existent, but that they exist and they differ in their purpose and goals. In all levels and types of participation, the purpose of participation decides the role or relationship between the outsider and local people and likewise their action and ownership. However, the table indicates that except for the self-mobilizing type, the objectives of a project or development initiative and the kind of participation are decided by the objectives of the outsider or development institutes. The self-mobilizing participation type seems to be an ideal kind of participation, which is probably rare.

Chambers (1997) asserts that participation threatens the powerful, because it creates loss of power and invites proliferation of local diversity and loss of central control. But others reject such scenario based on the reality because there are conspicuous discrepancies between “stated intent and actual intents and decisions and between development rhetoric and its consequences, practices, procedures, and organizational structures” (Thomas et al., 2012: 11). Rahnema (1997: 126) contends that “unless the participating individuals act as free and unbiased human beings,” genuine participation does not occur. But participants cannot be free and unbiased because of their religions, ideologies, and traditions. In other words, social structure and conditions influence and deter participants from being free from the system that produces inequalities.

Nelson and Wright (1995) identified conditions that limit true participation in development organizations. One such condition is that they must have clear objectives: to obtain funding; to demonstrate measurable results in a short period of time – to satisfy donors; to be efficient and quick to utilize limited resources and funding cycle time frames. Such situation requires funding to realize participation. Initial funding is required to identify participants' needs and their priorities. It may take years to meet high priority needs of the community. Another charge against the participatory process in development programs is that participation has been used to make projects look good and attract investment, but does not have an empowering function for the community (Chambers, 1997; Lane 1995; Rahnema, 1997). Henkel and Stirrat (2001: 172) observe that “participatory approaches are frequently used instrumentally as a tool for development agencies

to implement their projects more efficiently rather than seeking ‘real’ participation from the affected community.” They point out that such form of participation is beneficial to the project sponsor, and the development practitioner or knowledge-gatherer, rather than to the participants. Rahnema (1997) accuses those who claim to be promoters of participation, of being authorities and agents of a predefined ideal of change, rather than mutual learners.

The nature of participation can easily be exposed to cosmetic application, as it masks control motives that usually underlie its use (Taylor, 2001; Thomas et al., 2012: 13). The critics note that participation could be used as a strategy to facilitate and mask control by one group (development staff and institution) over another (communities and people to whom development projects are directed). Kothari (2001: 142) argues that “the very act of inclusion, of being drawn in as a participant, can symbolize an exercise of power and control over an individual,” which might be called political co-option. Rahnema (1997: 118) contends that although the perception that participation involves free engagement prevails, the use of participation in development, particularly in developing countries, created sophisticated systems of control over the population, showing “the government to be present everywhere.” Agencies can also use it to thwart protests against development projects, continue centralized project management, and transfer project costs from the agency to the beneficiaries, while seeming to be doing exactly the opposite (Chambers, 1997; Nelson & Wright, 1995).

Scholarly suggestions to avoid phony participation includes: respect, equality and inter-subjectivity as subjects and agents (Holland et al., 2004; Kelly, 2004). Positive contributions made by participatory exercises, include, “restoration of traditional knowledge and skills, literacy development, avoiding introduction of irrelevant or harmful interventions, and broadening local people’s sense of taking action on their own behalf and resisting discrimination and oppression” (Thomas et al., 2012: 12). For a successful participation to occur, Puri (2004) argues that there should be democratic framework of the state, legislation, knowledge transfer and sharing of costs by the participants in terms of money.

2.6. Power, participation, and development

Participation is criticized at two fronts: theoretical coherence and its practice. Theoretically, there is inadequate analysis of the relationship between power and community. In particular, Chambers’

work on the concept of power is criticized for defining power in a binary relation: upper vs lower; the former possessing power and the latter being powerless. Upon this assumption and premise, Chambers' solution is to reverse the relationship empowering the lower and disempowering the upper. Kothari's (2001) critique observes that the participatory theory in Chambers' upper and lower framework insists that power and control are only found at the macro and central levels and that empowerment exclusively focuses on the micro-level, empowering the local people. This dichotomy has created the perspective that sets the micro against the macro; the elite against the local; the powerless against the powerful. Therefore, those who wield power are located within the institutions and those who are subjugated to this power are found at the local or regional levels and the problem will supposedly be solved by applying "participation."

Likewise, Puri (2004) believes that participation is a complex matter, especially because it envisions the community as a cohesive whole. It downplays the nature of community, which maintains internal "differentiation, contestation, and power differentials" (Puri, 2004: 2512). Arguments made in favor of participation do not capture the reality of the dynamics of community participation, as they exclude the inherent hierarchies, power differentials and socio-economic disparities in local communities (Puri, 2004). The social capital theories also ignore the bad side of social capital, especially noting the positive social capital, such as "norms of trust, reciprocity and cooperation exist within the coercive, hierarchical and exclusive communal formations" (Puri, 2004: 2512).

Further, collective action at a local level takes place on the basis of "ascriptive affiliations such as caste, religion and tribe." The emphasis on empowerment needs to deal with such differences within a given community at the local level. Empowerment proponents wish away the elimination of such differences through participation, whereas these differences themselves impede participation. Hence, Puri (2004: 2515) argues that without understanding the characteristics of community and applying the participatory approach, it is sanctioning the difference in power and the exclusion of those who do not have power. Face-to-face interaction within a community is imbued with all kinds of meaning, restriction, and norms that impede participation, and mere physical presence does not ensure articulation of interest, knowledge and opinions.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) is conducted in a highly formal and public event in a local community (Probst, 2002). Mosse (2001) notes that such formal and public event takes place in the presence of local authorities and outsiders, which activates local power relations rather than reversing it. A group is a place of social control, self-censorship, and confirmation of power (Neef, 2003). Therefore, participation is naïve, regarding the nature of power and its structure in a community. For example, a meeting in a local community can be monopolized by village notables (Neef, 2003). Heterogeneity in groups such as gender, ethnic origin, age, social position, and conflict of interest is not given adequate attention in participatory approaches. There is not only one local reality but a myriad of positions, interests, and needs.

Mohan (2001: 160) disparages Chambers' concept of power relationship, arguing that it "romanticize[s] and essentialize[s] the poor and the social systems by which they operate," but it downplays the power relationship within the poor that works in the form of class, gender and ethnicity. Hence, Chambers' concept of power is regarded as being reductionist and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools are viewed as being questionable. PRA, according to Kothari (2001), does not allow the poor to examine or criticize the donor and eliminates the unfit and the messy but maintains the norm, the usual, and the expected.

Further, Kapoor (2002) critiqued Chambers' binary relationship of power (upper vs lower or top vs down) because such polarization conceives power as a negative influence and it assumes that such influence can be thwarted through the application of PRA. Based on Foucauldian insight on power, Kapoor (2002) argues that power cannot be avoided in the field of development because it is involved in the formation of knowledge, irrespective of its means of gathering, such as participation. Moreover, power is not always negative because it has positive influence in creating power. For instance, the power of aid agencies cannot be simply avoided by a voluntary decision and participatory techniques (PRA) because they themselves are permeated by power relationships. Power cannot be eliminated, as there are less-obvious forms of power that persist and some of them are even more repressive than the overtly top-down powers.

Chambers' means of convincing the upper to accept PRA is that it makes projects efficient, hence the upper echelons perceive PRA as a means to achieve efficiency in fulfilling their objectives; power is thus re-installed in the system, camouflaging itself to achieve efficiency. Chambers'

position is to persuade the so-called powerful to empower the powerless, resorting to efficiency, or participation as a means. Similarly, Oakley (1991a), even more boldly, insists that the reasons for embracing PRA in development, are efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. The problem at the core is the misunderstanding of the pervasive nature of power. The argument that empowering the vulnerable groups through participation becomes an instrument to reassert top-down powers, while still claiming to be inclusive and empowerment-oriented.

PRA has also come under fire: it is accused of overlooking local structures of power, such as patriarchy; it undervalues women's issues; organizations or states can co-opt it to avoid groups and communities that are potentially threatening them; organizations can make symbolic observations of principles of participation, but actual decisions can be made by top-down power relations. In other words, participation can be maintained within the traditional top-down power relations. Such traditional top-down power relations are maintained through the patronage of project staff.

Moreover, Cleaver (2001) points out that participation can be routinized and becomes a managerial exercise based on its tool-box of procedure and techniques, focusing solely on efficiency. Participation is obsessed with the overt formal committees and institutions, such as local organizations, rather than communal activities that occur on a daily basis. It focuses on costs and benefits of participation, ignoring individual positions.

From the social-psychology perspective, Cooke (2001) argues that participation weakens addressing the four areas of group dysfunction that negatively affect the participation process. These are: risky shift, the Abilene paradox, groupthink, and coercive persuasion. Risky shift pertains to groups tending to take higher risks than they would at an individual level; therefore, participation renders participants more prone to risk. The Abilene paradox is when group action is more often a contradiction to what group members actually want to do. Groupthink suggests that group members reach a false consensus if they already formed *esprit de corps*. For example, group members might develop over-confidence about their power and capabilities to the extent that they rationalize any discouraging feedback; they might succumb to justify the morality of the group; they might cast a negative outlook against out-groups; some members guard other members against negative information, which results in false unanimity as to goals. Coercive persuasion – or

conscientization – can be called brainwashing. In participation, coercive persuasion includes three stages: unfreezing; changing; and refreezing. At the unfreezing stage, the worldview or ideology of the participant is destabilized through disconfirmation. At the second stage, change is initiated through a model offered by the conscientizer. As the final stage, refreezing of the new model is ensured through the positive technique of confirmation. However, Parfitt (2004) argues that unfreezing, changing and refreezing can be done to attain positive results, such as de-nazification and de-programing of cult members.

There is no doubt that the participation discourse of Chambers (2006) and Oakley (1991a, 1991b) is aimed at convincing aid agencies to embrace the participatory approach, which compelled them to emphasize the managerial aspects of efficiency and downplay the those of empowerment. Such rhetoric has created mechanistic, routinized and symbolic exercises of participation, which in turn created a conducive context for the continuous existence of the traditional top-down power relations.

According to Parfitt (2004), there are two types of critiques against participation. One group focuses on the practices and the other group on the theoretical analysis of participation. The practical problem originates from the nature of organization, such as aid agencies, international NGOs, government organizations and their hierarchical culture. PRA is hijacked to serve the interests of the organization, rather than the intentions for which it was created. In other words, PRA is used nominally to claim that the organization is participatory and PRA has become a bureaucratic requirement.

A study in Kenya revealed that participation is equated with exercising PRA – donors wanted to apply PRA but not participation (Cornwall et al., 2001). This is because PRA does not expose an organization to a greater challenge to the pattern of their behavior and it can be done without doing genuine participation. Furthermore, PRA is blind to many sensitive community issues.

The theoretical and conceptual analysis on M&E, participation and context is directly relevant for the development of conceptual framework for evaluating the determinants of M&E and serve for the analysis of the result of the research. The next section presents the conceptual framework developed from the theoretical and conceptual analysis.

2.7. Conceptual framework of determinants for the research

This section presents the conceptual framework developed by the researcher based on theories and concepts discussed in this chapter: theories of M&E; concept of participation; concept of context; and literature review of conventional and participatory approaches in practice (see chapter 3). The researcher created the conceptual framework based on key determinants that emerged from the discussion and analysis in the aforementioned chapter and the ensuing chapter.

Figure 2: Key determinants: Conceptual framework



Source: Author's analysis of theories, concepts, and literature review

2.8. Chapter summary

The discussion in this chapter has demonstrated that there has been a number of theoretical ontological assumptions, and epistemological stances that have influenced methods and results of the M&E. Therefore, theoretical assumptions and epistemological stances are fundamentally important in M&E as they determine methodologies, approaches, and decisions on why the M&E is performed. For example, there is a wide gulf between conventional and participatory M&E theoretically and epistemologically, and at times they oppose each other as it seems that the debates are either/or. Notwithstanding the opposing positions, the chapter clearly depicted the possible theoretical and epistemological choices available for the research, which makes a tremendous contribution toward the formulation of the conceptual framework for the research.

The debate also identified key determinants of M&E. These are epistemological commitments (positivism, constructionism, and emergent realism). They are fundamental, as they determine methods to be applied; method to be used for M&E; purpose for doing M&E; the role of the expert in the M&E process; participation of stakeholders in the M&E process; the kind of result and purpose for which the M&E is being done; and the context of the evaluand, evaluator, and the stakeholders.

However, participation and context need further exploration and critical analysis especially because there are conceptual ambiguities that need a depth of analysis to draw form the analysis a better understanding for the conceptual framework. The chapter analyzed the concept of participation at some length. Accordingly, the definition, concept, purpose, level and critique leveled against participation in M&E demonstrated that participation is a complex notion that cannot be boiled down into one thought or practice.

However, the definition, concept and level of participation explored in this chapter provide a broader foundation for the examination of participation in the M&E process. A comprehensive understanding of participation enlightens practices, methodology, and epistemology in the discussion of participation in the M&E process. The analysis also revealed the different aspects of

the key determinant – participation: conceptual fluidity of participation; purpose of participation; level of participation; power interaction within participation and the nature of participation. Participation has expanded determinants of its own. While the theoretical and conceptual analysis of M&E resulted in identifying some key determinants, the next chapter deals with the literature review, which provides additional determinants for the development of the conceptual framework (see above) for this research.



CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review published works by scholars and practitioners of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in multiple disciplines in order to lay a broad foundation and analysis of works already done in the field of M&E. This is because M&E is exercised in diverse disciplines. Further, since the research question is to explore the determinants of conventional and participatory M&E that might be combined, the literature review focuses on assessing both theory and empirical works because the review assumes that the empirical works are dependent on a given M&E theory. The review is not categorized either in discipline, geography and temporal categories because the aim of the review is to analyze key works on the determinants of M&E, despite their specific categories that might possibly be fixed characteristics of both approaches. Therefore, the review is presented by integrating empirical findings and theories attached to the findings.

The first part of the review places a special emphasis on publications regarding indigenous knowledge's theoretical and empirical works. The second part of the review is devoted to critically analyze the empirical research done on the conventional and participatory M&E and draws out their differences, similarities, weaknesses, strengths, and key determinants to have a broader understanding and identify the key determinants from published works that did empirical research.

As conventional M&E has been exercised for several decades, there is no need to belabor the point of its emergence and other matters related to it. But participatory M&E demands a closer discussion as it is a relatively recent phenomenon. Therefore, the ensuing section review the context and matters related to indigenous knowledge, followed by a critical evaluation, comparing and contrasting conventional and participatory M&E in light of empirical works.

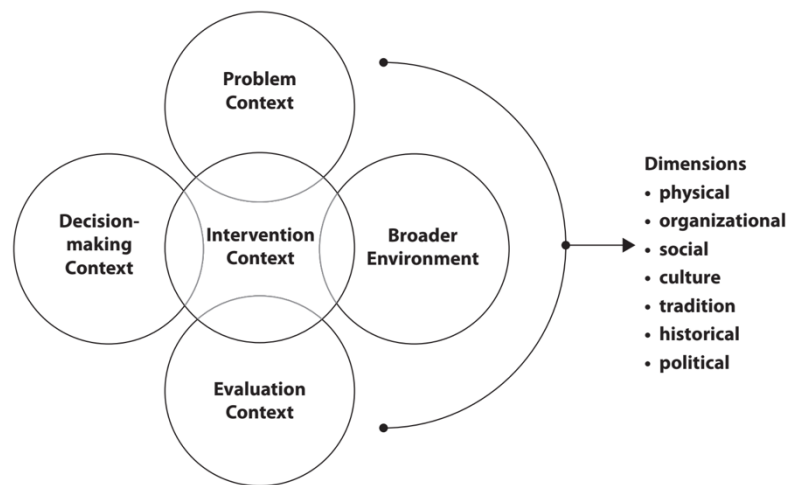
3.2. Context in M&E

After reviewing a number of publications on M&E, Fitzpatrick (2012) argues for the critical role of context in M&E. Fitzpatrick (2012) argues that an evaluator's personal contexts and values influence how the evaluator sees or fails to see other cultures; because of this, an evaluator will be invalid. Invalidity of an evaluator occurs in many ways, such as identifying wrong questions to frame the evaluation, ignoring key stakeholders, misinterpreting stakeholders' priorities and

values, even program goals, collecting data with the use of words and nonverbal clues that have different meanings to the audience and poorly communicating the result. Speaking of the context of a country entails: the nature of government policies, politics, expectation of NGOs and international development agencies, cultural norms of individuals and communities, norms of communication, consensus and decision-making (Fitzpatrick, 2012).

Rog (2012) points out that context “affects the implementation and outcomes of the interventions that we study” (2012: 25). She further elaborates context in five key areas: problem context, broader environment, intervention context, evaluation context, and decision-making context. The problem context is critical to choose an approach to evaluation. It is paramount to know “the nature of the problem, its extent, the circumstances in which it exists, which populations are affected, and so on, can be essential to scoping out and implementing an evaluation approach that is appropriate to this context area” (Rog, 2012: 28). Intervention context has to do with the structure, complexity, and dynamics in the program situation, for example, the stage of the program (where it is in its life cycle). The broader environment/setting is multilayered. It is all about the context surrounding the program. The evaluation context may include the budget, time, and the data available for the evaluation. The decision-making context refers to the type of decision needed to be made, the standard of rigor it requires or expects, the level of confidence expected to make decisions, and structural and cultural factors that influence the decision behavior. Rog (2012: 28) demonstrates the interaction of context in the diagram below (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Interaction of context



Source: Rog (2012: 28)

Rog (2012) defines context as “the setting (time and place) and broader environment in which the focus of the evaluation (evaluand) is located.” Thus, context is comprehensive, which includes, but is not limited to, demographic information about program participants, geographical location of the program, material and economic features of a setting, the historical and political climate surrounding the institutional and organizational settings. Culturally responsive evaluation claims that democratic principles arrogate for three benefits. First, it opens spaces for various groups and persons to participate in the conversation to discuss their areas of interest, values and principles. Second, it allows participants access into a broader view of an issue beyond their narrow interest and to think about what can be justified to people who would not agree with them. Deliberation as one of the principles of culturally responsive principles occurs when stakeholders use reason and evidence to arrive at a conclusion (Samuels & Ryan, 2011). Thus, the principles of inclusion, dialogue, deliberation, and mutual accountability are the tents of democratic participation or approaches to evaluation.

Furthermore, according to Kirkhart (1995, 2010), who argues for the importance of congruity between context and evaluation theory, context must also consider multiculturalism, which refers to “the coexistence or juxtaposition of more than one cultural group (1995: 2). She contends that a usual definition of culture has serious shortcomings, as often reference is made to demographics or setting variables such as race/ethnicity, religion, gender, economic status, age, disability, sexual orientation, and social class and thus are insufficient variables, especially because they do not capture “blueprints for living” and social regularities therefore provide false impressions. Culture is defined as “a set of beliefs, attributes, values, knowledge, and skills that collectively creates identity” and it “represents an intersection of identifications held by individuals plus identifications of collective groups such as organizations, institutions, communities, societies, and nations” (Kirkhart, 2010: 401). Kirkhart presents a caveat that any definition of culture needs to entail the hallmarks of culture: its multiplicity, fluidity, and non-neutrality. Culture is not static but transitional, nor is it a single or unitary construct; rather, it is multiple. Therefore, cultural consideration is not only at the core of evaluation practices but it is also at the core of evaluation theories, for “all evaluation theories have a cultural footprint that must be understood and engaged to achieve valid understandings and determinations of merits and worth” (Kirkhart, 2010: 411).

Kirkhart further argues that the “contexts of evaluation practice are defined by numerous intersecting cultural identifications and assumptions; therefore, validity too must be multicultural” (2010: 401). Validity is an indispensable element in a good evaluation. It is understood as an “evaluative judgment of the adequacy and appropriateness of inferences and action” (Kirkhart, 1995: 3). That is to say, “systematic inquiries into the values of programs and other enterprises must produce accurate, trustworthy understandings and judgments from which sound and just actions may be taken” (Kirkhart, 2010: 400). Granted that theory still remains an important element of a contemporary validity argument, Kirkhart insists that “validity is a property not of the theory itself but of the application of theory in context.” Theory itself is one component in justification of multicultural validity, because when theory is invoked, the linchpin of validity argument demonstrates “the fit between the cultural location of theory and the cultural context of application” (2010: 410).

But validity gains support from evaluation theory when theory is congruent with cultural context. For validity to be congruent with the context of evaluation, it needs to be multicultural. Multicultural validity refers to “the ability to capture multiple cultural perspectives accurately, soundly, and appropriately” (Kirkhart, 1995: 2). Kirkhart argues that multicultural validity goes beyond methodological validity (measurement validity and design logical validity), albeit it draws its concept from it, by extending two additional dimensions: interpersonal validity and consequential validity. The former refers to the soundness or trustworthiness of understandings that emanate from personal interaction of the evaluator, including the skills, insights, and reflexivity of the evaluator. The latter refers to the soundness of change imposed on systems by evaluation results and the extent to which those changes are just; or it refers to “the worth, adequacy, or appropriateness of actions resulting from the evaluation” (Kirkhart, 1995: 6). The findings of evaluation exert positive or unintended negative effects on a particular system. However, threats to multicultural validity are time (time frame evaluation designed, conducted, and reported), culturally unsophisticated evaluator, and arrogant complacency.

Chouinard and Cousins (2009) made a comprehensive review of 52 empirical studies on evaluation conducted in cultural communities, book chapters, and foundation reports from seven countries, namely: United States, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Brazil, India, and Australia. Their analysis of culture in these empirical works sheds further light on the understanding of culture in

M&E. They categorized it into four classifications: aesthetic (humanistic refinement and elite artistic), ethnographic (entire ways of life for groups and the community), symbolic (system of patterns and shared symbols), and ecological (setting of culture and surrounding context).

Samuels and Ryan (2011) similarly conducted a selective literature review on culturally responsive evaluations, mainly from the discipline of education and an empirical study from a pilot project on culturally responsive evaluation. The result of the review indicated that culture purported to be a transferable pattern of meaning interlinked with individuals' and groups' sense of identity, but there are various cultures at a given individual and group level in the ways in which programs are designed, implemented and experienced (Samuels & Ryan, 2011). Various names and designations are used in the literature referring to culturally sensitive evaluation, namely, culturally responsive, culturally competent, multicultural, and even cross-cultural evaluation. Culturally responsive evaluation is consonant with other evaluation approaches that are concerned with democracy, social change, inclusion, and power relationships. Their exploration of literature on culturally responsive evaluation from the discipline of education, being cognizant of its applicability to a variety of fields and projects, concluded that evaluation cannot be isolated from its organization and the surrounding culture; therefore, evaluation is influenced by cultural milieus such as groups and institutions, and their contextual nuances.

Both the empirical and theoretical works on the relationship of context, mainly culturally sensitive evaluation, reviewed above, have indicated that the importance of context in M&E, and concluded that at its core, culturally responsive evaluation is about considering the culture and context of the evaluator and the evaluand. Notwithstanding the importance of culture and context in M&E, no agreed-upon definition has yet been reached due to the complex nature of context. However, the understanding of the complexity and comprehensiveness of context and culture creates informed awareness of the planning and implementation of M&E.

3.3. Indigenous knowledge in M&E

One of the key components of context in M&E is indigenous knowledge. However, defining indigenous knowledge has become problematic, although it achieved its currency due to the progression of the rhetoric of development. The discourse on development issues has grown from economic growth to equality, to basic needs, to participatory development, and to sustainable

development (Agrawal, 1995b). In the 1950s and 1960s, the theories of development perceived indigenous knowledge and institutions as stumbling blocks against the growth of development. Contra these earlier theories, indigenous knowledge is currently valorized to improve the life of peasants and small farmers. However, the discourse on the concept, definition, and character of indigenous knowledge and Western science is polarized: Western science is monolithic and failed, whereas indigenous knowledge is local knowledge and technology, and is viewed as the best and latest strategy to fight against hunger, poverty, and underdevelopment. Proponents of indigenous knowledge, however, contend that indigenous knowledge allows its holders to live in harmony with their environment, allowing them to use it sustainably (Agrawal, 1995b).

Due to the change of development practices from top-down to a grassroots participatory perspective, the importance of indigenous knowledge is emphasized for the purpose of cross-cultural communication, understanding and political reasons (Sillitoe, 1998). Particularly in the area of research, the purpose of researching indigenous knowledge is to connect between local people's understanding, experience and that of scientific researchers and development workers. Paul Sillitoe (1998) presumes that there are two streams to the development of indigenous knowledge: one is academic and the other is development. In the former, the ethnoscience and human ecology has been studying indigenous knowledge for more than seven decades, whereas in the latter it has been studied for more than four decades in the area of farming and participatory development. Modernization, the classical transfer of the technology model in collaboration with the political right, indecency from colonial system, Marxist politics, and especially the market-liberal approach, compelled the change of perspective in how to do development by challenging the top-down perspective.

However, in the academic sphere, several attempts have been made to define indigenous knowledge. Most make their point of departure identifying the difference between scientific and indigenous knowledge. There are those who begin by stressing differences in the subject matter for research. Others attempt to define it "based on contextual grounds, as indigenous knowledge is more deeply rooted in communities' environments" (Viergever, 1999: 334). Still others focus on the methodological differences employed to conduct research. Viergever (1999) suggests that there are three important elements of indigenous knowledge: its production is through dynamic systems, that is, through the creativity and invention of individual indigenous people; it integrates

both the physical and social environment of the communities; and it is a collective property. Dei defines indigenous knowledge as,

... common sense knowledge and ideas of local peoples about the everyday realities of living ... [and] it includes the cultural traditions, values, beliefs, and worldviews of local peoples as distinguished from Western scientific knowledge. Such local knowledge is the product of indigenous peoples' direct experience of the workings of nature and its relationship with the social world. It is also a holistic and inclusive form of knowledge (as quoted by Agrawal, 1995a: 418).

Furthermore, Marie Battiste (2005: 4–6) offers a comprehensive definition:

... a transcultural (or intercultural) and interdisciplinary source of knowledge that embraces the contexts of about 20 percent of the world's population. Indigenous knowledge is systemic, covering both what can be observed and what can be thought. It comprises the rural and the urban, the settled and the nomadic, original inhabitants and migrants ... Indigenous knowledge comprises all knowledge pertaining to a particular people and its territory, the nature or use of which has been transmitted from generation to generation ... Indigenous knowledge is an adaptable, dynamic system based on skills, abilities, and problem-solving techniques that change over time depending on environmental conditions.

Additionally, Gloria Emeagwali (2014: 1) provides this definition:

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) may be defined as the cumulative body of strategies, practices, techniques, tools, intellectual resources, explanations, beliefs, and values accumulated over time in a particular locality, without the interference and impositions of external hegemonic forces. Indigenous Knowledge Systems are not confined to the material sphere, but often interconnect with the spiritual and non-material realms of existence.

In the discussion of indigenous knowledge there are many slippery curves that have left scholars in ambiguity regarding what it means. Semali and Kincheloe (1999: 3) argue that the Western knowledge system regards indigenous knowledge as “primitive, the wild and the natural.” This eschewed definition and conceptualization of indigenous knowledge in the Western knowledge system has militated the contribution of indigenous knowledge to the development of indigenous

nations and the world at large, although it is an everyday rationalization of the indigenous people in a given locality, particularly in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Oceania.

Not only is the definition of indigenous knowledge a problem, but also conceptualizing knowledge in terms of boundary as owned by a specific community, is bound to be a futile enterprise. So, the questions of whether knowledge can be local, or if a community can own a knowledge system, or if culture can produce knowledge, are baffling the academic world. For Semali (1999: 96), there is no ambiguity: “African, indigenous knowledge is about what local people do, and what they have known and done for generations – practice that developed through trial and error and proved flexible enough to cope with change.” They express their knowledge in their own terms using their language, their history, their stories, traditions, songs, theatre, and “all that goes to make up the repertoire with which individuals communicate among themselves and with others outside their communities” (Semali, 1999: 96).

3.3.1. Science vs indigenous knowledge

Phrases such as “indigenous knowledge,” “traditional knowledge,” “lay beliefs,” and “common sense belief” are used to denote the knowledge that evolved in a particular societal context and used by lay people to conduct their lives in their context (George, 1999). Indigenous knowledge differs from structured school knowledge in that it is not generated through planned procedures and rules. Instead, it is generated while lay people seeking to solve problems in their day-to-day activities. It is a societal wisdom, intuition, creativity and uses local resources that may be available. The knowledge acquired is transmitted from generation to generation through oral mode of communication but it is influenced by knowledge generated in other settings through interaction and contacts with other forms of knowledge particularly from people who wield power.

Nonetheless, scientists debate whether indigenous knowledge exists or not. Such skepticism is futile, particularly because local people make decisions and choices based on their faculty to lead their lives. Semali and Kincheloe (1999) have convincingly argued that the indigenous people use their resources available to them such as food, water, medicine and other natural resources that sustain them and their families. They value what is valuable and what is not for their own subsistence. Such evaluative knowledge is not the result of scientific laboratory, but it is that of real-life laboratory through trial and errors. For instance, they have experience of how to treat

disease, tend livestock, manage aquatic resources, provide health therapies, and how to preserve and pass on such local knowledge to the next generation. Indigenous knowledge is not only a means of physical survival for the indigenous people, but, as Freire and Antonio Faundez argue, it is “a rich social resource for any justice-related attempt to bring about social change” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999: 15). Due to its emphasis on relationships of human beings to one another and to their ecosystem, indigenous knowledge saves the world by countering earth-destructive science of the West.

Such contribution, however, argue essentialists, is a no-mean-feat project as it is hardly possible to reclaim and renew uncontaminated pre-colonial and past indigenous knowledge, because indigenous knowledge is “in the prehistoric, stationary and unchanging web that is ever separate from non-indigenous information. Indigeneity in this context becomes romanticized to the point of helpless innocence” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999: 22). It is worthwhile to note Antonio Faundez’s caveat that those who are committed to study and advocate indigenous knowledge should avoid the pit of romanticizing it particularly because there is no stagnant culture that never changes; rather, “all cultures (especially colonized ones) are perpetually in a state of change” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999: 22).

For a postmodernist anthropologist, for instance, culture is not a “self-contained social organism” but it is an “interrelated networks of localities” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999: 23). Indigenous people are exposed to Western knowledge through mass media and developmental projects. Particularly in a current situation where globalization is increasing, ever increasing human transnational mobility, refugee Diasporas, and multi-capital infusions have permeated and disrupted the traditional way of seeing the world, lived experiences, and the cultural system. Not only culture but also identity is not stable and fixed. Unlike the essentialist, identity is under construction and always in process, “constantly dealing with intersections involving categories of status, religion, race, class, and gender” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999: 23). Within the indigenous people there are also diversities as their local identity and experiences are not exactly similar to the others; likewise, indigenous knowledge is “not a monolithic epistemological concept” (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999: 24).

Those who do not perceive indigenous knowledge as scientific knowledge define it as “pre-modern,” and “non-science”; in other words, intrinsically defined not by what they are, but by what they are not; by what they cannot be” (Prakash, 1999: 157). Scientists argue that knowledge is not culturally conditioned; it is neutral from culture, and gender. Therefore, Prakash (1999: 158) argues that the weakness of indigenous knowledge is that it is inextricably defined, shaped and linked to culture whereas with science,

... the principles and practices that constitute and define ‘science’ are neither shaped nor determined by culture, ethnicity, race, class, gender, age and any other non-universalizable characteristics. The principles and practices of Science remain the same, regardless of the cultural context in which they are discovered or implemented.”

For instance, sciences such as medicine, transportation or construction, are not defined by the limits of ethnicity or locality, culture, or gender. Against the grain of modern science belief that science is universal, ecologists, feminists, peace and justice advocates, as well as other grassroots movements argue that particular personal interest, culture, gender, and other interests continue to determine and direct the modern science projects. Postmodernists vehemently argue that there is a strong connection between the project of modern science to the centralization of power and control. Global centralization of knowledge/power is the source of oppression, violence, and mass ignorance that resulted in inequalities (Prakash, 1999: 158).

The academy’s (Western science) perception of indigenous knowledge is the ramification of colonialism and neo-colonial relationship, which levelled indigenous social and political structure, knowledge, religion, and worldview as inferior, insignificant, even barbaric, primitive, folkloric, unscientific, amethodological, insignificant, and lacking scientific rigor and objectivity (Knopf, 2015). More especially, the validity of indigenous knowledge is questioned because of its belief in spiritual beings and is based on moral codes. The Western science-based knowledge system denies faith-based worldviews of creation and brands them as myth. The Western knowledge system claims to be based on reason, logic, science, and empirical proof, excluding knowledge based on observation, oral tradition, digressive thinking, and even the spiritual with which indigenous knowledge is intricately associated. The Western scientific knowledge system isolates a problem to disentangle it from various factors and reduces it to a small number of controllable

parameters in a linear causality, assuming that understanding the cause and effect of a problem will allow it to predict the future development. The term “scientific knowledge” has come to refer to knowledge itself, whereas in its true sense it should have been referring to variation of knowledge (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019).

Nonetheless, the indigenous knowledge system examines a problem in its entirety with its web of complexity because many indigenous people see themselves within their environment perceiving that all factors influence each other, constantly reforming in multidimensional interacting cycles. Therefore, the Western knowledge system is reductionist, fragmented, and compartmentalized while the indigenous knowledge system sees problems holistically as a set of relationships. Knopf (2015) argues that indigenous knowledge and practices are not static, and solely traditional, but they are dynamic, innovative, and changing with the influence of new technologies, and political development.

Agrawal (1995a) categorizes the claimed differences between indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge: substantive (subject matter and characteristic differences); methodological and epistemological (methods of investigating reality); and contextual. Agrawal (1995a) argues against dichotomizing indigenous knowledge and scientific or Western knowledge vs indigenous knowledge. First, because numerous philosophers of science failed to find concrete demarcation criteria between science and non-science and no methodology for distinguishing the science from non-science has been found until now. Second, science is also anchored in a specific milieu as any other system of knowledge. Third, there is no aspect of Western daily-life that science is not involving and influencing. Fourth, there are similarities between Western science and indigenous knowledge, for instance in agroforestry and taxonomy. Fifth, there are contact, diversity, exchange, communication, learning and transformation among different knowledge system and beliefs. Agrawal (1995a) proposes that instead of putting all western knowledge in one category as Western knowledge or science, or all non-Western knowledge or science as indigenous knowledge, it is much better to accept the differences within these categories and find similarities across them.

Contra Agrawal, Thamas Heyd argues that all scientific knowledge is not Western knowledge as there is non-Western scientific knowledge (as presented by Agrawal, 1995b). Although Warren

(1970) does not reject Agrawal's criticism against dividing science and indigenous knowledge, he points out that indigenous knowledge is not inferior to the global system, but it is not easily available until it is recorded, because even the local communities or ethnic groups do not know it. In contesting Agrawal, who contends that trying to conserve indigenous knowledge *ex situ* is committing the same mistake that science has committed, Warren (1970) argues that for the dichotomy between indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge to disappear, indigenous knowledge should be recorded to make it available to the global community (Agrawal, 1995b).

As to the nature of indigenous knowledge and science, Showers posits that both systems of knowledge are attempts to understand the universe in their own terms within a given society and none of them are constant for they are in an evolutionary state all the time (as presented by Agrawal, 1995b). Serrano concurs with Agrawal (1995b) that indigenous knowledge is a product of a long period of time within an identifiable culture or society. If this is so, indigenous knowledge also exists among the Western culture just as in any other society in the world. Kohler-Rollefson (as presented by Agrawal, 1995b) contends that the difference between science and indigenous knowledge is that the latter is practically produced in the field through several years of hard work, as opposed to scientific knowledge that is mostly written in a book which may or may not be put in practice. Agrawal (1995b) concedes that there is a difference between science and indigenous knowledge but it is not in their substantive methodology, epistemology, and context, but rather in their relationship to power.

Donaldo Macedo (1999), however, disputes that a global consensus and understanding about indigenous knowledge cannot be achieved, based on reductionist binary arguments, that is, Western versus indigenous knowledge. Likewise, colonized experience cannot be restricted to developing countries. Macedo reasons that a colonized experience exists even in developed countries, such as in the concentration camps without barbed wire in the form of ghettos, rural mountains of Appalachia, and Indian reservations. The essence of indigenous knowledge exists in the life experience of those who are colonized, which cannot be restricted to the developing world. However, Macedo's comprehensive understanding of colonization is questionable, particularly because he understands colonization in terms of economic deprivation, such as poverty, violence, illiteracy, human exploitation, and human misery. But colonization in Africa is not only about economic deprivation, but also deprivation of self-identity, values, self-knowledge, and self-

esteem by the colonizers. It is a clear display of power exertion and domination of the indigenous peoples by foreigners. It is deprivation of their culture, values, language, and knowledge, not just through corrupted governance, but through military power. The African nations' experience of colonization cannot be placed on par with that of economic deprivation because of corrupted government systems in the developed countries.

With regard to development, indigenous knowledge theorists adumbrated five claims (Agrawal, 1995b): compared to the Western scientific approach to development, it is cost-effective, participatory in development processes and facilitates sustainability; it is local knowledge, therefore it is unique to a given culture or society; it is the basis for local-level decision-making pertaining to development such as agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural resources management, and it is passed down from generations through words; women in particular, have particular insights and contribute to the indigenous knowledge.

Agrawal (1995a: 418) maintains that the five characteristics that distinguish indigenous knowledge from science are: (1) it is embedded in its particular community; (2) it is contextually bound; (3) it does not believe in individualist values; (4) it does not create a subject/object dichotomy; and (5) it requires a commitment to the focal context, unlike Western knowledge that values mobility and weakens local roots.

The difference between indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge is philosophical because of socio-cultural processes and worldviews. However, there is consensus among scholars that indigenous knowledge is an alternative to the mainstream knowledge system (Western science or modern knowledge system) (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019). Table 2 contains a summary of the main differences between indigenous knowledge and Western scientific knowledge.

Table 2: Summary of the differences between indigenous and scientific knowledge

| Indigenous knowledge | Western-style scientific knowledge |
|---|---|
| It is transmitted orally, through folklore, legend, imitation, and demonstration. | It uses writing as a means of transmitting the knowledge. |
| Knowledge is gained through observation, participation in situations, real-life experiences, trial and error. | Knowledge is acquired through teaching and is imbibed in abstraction. |

| | |
|--|---|
| It is founded on the spiritual, that is, the world and its components are infused with spirit, therefore it includes both animate and inanimate objects. | It distinguishes between animate and inanimate objects. |
| The world is perceived as interrelated, that is, all forms of life, including humans, are interrelated and interdependent parts of one ecosystem. | The world is viewed from a human perspective, with humans regarded as superior to nature, with the authority to exploit it. |
| It is holistic and integrative, rooting itself in a culture of kinship between the natural and supernatural realms. | It is reductionist and fragmentary. It reduces and delineates boundaries to the point that every relationship can be treated as a distinct whole. |
| It values intuition, emotional involvement, and subjective certainty in perception. | It uses logic, analysis, and replication of measurement to determine results. |
| It is the result of long periods of close interaction with the natural environment and natural phenomena. | It relies on mathematical and quantitative measurements. |
| It is informal and culture-specific. | It is formal and de-cultured. |
| It is inculcated into individuals from birth onwards. Its distribution is fragmentary and has no grand repository. | It is generated through global networks of institutions of higher learning. |

Source: Researcher's compilation (2022)

A solution proposed by scholars is to steer clear of a binary position – that is, an essentialist position that perceives realities categorically, such as indigenous vs European, indigenous vs colonialism, indigenous vs science or academic knowledge. A dichotomous (an “either or”) mode of perception values the one and devalues the other and leaves no room for dialogue. Rejecting the position that argues for the categorically defined opposition stance of either indigenous knowledge or science, Knopf (2015: 183) proposes a metaphor of the “polar point of a contact field where both knowledge systems face each other from various positions within the field, depending on the discipline and aspect, degree of openness of the discipline, and the history of their contact.”

3.3.2. Indigenous knowledge, culture, and M&E

Basing their research on the American Indian community, LaFrance et al. (2012) strongly argue that indigenous evaluation is a culture-centered evaluation and is an epitome of a context-sensitive evaluation exercise. The importance of context is beyond reasonable doubt in evaluation practices, particularly because programs can only be understood in their particular relationship to place, setting, and community. Nonetheless, context does not only require sensitivity to its environment but also to its epistemological paradigms, because neither the post-positivist nor the constructivist paradigm are non-western paradigms. But indigenous evaluation demands a paradigm that embodies indigenous worldviews, that is, a belief that all things are living, spiritual entities and

that they are interrelated with knowledge (LaFrance et al., 2012). Indigenous knowledge comes from tradition, the creation of stories, clan origins, ancestors, dreams, visions, ceremony, and mostly from daily lived experience. This way of perceiving the world opposes a linear or hierarchical perception of the world.

LaFrance et al. (2012) contend that empirical methodology is not congruent with an indigenous way of thinking, especially because experience is a way of knowing, albeit experience could be misinterpreted. They further argue that indigenous evaluation cannot be standardized; however, guiding methods based on indigenous ways of knowing are indispensable. Granted that indigenous methods of evaluation may overlap with qualitative research methods, but the two are not synonymous – not all indigenous evaluation is qualitative, nor are all qualitative methods consonant with indigenous context. LaFrance et al. (2012) emphasize that at the core of an indigenous evaluation method is storytelling, metaphor, symbols, and textual references, because they tie to the culture of the people and their place.

Stories use lexical forms, visual symbols or metaphors, songs, and prayers and they are the means through which the consequences of lived experience are understood. Metaphors replace the logical model of the western concept, particularly because they do not necessarily represent causal models; they represent images that convey meanings in the specific cultural context of the program and the evaluand. Evaluation design and process in indigenous evaluation demand respect for tribal values. Identifying data, sources of data and establishing timelines, analysis and reporting – although similar to the normal evaluation design – require that cultural and community contexts be taken into consideration. Honoring individual and community gifts has to do with involving the community in the process of designing and implementation of the evaluation.

The axiology of indigenous evaluation is intertwined with the notion of relationship or relational accountability. In other words, the methodological approach to indigenous evaluation is based on the community context, demonstrating respect, reciprocity, and responsibility. It entails honoring places, gifts of individuals, community, and sovereignty (LaFrance et al., 2012). The role of evaluator is a position of partnership that facilitates reflection and negotiation (respect). Information-gathering strategies are relational but new strategies can be created and used as context-specific situations demand in the course of evaluation. In the context of this study, the

most suitable approach is the holistic understanding, rather than isolating variables to explore causality and generalizability, as is the case in the Western epistemological stance. Dissemination of the result of evaluation is a time celebration.

3.3.3. Indigenous knowledge and M&E approaches

The debate over whether evaluation should be culturally relevant has been ongoing in the evaluation discourse. In particular, Chilisa et al (2016) argue vehemently that the global effort to respond to the issue through culturally responsive practice, especially by the social justice paradigm, is inadequate in creating room to incorporate African voices and worldviews. Several similar arguments are marshaled to exhibit the inadequacy of the paradigms, theories, approaches, and models employed by the evaluation enterprises. Among others, M&E standardizes program implementation, indicators for evaluation, and measurements. For example, M&E in Africa and in developing countries in general is adopting Western epistemological approaches. This is especially evident in how the West is reaffirming its power through the globalization of knowledge (Chilisa, Major, Gaotlhobogwe, *et al.*, 2016). Although participatory methodologies – such as the ones espoused by the social justice paradigms – are deemed to have been adapted to be more appropriate to the way of life of most Africans, there is no consensus on the part of evaluators regarding the level of stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process.

Chilisa et al. (2016) proposed an African relational-based approach to remedy the inadequacy of the Western-influenced evaluation approaches. Some of the emerging indigenous evaluation approaches that “share relational ways of perceiving reality and of being, ways of knowing, and value systems that together make up an African relational paradigm” (Chilisa et al., 2016: 317), include the following: postcolonial indigenous paradigms (Chilisa, 2012); African worldview (Carroll, 2008); the Afrocentric worldview and Ubuntu² philosophy (Asante, 1990, 1998; Mkabela, 2005; Muwanga-Zake, 2009; Reviere, 2001); and ethno-philosophy (Chilisa & Malunga, 2012; Chilisa & Preece, 2005; Easton, 2012). African ontological reality is relational, that is, it pertains to a relationship among beings – both living and non-living beings – as epitomized by the Ubuntu philosophy. Furthermore, its epistemological system is also relational, as opposed to individualistic Euro-Western epistemological systems. Such relational epistemology is oriented to

² Ubuntu is an African word meaning ...

“an affect-symbolic imagery such that an affective evaluator studies reality through the interaction of affect and symbolic imagery” coupled with relational axiology built around respect for others (Chilisa et al., 2016: 319).

Chilisa et al. (2016) demonstrate African relational-based evaluation approaches in three evaluation approaches: (1) Ethno-philosophy and proverb-based evaluation: This approach argues that language, proverbs, metaphors, folklores, stories, songs, artifacts, and oral traditions are pools of African literature, concepts and theories that can inform new evaluation theories and practices. (2) Afrocentric worldview and Ubuntu philosophy: This approach combines Western participatory paradigms whereby stakeholders participate in the process of evaluation and the evaluator would be immersed in the society being transform or incarnate the community. (3) Ideal community development evaluation: This approach is based on the five Ubuntu principles, namely: sharing and collective ownership of opportunities, responsibilities, and challenges; the importance of people and relationships over things; participatory decision-making and leadership; loyalty; and reconciliation. In addition, this approach is reinforced by proverbs. Importantly, two evaluation approaches, namely the adaptive evaluation approach and the least indigenized approach are deemed inadequate for indigenous evaluation systems, because the former lacks an approach for valuing, and the latter does not address the fundamental question of worldviews that inform evaluation theory and practices in Africa.

Anthropologist Paul Sillitoe (1998) adds a caveat that although indigenous knowledge is important, its proponents need to refrain from romanticizing it, particularly because indigenous knowledge is often local knowledge and, in many cases, it is hardly possible to analyze it to make it understandable, accessible, and relevant to the outsiders such as scientists and policy-makers and to develop an integrated theory and a single paradigm that covers all knowledge traditions. Furthermore, it is difficult to capture the concepts expressed in idioms, featuring symbols, myths, rites, and so on, particularly because the concepts could be distorted and knowledge is reduced to words alone, whereas people transfer much knowledge between generations through traditions learned and practical experiences that cannot be translated into words. Nonetheless, the lack of respect for indigenous knowledge by many Western scientists is due to the assumption that technological superiority is a panacea for all difficulties; this is also a barrier for development.

Nicole R. Bowman-Farrel (2018), from North America, pointed out that such lack of respect for indigenous knowledge of indigenous people (who are the inhabitants of the land) is negative labeling them as pagan based on Christian influence. Until this day, such perception has been held by the West and this is distorting the experience of indigenous people. Therefore, “evaluators who approach an indigenous community should not expect to impose a model, evaluation design, instruments, or tools upon the members of that community” (Bowman-Farrel, 2018: 4). This is because Western evaluation and indigenous evaluation differ in the ways in which knowledge is created and transmitted. Western evaluation is privileged with written and publication over the oral and traditional indigenous knowledge which is passed down to others through language, ceremonies, and songs. It also arrogates ownership prioritizing on data, knowledge, and intellectual property of the individual. Subject matter experts are privileged to report findings in formats and venues accessible and acceptable to evaluators, academics or study funders (Bowman-Farrel, 2018).

Indigenous evaluation is motivated by the community context and cultural values, practices, and experiences of participants. Understanding the root causes of community issues, gaps and problems related to health, social issues, education, or economics of the participant requires closer work between social justice and evaluation (Bowman-Farrel, 2018). According to LaFrance and Nichols (as quoted by Bowman-Farrel, 2018) there are four core tenets of indigenous knowledge: being people of a place; recognizing our gifts; honoring family and community; and respecting sovereignty. Evaluation cannot be performed without a process, content, context and community. To perform an indigenous evaluation, Bowman espouses a culturally responsive indigenous evaluation model. Such a model is not flat but it is multidimensional, entailing physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional aspects of evaluation. Other Western theories and methods are also recommended to perform indigenous evaluation, such as community-based participatory research, Tribally driven participator research, Tribal critical theory, Decolonizing and Indigenous theory and methods, the Tri-lateral model, and the Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples (Bowman-Farrel, 2018).

3.4. Conventional vs participatory M&E in practice

This section reviews publications on empirical works on conventional and participatory M&E. Key works by Estrella and Gaventa (1998), Probst (2002) and a collection of empirical research published under the title *Learning from change: Issues and experiences in participatory monitoring and evaluation* (Estrella, Blauert, Campilan, et al., 2000) are discussed as representative work for the review although other works have also been considered. Estrella and Gaventa (1998) reviewed several publications on empirical participatory M&E, whereas Probst did empirical research in Honduras on the participatory M&E to assess its benefit and limitation. The publication on *Learning from Change* (2000) contains empirical research on Participatory M&E from several countries: Nepal, Mexico, Bolivia, Laos, Brazil, the Philippines, Colombia, Ecuador, USA (West Virginia), Palestine, Zambia, and Mongolia. This section also includes articles from an influential work entitled *Participation: The new tyranny?* and edited by K.U. Cook and U. Kothari (2001) – a collection of twelve papers critiquing the practice of participation in the field of development. However, there is no point in belaboring the points of all the works here; the researcher reviewed only key works and findings relevant to the study's key questions, to assess the differences between conventional and participatory M&E and issues related to both approaches.

Regarding conventional M&E – albeit in a variety of forms – its major hallmark is its sole orientation and formulation to satisfy the needs of funding agencies, policy-makers and project staff. Its positivist epistemological approach to M&E attempts to produce objective, value-free, and quantifiable information (Probst, 2002). To achieve such information, external professionals are contracted to perform the evaluation without significant involvement of stakeholders in any of the processes of evaluation and its results (Estrella, 2000). Indicators, questions to be asked, methods to be used, defining measure of success, and decision to be served are specified and ratified by funding agencies or project staff, whereas local stakeholders or beneficiaries have no input in any of these (Probst, 2002). Local stakeholders might be involved at the consultative level or might serve as a source of information (extraction of information) and as audience of the evaluation result. The purpose of conventional M&E for funding institutions is to determine the merit, impact, or effectiveness of a project for public accountability for soliciting future funding, mostly through summative evaluation (Probst, 2002). For the project managers, it serves as a means of improving project planning and management through an ongoing cycle of reflection and

informing what corrective actions should be taken. In doing so, it provides up-to-date information whether or not the project is on the right track to meet the intended objectives and whether or not resources are being used properly. For researchers, conventional M&E is a research tool mainly used to “generate conceptual knowledge” through lessons learned, to test theories, and to generalize principles across time and space (Probst, 2002: 29).

The M&E process, whether conventional or participatory, involves four major steps: planning the framework for M&E (deciding on the objectives, information to be collected, methods to be used, and criteria for judgment); collecting information; analyzing data and using it as a basis to take action; and documenting, reporting and sharing information (Estrella, 2000). A conventional M&E involves in these activities the project staff and an external consultant; and it might also involve some stakeholders as consultants, using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques only to extract information for analysis and reporting purposes. What is to be measured and what information needs to be collected are matters of deciding the study foci as there are potentially many other issues to be monitored and evaluated. In the conventional M&E, monitoring focuses on documenting the project performance, whereas evaluation focuses on measuring whether previous objectives and goals have been achieved, using a logical framework as a means of assessment. Being positivist epistemologist (objectivity is *sine qua non*), conventional M&E greatly values a hypothetico-deductive mode of inquiry, qualitative measures, (quasi)-experimental design, and statistical analysis as the paragon of methods for scientific inquiry (Probst, 2002). Hence, baseline studies (pre-test) and post-test, pre-defined variables, and objective, verifiable, valid and reliable indicators are fundamentally important in the collection of information. The external evaluator makes an interpretation, judgment, and recommendation based on the result of these scientific inquiry methods.

On the other hand, PM&E is purported to be a response to the criticism against conventional M&E and claims that it involves “a wider range of stakeholders at every stage of the process” of evaluation. But such involvement occurs in many varied forms, that is, from small initiative to entire regions or countries, involving a range of audiences in varying degrees of involvement, which entails methodological implication, including its process, methods, and results (Guijt, 2000). Estrella (2000) identifies at least four common features of PM&E, namely: learning, participation, negotiation, and flexibility. The emphasis in the PM&E process is on the

involvement of stakeholders in all processes of M&E, beginning from planning, to gathering, analyzing, and using the information. Stakeholders' values and construction of meaning or knowledge are the basis of the approach, and they are serious partners and own the process (Probst, 2002). Ultimately, the quality of PM&E depends on *who* is involved, and *how* they are involved at each step (Guijt, 2000), but it also includes *who owns* the process, *who utilizes* the findings, and *who benefits* from the M&E.

Who should be involved depends on the kind of M&E and its purpose. In PM&E the purpose of involving stakeholders is to “enhance shared understandings ... to increase the participants’ engagement, sense of ownership, and self-determination, to strengthen organizations and promote institutional learning” (Probst, 2002: 29). Probst (2002: 29) further notes that participation in this sense is not an instrument of reporting and auditing, but instead, it is a means of enabling organizations and groups to track their progress and success and “enhance their capacities for self-reflection, learning, and social responsiveness.” Hence, participation in PM&E should be aimed at promoting self-reliance and decision-making of the local stakeholders. Outside professionals may serve as facilitators. PM&E has no particular focus regarding what needs to be measured, because it is grounded on the premise that the perspectives of different stakeholders must be included in defining the evaluation focus. It is therefore “relevant to local users, action-oriented, group-based, situational, simple and evolving...” (Probst, 2002: 188).

Since PM&E emphasizes the purpose of M&E, it employs a combination of different methods and methodologies to ensure rigor and participation as well as to accommodate different information needs. Therefore, one of the key areas that conventional M&E and PM&E arguably differ, is on methodology. The root of the difference lies in their differing epistemological stance. PM&E’s proponents are constructivist, believing that people construct their own realities; hence, realities are absolutely dependent on the observer (constructor). Therefore, inquiries must be undertaken in such a way that they disclose those differently-constructed realities, which are constructed by all concerned parties. Probst (2002) points out that through the process of exposing these realities, a negotiated entry into new constructed realities emerge that every participant might agree to, through negotiation. Hermeneutics methodology is preferred and the outcomes of the process are not conclusions and neither are they recommendations; *rather, they are an agenda for negotiation*. Guijt (2000) agrees that the differences between PM&E and conventional M&E lie in the

participatory process. Methods in PM& E serve to identify indicators, reach consensus, collect information, collate and analyze data, and facilitate feedback. However, there is no consistent one-fit-for-all method; instead, various methods are implemented by practitioners, such as a visualized format that gives a score or rank, semi-structured interviews, impact flow diagrams, matrix ranking, wealth ranking/social mapping, grassroots development framework (or the cone), household livelihood strategies, bio-resource flows, story-telling, mapping key judges, and questionnaires (Gujt, 2000).

However, Levigne Delville (quoted in Neef, 2003: 492) observes that in participation the only moment of participation is during the diagnosis and inquiry period. Participatory methods need to be done over a longer term with the continuous involvement of project staff, with communities to negotiate among different interest groups and to challenge inequalities at the local level (Probst, 2002). Probst's (2002) study revealed that the claims of PM&E that its result informs decision-making cannot fully be substantiated, especially when priorities, objectives, activities, and responsibilities change rapidly within the project context. It is also problematic to substantiate the use of PRA as an instant analytical tool for the analysis of local knowledge. This is because "local knowledge and perspective are not common goods of a local community" (Neef, 2003: 493); therefore, they are not easily extractable. Local knowledge is non-linguistic, tacit, and generated in practice (Mohan, 2001). Francis (2001) observes that subtle "multidimensional and multi-sensory knowledge is lost by reducing it to flat, two-dimensional, and language-free matrices" (Neef, 2003: 493). Furthermore, Kothari (2001) points out that local knowledge is constructed by culture, social and political interaction of the community and is embedded in power relations.

In conventional M&E, methods are fixed and decided by scientists and policy-makers, whereas they are diverse and are not fixed in PM&E. Indicators are pre-defined and are 'objective' in conventional M&E, whereas in PM&E they are flexible and negotiated to accommodate different views. However, Estrella (2000), although espousing PM&E, admits that there is no clear distinction between conventional M&E and PM&E in practice because "there is a wide continuum of participatory and conventional M&E approaches" (2000: 5). For instance, both conventional M&E and PM&E employ an external evaluator, although their roles are different, as the former plays the major role and the latter is a facilitator. In PM&E, rigor and external validity are not totally ruled out but the proponents argue that the need for rigor depends on the purpose of M&E

and who uses it. PM&E should use conventional methods and rigor if the information is needed for scientific use. Further, both approaches use the same methods of inquiry: qualitative and quantitative methods with the same tools.

Dino M. Campilan (2000) points out that the concern of M&E is to track changes that occurred due to a given intervention; hence, the main focus is measuring change and judging performance to decide future action; in this regard, PM&E is not different from that of conventional M&E approaches. The major difference would be the “conceptualization of *how* to measure change, *who* is involved, and *for what* purposes” (Campilan, 2000: 194, italics in original). But Campilan claims that PM&E goes beyond measuring performance and change as it seeks to “create an enabling environment for stakeholder groups” (Campilan 2000: 196).

Estrella (2000) synthesized the experiences of PM&E in different places from different disciplinary perspectives and concluded that the major issue that PM&E attempts to address is not what is measured, but rather, “who is measuring and how different concerns and interests are negotiated and represented” (2000: 1). Participation is key and the “‘axis’ around which the PM&E process revolves” and participants are stakeholders, which include “beneficiaries; project or program staff and management; researchers; local and central government politicians and technical staff; and funding agencies” (Estrella, 2000: 1).

The key differences between conventional M&E and PM&E that emerge from the above analysis, are their epistemological stance and point of departure, and the role of the stakeholders and evaluator. Methodologically, they have insignificant differences. Next, the study undertakes a close analysis of PM&E. However, the emergence and practice of PM&E deserves a closer review and assessment, which is undertaken in the ensuing section, because it was proposed as a panacea for the problem raised by conventional approaches.

3.5. Emergence of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) sprouts from different approaches of M&E that champion participation. Cousins and Whitmore (1998) explored the meaning of participatory evaluation (PE) by identifying and explaining the key conceptual dimensions. The authors explicate that participatory evaluation is an umbrella name for different approaches that espouse

participation, such as collaborative inquiry, P-PE (practical participatory evaluation) and T-PE (transformational participatory evaluation). P-PE is geared to support a program or organization to make decisions and solve problems. Its core promise is that “stakeholder participation in evaluation will enhance evaluation relevance, ownership, and thus utilization” (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998: 6). Utilization has to do with three types of uses of evaluation findings: instrumental, conceptual, and symbolic. But the utilization evaluation concept developed through time; first its role was to associate the process and the finding of evaluation, then it expanded its role as a planned-change agent, and finally it incorporated in its role organizational learning and change.

The P-PE focuses on practical dimensions – it is utilization-focused – but relies on the expert status of a professional evaluator within the traditional evaluation approach status quo and developed in the global North. Its scholastic milieu where P-PE was hatched was the 1960s and 1970s women’s and civil rights-organized movement in the United States, acknowledging “a generation’s consciousness of the role that gender, race, ethnicity, and class play in constructing knowledge legitimizing ‘knowers’” (Brisolara, 1998: 26). Philosophical currency that contributed to the emergence of P-PE is the dissatisfaction with the orthodox social science practices and its critiques in the 1970s. The questions posed include: Can objectivity be an ideal critical regulative assumption for inquiry? Who can be the inquirer? What can be known and how can a social reality be known? P-PE was borne out of such pragmatic philosophical questions and assumptions that knowledge is socially constructed, and human agency is of paramount importance for understanding the entire human life. In other words, the knower and the known are intricately intertwined.

Evaluators also admitted that the evaluation practice suffer from methodological, epistemological, and ontological limitations, in particular that their practices of evaluation have often been highly political; therefore, they were compelled to respond to the needs of their context, such as program culture, socio-cultural, moral-ethical and political economic contexts. Therefore, the focus on the knower obliged the evaluators to grapple with answering the questions: “Who uses or needs evaluation?” “How can we promote utilization?” For such questions, a utilization-focused evaluation argued for the importance of participants in evaluation, that is, “the presence of an identifiable individual or group of people who personally care about the evaluation and the

findings it generates” (Brisolara, 1998: 27). The P-PE model committed itself to integrate action and participation in the evaluation to facilitate democratic decision-making processes, assuming that democratic decision-making is valued and experienced by stakeholders. Models such as stakeholder-responsive evaluation, stakeholder-based evaluations, development program theory, democratic evaluation, teacher research, and decision-making approaches are some of the models that contributed to the P-PE agenda of “democratic pluralism, stakeholder involvement, utilization through action, and the evaluator’s role as facilitator or negotiator” (Brisolara, 1998: 27).

On the other hand, T-PE is predicated on the foundational principle of emancipation and social justice; it is committed to empower those who are less powerful. It advocates democratization of social change. Therefore, it deals with these questions: Who creates and controls the production of knowledge? How is the evaluation conducted (the process)? It requires critical reflection, allowing participating stakeholders to consider a broad range of social factors, including their own biases and assumptions.

Therefore, T-PE argues for transformative action-oriented evaluation, which is a process of an ideological nature. T-PE assumes that empowering the less powerful is a key catalyst for social change. T-PE insists that there is a political connection *between knowledge, power, and control* and therefore rejects objectivity as the result of colonization. T-PE has its root in the global South, particularly in Latin America and Africa in the 1960s and 1970s (Brisolara, 1998). Many Latin Americans and Africans were wrestling with war and poverty during these decades. Revolutions were taking place in many of these countries, such as Cuba and Nicaragua, guided by liberation theology in Latin America, and the struggle against colonial powers in many African countries contributed to the embrace of radical ideas and actions. Evaluators responded to these situations, initiating engagement and radical social change. As the child of its time, T-PE drew its model from revolutionary social change and from “the power in action that permits, constricts, creates and defines such changes” (Brisolara, 1998: 30).

However, philosophically it was borne out of Karl Marx’s theories of radical social change, which argues that action and radical change are foundational for liberation. Evaluation attempted to respond to exigencies of praxis to meet human needs. Therefore, T-PE puts individuals whose lives are at risk, the center of evaluation – its beginning, continuation, and end. One of the key

factors was, however, to understand the power relationships. Power dynamics do not only manifest in direct control, coercion, and influence; on the contrary, they are also pervasive and subtle, influencing desires, opinions, and thoughts of other people. T-PE entails power dynamics, especially in the notion of participation, which allows stakeholders to have a share in evaluation; furthermore, T-PE works within the ethical premises of social justice and equality.

As a response to the demand of the time, different participatory models for T-PE began to appear, such as morally engaged evaluation, emancipatory and critical action research, participatory research, collaborative action research, participatory evaluation, and participatory action research (PAR). These models are all value-based concepts. T-PE attempts to respond to the crucial question: Whose value is promoted? Hence, pluralism became the T-PE fundamental foundation for its assumption, that is, recognizing different perspectives (stories, paradigms, and values) as “a source of legitimation, a means of including diverse, often silenced, voices in the evaluation setting, and a guide in choosing methods appropriate to the circumstances and suitable for training participants with diverse skills and abilities” (Brisolara, 1998: 36).

These two strands of stance, namely P-PE and T-PE – although they seem to be propagating different interests, it is hardly possible to claim that participatory evaluation originated only from one of them; instead, it is a procreation of the cross-pollination of both strands. However, quite a few crucial questions and reflections have been leveled against the premises of PE. Among the most pressings are the issues of objectivity, PE rationales (Northern versus Southern PE), technical quality, general usefulness, the appropriateness of empowerment as a goal, and the role of the evaluator. However, Brisolara (1998: 39) argues that historically, P-PE and T-PE “draw from rich philosophical traditions and from a wealth of experience in the field of evaluation.” In doing so, PE tremendously contributes to evaluation theories and practices. Therefore, Brisolara (1998) adds a caveat that P-PE and T-PE are not contradictory notions, but that both have a commitment to participation. Their difference lies in their respective commitments.

Although PM&E shares a development story of P-PE and T-PE, as a field of M&E, according to Estrella (2000), it is the result of a 20-year participatory research tradition, participatory action research (PAR), participatory learning and action, participatory rural appraisal (PRA), farming systems research (FSR), and farming participatory research. However, it was in 1980s that the

concept of PM&E entered “the policy-making domain of larger donor agencies and development organizations” (Estrella, 2000: 1). Many donors’ interests in PM&E can be ascribed to several factors: the emphasis on achieving results and objectives, rather than financial reports; scarcity of funds; demand for greater accountability; demonstration of change or impact due to implementation of projects; emphasis on decentralization and devolution of central government policies; and NGOs’ and CBOs’ strength and capabilities of making decisions and involvement in development processes (Estrella, 2000). However, one of the key factors for the interest in PM&E arose from dissatisfaction with the conventional M&E or top-down approach to M&E.

Theoretically, it depends on the constructive theory of Guba and Lincoln (1989), who call themselves the fourth-generation evaluation theorists, arguing that realities are socially constructed and there is no value-free judgment. For them, evaluation can be divided into four generations. First, measurement-oriented evaluation, which emerged in the 1900s and it is associated with educational research and scientific management in business and industry. The second generation is description-oriented, which emphasized the achievement of objectives and analysis of the program’s strengths and weaknesses, aiming at refinements and revisions. The third generation is judgment-oriented evaluation, which conceptualizes that the programs themselves are problematic; therefore, goals are under scrutiny of evaluation. The fourth generation insists that evaluation must be a process of negotiation, involving various stakeholders more centrally into the evaluation process. The ensuing section evaluates the practice of PM&E from different angles, based on the works of practitioners and scholars of PM&E.

3.6. Challenges and limitations of PM&E

This section reviews a number of publications on empirical research conclusions, with regard to key determinants of PM&E, namely: methodology, conceptual framework, theories, epistemology, participation *per se*, cost, time, and assumption. The works are not discussed chronologically; instead, ideas, concepts and findings are integrated for the sake of convenience of analysis undertaken for gathering findings around the key determinants of M&E, per the main research question.

3.6.1. Methodological issues

Katherine Pasteur and Jutta Blauert (2000) conducted a literature review on PM&E in Latin America with 100 organizations, networks, and individuals, 94 documents, using conventional literature review methods. The documents discussed are primarily on agricultural themes, although the health, urban, social, children's and water/sanitation sectors are lightly touched. They focused on the following determinant of M&E in their assessments: methodologies, creation of indicators, temporal (that is, *when* PM&E would be applied), what is monitored and evaluated, time, cost, training, participation, organizational learning, and learning and sharing. The review revealed that there is no consistent or one-fits-all methodology and approach to PM&E for methods such as descriptive narrative, discussion groups, interviews, recipient observation, a large gathering of men and women including authorities, problem-solving exercises, case study with structured interviews, self-esteem associative strength, resourcefulness, informal interviews, questionnaires, brainstorming, and group discussion, and highly visual techniques were used as methods. The documents also disclosed that PM&E is used throughout project cycles to monitor and evaluate planned activities, outcomes, and overall effects of the intervention.

However, one of the severe disparagements against PM&E is that *it lacks rigor*. Rigor refers to scientific standards in methods, indicators, data collection and interpretation and maintaining strict consistency in the process of application of the standard. It is defined as “a characteristic of evaluation studies that refers to the strength of the design's underlying logic and the confidence with which conclusions can be drawn” (Braverman & Arnold, 2008: 72). Methodological rigor is required by different stakeholders who are interested in the result of the evaluation, such as funding agencies, grant reviewers, legislators, and academicians. In fact, rigor contributes to evaluation quality. Evaluation design, measurement strategies, program monitoring, and program participation and attrition are purported to be specific elements of rigor in the evaluation process. But if rigor is applied in PM&E, it mitigates its core principle – participation of local stakeholders. The higher up the information needed along the type of analysis, the further removed the local group, the greater the difficulty to involve the primary stakeholder in selecting, collecting, interpreting, and using information.

Martin et al. (2011), however, argue that those non-experimental and participatory approach evaluations can be done with greater rigor through triangulation of data collection, using

qualitative methods. But validation of the information gained from the PRA, for instance, is accused of being less rigorous. Chambers (1997) recommends that PRA practitioners make use of their best judgment to ensure validity and reliability of information generated by implementation of the tools. Such prescription will allow the uncertainty of the result as it depends on the judgment of the practitioner. Objectivity in the participatory approach is virtually unrealistic and it is illusionary, for it claims that it listens to and takes account all local perspectives. This is because rigor and community participation seem to be unachievable. PM&E employs unskilled participants, which mitigates the quality and credibility of information or findings. Participatory tools exclude people's lives that are messy and do not fit with the structured participatory tools (Kothari, 2001: 147). Further, Probst (2002) points out that most participatory research processes and especially in PM&E, conceal the interest and priorities of those marginalized individuals who are not organized into groups. Therefore, argues Probst (2002), it must include conventional and consultative surveys as complements to fill the gaps that require capturing the notion of those who are not organized into groups.

Another major issue of PM&E regarding methods is which method is more participatory. Choosing the right method is a challenge as identifying the essence of a method that fits a given context and can best be identified through negation or trial and error which is time consuming (Campilan, 2000). Guijt (2000) also critiques that; for instance, visual methods do not always create participatory engagement, so also participatory appraisal can be used for data collection and for joint analysis, but it does not ensure participation. Questionnaires and interviews can be more participatory than visual methods which might be extractive and un-analytical, and group discussion which tends to culminate in consensus. Guijt (2000: 208), however, insists that "the potential contribution of methods to successful PM&E derives from an interactive and analytical process, which requires skilled facilitation." In PM&E methods are adjustable and need to be developed with stakeholders and be lucid for users and adjustable to be participatory, which in turn requires understanding local conditions and communication forms.

However, participatory methods suffer from *tyranny of techniques and instrumentalist* character which are against its claim of empowering the local stakeholders. Cleaver (2001) observed that the focus on techniques disengages participation from its original intent of empowering the marginalized. The PRA focuses on the product, not on the process; although it claims to be flexible,

it follows a standardized and rigid procedure (Cleaver, 2001). Cleaver (2001) also argues that PRA can easily be “translated into a managerial exercise based on ‘toolboxes’ of procedures and techniques” (2001: 53). Its framework is already determined in advance (Hildyard et al., 2001: 59–60). Henkel and Stirrat (2001) further indicate that the participatory approach is usually used by development agencies to make projects more efficient. Mosse (2001:17) goes further, stating that “participatory approaches have proved compatible with top-down planning systems, and have not necessarily heralded changes in prevailing institutional practices of development.”

The documentation of the findings and the M&E process in PM&E is another area of weakness as it involves many participants and layers, particularly if the local communities are involved, because it requires accommodating varied communication styles, literacy, and practice in registering information. The lack of documentation is one of the weaknesses of PM&E (Guijt, 2000) although consistent questions put forward by the proponents of PM&E, demands an answer: Who needs and uses the documentation and in what style does it keep the focus on the participation? Such questions are a way of defending PM&E by its proponents. Campilan (2000: 200), however, insists that documentation is crucial “for building a more coherent body of knowledge in PM&E. However, for most practitioners, there is generally little time (and few resources) available for systematic, long-term documentation. Effective documentation often requires additional skills.” This indeed indicates that PM&E cannot be done without the help of professionals who have the skills of meta-level analysis and reporting in writing, which is most probably difficult to find in local stakeholders.

The lack of rigor, choosing the right participatory method, tyranny of techniques, instrumentalist character, and documentation of findings are some of the key issues that militate the claims of participatory M&E in the area of methods.

3.6.2. Issues of conceptual framework, theories and epistemology

Turner et al. (2014), aiming at the creation of an M&E framework for climate change adaptation for Western Alliance for Greenhouse Action in Australia, reviewed the M&E literature framework, drawing from national and international literature from current knowledge and practices. They argue that *there is no one-fits-all M&E framework*; therefore, frameworks need to be selected and adopted for the kind of M&E purpose. However, they point out the weakness of a logical

framework as a linear and cause-effect method that does not incorporate flexibility and comprehensiveness can be remedied through Theory of Change (ToC), which is broader, *sets out a long-term vision, intermediate outcomes, indicators, thresholds and assumptions*; but it is time consuming to engage the participatory process. Both the logical framework and ToC can be combined to draw the benefits of their particular strength. However, it should be noted that their review also confirmed that the involvement of participation in M&E is time consuming.

Estrella and Gaventa's (1998) review further showed that inconsistent and incoherent definitions and conceptualizations of PM&E resulted in differing practices among PM&E practitioners. However, Estrella and Gaventa (1998) argue that despite the differing experiences and ways of doing PM&E, four common "principles" and five functions emerged from the documents they reviewed. The "principles" are: participation, learning, negotiation, and flexibility; the functions are: impact assessment, project management and planning, organizational strengthening or institutional learning, understanding and negotiating stakeholder perspective, and public accountability. But *PM&E has no prescribed blueprint approaches*, although many apply PRA as tools for processing PM&E, let alone consistent methodology.

Further, working towards a conceptual development of PM&E proved to be difficult, according to Campilan's (2000) analysis of twelve case studies. Campilan underlines that the concept is fundamentally important to analyze, classify, and formulate higher-level propositions. PM&E differs from other forms of M&E in its conceptualization of who will measure changes, who is involved, and why the measuring of changes has to be taken. Campilan's analysis revealed that there are varied concepts of PM&E because of the purpose and function of PM&E such as it might be used for organizational development and learning, or for influencing policy, or for ensuring greater public accountability. Although these are admirable claims, diverse understandings of PM&E create confusion and conflict of interpretation and lack of a common language (Campilan, 2000).

The attempt to identify non-negotiable or cornerstone principles entails answering the questions: Why is PM&E being undertaken and for whom? The answer to this question is that PM&E is practiced to enable the local stakeholders to "learn how to define and interpret changes for themselves, and hence to take greater control over their own development" and caters to the

“information needs and concerns of a much wider range of actors ...” (Campilan, 2000: 197). What is the role of participation in PM&E? Campilan answers these questions negatively: “Despite the rationale for promoting participation, there is a lack of hard evidence to demonstrate what difference participation actually makes to the M&E process.” When does participation take place in PM&E? In answering this question, Campilan admits that PM&E does not take place in uniform time and place throughout M&E process; likewise, the degree of participation by all stakeholders in PM&E may not have the same level or part as it varies at each point. It is incorrect to claim that PM&E is participatory based on the number of stakeholders involved. “The bottom line is to make sure that stakeholders are involved in deciding and planning who should participate, and how, at each stage of the PM&E process” (Campilan, 2000: 198).

Campilan’s (2000) assessment and analysis of conceptual development for PM&E resulted in questioning the importance of convergence in conceptualization of PM&E, common language, establishing cornerstones and core principles, and the need for professionalizing and mainstreaming PM&E as a field of study and practice, because conceptual development in PM&E means accepting diverse concepts of PM&E.

Regarding evaluation theory, Martin et al. (2011) favored Patton’s (1997) theory of evaluation, which espouses the view that evaluations should be judged by their utilities and actual use, that is, how the real people in the real world apply the findings of the evaluation. The theory argues that no evaluation is value free; therefore, the key question is, whose value frames the evaluation? Patton argued that utilization-focused theory of evaluation is characterized by a high degree of situational responsiveness and opens up the evaluation process for interaction between evaluator and primary intended users and this is valuable for a complex situation. Nonetheless, the aim of evaluation determines the design of a program or a project, as well as its quality. For example, if the evaluation is done for the purpose of demonstrating accountability, it should be done independently to achieve a certain level of objectivity.

Martin et al. (2011) insists on the importance of participation of stakeholders in the evaluation process, for their involvement in the designing and planning stages of the evaluation ensures the authenticity of the evaluation in terms of scope and sufficient rigor and provision of information. Patton (1997), in his theory of utilization-focused evaluation, argues that the evaluation process

must discover key stakeholders. But Martin et al. (2011) explicates that participation should include a diversity of users and needs to be accommodating and convenient for different genders, ethnic groups, differing socio-economic categories, especially the poor. It should be demand driven, pluralistic, adaptive, and support learning and capacity building. According to Lawrenz and Huffman (2003) there are at least four criteria to determine the extent of users' participation: type of evaluation information collected, the evaluation process, decisions concerning the data to be provided, and the use of evaluation findings. But the challenge to participatory evaluation is to use easy methods to collect, analyze, and interpret data insofar as it attempts to have the local community's active participation. Its shortcoming, argue Martin et al. (2011), is that *participatory monitoring creates indicators with the local community, which makes the indicators very specific and cannot be extrapolated and compared across other communities to produce knowledge.*

Several criticisms against the participatory approach (a populist) in development indicate that it is too local in scope and excludes broader and structural injustice (Cooke, 2001), and that it is obsessed with local as opposed to broader structures of injustice and oppression (Mohan & Stokke, 2000). It has a simplistic understanding of how power operates and is constituted and thus fails to comprehend how empowerment occurs. Given its inadequate understanding of the role of structure and agency in social change, it treats participation as a technical method of project work, rather than political methodology of empowerment.

However, proponents of PM&E rebut the criticism, consistently grounding their arguments on the foundational question of PM&E, namely: Who? In this case, who decides credibility and rigor? The answer for PM&E proponents is neither professional scientists nor external scientific standards; rather, the users decide credibility and rigor. A further argument put forward is that PM&E at the core is participatory and it must be locally relevant, action-oriented, adaptable, and simple, not scientifically complex. External validity also depends on who needs the information and by whom it is used. Hence, conventional standards of validity and rigor should be used, depending on the purpose of M&E and who needs the information. Guijt (2000: 210) observes that:

If monitoring is less about providing proof to others, and more about improving learning and planning, then participation of primary stakeholders can be prioritized ... if proof is needed

for scientific and/or policy audiences, then externally acceptable approaches might be needed, to demonstrate changes in ways that are compatible with these groups.

Although Estrella and Gaventa (1998) argue that qualitative and quantitative methods can possibly be applied to do PM&E, it is hardly possible to ensure standards of scientific rigor in PM&E particularly because PM&E requires community involvement. However, *they also argue that the balance of the scale between scientific rigor and community participation relies on the purpose of the M&E exercise.*

Three options can be used to ensure internal validity (Guijt, 2000): the sequential approach (participation first, then proceed to ensuring external validity); the comparability approach (compare between different projects or communities using standardized indicators); or develop a new rigor and credibility. Guijt (2000: 216) admits that due to the emphasis on participation, quality is compromised in the PM&E and concludes that, “more thorny questions relate particularly to acceptable levels of rigour.”

It is evident that in PM&E, there is no one-fits-all framework, no consistent and cohesive definition and conceptualization, no prescribed blueprint approach, the number of anticipated stakeholders is not a guarantee to exercise real participation, indicators are context-specific, it is too local in scope, and does not uncover structural injustice.

3.6.3. Participation issues

Judi Aibel (2004) examined publications since 1990 on PM&E at the international and national levels, focusing on water, sanitation and hygiene (WSH), to create PM&E tools for hygiene projects, water supply, and environmental health projects. Aibel argues that PM&E is preferred for such projects because it focuses on involving community stakeholders. This does not mean, however, that conventional or expert-driven M&E does not have a place in the M&E in the hygiene projects but it complements and serves as an alternative approach. Nonetheless, the key characteristic of PM&E (participation) is challenged as it is hard to decide the level of participation. Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation and the work of Robertson and Minkler (1994) on levels of participation, are considered to be the sources to identify levels of participation,

namely: donation, manipulation, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and community control.

Estrella and Gaventa's (1998)³ studies on PM&E literature indicate that there is a continuum of responsibility for PM&E as levels or modes of participation. Such continuum entails three levels of involvement and responsibilities in the process of initiating, developing, and implementing of PM&E. First, externally-led PM&E is one extreme of the continuum that an external or outsider assumes primary responsibility such as organizing to carry out the PM&E process. The assumption of this model is that the *outsider has unbiased and objective* point of view to keep the balance of views provided by the stakeholders as an input, and serves in producing tools, frameworks and facilitates the PM&E process. The second model in the continuum is a joint PM&E model in which responsibilities are shared by insiders and outsiders that is, there is substantive involvement of both in planning and implementation of PM&E activities. The third model of continuum is internally-led PM&E in which the insider assumes primary responsibility: initiating, developing, and implementing M&E activities. Community members and field-based staff are directly involved throughout the process in this model. But this model of participation requires considerable skills from the insider to design, develop, collect data, analyze, and synthesize the collected data required to perform the PM&E.

Aubel (2004) observed several challenges in the application of PM&E, although they are in vogue in the contemporary M&E enterprises. First, *organizational values, structures, and professional modes of practices* that are alienated from involving the local people and communities are obdurate to the principles of PM&E, that is, participation. Second, *domineering attitudes and behavior of development workers inhibit participation and learning in PM&E*. PM&E requires positive attitudes toward the community, which is subjective and depends on the individual. When there is a positive attitude in involving the community, it requires skills to incorporate the communities or beneficiaries. Robert Chambers (1997) complained that although there were ample participatory tools, since they are in the hands of development workers, there are many bad practices, that is, inappropriate attitudes and practices of development workers, such as disrespectful attitudes

³ Marisol Estrella and John Gaventa (1998) conducted a literature review on PM&E, using journal articles, unpublished grey literature, manuals, guides, policy documents, academic papers, annotated bibliographies, other reviews, and twenty cases for close studies from different sectors and contexts, such as NGOs, donors, research institutions, government, people's organizations, and communities.

toward the community, top-down attitude, impatient and domineering behavior. Third, *confusions on the meaning and concept of participation, particularly on the levels of participations deter effective application of the approach*. Fourth, for participatory approach to M&E is not just using participation techniques within a conventional M&E but it requires rethinking about who initiates, develops, undertakes and learns from it. Chambers (1997) argues that participation is meaningless without allowing those who are not in the position of power to take part, set agendas, make decisions, manage and control resources.

An obdurate challenge is the issue of power. The dynamics of participation is power sharing. The nub of the PM&E claim – participation – is challenged and mitigated as total participation is virtually impossible because of the issue of who decides, and who should be involved and who should not. According to Estrella and Gaventa (1998), the four principles of PM&E that create discomfort to development staff, are: participation, negotiation, openness to learning from others, and flexibility. At the core, PM&E is about participation, but it has encountered a huge challenge at its core principle because PM&E as a social process deals with the role of power. The question is, who controls and influences the PM&E practices particularly because unequal social relationships and positions in a given society are an inevitable reality. Power differences exist within the stakeholders, and at the institutional level such as within the village, program and at policy level. Openness and transparency are required, for real participation and negotiation must be achieved for meaningful participation to happen; but differing interests of differing groups, ages and gender exacerbate the challenges of negotiation. Unequal power relations among the participants stifle the voice of certain groups. Pasteur and Blauert's (2000) studies evinced that organizational learning is rarely addressed, and learning and sharing knowledge to the primary stakeholders is not addressed and neither is learning happening across organizations due to power issues.

Since the use of participatory methods does not ensure participation in PM&E, for a real participatory M&E, it places participation at the center of all its process, beginning from defining objectives, deciding information needed, and the use of the result. Although such is the claim, still in PM&E the data is controlled either by selected individuals or outsiders. Hence, in practice it is hardly possible to make a clear distinction as to a more versus less participatory approach. The problem is exacerbated when deciding who participates. Selecting and identifying participants is

influenced because of power relations due to the nature of M&E itself. M&E “allows individuals or groups to wield power over others in determining how to interpret change” (Campilan, 200: 195). Hence, the decision who should be included and excluded depends on who owns the PM&E process. Not only deciding who should be included or excluded would be difficult, but also defining who are the ‘local people’ and what is their role?

Aubel (2004) concludes that *it is not realistic to prescribe the same level of community participation across programs*; instead, the level of involvement of stakeholders must be decided on program-by- program, based on skills required, degrees of responsibilities in planning and managing community programs. Furthermore, the level of competency of community organizations and representatives should be taken into consideration to effectively assume the task of facilitating the PM&E. Nonetheless, the most difficult part of the PM&E is the planning stage, as it requires processes of negotiation, contention, and collaborative decision-making among various stakeholders.

Turreira-Garcia et al. (2018) conducted a review of 146 articles reporting on Participatory Environmental Monitoring (PEM) case studies from 2010 to 2015, excluding reviews and theoretical papers. Geographical distributions included 35% Asia, 24% Africa, 14% South America, 13% North America and 12% Oceania. The goal of the review was to systematically analyze PEM and identify whether authentic participation occurred in the projects. The authors’ findings revealed that participatory monitoring remained top-down or exclusive in practice, which indicated that there is a huge discrepancy between the rhetoric of participation and actual practice in the field.

The difficulty to decide the level of participation, institutional characteristics and staff attitudes, confusion in defining participation, and the issue of power involved in participation, further downplay the practicality of participatory M&E.

3.6.4. Other issues: Costs, time, and assumptions

PM&E is easier said than done. Several challenges and limitations are registered in the case studies, such as those conducted by Probst in Honduras. Probst’s (2002: 182) findings revealed that “PM&E is a costly process and requires considerable resources in terms of time, effort and

finances, skilled facilitators, materials for recording the information gathered, etc.” Collecting data and analyzing it, building ownership and commitment to M&E, dealing with sensitive information regarding failure, catching up on changing information needs, and utilizing the findings in decision-making are recorded as challenges and limitations of PM&E (Probst, 2002). The PM&E assumptions are also based on some misconceptions. It assumes that stakeholders are interested in participation, that stakeholders communicate their actual desires and opinions; and that the PM&E ensures success, whereas it depends on multiple factors and dynamics.

Pasteur and Blauert (2000) also identified several factors that limit PM&E. First, the review revealed that *time, cost and technical capacity* are limiting factors of the PM&E. NGOs prioritize implementation and administrative activities; therefore, they require quick and easy methods. But designing the PM&E and providing training to the participants are time-consuming activities. However, the reviewers believe that although PM&E is time consuming at the beginning, in the long run it does not consume time and finances. PM&E is widely accepted to increase beneficiaries’ involvement in research and projects; but it is not used in appraisal of the advisory, policy-making, and operational institutions in the area of agricultural technology due to an extended time and costing required using PM&E.

Second, participation is affected due to beneficiaries’ financial constraints. Beneficiaries who are marginalized or have low incomes, cannot afford to participate due to financial constraints as PM&E in principle does not offer payment to ensure unbiased judgment of evaluation. Participation underestimates the costs of participation. Currently the claim of participatory approach as cost-effective is questioned because it involves high opportunity costs for the local people because it taxes the time of participants due to the scope of responsibility. Not only the scope of responsibility but also negotiation takes time and reaching consensus is difficult as different interests and perspectives cannot easily be mixed, accommodated, or reconciled (Guijt, 2000).

Estrella and Gaventa (1998) identified the third area of challenge, namely, the challenge of institutionalization of PM&E, which includes resources and scaling up. Institutionalization of PM&E is challenged due to differences in opinion among senior-level authorities or staff regarding the value of the process. Resources are challenges, particularly financial resources, time

availability, and human resources because they require a great level of commitment, efforts and capacities. Substantial time is required to do PM&E, as compared to external evaluation. Human resources are needed for coordination, administrative efforts and long-term commitment on the part of the stakeholders as well as at the institutional level. Scaling-up PM&E is also problematic because it impacts on how information gained from the micro level or at the village or project level, is to be analyzed and used for developing national and macro-level management strategies and policies. Moreover, PM&E requires systematizing it into policy, which in turn requires change in organizational procedures, culture and attitude at higher institutions, especially sharing power in controlling the funding resources and decision-making.

Martin et al. (2011) highlighted another aspect of the challenges of M&E from several fronts. Donors shifted their interest from supporting project-based approaches to sector-support programs; decentralization of agricultural services demanded different approaches to evaluation; donors hold varied interests in evaluation theories and approaches at different phases of evaluation; and the international financial crisis demanded expenditure cuts and placed an emphasis on value for money. Different methods, approaches and theories of evaluation broadened alternatives to choose fitting ones, depending on context and purpose of a given evaluation; in some cases, they produced conflicting and polarized concepts and caused confusion. Furthermore, various alternatives of evaluation methods raised ethical and resource issues, not least choosing an appropriate approach for a complex program, is extremely challenging. The acceptability of approaches to different client groups or donors, and country partners, especially in the area of what constitutes evidence and rigor in evaluation, is extremely contentious. An ethical issue such as excluding potential beneficiaries from the process of evaluation is a complex issue that needs resolving.

A final area that needs closer discussion is the role of the evaluator. In the conventional M&E, the evaluator is an external professional who does the evaluation without the involvement of the stakeholders, whereas in PM&E the external evaluator is a facilitator. Using an external evaluator without including stakeholders, is condemned by the proponents of PM&E. However, Mertens and Wilson (2019) identified several roles of evaluators and argued that it is hardly possible to link the role of evaluator to the theory or practices of a particular evaluation approach, particularly because the role of the evaluator has complex and dynamic nature in the field (Mertens & Wilson, 2019). From a practical point of view, the evaluator can assume different roles, depending on the stages

of evaluation. The evaluator can assume a managerial role, which might be regarded as a dominant role in the evaluation process. Other roles, such as detective role (exploring the context and needing skillful evaluators), designing role (developing, planning, and designing the evaluation), and negotiating role (working towards reaching agreement on issues in terms of time, money, and other relevant factors) can be taken on as the role of the evaluator during the designing stage of the evaluation. The diplomatic role (working closely with stakeholders to build trust and rapport), researching role (collecting and analyzing data, using valid and reliable measures), judging role (using evidence to make judgments for the improvement of the program), and reporting role (disseminating findings to the stakeholders) are the roles that the evaluator plays during the implementation stage. Finally, during the post-evaluation stage the evaluator facilitates the use of the findings of the evaluation and identifies areas for improvement in the evaluation (Mertens & Wilson, 2019). Still others extend the role of the evaluator as a person who establishes social relationships with the stakeholders and monitors them; plays a leadership role in resolving conflicts by creating space for discussion; communicates with various stakeholders; facilitates changes; and provides insights regarding the program context, constraints and opportunities. Nonetheless, it should be noted that different paradigms, theories, approaches and models emphasize specific roles of an evaluator depending on their commitment to their philosophical and theoretical models and approaches.

Hence, time, cost, assumptions of PM&E, institutionalizing PM&E, donor interests, and ethical issues are additional areas that present challenges to the application of PM&E.

3.7. Chapter summary

Identifying, summarizing, and concluding the key findings from the literature review pertaining to the research question and objectives, are in order. The context of the evaluator and evaluand is critical for a valid M&E result. Context involves several aspects but the problem, environment, intervention, evaluation and decision-making contexts are critical for a successful M&E process. One of the key functions of a context-sensitive M&E approach, is that it opens space for dialogue, participation and accountability based on understanding of realities on the ground. Not only for practical implementation of PM&E, but also, uncovering context, illuminates the evaluator and the evaluand in the context of the construction of a given theory of evaluation, which might affect the

evaluation process and results positively or negatively. Context also includes culture, which entails individual, group and institutional identity; therefore, it cannot be separated from M&E.

The literature review disclosed that defining indigenous knowledge, which is one of the key elements of context, is problematic, particularly due to the point of departure of defining its meaning and concept as many depart from comparing indigenous knowledge against scientific knowledge, context, and methodology. However, this chapter argued that the difference between science and indigenous knowledge is not based on substantive matters, methodology, epistemology, or context but on their relationship with power. According to the literature, a binary perception of indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge should be rejected; instead, their existence and importance – depending on the kind of discipline and purpose of study – should be acknowledged and maintained. Therefore, there should be a degree of openness.

The literature also indicated that in the field of M&E, the indigenous knowledge is part of the context and cultural sensitivity of the M&E process. The M&E process that entails indigenous knowledge can employ qualitative methods, but its major methods are storytelling, metaphor, symbols, and textual references, although indigenous knowledge is not consonant with empirical methodology. Indigenous knowledge should not be romanticized, especially because it is difficult to capture concepts expressed in idioms, symbols, myths, and rites. Nevertheless, indigenous M&E is motivated by valuing context, culture, and values of the community where the intervention is undertaken.

In addition to context and indigenous knowledge, the literature review of published works on empirical studies on comparison of conventional and participatory M&E, disclosed that the key areas of their differences are their epistemological stance, scientific rigor, purpose of the evaluation, and the role of the evaluator and the stakeholders. The rest of their differences are not that significant as there are overlaps. For instance, although PM&E claims that evaluation must be done by internal stakeholders, not by external professional evaluators, it found that it is impossible to avoid an external evaluator, except limiting the role as a facilitator of the process of PM&E; but still, it is hardly possible to draw a boundary to limit the influence of the facilitator. The facilitator also needs to have skills pertaining to negotiation, conflict resolution and team-building.

The chapter highlighted that participatory M&E has several pitfalls. Criticism of the participatory approach includes the following: (1) methodological limitations and lack of scientific rigor; (2) naivety about complexity of communication processes, group dynamics and power relations; (3) reduction of participatory methods to the diagnostic stage; (4) myth of instant analysis of local knowledge; (5) ‘tyranny of techniques’ and instrumental character of participatory methods; (6) underestimation of the costs of participation; and (7) participation as a substitute for good governance (Neef, 2003: 408). Additional critiques included: high costs and time; assumption that stakeholders are interested in participation; not including donors’ interests; and ethical issues. Above all, *translating participation into practices is hampered due to variegated understanding of participation and because of lack of minimum standard to weigh and qualify whether the M&E is participatory is not.*

The chapter concluded from the literature review that two major gaps emerged. First, context, especially indigenous knowledge of M&E needs further study because there is no fully-fledged theoretical and empirical evidence to fully incorporate it in the M&E enterprise. Second, the review indicated that there is significant overlap between conventional and participatory M&E but no research has been done about the possibility of combining these two approaches based on common epistemological stance, to overcome the limitations of both approaches and to exploit the strength of both approaches in the M&E process. This research attempts to explore the possibility of the latter. The exploration is undertaken in the ensuing chapters where cases studies, data analysis on quantitative and qualitative results and conclusions are presented.

CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDY ORGANIZATION: WORLD VISION ETHIOPIA (WVE)

4.1. Introduction

Payne and Payne (2004: 31–32) define a case study as “a very detailed research enquiry into a single example (of a social process, organization or collectively) seen as a social unit in its own right and as a holistic entity.” The social unit has identifiable boundaries, but it does not compare two or more social units. The unique characteristic of case studies is that the selected social unit is an example of many similar cases. A case study is popular for different reasons: first, since it focuses on a single unit; it can be studied at smaller scale; second, although it does not prove something, it has the greatest potential to disprove a general statement; and third, it contributes to gain fresh insights. The case study is the backbone of this research – World Vision Ethiopia (WVE) was selected as the focus of this study. WVE is among one of the renowned World Vision International (WVI) branches for a case study to explore the research question.

This chapter provides an overview of World Vision International and World Vision Ethiopia. First, it explores the formation, mission, purpose and goals, and the underpinning conceptual foundation of development, M&E, M&E documents, leadership, and geographical distribution of World Vision International. Then it provides an overview of World Vision Ethiopia, exploring the status and context of the organization in its specific context.

4.2. World Vision International: Overview

4.2.1. Formation

World Vision (WV), at its inception and core is a Christian mission organization founded by a Baptist evangelist, Bob Pierce in 1947 (McCollim, 2019) and named it “World Vision Rallies” in Korea (VanderPol, 2010). During Pierce’s presidency (1950–1966), World Vision focused on Asia and Pierce perceived himself as a bridge between the American evangelical public and individual needs he came across in Korea and in later times in Formosa, the Philippines, India, and Hong Kong (VanderPol, 2010). King, citing World Vision Fact Book (1982), notes that “from 1954 to 1956, the annual funds devoted to orphanages mushroomed from \$57,000 to \$452,538. By the end

of the decade World Vision donors sponsored more than 13,000 orphaned children throughout four countries” (King, 2014: 263).

In the 1960s, it faced a new context and made significant changes (King, 2013). In 1962, World Vision was registered with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In 1966 World Vision was referred to as World Vision International. It opened support offices in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand for fundraising (King, 2013). The key change in World Vision’s history happened with the stepping down of the founder, Bob Pierce, in 1967. According to King, from 1950 to 1967 “Pierce *was* World Vision” (King, 2013: 83, italics in original).

4.2.2. Mission, purpose, and goals

The mission statement of World Vision was crafted by Pierce: “World Vision is a missionary service organization meeting emergency needs in crisis areas of the world through existing evangelical agencies” (King, 2019: 79). In 1975 World Vision received support to capacitate its development services and at the end of the decade, relief and development became its defining direction. World Vision approaches and trends were constantly evolving: from the 1950s to the 1960s, its approach was mainly institutional child welfare (one sponsor to one child and assistance to orphans in institutions) which was not community based and was not sustainable, although it succeeded in supporting orphans. In the 1970s, the approach was community-based child support, which included family support, that is, individual children as well as their families who were in destitute communities; the support was primarily for schooling. In the 1980s, the approach became community-based child support and community development, that is, individual child support and their families were intentionally connected to small community development projects focusing only on sponsored children (Pierce & Kalaiselvi, 2014).

In the early 1990s, it began to address multiple communities that comprised of 20,000 to 40,000 people. From 1990 to 2000, the approach changed, to focus on the slogan, “Change a child’s life by changing a child’s world” (Pierce & Kalaiselvi, 2014: 145). This program was called an Area Development Program (ADP) (King, 2014; Pierce & Kalaiselvi, 2014). Each ADP would be supported for ten to fifteen years until the communities were able to have complete control over the program (McDonic, 2004; Pierce & Kalaiselvi, 2014). Since 2011, World Vision began to focus on eradicating dependency through the agency of local communities, called the Development

Program Approach (DPA). The DPA “refined the multi-sectoral program approach of the ADPs” (Pierce & Kalaiselvi, 2014: 141). The DPA builds on the strength of the ADPs but in the DPA child sponsors partner with the local community to work together to bring change for the well-being of the child. In 1958, World Vision articulated its specific objectives : “(1) Christian social welfare; (2) emergency aid; (3) evangelistic outreach; (4) Christian leadership development; (5) missionary challenges”(King, 2019: 79).

World Vision’s current mission statement is, “a global relief, development and advocacy organization dedicated to working with the children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. We serve all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender” (WV, 2020: 5). World Vision’s vision statement is, “our vision for every child, life in all its fullness, our prayer for every heart, the will to make it so” (WV, 2020: 5).

4.2.3. Conceptual foundation of development and M&E

4.2.3.1. Transformational development

During World Vision’s inception years, that is, the 1950s and the 1960s, the theoretical milieu of development was informed by modernization theories (especially as crafted by Walt Rostow), which were being established in American’s top universities and were used by the US as a template for development engagement in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Offutt, 2012). Nonetheless, the theory failed to bring the claimed result. Its counterpart, dependency theory, vehemently disparaged Western countries’ exploitation of African, Asian, and Latin American countries under the pretext of modernization. Within this milieu of debate over theories of development, religious organizations such as the Catholic Church were also thinking of how to respond to the issue of poverty, violence, and abuses in the world. While religious organizations were participating in philanthropic responses to civil war, violence, etc., they were also crafting theological linkages as well as academic theoretical foundations for their faith and practice. Such academic endeavors gave birth to liberation theology in Latin America in the 1970s as a theological basis to reflect on the social context and as an instrument to alter it. However, liberation theology became a channel to support armed resistance movements in Latin America (Offutt, 2012).

Several evangelical scholars and development practitioners espoused transformational development, but it was Bryant Myers (1999) who made significant contributions to the

formulation of the evangelical–theological linkage and the academic–theoretical foundation for transformational development for World Vision. Undeniably, Myers’s work became “a capstone work of the transformational development theory” (Offutt, 2012: 40). Myers (1999: 3) clarifies the phrase transformational development: “I use the term *transformational development* to reflect my concern for seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially, psychologically and spiritually” (italics in original). The transformational development paradigm is built on three core concepts: (1) poverty is the result of broken relationships; (2) development is the restoration of all broken relationships; and (3) the ultimate goal of development is to live in Shalom (Offutt, 2012).

Transformational development conceptualizes poverty as broken relationships, as opposed to measuring poverty in terms of income level or net worth of individuals or family units. Income level or net worth of individuals or family units – based on the measurement of poverty vis-à-vis affluence – understands poverty as lacking the basic needs or scarcity of livelihood. Transformational development argues that poverty is not just economic, but that it entails spiritual as well as social impoverishment (Offutt, 2012). Offutt (2012) asserts that the transformational development conception of poverty has close affinity to those who presume that poverty has a social nature, for instance, Sen (2000), Friedman (1992), and Chambers (1997). For Sen (2000), poverty occurs due to limited capacities of the individual; Friedman (1992) believes that poverty is the result of lack of access to power; and Chambers (1997) maintains that poverty is the result of being trapped in weakness, isolation, powerlessness, and vulnerability. Although World Vision draws its transformational development theories from these theorists, it is evident that its fundamental premise and sources are anchored on its evangelical worldview, because, for World Vision, poverty is “the absence of Shalom in all its meanings” (Myers, 1999: 86).

Transformational development is therefore restoring Shalom, as it includes restoring the relationship with oneself (self-esteem or peace with oneself, dignity, character, and values), the relationship with neighbors (eradication of conflict, healing wounds among communities, groups), and restoration of stewardship toward creation. Transformational development’s ultimate goal is to change people, emphasizing their identity, dignity, vocation, justice, social, economic and political life; it thus shares the concern of development theories that place especial emphasis on people (Korten, 1987).

Transformational development argues that it is a unique approach because Shalom makes it different from other secular development thinking. The secular development attempts to create increased life spans, level of wealth, resilient ecosystems, better functioning economies, good governance, lower mortality rate, and reduced pollution, but it lacks capacitating people so that they may love themselves and their neighbors (Offutt, 2012). However, transformational development is criticized for its claim of Shalom because it is hardly possible to evaluate whether such claimed Shalom is attainable, and there is no matrix so far that produces empirical measurement in this regard.

4.2.3.2. World Vision's materials used for M&E process

This study used several fundamental World Vision documentary materials as part of the M&E process. The first document is *The Handbook for Development Programs: The Essentials* (WV, 2011b). The document deals with different key elements of how WV functions. It elaborates the Critical Path, which is developed to help WV programs to collaborate with communities and local stakeholders to conduct a joint plan, to build the capacity of local stakeholders to implement and manage shared projects. The path has four stages: engaging the community that defines the WV identity, and the program; engaging communities and local stakeholders to create a common vision to improve child well-being (this stage culminates in the development of a community-owned vision and prioritizes child well-being); collaborating with local stakeholders to develop detailed project plans for the vision created in stage two; implementing and transitioning shared projects and programs; in this stage, WV establishes a monitoring and learning system that can be led by the communities and stakeholders. This is done every six months, with the baseline established at the beginning of the project, and evaluation at the end of the project, which should be conducted in ways that build the capacity of the local stakeholders.

The second document, *WV's Annual Community Review and Plan*, confirms that the community who participates, include, children, families, communities, partners and invited persons, who discuss the progress of the project (WV, 2016a). The purpose of the review is twofold: for monitoring the progress of the project, and when the project is about to be closed. The purpose of these participatory meetings is explicitly stated: review progress, celebrate the work and contribution of all the different groups, review the process of implementation, identify any change

that occurred in context, and recommend changes to the community (Evidence and Learning).⁴ Then the results of the meeting are documented and reported to the relevant national staff, technical program manager, design M&E, advocacy and sponsorship to use the information to improve strategy, program theories, designs, and advocacy.

The third document, the *Program Monitoring Guidance for LEAP 3* (WV, 2016b), elucidates that those primary owners of the monitoring process should be the local decision-makers. The community participants (which also includes children) in monitoring process are responsible for prioritizing indicators and helping to develop context-specific indicators, collecting primary data, providing secondary data, analyzing data, and interpreting results (at community review and planning), providing information to key stakeholders through reporting and interactive feedback and deciding how project plans can be changed to improve performance.

The fourth document is the *Compendium of Indicators for Measuring Child Well-being Outcomes* (WV, 2014). This document is a compilation of indicators that can be used across the world wherever WV operates. The indicators can be adjusted according to context, or selected based on the specific context in which the intervention is running. The aim of the compendium is “to build an evidence base to demonstrate its contribution to the well-being of children in the area where WV and its patterns intervene” (WV, 2014: 5).

This study employed these documents as instruments of validation for the results of the data collected in this research. The researcher compared the results with what is stated in the document and what happens on the ground. At times, the documents were used to understand some unclear concepts and practices to provide background context or operational insights of M&E.

4.2.3.3. Governance structure

The evolution of World Vision as an NGO depends on its leaders, in particular its CEO/President. In the 1970s, the internationalization of World Vision was initiated by World Vision partners, which resulted in establishing World Vision International. World Vision International was “established with a two-layer structure of governance, including a council and international board

⁴ Partners are groups and organizations engaging in collaboration for child well-being in an area: government, churches, and other faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, local businesses, and informal community groups – including groups of children and youth.

(Foreman, 1999: 184). Its council consisted of World Vision partner countries – promoting one country one voice – meeting every three years. The World Vision International board currently meets twice a year. This board

... appoints WVI's chief executive, approves strategic plans and budgets and determines international policy. WVI's council, comprised of the international board and representatives of each national office board or advisory council, meets every three years, and has the authority to change fundamental elements of the Partnership structure and mission (WV, 2021a).

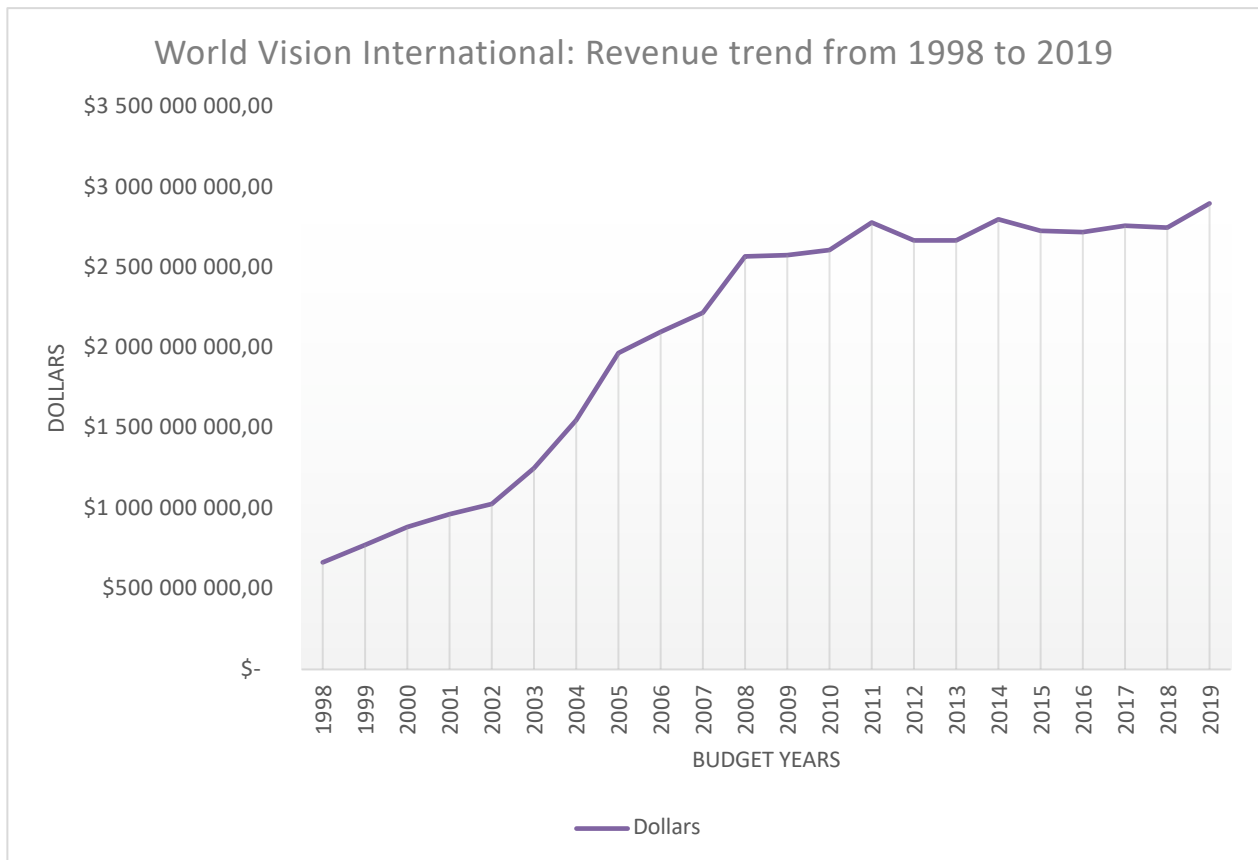
In addition to the international board and council, at a lower level there is a national board governing many national offices with international directors who approve almost 90% of the project within the boundary of already approved budgets (McCollim, 2019).

The international governing board, which is called the Global Center, is responsible for developing capabilities, providing global stewardship, setting strategic priorities, promoting the World Vision way, and ensuring accountability (WV, 2011a). The 2011 Accountability Report provides the Global Center organizational chart.

4.2.3.4. Budget and growth of annual revenue

The research was not able to find public reports on financial growth from 1950 to 1997; however, in the 1980s the annual revenue reached over \$200 million (as stated earlier). Figure 4 below shows that World Vision has steadily grown in its fundraising over the last twenty-one years, increasing from \$665 million in 1998 to \$2.90 billion in 2019, inclusive (McCollim, 2019: 36). As Figure 4 indicates, although there has been steady growth in the budget, the growth has not been consistent in the amounts of the budget. While from 1998 to 2010 a consistent increase occurred, in 2011 there was a sharp increase as compared to the previous years and coming years (that is, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018) (McCollim, 2019: 36–38).

Figure 4: World Vision International: Revenue trend from 1998 to 2019



Source: Data collected from World Vision Accountability Reports of different years

Likewise, in 2014 there was a sharp increase in the budget, excelling from year 1998 to year 2018. In 2015, there was also an increase as compared to 2016; similarly, there was an increase in 2017 as compared to 2018; the years 2012 and 2013 had no increase in income. In other words, annual income decreased in the years 2012, 2013, 2016, and 2018, whereas it sharply increased in the years 2011, 2015, 2014, and 2019. Income increases can possibly be as a response to the humanitarian disasters that happened in those years. McCollim (2019) notes that in some of the years that sharp increases occurred, it may be ascribed to the response to war, tsunami, cyclone, and typhoon occurrences. Most probably the increases and decreases of funds depend on the issues raised in each year that World Vision uses to solicit support from donors.

4.2.3.5. Global geographical distribution

World Vision works in nearly 100 countries, with a global staff complement of 37,000; it received funds from more than 10 million supporters and serves 100 million vulnerable children and family

members (WV, 2021a). According to McCollim (2019), World Vision International is a federation structure. Its headquarters are situated in Monrovia, near Los Angeles, and it is a decentralized structure to the point that almost all affiliates have equal power, except voting power of the Australian, Canadian and US affiliates. The different WV international administrative offices are: World Vision International Executive Office UK, World Vision Brussels and European Union Representative (Brussels, Belgium), World Vision International Geneva and United Nations Liaison Office (Geneva, Switzerland), and World Vision International New York and United Nations Liaison Office (New York, USA). WV regional offices are: Middle East and Eastern Europe (Cyprus), East Africa (Kenya), South Asia and Pacific (Singapore), East Asia (Bangkok), Southern Africa (South Africa), Latin America and Caribbean (Panama), and West Africa (Senegal) (World Vision, 2021b).

4.3. World Vision Ethiopia: Overview

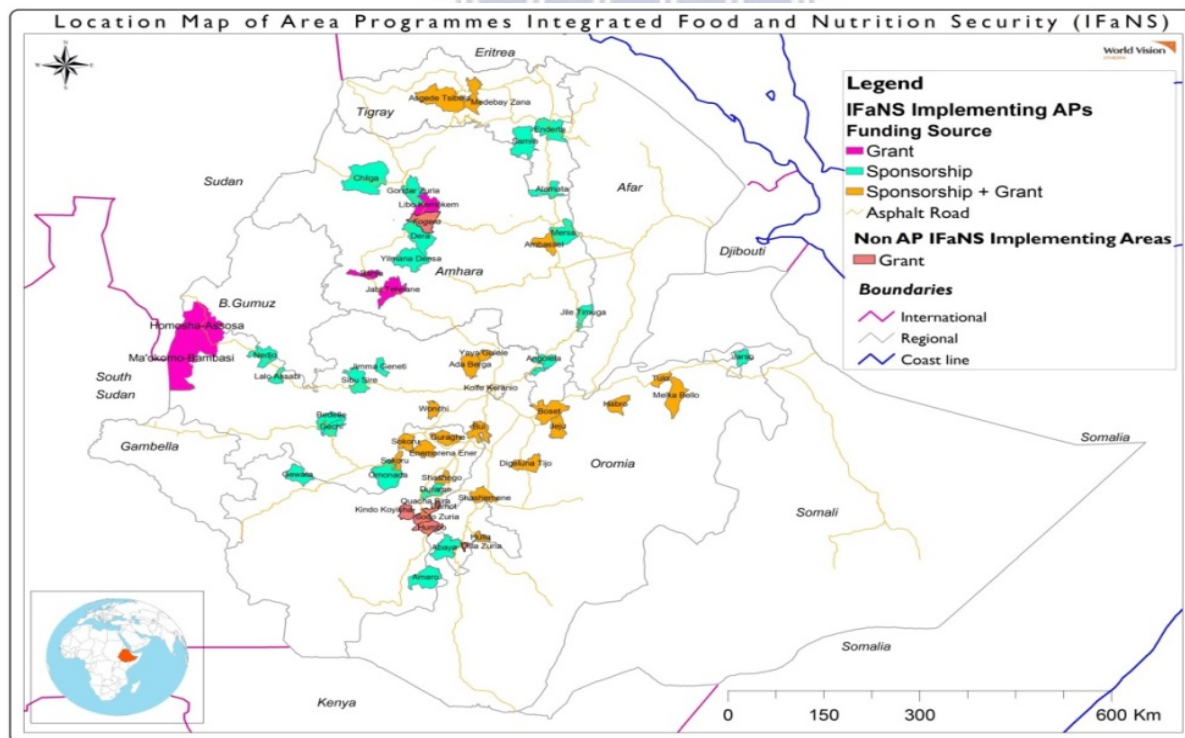
World Vision International did not start its office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia directly from the head office. Around 1971 WVI was supporting refugees at the border of the Gambella and Gode areas from its Kenyan-based office in collaboration with World Vision Canada and the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) (WVE, 2015). It was in 1973 that World Vision Ethiopia (WVE) commenced its first child support program in Addis Ababa with 128 street children, in collaboration with Hope Enterprises. The decision of establishing a World Vision field office was made by WVI's President, Stan Mooneyham while he was visiting drought-affected Bume on the Kenyan border. As a result, on March 3, 1975 World Vision Ethiopia was registered by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission as a non-profit, philanthropic organization in Ethiopia with only five staff members (WVE, 2015).

World Vision Ethiopia, which began with supporting street children, gradually added a community development program, along with the Child Care program (CCCD) operating through 85 local churches from different denominations around the country in accordance with the model of World Vision International (WVE, 2015). In 1984, 114 small-scale CCCDs were operating in Kambaata and Hadiya, Wolaita, Gedeo/Dilla, Sebat Bet Gurage, West Shoa, Butajira, and Addis Ababa through evangelical churches. But it was in 1984/85 that World Vision Ethiopia increased its volume of work due to the virulent famine that occurred in the northern, eastern, central and

southern parts of Ethiopia. Wello, Gondar, Shoa, Sidama, Tigray (Shire), and Kefa were seriously hit by the drought. The mortality due to the famine was estimated at about 175,000 (Kumar, 1987). World Vision Ethiopia participated in the relief work, in collaboration with the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. Its first relief arrived at Antsokia Valley by camel, as road transportation was impossible (WV, 2015).

After the famine abated in 1985, World Vision Ethiopia established rehabilitation centers to assist survivors of the drought until they were able to produce their own crops. WVE also commenced an agro-forestry program in Omo Sheleko, Humbo, and Antsokia and a large-scale agricultural development (LAD) program in Antsokia. Between 1987 and 1990, WVE started a village- or cluster-level approach sponsorship project or community development as a means of assisting famine survivors. This resulted in WVE supporting over 20 villages or communities, which comprised around 60,000 beneficiaries (WVE, 2015).

Figure 5: WVE: Location map of Area Programs



Source:

World Vision Ethiopia transferred the leadership from expatriate to indigenous leaders from 1990 onwards and the focus became sustained community development. From 1995 to 2015 a number of changes occurred at the program and organizational levels, among them the following are notable: 1997: micro-finance was established; 2001/2002: World Vision International's Action Team assisted with the establishment of World Vision Ethiopia; 2005: World Vision Ethiopia adopted the newly-formed organization's vision statement; 2005/2006: Learning through Evaluation for Accountability and Planning was introduced; 2005–2015: the number of sponsored children escalated from 95,828 to 237,758 (WVE, 2015: 14).

Although World Vision Ethiopia transferred leadership from expatriate to indigenous leaders from 1975 to 1985 (for 10 years), and from 1992 to 2011 (for 19 years), expatriates such as Ken W. Tracey, from 1986 to 1991 (for 5 years), and Margaret Schuler, from 2012 to 2015 (for 3 years), also served as national leaders; and currently Edward Brown, from 2016 to the present (5 years) is also an expatriate national director. Hence, this indicates that the transfer is not complete and the reason for the oscillation from indigenous to expatriate is not explicitly stated.

World Vision Ethiopia reached 68,000,000 communities and assisted 32,601,493 children from 1975 to 2015 (WVE, 2015: 20). From 2016 to 2020, its focus remained on the well-being of Ethiopian children. World Vision believes that to realize transformational development, it must continue to engage in transforming resource-poor smallholder farmers, female-headed households, unemployed youth, pregnant and lactating mothers, malnourished children, the WASH program, and improving education access and quality of education. Its strategic priorities are to ensure that children thrive in resilient households and communities, to provide health, nutrition, and WASH for healthy growth and development of children, women and families, ensure improved quality of education and life skills for children and youth, and enhance protection, participation, and holistic development of vulnerable children and adolescents.

From 2015 to 2020, World Vision Ethiopia aimed at contributing to the well-being of more than 3.5 million vulnerable children (WVE, 2016). Currently, WVE is the largest humanitarian organization in the partnership and operates in 54 Area Programs (APs) in 91 districts, in 6 regional states (Amhara, Benishangul Gumuze, Gambella, Oromia, SNNP, and Tigray). Furthermore, Addis Ababa City Administration provides support to over 6,472,679 people, (3,715,141 boys and

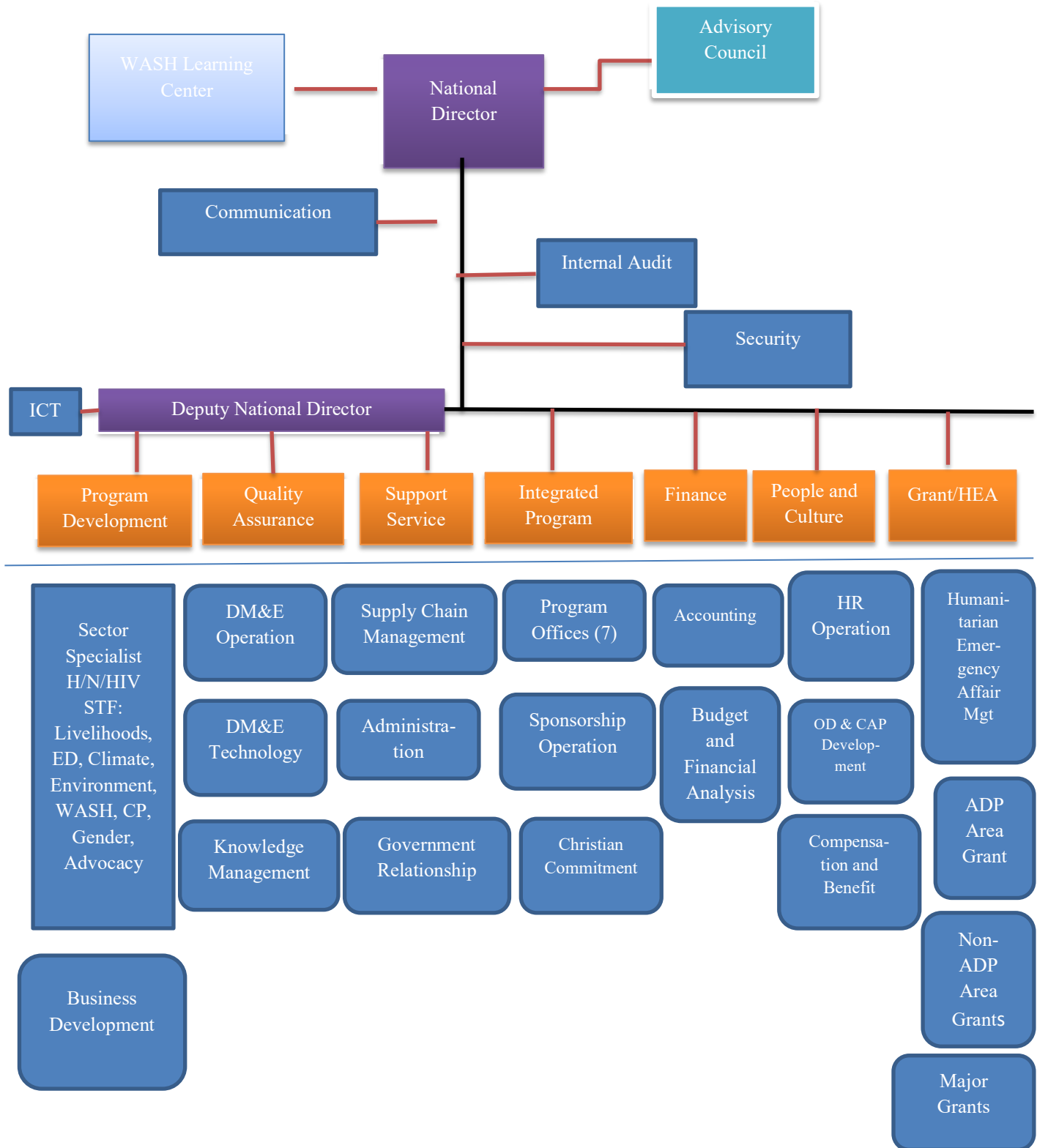
girls) (WV, 2020: 5). Currently, programs that WVE runs, include: integrated food and nutrition security, integrated water sanitation and hygiene, community engagement and sponsorship plan, education and life skills, maternal and new-born care, child protection and participation, and humanitarian emergency affairs. It has over 1,500 professionals working and living in every region of the country, except Afra. The total budget of WVE in 2020 was \$148 million (WV, 2020: 4). It is funded by fourteen countries in North America, Asia, Europe, and Australia. Among all of them, the US accounted for over 60% of all the funding (WV, 2020: 4).

4.3.1. World Vision Ethiopia: Structure and accountability

Figure 6: WVE – Governance structure



Reproduced from <https://www.wvi.org/ethiopia/organogram>



4.4. Chapter summary

It is commonly believed by scholars that case study is a social unit that serves as a specimen for many similar cases. Accordingly, this research selected WVE as its case study because WV is one of the major international development organizations in the world with major branches in around 100 countries. WV evolved from a simple Christian missionary work to an all-inclusive international organization with a mission of global relief, development and advocacy organization dedicated to children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. However, WV is unique in its conceptualization of development as transformation that brings holistic change to persons that entails quality of life not only at the physical, political, and justice realm of people's life but also at the relational dimension of the people it is serving.

WV as any development international organization exercises M&E system that accords to its concept of development. To this effect, it has developed several written documents for the policy and implementation of the M&E system. These documents were taken as documentary material for the research serving to validate the result of the empirical data.

In fact, the focus of this research is on WVE which is serving more than 3.5 million vulnerable children. Geographically, it currently functions in 54 Area Program in 91 districts and in 6 regional states with a budget reaching \$148 million dollar for all its programs: providing food, nutrition security, sanitation and hygiene, community engagement and sponsorship plan, education and life skills, maternal and new born care, child protection and participation, and humanitarian emergency affairs.

Since WVE has a wider spectrum of development services in Ethiopia and geographically covers more than half of the regional states in the country, it is impossible for the researcher to collect data from all these regional states and programs. However, out of 6 regional states, 3 regional states were selected namely Oromia, Sidama and South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. The ensuing chapter presents what research philosophy, research design and methods, and research ethics that the researcher is employing to investigate the case study in accordance with its research questions.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the core part of the research because it presents the research philosophy and the research design. The research philosophy argues for the epistemological position of the researcher and the lens through which interpretation was made. The research design presents the methodological choices made for the research and the reason behind them. The chapter also explains how quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed, and the ethical commitment of the research in accordance with the standards of the University of the Western Cape and World Vision Ethiopia (WVE).

The aim of this chapter is to set the research on a solid theoretical and epistemological stance in relation to the standard research design, method, data collection and research ethics statement. It provides the first argument for the position of the emergent realism as an appropriate epistemological stance for the research. Then it presents the exposition of the research design, including research methods, data collection methods, data analysis, sample size determination, and ethics statement of the research.

5.2. Research philosophy: Emergent realism

The paradigm of knowledge construction is fundamentally important for the kind of methodology one uses, interpretation of data and reaching meaningful conclusions. Guba and Lincoln (1989: 80) define paradigms as “a basic set of beliefs, a set of assumptions we are willing to make, which serve as touchstones in guiding our activities ... paradigms are basic *belief* systems; they cannot be proven or disproven, but they represent the most fundamental positions we are willing to take” (Julnes & Mark, 1998: 33, italics in original). Knowledge encompasses ontological (the nature of the world), epistemological (how one comes to know the world) and methodological (techniques for the construction of knowledge (Warren, 1970).

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E), like any other discipline, creates knowledge and this process of creation of knowledge is dominated by two opposing paradigms: the validation paradigm and the interpretive paradigm. Positivists are empiricists who insist that claims must be substantiated by direct experience. This is the experimentalist position (real experimentation and quasi-

experimentation). The method is based on the theory of causation. Epistemologically, it is known as “successionist” or molar understanding of causality (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 5). This is to say, that causation between outcomes must be inferred from repeated succession of treatment events by another or “inferring cause requires observing a constant conjunction between presumed cause and effect (the effect is observed if and only if the cause is observed)” (Julnes & Mark, 1998: 34). Any rival causal agent from the experiment is removed to identify a secured causal link. This is an effort to avoid conclusions that arise from speculation. It employs inductive and deductive approaches but is criticized for logical errors affirming the consequence, the fallacy of undistributed middle or modus tollens. In other words, one can be right for the wrong reasons or confirmation of prediction does not necessarily mean a theory is true (Julnes & Mark, 1998: 34).

However, due to these pitfalls the logical empiricism is replaced by logical positivism, but it has remained the same in purpose. In general, the positivist tradition is the reason for the development of inquiry methods to arrive at a conclusion with observed data. A conducive research environment for such theory is a laboratory experiment, but in a social world such theory is problematic; for example, how can one treat history with experimentation? One of the major problems of experimentalism and empiricism is that it strips away context and yields findings that are valid only in other contextless situations. From an evaluation perspective, it provides a description of outcomes but does not give explanations of why programs work or fail (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 30). Evaluation findings need to consider the users of the finding within the context of the evaluand in question. Hence, in an open system that characterizes social life as opposed to an experiment done in the laboratory, experimentalism or logical positivism is problematic.

A standard validation approach creates dissatisfaction within the social science research and creates impetus to turn to an alternative framework which was developed by anthropology and parts of sociology with a number of overlapping approaches that were also developed, such as constructivism, interpretivism, naturalism, and feminist methodology (Elder-Vass, 2005; El-Hani & Pihlström, 2002; Julnes & Mark, 1998). Among these overlapping approaches, constructivism is most relevant to this discussion.

Constructivism is diametrically opposite to the logical empiricist or positivist tradition in that while the positivist believes in objectivity, the constructivist believes in subjective idealism.

Constructivism believes in multiple realities. In the constructivist research, focus is placed upon participants' conception of reality and meaning they attach to their experiences. Constructivists insist that all social programs are constituted in complex processes of human understanding and interaction (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 17). Therefore, generalization is not the goal of research for particularities and specific context for generalization is unattainable. Knowledge claims are not based on the empirical test, but hermeneutic circle, that is: interpretation of interpretation without conclusive ending. Constructivists deny "observer-independent reality of social processes and it is inattentive to causality" (Julnes & Mark, 1998: 36).

In other words, for constructivists, realities are multiple, truth is relative, and thus accounts are neither true nor false, they are all equal; the best an evaluator can do is just to produce a journalistic report. No factual, neutral or definitive accounts are to be made of the social world; hence phenomena can only be understood within the context in which they are being studied, findings of research or evaluation cannot be generalized to another, neither problems nor their solutions can be generalized from one setting to another. Although constructivism identified the weakness of positivism, it also has its own pitfalls, not least because it denies "an observer-independent reality of social processes, and its inattentive to causality ... avoids the important questions for evaluation, such as, What are the effects of the program?" (Julnes & Mark, 1998: 36).

Emergent realism, however, attempts to bridge the gulf between the validation paradigm (positivism) and the constructive paradigm (relativism). Realism, rooted in John Locke's philosophy of representational realism, makes a distinction between sensation and perception. Senses react to the world around us but the sensation or the reality sense experience is not a direct experience. That is, sense provides raw material and the human mind processes and organizes it into perceptions. Traditional realism, in fact, differs from scientific realism, which is a replica of strict empiricism or positivism. Emergent or modern realism involves items of empiricism and constructivism. Emergent realism, like positivism, admits the existence of a real world apart from human construction, and likewise, emergent realism shares from constructionism the belief that "our experience of the world is not direct, that our perception of reality is mediated by what we bring to the experience, and, thus, that our experience of reality is constructed" (Julnes & Mark, 1998: 37). Realism that adheres to this line of thought is called emergent realism.

Emergent realism foundation is common sense realism that admits that humans have limitations in making sense of their complex social world. It also admits that social reality is a complex open system and contextual dynamics; therefore, a controlled experiment is unrealistic. Further, it assumes that the world is organized into different levels, which in turn imply that human beings can make sense of the world round them. While positivism holds that a unified reality can be explained in reductionism, constructivism contends that there is no unified truth; all is subjective. Hence, emergent realism promotes progress, that is, understanding advances implying that some notions are more warranted than others (Julnes & Mark, 1998). In this research, emergent realist epistemological philosophy is the paradigm for the choice of methods, the analysis and interpretation of data.

5.3. Research design and methodology

Bryman (2008: 31) points out that research design “provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data.” Creswell conceives of research design as a type of inquiry that provides specific direction for the research (Creswell, 2014). Research design serves as a framework for investigation to generate evidence to the research question in which this research is interested (Dinbabo, 2011; Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015).

5.3.1. Research methods

In social science, there are three major research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research. Qualitative research emphasizes words rather than numbers in the collection of data, whereas quantitative research emphasizes quantification (Bryman, 2008; Dinbabo, 2011). Mixed methods research refers to research that blends the two research strategies, namely: qualitative and quantitative methods. Arguments lodged against the use of mixed methods are mainly arguments from embedded methods and paradigms. The former argues that research methods are “ineluctably rooted in epistemological and ontological commitments,” so, it is not about how to collect data but rather it is a commitment to an epistemological position; therefore, the mixed method is not feasible or even desirable (Bryman, 2008: 604).

However, Bryman contends that an argument that holds methods would carry fixed epistemological commitment cannot be corroborated with evidence; it is therefore difficult to

sustain. Likewise, an argument about paradigms levels criticism against mixed methods, insisting that epistemological assumptions, values, and methods are inseparably intertwined and there is incompatibility among paradigms, for instance, between positivism and constructivism. Therefore, the integration is superficial. Nonetheless, Bryman (2008) similarly rejects this argument, contending that in social science the existence of such inextricable connection between methods and paradigms cannot be demonstrated.

This research employed a mixed method approach. As argued above, the paradigm and epistemological commitment of this research is emergent realism. This paradigm attempts to bridge the gulf between positivism and constructivism, in fact, verging to the pragmatist stance; therefore, the epistemological paradigm is not an issue. Further, a mixed-methods research is preferred for this research, for the purpose of completeness, incorporating diverse views, and enhancing explanation of the data. Hence, this study used semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussion (FGD) for the qualitative methodology, and it employed closed survey questionnaires to generate quantifiable data and to analyze the data with basic descriptive statistical formats.

5.3.2 Data collection methods

This section presents the process used to collect the quantitative and qualitative data used in this research. The researcher collected the data using three distinguished data collection methods: structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. The sources of primary data were direct beneficiaries, staff members, and government sector partners' representatives. The secondary data sources entailed conducting a literature review, using a theoretical framework and consulting scholarly work in the area of the research questions. The researcher also used secondary sources such as WVE M&E documents for validation and the framing context of procedures and practices of M&E processes for the interpretation of the raw data.

5.3.3. Quantitative data collection methods

The researcher printed and administered two separate sets of questionnaires – one on monitoring and one on evaluation. The direct beneficiaries and the WVE staff completed the questionnaire. The researcher gathered the data from three regional states: Sidama, Oromia, and the Southern

Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' (SNNP) region in three Area Programs, namely: Hula – Sidama; Shashemene – Oromia; and Shashago – Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' region. These locations were selected because of their convenience for the researcher because of their relative proximity to each other. The number of respondents to the questionnaire were 329 from direct beneficiaries (115 from SNNP; 113 from Oromia; 101 from Sidama, and 16 from the staff (6 from SNNP; 5 from Oromia; 5 from Sidama). Proportion population at each Area Program was determined based on the formula $n_1 = (n \times N_1) / N$. Its calculation is provided below. The researcher first prepared the questionnaires in English and then translated them into Amharic, the Ethiopian working language. Each respondent had one helper who was able to read the questions and explain them in the respondent's vernacular.

The questionnaires were built around eight determinants of M&E, which were developed from the theories, paradigms and literature reviews. The questionnaires were structured in three parts. The first part introduced the researcher, the purpose of the questionnaire, and the ethical commitment of the researcher according to the consent letter accepted by WVE. The second section requested the respondents' demographic information, while the third section presented questions on determinants. Different types of questions were formatted in an easy way to read, fill and answer by those who were supporting respondents who were unable to read. Before the questionnaires were administered, the researcher submitted a consent letter and ethical clearance to WVE headquarters for approval. After the approval was granted, the regional manager allowed the researcher to conduct the research. The researcher signed WVE's ethical consent on the right of the respondents according to the values and regulations of WVE. The researcher then selected the regions and APs made available by the managers before administering the questionnaires to respondents on a home-to-home basis. An average of more than one hour was taken by each respondent to fill in and respond to the two separate questions.

5.3.4. Sampling for the quantitative method

Sampling is the process of selecting cases for inclusion in the research for the purpose of a study. It allows the researcher to handle, analyze, evaluate, and measure variables to achieve generalized findings (Dinbabo, 2011; Neuman, 2014). This research study used purposive sampling, which is a non-probability form of sampling. The researcher does not sample the research on a random basis, but samples cases or participants in a strategic way and ensures that those sampled are

relevant to the research questions (Bryman, 2008). In purposive sampling, the researcher has the liberty of using a wide range of methods to locate all possible cases of highly specific and difficult to reach people (Neuman, 2014). This study used purposive sampling to extrapolate data and information from key personnel directly involved in the M&E department of World Vision Ethiopia, and from the direct beneficiaries.

For determining the sample size for the research, the researcher used the following formula:

$$\text{Sample size, } n = N * \frac{\frac{Z^2 * p * (1 - p)}{e^2}}{[N - 1 + \frac{Z^2 * p * (1 - p)}{e^2}]}$$

n= sample size

N= population size

Z= critical value (95% confidence level)

e= margin of error = 5.0%

p= sample proportion (uncertain)



Regarding WVE’s direct beneficiaries in three APs from three regions – the number of direct beneficiaries were, in Hula (Sidama): 5,980; in Shashemene (Oromia): 6,700; and in Shashego (SNNP): 6,800, which totaled to 19,480 households of direct beneficiaries. A household consisted of seven persons. Based on the aforementioned formula, the estimated appropriate sample size with 1.83 confidence level, 0.05 margin of error, and 0.5 sample proportion uncertain is 329.

| Particulars | Value |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| N= population size | 19,480 households |
| Z= confidence level | 1.83 |
| E= margin of error | 0.05 |
| P= sample proportion (uncertain) | 0.5 |

n= sample size

329.24

Proportionate sampling technique used for determining the sample size for each Area Program was

$$n1=(nxN1)/N$$

Particulars

n1 = proportionate sample size

n= number of household in an Area Program

N1= research sample size

N= total population

Hence,

1. Hulla (Sidama)

Number of house hold = 5980 (n)

Research sample size = 329 (N1)

Total household (Population in three Area Programs)= 19480

Proportionate sample size for Hulla = $(5980*329)/19480 = 100.9969= 101$

2. Shashemene (Oromia)

Number of house hold = 6700 (n)

Research sample size = 329 (N1)

Total household (Population in three Area Programs)= 19480

Proportionate sample size for Hulla = $(6700*329)/19480 = 113.2396= 113$

3. Shashego (SNNP)



Number of house hold = 6800 (n)

Research sample size = 329 (N1)

Total household (Population in three Area Programs)= 19480

Proportionate sample size for Hulla = $(6800*329)/19480 = 114.846 = 115$

5.3.5. Qualitative data collection method

The interview is a predominant method of data collection in qualitative research. It is mostly recommended for purposive sampling to establish the correspondence between the research questions and the sampling. In other words, the researcher wants to interview people who are relevant to the research questions (Bryman, 2008; Dinbabo, 2011). The goal of the interview is to get detailed answers and insights to address the research questions. This research study employed a semi-structured interview because it allowed the interviewees and the researcher to interact freely, creating an opportunity for the researcher to explore insights from spontaneous discussions and to allow for in-depth analysis. Therefore, the researcher interviewed the staff (N=16) (6 from SNNP; 5 from Oromia; 5 from Sidama). The number of interviewed staff was based on the number of staff directly involved in serving direct beneficiaries at each Area Program. Note that same number of staff responded to qualitative and quantitative questions. Key informants from government and community representatives (N=26). The number of key informants was determined based on available representatives in each Area Program in accordance with the project they were involved. The interview questions were organized around the key determinants of M&E, as identified in this research. Similarly, the researcher held a focus group discussion (N= 16) at the regional coordinating office with key M&E professionals and managers.

5.3.6. Data analysis

Data analysis provides the platform for the movement of data to information (Kultar, 2007), reducing the size of the data to controllable proportions and helping to identify diverse themes and patterns in the data. In this study, the quantitative data obtained from the survey was subjected to descriptive statistical analysis using SPSS, a reputable software tool for quantitative data analysis.

Regarding the qualitative data – the research team first transcribed it into English and then coded the data, using the key determinants and outlining each determinant's sub-feature under each key

determinant. For the coded data, the research team used Nvivo data analysis software to analyze the data, to draw out important patterns and common themes, while also deepening the understanding of identified relationships (Thomas, 2006).

5.3.7. Ethics statement

The researcher commenced the research activities after receiving formal approval from the Senate of the University of the Western Cape, the Economic and Management Sciences Faculty Board, and the Institute for Social Development. Additionally, the researcher obtained approval from World Vision headquarters before engaging the research. Information received from respondent will remain undisclosed to third parties, unless concession is obtained from the respondents to disclose it. Data collected from the organization will also remain undisclosed to any third party, unless the organization consents to its disclosure to a third party. The researcher maintained anonymity, and respondents' participation was based on the consent between the researcher and the respondents, and all gathered information has been secured confidentially and only used for the intended purpose stated in this research.

5.4. Chapter summary

The chapter presented the philosophical and epistemological position of the researcher and the research study, which was applied to the process of the interpretation of the gathered data. The researcher designed a mixed-method approach, within which quantitative and qualitative methods were applied. Furthermore, the research team administered closed survey questions, interviews, and focus group discussion (FGD). The research team first composed the survey questions in English, then translated them into Amharic, and finally transcribed the responses into English. This was followed by coding and data analysis. The philosophy and the methodology of the research underscored in this chapter served to analyze and interpret the data collected, to arrive at the research study's conclusion. Employing the underscored philosophy of the research and the research design, the following chapter presents the data analysis, including data results, and a detailed discussion.

CHAPTER 6: PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS (PART I): EXPLORING WORLD VISION ETHIOPIA'S M&E DETERMINANTS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data collected through quantitative and qualitative research methods, albeit separately but synthesized during the discussion and conclusion of each theme. The chapter explores and present the results of the data on the following themes: demography, ownership of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), purpose of M&E, creation of indicators, and methodological choice of World Vision Ethiopia (WVE).

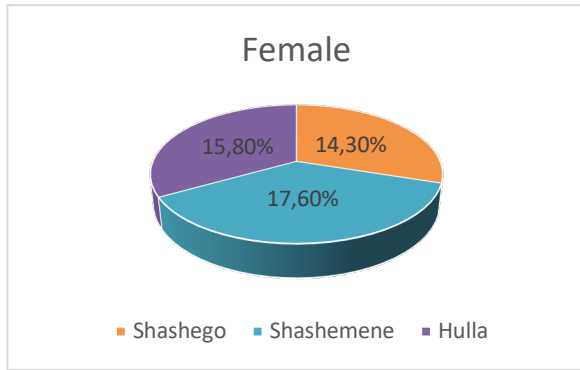
6.2. Demographic analysis

In this section, the presentation of the results is focused on comparing the respondents' gender, age, marital status, and educational background of both direct beneficiaries and Area Program staff. The rationale was to explore if there were any significant differences among the respondents in the sample on these particular variables, as both conventional and participatory M&E involve power relationships. According to Kapoor (2002), power cannot be avoided in the field of development as it is involved in the formation of knowledge, irrespective of its means of gathering. Power involves "to affect and to be affected" (Bigger, 1968: 126). Among others, power differences manifest in gender, age, marital status, and educational background and positions at the institution. Hence, the demographic analysis attempts to identify whether the data indicates that there were significant power differences among the stakeholders at WVE.

6.2.1. Gender differences

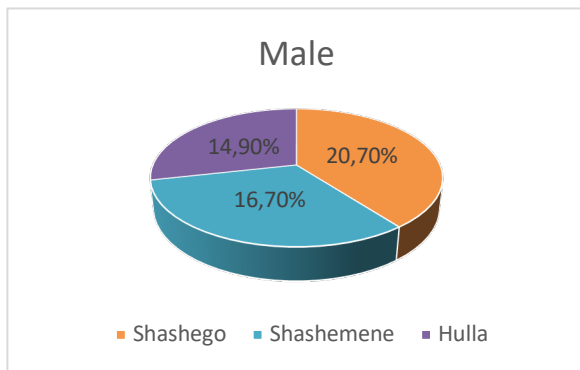
There were 157 (47.7%) females and 172 (52.3%) males, from the total of 329 respondents. Out of the 47.7% of female respondents, at the Area Program (AP) level, the gender distribution was as follows: Hula: 15.8%; Shashemene: 17.8%; and Shashego: 14.3%. Out of the 52.3% of male respondents, the gender distribution at AP level was: Hula: 49.9%; Shashemene: 16.7%; and Shashego: 20.7%.

Figure 7: Direct beneficiaries – gender difference: Female



Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

Figure 8: Direct beneficiaries – gender difference: Male



Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

As the data indicates, the numerical difference between female and male direct beneficiary respondents was 4.5% from the total respondents in the sample, that is, the number of female respondents was less by 4.5% respondents from that of male direct beneficiary respondents. However, the gender distribution at AP level shows otherwise. The number of female respondents at Shashemene and Hulla APs exceeded the number of male respondents by less than 1%, but within the APs, females exceeded by 2.6% (Shashemene) and 3% (Hulla).

Unlike the direct beneficiary respondents, the numerical gender difference between female and male respondents, which was insignificant, the staff numerical gender difference was significant.

The number of female staff comprised of only two females from the total staff who responded to the survey questions.

6.2.2. Gender and age difference factor analysis

Apart from the male versus female dominance that reflect power differences among the direct beneficiaries, which would most probably affect the nature of the M&E process and outcome, the age difference is also a serious factor in power relationships (Neef, 2003).

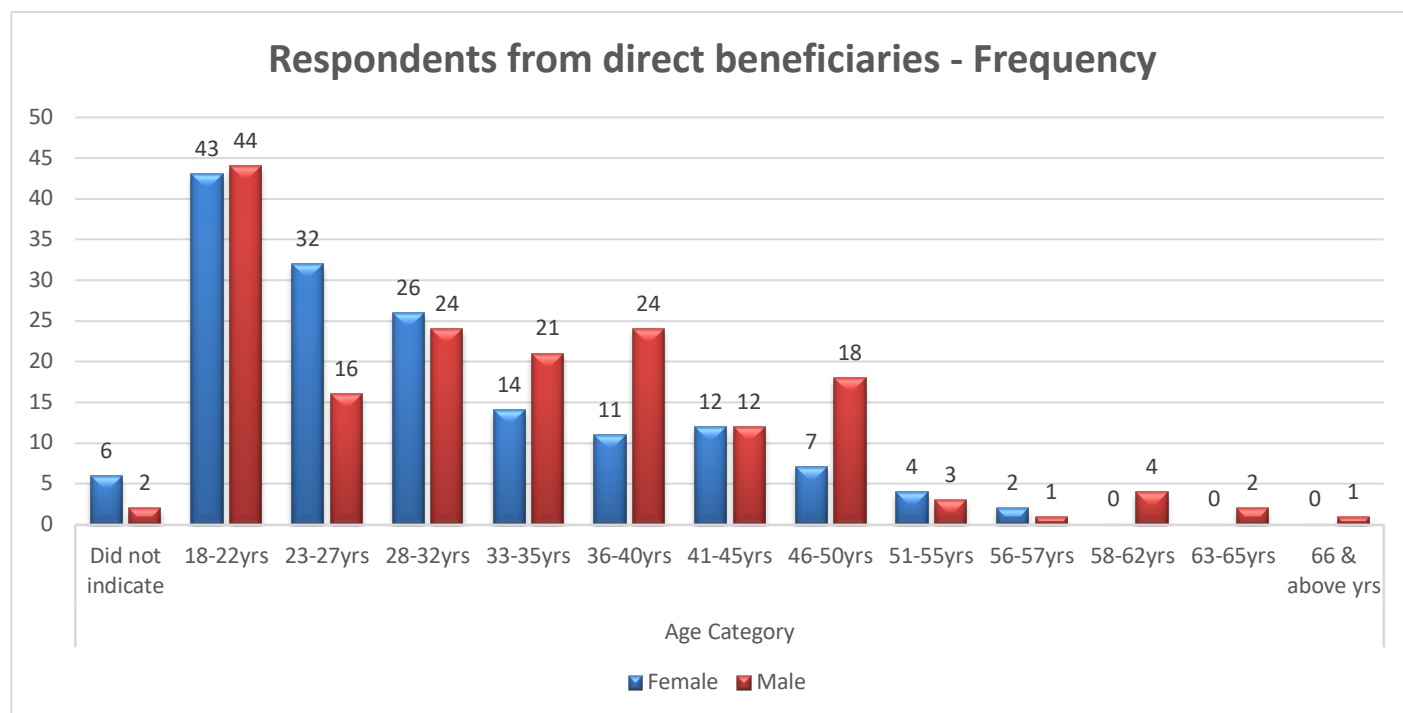
The data collected indicated that there were more men than women among the direct beneficiary respondents. From the total of 329 respondents, 87 of the respondents were 18–22 years of age. Within this age group, 44 were male and 43 were female. This age group was the largest of the age groups of respondents; but the data indicates that the age difference between males and females in this group was insignificant.

The second largest group was composed of respondents 28–32 years of age. This group was comprised of 50 respondents out of the 326 sample size, of whom 26 were female and 24 were male. Regarding the age group difference, according to the data, it was not that significant. However, in the third largest age group – comprised of 48 participants aged 23–27 years – there was a significant difference among males and females. The females were dominant – the female count was 32 and male count was 16.

The fourth largest number of respondents were those within the 33–35 and 36–40 years of age groups. Each age group was comprised of 35 respondents from the 329 total sample size. The 33–35 age group contained 14 female and 16 male respondents. Likewise, the age group 36–40 years of age comprised of 11 female and 24 male respondents. In these two age groups the males were the dominant gender.

The fifth largest group, comprising those aged 46–50 years, contained 25 of the 326 respondents, of whom seven were female and 18 were male. The sixth largest group accounted for 24 respondents of the sample size, with an equal number of males and females, that is, 12 each. The smallest number of respondents were found in the age group 51–66 years and older, comprising six females and 11 males. However, eight respondents from the total sample size did not indicate their gender.

Figure 9: Direct beneficiaries' gender and age



Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

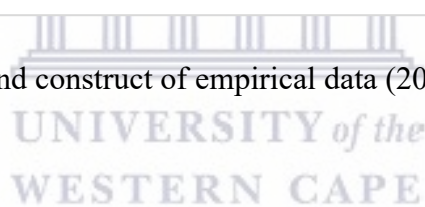
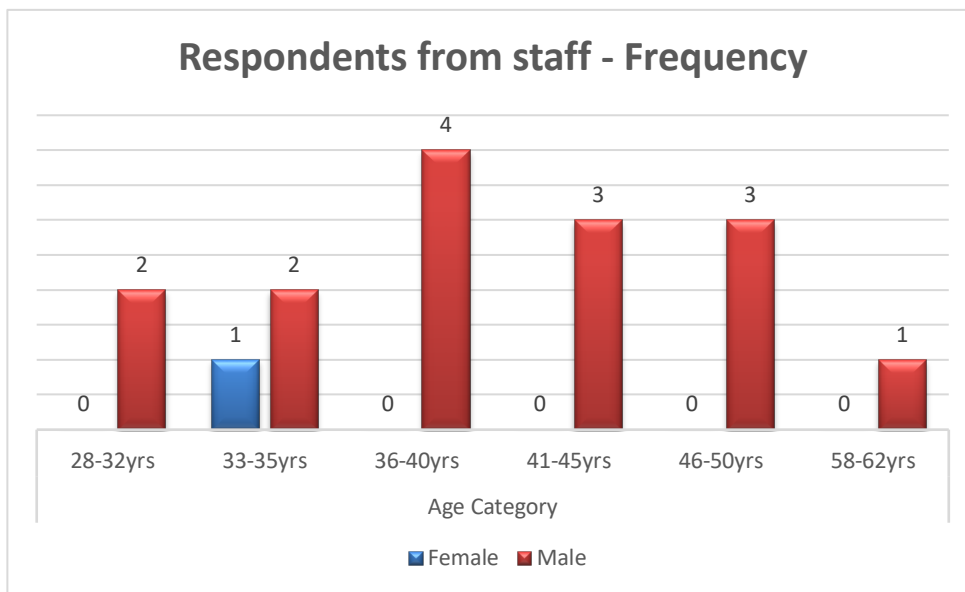


Figure 9 shows that the conflated younger age group, that is, those aged 18–27 years, and those aged 28–35 years, comprise 75 females to 60s males, and 40 females to 45 males respectively. Again, a conflation of the younger age groups with that of the young age groups of respondents results in 115 female and 105 male respondents out of the total sample size. Hence, the data indicates that these age groups were populated with a larger number of young female direct beneficiary respondents.

A combined count of age groups ranging from 36–55 years results in 34 female and 57 male respondents, which indicates that male respondents were dominant in these age groups. A conflation of the oldest age group category that is, those aged 56–66 years and older, totals two female and eight male respondents. The addition of the older age group and the oldest age group (36 females and 65 males) shows that male respondents were dominant in this age group.

Figure 10 shows that of the 15 staff representatives, there was only one female, alongside 14 males. A conflation of the younger age groups – 28–35 years – results in eight males and one female, whereas all the other age groups are male-dominated, without any female representation. The data indicates that the older age groups were all male-dominated, comprising 14 male respondents. The only exception is a single female participant in the younger age group within the conflated data range, showing eight males and one female. This has important significance for power relations, especially when considered in relation to the direct beneficiaries’ male-dominated scenario in the older age categories.

Figure 10: Staff – gender and age



Source: Author’s own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

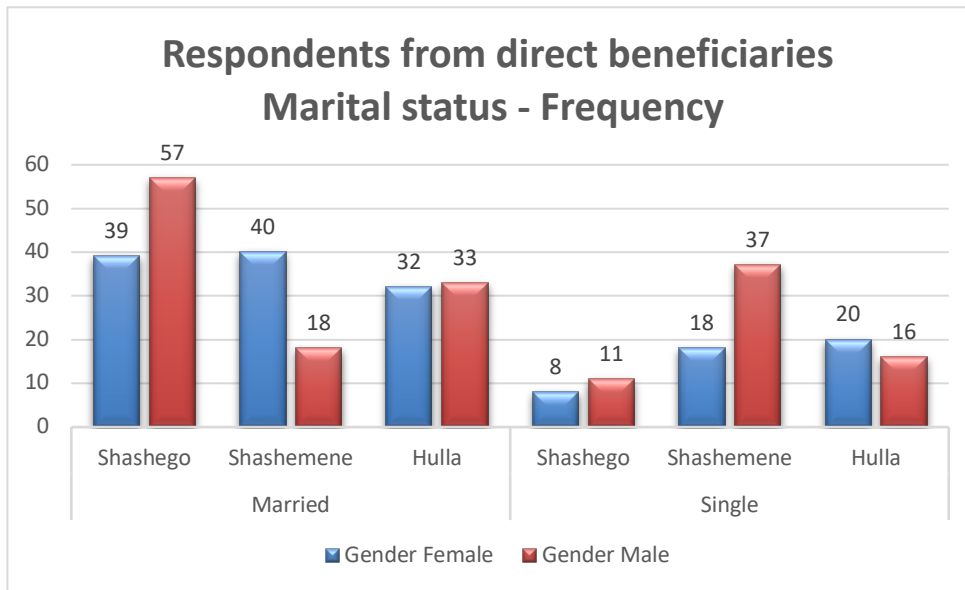
6.2.3. Marital status of respondents

Marriage is another factor that affects power relations. Mosse (2001) observes that formal and public events (such as marriages) take place in the presence of local authorities and outsiders, which activates local power relationships rather than reversing them. Power relations within couples are usually affected by cultural and age factors.

Figure 11 contains the data collected that shows that out of 329 respondents, 220 were married and 106 were single; one female and two male respondents did not indicate their marital status in the

questionnaire. Out of the 220 married respondents, 108 were female, whereas 112 were male. Of the 106 single respondents, there were 58 males and 48 females. Comparing the data in the three APs, 91 respondents were married and 22 were single in Shashego; the second largest number of married respondents were in Hulla, comprising 70 married and 30 single respondents. However, in Shashemene, the difference between the number of married and single respondents was not that significant, with 59 married female respondents and 54 single respondents.

Figure 11: Direct beneficiaries’ marital status



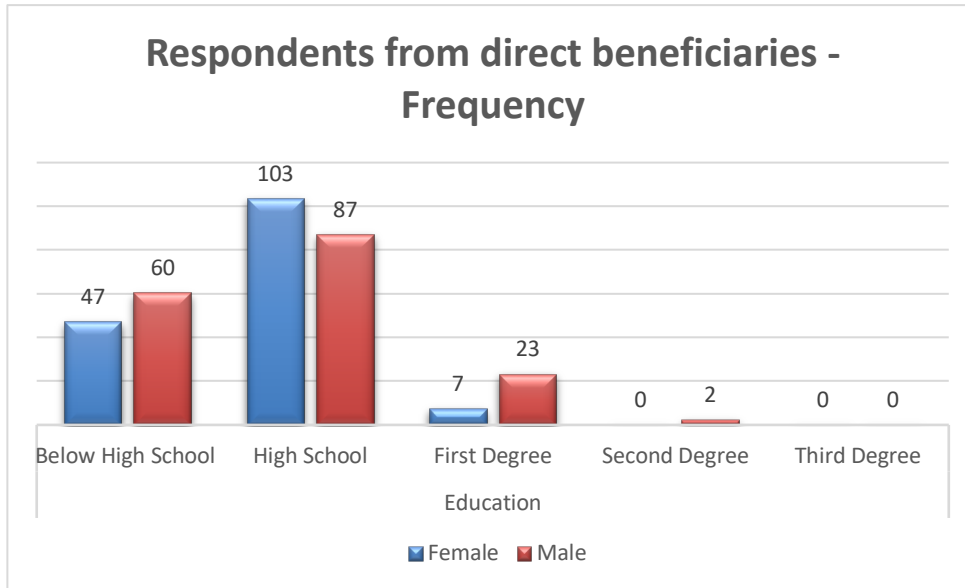
Source: Author’s own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

6.2.4. Educational background of respondents

Social position is one of the factors that exert power among community members (Neef, 2003). Croizet et al. (2019: 149) observe that education “plays a decisive role in the perpetuation” of social inequality.

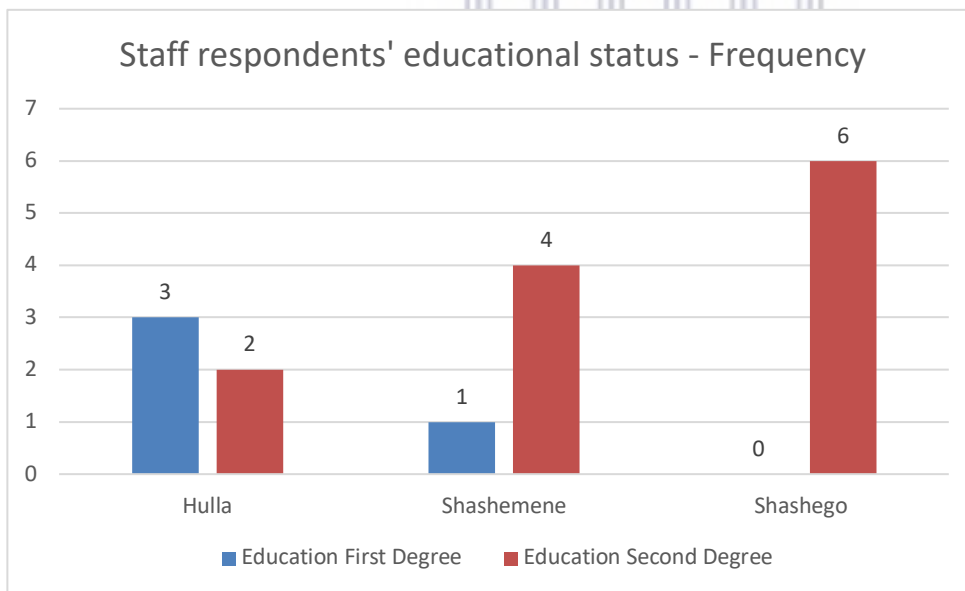
Figure 12 shows that the majority of direct beneficiary respondents completed high school, with a significant number of respondents with educational levels below high school (107 out of 329). However, 30 respondents hold a first degree and two attained a second degree. The total number of respondents who successfully completed secondary and tertiary studies, indicates that 222 (67.5% of the total) respondents were educated at different levels.

Figure 12: Direct beneficiaries' educational status



Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

Figure 13: Staff educational status



Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

6.2.5. Demographic status of interviewees

The data on the interviewees' gender distribution, marital status, and educational qualifications is provided in Figures 14, 15, and 16 respectively. Only three out of 25 respondents are female, all are married, except one, and 14 hold first degrees and 11 attained a second degree.

Figure 14: Interviewees' gender distribution

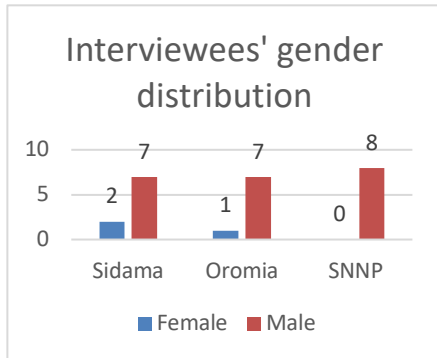


Figure 15: Interviewees' marital status

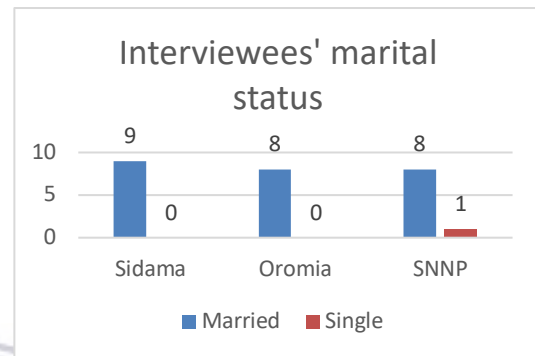
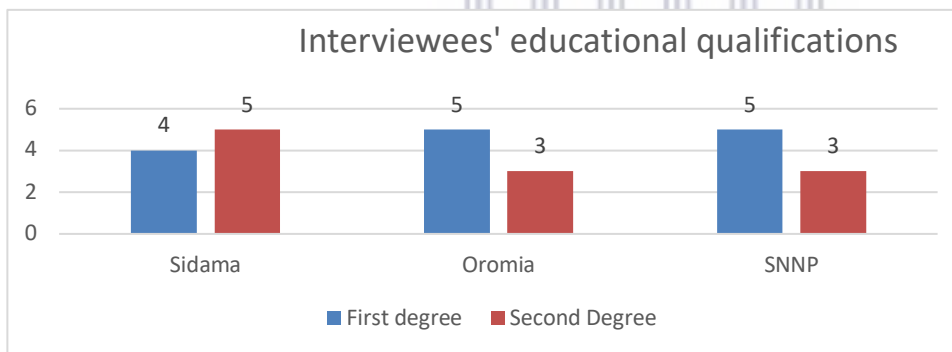


Figure 16: Interviewees' educational qualifications



Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

In general, the above empirical evidence demonstrates that the majority of younger respondents in the quantitative part of the study were female, whereas in the older age group the majority of the respondents were male. The data also indicates that the overwhelming majority of the respondents were married and had completed at least their high school education. However, the staff representative respondents were virtually all males. The qualitative results show that the majority of respondents were male, educated, and married.

Hence, the result of this section has shown that there is a likely power imbalance among the direct beneficiaries and the staff, which most probably affected the quality of participation. This is discussed in more detail in a later section on the actors' levels of participation. This section flags the potential existence of power difference among the direct beneficiaries through inference, depending on the demographic data of the respondents, although it is not conclusive.

As the results of the data have indicated, the numerical differences between male and female participants do not seem to be significant, but if the context defines the power relations between female and male relations, it has a significant indication in inferring that there might be a power imbalance due to gender relations. What can be inferred from the result is that most probably male direct beneficiaries were active and closer to matters related to the projects. One of the key elements in power relations is gender differences (Darmastuti & Wijaya, 2018). Mosse (2001) indicates that formal and public events held in public places activate local authorities and can be monopolized by gender, ethnic origin, age and social position. Similarly, Mohan (2001) contends that even within the poor who seems to have no power there is a power difference because of gender and ethnicity. Kapoor (2002) boldly argues that there are less obvious forms of powers that exert oppression than the overtly top-down powers. Therefore, it might be apropos to infer from the result that there was an imbalance in power relations among direct beneficiaries that probably affected the M&E process.

Such power difference was probably aggravated through age difference. Comparing the younger and older age groups, in the younger age group, females were dominant numerically whereas in the older age groups males were dominant numerically. This has a significant implication in power relations among the direct beneficiaries which most probably affects participation in the M&E process because of the male dominant culture where older age has greater honor and must be heard.

Correspondingly, there was most likely male dominance in the staff representation, which still implies power differences among the staff. It can be inferred that interaction between female direct beneficiaries with male staff would be affected due to dominance by a patriarchal culture (see level of participation). Further, the M&E process, whether it is conventional or participatory, the role of

the expert is extremely affected in such a male-dominated environment, and female direct beneficiaries would not have the liberty of expressing their views because of dominant male staff. It is also probable to infer from the results of the data that those female beneficiaries were not represented in the staff through adequate female staff in the area where this data was collected. It could also be implied that there was an unbalanced gender distribution among the staff which might also be an indication of the existence of unbalanced power relations among staff members versus beneficiaries' relationship in terms of gender.

The marital status of the respondents produced a similar result. Comparing this data with gender and age data, it might be possible to imply that the majority of married women are young. This in turn has a possible implication that there would be unbalanced power among the direct beneficiary respondents. Since one survey questionnaire was administered in one household, it might be possible to assume that the majority of married male beneficiaries take the lead in households in responding to the questionnaire, which in turn implies that they had an influence in the household with regard to their relationship with WVE. Education is also a source of power; the data indicated that the majority who are educated among the respondents from the direct beneficiaries were male. This indicates that female direct beneficiaries might be present physically but may not be fully participate in voicing their ideas. As discussed earlier regarding the demographic analysis, the direct beneficiary respondents exist in a male-dominated environment and in age-grade system culture; therefore, it might be possible to infer that those male beneficiaries were dominant in the M&E process.

6.3. Ownership of M&E process

One of the key differences between conventional and participatory M&E is the ownership of the processes. Probst (2002) demonstrated that in the conventional M&E indicators, questions to be asked, methods to be used, defining measure of success, and decisions to be served are specified and ratified by funding agencies or project staff whereas local stakeholders or beneficiaries have no input in any of these. In other words, the process of M&E is totally controlled by donors and top management staff. Whereas PM&E involves a wide variety of stakeholders at every stage of the M&E process and the quality of PM&E depends on who owns the process, that is, if the process

is owned by local stakeholders from the beginning to the end, then actual participation is occurring in the process (Guijt, 2000).

This section presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative data on three key areas regarding owning the process of M&E in WVE, namely: Who initiates the process? Who controls the process? Whose perspectives are emphasized in the process of M&E? The aim is to identify one of the determinants of M&E, that is, ownership of the process of M&E which expresses itself in initiating, controlling, and in projecting perspectives in the process of M&E. Then it explores the possibility of whether the difference between the conventional and participatory approaches could be narrowed or avoided. First, the qualitative data results are presented, followed by the quantitative data results, then closing off with a discussion of the results.

The data (see the graphs below) that was collected from direct beneficiary respondents (26.1%; N=329) indicates that the M&E process was initiated mainly by the donors ensued by the internal M&E experts, program managers and project managers although some respondents indicated that direct beneficiaries and internal experts were also involved.

In both cases of M&E, donors were the dominant initiators of the process, followed by an internal monitoring expert, program manager, and project managers respectively. Although 10% of monitoring and 10% of evaluation respondents think that direct beneficiaries and an internal expert jointly take the initiative, it is unlikely that they were the dominant actors in the initiating stage of the process. The data also demonstrates that the chance of direct beneficiaries taking the initiative to start the process of M&E is extremely low as only 3% (monitoring) and 4% (evaluation) of the respondents thought that they might be the ones initiating the process. The role of an external expert in initiating the process was also unlikely as only 4% from the monitoring and 5% from the evaluation survey respondents believed that they initiated the process.

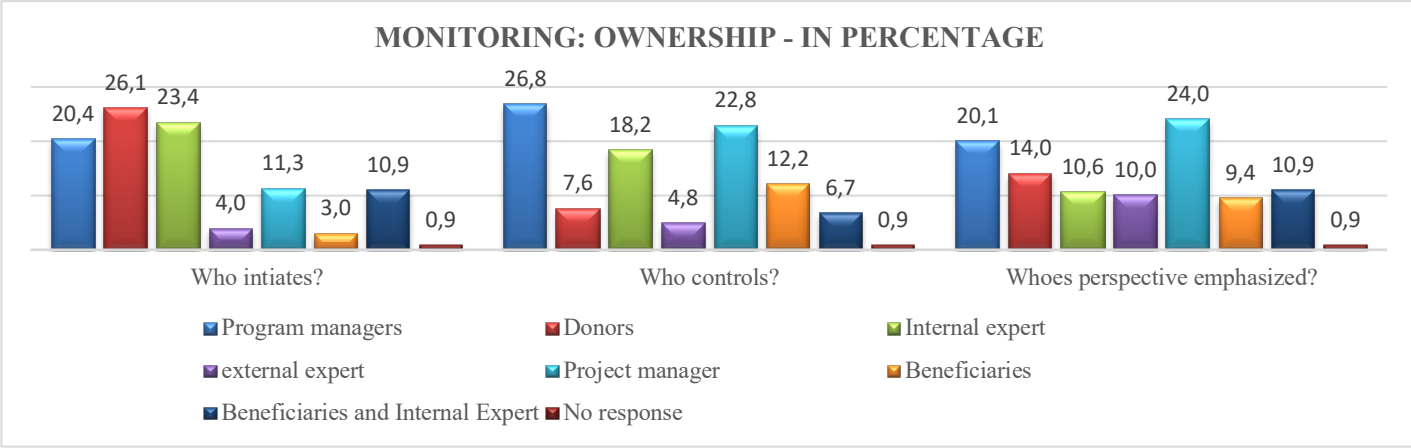
Likewise, the data revealed that the process of M&E would seem to be mainly controlled by program managers, project managers, and internal experts. However, in the evaluation process, the data indicates that the project manager was the dominant actor (26.1%) in controlling the process, as compared to the program manager and an internal expert, whereas in the monitoring process, the dominant actor was the program manager (26.8%). According to the data, the process was controlled by top management staff. It is important to note the observation that the external expert

in the M&E was not the dominant actor, as the data indicates. Similarly, the data also disclosed that donors did not take the dominant position in controlling the process.

In the monitoring process, the majority of the respondents believed that the top management staff's perspectives were emphasized: the project manager, program manager and donors. However, a closer look at the data evinces that the majority of the respondents believed that the project manager's perspective was the dominant perspective in the process of monitoring, followed by the perspectives of the program manager and the donor. It seems that a joint perspective of direct beneficiaries and the internal expert had a share in the monitoring process. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the respondent believed that the direct beneficiaries' perspective had no emphasis if it is taken alone. It is also significant to observe that the internal monitoring expert and the external monitoring expert's perspectives carried a stronger emphasis, compared to the direct beneficiaries' perspectives.

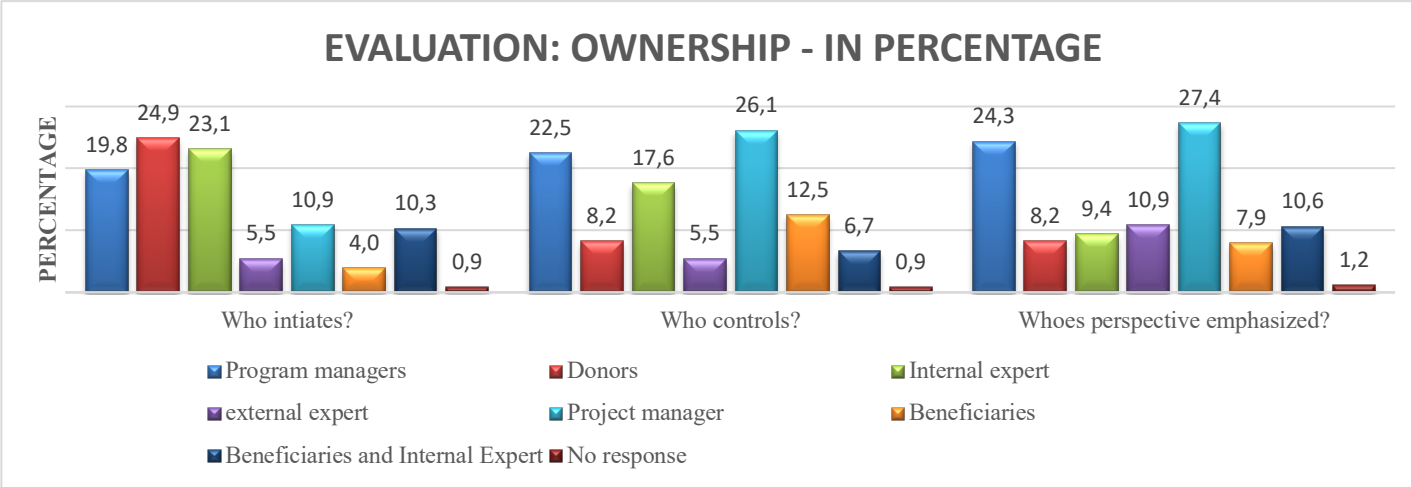
Similarly, the data shows that the top management staff's perspective had emphasis in the process of evaluation. However, the difference during M&E was that in the evaluation the external evaluation expert's perspective carried emphasis, according to the respondent. Observing the data at the descending order, the project manager's perspective comes first, followed by the program manager, who is second in the order while the external evaluator's perspective is the third. This evinces that the external evaluator's perspective had a significant place in the evaluation process next to the two top management staff. A joint perspective of direct beneficiaries with that of the internal expert seems to be sharing a level of emphasis, rather than that of an internal evaluation expert taken alone and that of the donor's perspective. However, as in the case of monitoring, the data reveals that the direct beneficiaries' perspective did not receive significant emphasis in the evaluation process. One of the significant observations that the data presents, is that with respect to emphasis of perspective, donors had a strong say in the monitoring process, whereas they had insignificant voice in the process of evaluation.

Figure 17: Direct beneficiaries – Monitoring – Ownership



Source: Author’s own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

Figure 18: Direct beneficiaries – Evaluation – Ownership



Source: Author’s own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

Unlike the direct beneficiaries’ perspective on the initiators of the M&E, the data collected from the three AP staff representatives indicates that the majority (37.50%) believed that while the monitoring process was initiated by the internal monitoring expert, the evaluation process was initiated by the program manager. However, the dominant actors in the initiation stage of the M&E process remained the top management, donors and an internal evaluator. While donors are deemed to have a dominant role in initiating the evaluation process by the majority, they had a lesser number of respondents perceiving as them having a dominant role in initiating the monitoring process.

The data also revealed that the project manager was deemed, by a lesser number of respondents, to have a dominant role in initiating the M&E process, as compared to other top management staff. None of the staff respondents believed that the direct beneficiaries initiate the evaluation process. Hence, the data discloses that at the initiative stage of the M&E process, the dominant actors were the top management whereas the direct beneficiaries had hardly any role.

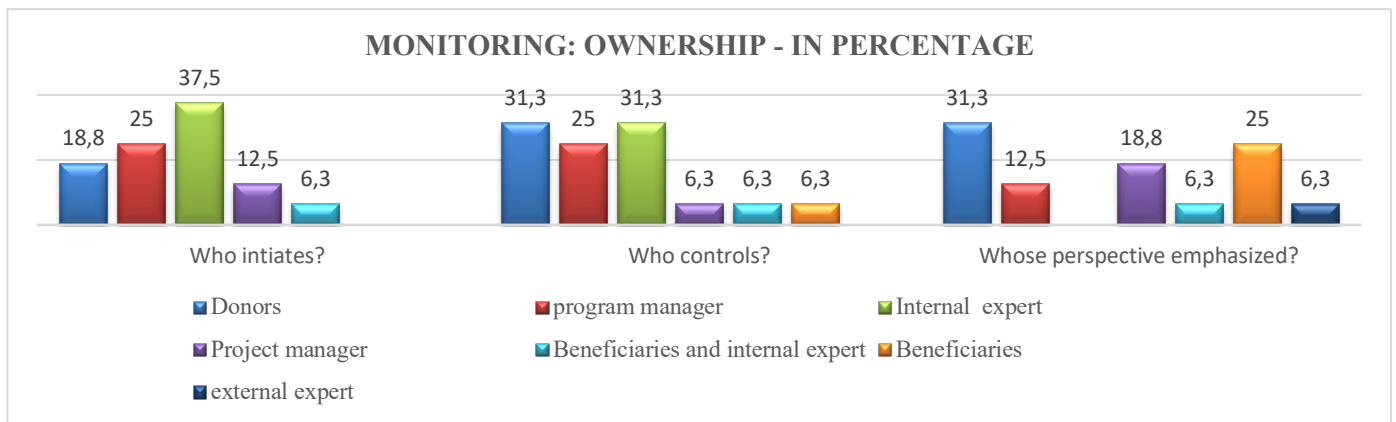
Likewise, the dominant actors in controlling the M&E process were the top management staff: donors, an internal M&E expert, and the program manager, while the direct beneficiaries had an insignificant role. However, upon a closer look at the data, the actors who control the evaluation process differ from those who control the monitoring process. The evaluation process was mainly controlled by the program manager, whereas the donors were the dominant controlling actors in the monitoring process. This is disturbing information that the data offers, that in the monitoring initiation stage the donors were not the major dominant actors, as they were placed at the third level of dominance; however, they were the top dominating actors in controlling the monitoring process, as 31.25% of the staff respondents believed this to be so.

In controlling the evaluation process, next to the program manager, the dominant actors were the internal evaluation expert and the external evaluation experts. It is important to note that the donors were not the dominant actors in controlling the evaluation process, so also the project manager had an insignificant role. While an insignificant percentage of the staff respondents (6.25%) believed that the direct beneficiaries had a controlling role in the monitoring process, none of the respondents believed that the direct beneficiaries had any controlling role in the evaluation process. Further, the external monitoring expert also had no role in controlling the monitoring process while they did have a role in controlling the evaluation process.

The data provides quite interesting information regarding whose perspective was dominant in the M&E process. In the monitoring process, the dominant perspective was that of the donors, accounting for 31.25% of the respondents; so also in the evaluation process – their perspective was perceived to be dominant. Direct beneficiaries (25%; N=16) also had a strong voice in the M&E process. This is quite a striking contrast with that of the data on “who controls the process?” which revealed that the direct beneficiaries had an insignificant role in controlling the process of monitoring, while they had none in the evaluation process.

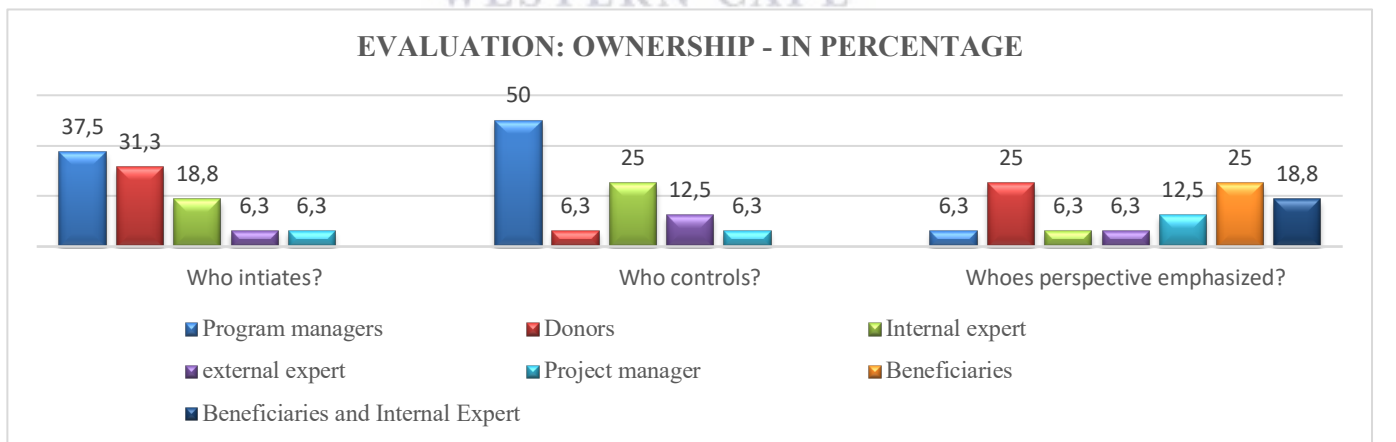
The project manager, program manager, internal expert and external expert, according to the data, had no strong voice as compared to that of the donors and direct beneficiaries. In fact, in the evaluation process, the project manager's and the program managers' perspectives obtained a significant place. The external evaluator's perspective had insignificant dominance in the M&E process. Nonetheless, the data indicates that while a joint voice of the direct beneficiaries and the internal expert had an insignificant role in the monitoring process, it had significance in the evaluation process.

Figure 19: Staff monitoring – Ownership



Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

Figure 20: Staff evaluation – Ownership



Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

The data from the interview indicated a virtually similar result to that of the quantitative data presented above, because the majority of the interviewees believed that the donor agency, that is,

WVE, initiated the M&E, although a few thought that internal experts, program managers, and government partners were also part of the initiative stage (MR, age 48, SNNP; MR, age 32, SNNP; MR, age 40, age 55, Oromia). Likewise, the majority of interviewees responded that the M&E process was controlled by the donor agency (WVE) including the project managers, M&E expert, and government partners, which is consonant with that of the staff perspective in the quantitative result. It is surprising that the majority of the interviewees were of the opinion that the direct beneficiaries' perspectives enjoyed greater emphasis during the M&E process, which seems to be contradictory to that of the direct beneficiaries' perspectives in the quantitative result, and the interviewees' opinions on the initiation and control of the M&E process.

Nonetheless, the qualitative data disclosed how the perspectives of the direct beneficiaries were emphasized to create the ownership of the M&E process and the whole project. To elaborate this process, one of the respondents provided an example:

Children separately discussed their objectives through the tools provided by WVE. The objectives which are already set by WVE and the objectives created by the direct beneficiaries would be compared and, in most cases, they are almost similar. The difference between the objectives that WVE created and the objectives created by direct beneficiaries is simply wording or the way of expression; for example, a project started in 2020 and ends in 2024. For this project, the direct beneficiaries set objectives, articulated their dreams and priorities. The MEAL⁵ officers took these objectives, dreams, and priorities and compared them with WVE's already set objective to create indicators. Dreams, objectives, and priorities that were articulated by the direct beneficiaries but do not align with WVE's principles and commitment were not included in the designing process; rather, they would be documented. For example, direct beneficiaries raise issues related to land administration as their priorities; such issues are beyond the purview of WVE" (FR, age 40, Sidama).

The quantitative and the qualitative data both disclosed that the donor agency (WVE) owned the M&E. In other words, donors, top management, and experts of WVE *mainly* (not the only one) own the process, which demonstrates itself in initiating, controlling and influencing the result (perspective) of the process. The quantitative and the qualitative data both concur that the perspectives of the direct beneficiaries received emphasis during the M&E.

⁵ Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL).

Who owns the M&E process, is one of the key areas of difference between the conventional and participatory M&E systems, according to researchers. In the conventional approach, the system is owned by top management groups and professionals while the local people own the process beginning from the initiating, developing and implementing stages of the monitoring process in the participatory approach.

The empirical findings from both quantitative and qualitative data have evidenced that initiating and controlling the M&E process had been done by the donors (albeit they were not involved in the evaluation as per the staff respondents), internal experts, program managers, external experts, and government experts. But the direct beneficiaries did not believe that their perspectives received emphasis in the process while the staff and interview respondents believed that the direct beneficiaries' perspectives received emphasis in the M&E process.

In WV M&E documents, it is indicated that various stakeholders are involved in the process of M&E, beginning from the needs assessment to the closing of a project (World Vision, 2016b, 2018). In WVE, participants are national office Design Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) staff, technical managers, AP managers, partners, and the communities or direct beneficiaries, although their levels of involvement differ in accordance with the hierarchical structure between the field and top management. Donors and global stakeholders are receivers of reports on the projects and they decide the key indicators. However, at the national level, for example, technical managers, AP managers, partners, and community members (including children, vulnerable groups) are called local decision-makers, who are supposed to be actively involved in selecting indicators from the compendium of indicators and communities also propose their own indicators (WV, 2016). It is also recorded in the document that annual community review and planning work toward strengthening the local ownership of monitoring and the steps stipulated in the document intentionally work toward strengthening the ownership of the monitoring process by local decision-makers. Regarding evaluation, the documents are not clear as to the ownership of the local decision-makers.

Although the perspectives of the staff and the interviewees are consonant with that of the M&E documents, the facts on the ground show otherwise. The direct beneficiaries probably had a measure of control over the system, as more than 12.2% of the respondents ascribed control to the

direct beneficiaries, albeit it is not that significant as compared to the percentage of direct beneficiaries' conviction that the top management control the system.

However, it is odd that the majority of the staff (quantitative) and interviewees (qualitative) believed that donors initiate and control the M&E process but at the same time, they believed that the direct beneficiaries' perspective was emphasized. It is hard to reconcile these two extreme polar perspectives. However, the direct beneficiaries were consistent in their perspective, as they believed that the direct beneficiaries are not involved in initiating, controlling, and influencing the M&E process. Logically, it is hardly possible for the donors to control the day-to-day activities of monitoring, despite the notion of the majority of the staff and the interviewees. It might be inferred, however, that the conflicting view of the staff that ascribes initiating and controlling to donors and top management staff but at the same time emphasizing direct beneficiaries' perspective in the process might allude to the hybridity of the system that is, a little bit of the nature of PM&E is traced here.

6.4. Purpose of M&E

The purpose of M&E in the conventional and participatory evaluation has marked differences. Probst (2002) argues that although conventional M&E exists in various forms, its distinctive purpose is to satisfy the needs of funding agencies, policy-makers, and project staff. More especially, it is conducted to determine the merit, impact, or effectiveness of a project for public accountability for soliciting future funding. However, the purpose of PM&E is learning and it is part of organizational development and change (Cousins & Earl, 1992). PM&E, in fact, aims at producing transformational learning responding to the needs of the organization and its members (Preskill & Torres, 2000).

This section presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative survey data collected from direct beneficiaries and staff of WVE in three Area Programs in three regions, sample size 329 and 16 respectively, on the purpose of M&E. The qualitative data was collected from 26 interviewees, conducted in three regions. The quantitative data was collected on seven possible purposes of M&E, namely: facilitating learning between the WVE and direct beneficiaries, meeting accountability requirement, empowering direct beneficiaries, satisfying

funding agencies for future funding, improving project planning and efficiency, measuring change, and increasing sense of ownership among the direct beneficiaries.

The quantitative data collected were in Likert's scale ranging from critical to trivial in five levels. The respondents requested to rank the level of importance of the purpose of the evaluation in WVE assuming that these purposes are normally appear in any monitoring and evaluation purposes, particularly of that of conventional M&E and PM&E. The scales were: Critical=1, High=2, Low=3 and Trivial=4. However, the qualitative method involved a semi-structured interview question in which the interviewee had the freedom of stating the purposes in their own words without being given choices to make or even mentioning these seven purposes presented in a quantitative survey question. Each data was presented separately followed by the discussion. The quantitative results are presented first, followed by the quantitative data results.

The quantitative data collected from the direct beneficiaries (see the figures below) revealed that the purpose of facilitating learning in both monitoring and evaluation, is critical in WVE. If the percentage of those who responded as "critical" and those who responded as "high" are coupled then the purpose of facilitating shared learning between WVE and the direct beneficiaries stands out among other purposes as 61.09% critical in M&E, 27.7% and 24.0% ascribed to high in monitoring and evaluation respectively, comprising more than 85% of the total respondents. This indicates that facilitating learning among the direct beneficiaries and WVE is the critical purpose of monitoring and evaluation, that is, 88.75% monitoring and 85.71% evaluation.

Meeting accountability as the purpose of monitoring resulted in critical=44.1%; high=38.9%; whereas evaluation recorded critical=41.6%; high=38.9% of respondents. The purpose is critical and joining "high" and "critical" percentages of monitoring and evaluation respondents' results in 83% and 80.5% of respondents respectively who believed that accountability is a critical purpose of M&E. A greater number of respondents ascribed to the criticalness of empowering the direct beneficiaries through participation as the purpose of monitoring (critical=50.2%; high=37.4%) and evaluation (critical=48.0%; high=34.7). A combination of percentages of "critical" and "high" respondents resulted in 87.6% monitoring and 82.7% evaluation which informs that empowering direct beneficiaries are critical in M&E. Similarly, satisfying the funding agency for further funding is believed to be critical in the monitoring (critical=44.7%; high=37.4%) and evaluation (critical=44.4%; high=36.2%) respondents respectively. Merging the percentages of "critical" and

“high” respondents in both cases, monitoring and evaluation, provide 82.1% and 80.6% of respondents respectively, indicating that this purpose is critical in M&E.

To improve project planning and efficiency (use of time, cost, and resources) by providing useful information to managers and decision-makers is also believed to be a critical purpose in monitoring and evaluation according to the data comprising 45.3% of respondent from monitoring and 45.9% from evaluation; further monitoring (high=39.2%) and evaluation (high=37.4%). Blending both “critical” and “high” percentages of respondents in monitoring (84.5%) and evaluation (83.3%) indicates that this purpose is also considered to be critical in M&E. Further, measuring changes is a critical purpose of monitoring and evaluation as 44.1% (critical), 40.1% (high) and 42.2% (critical), 40.7% (high) of respondents respectively indicated. Blending “critical” and “high” percentage of respondents in the monitoring ranking results in 84.2% of respondents regarding it as critical, whereas blending the respondent in the evaluation provides 82.9% of respondents. Therefore, the data indicates that in monitoring, measuring change is a critical purpose, whereas in evaluation it is highly important, although not critical. Increasing the sense of ownership among the direct beneficiaries as the purpose of M&E is also considered by the respondent as critical in both monitoring (critical=44.7%; high=39.2%) and evaluation (critical=41.0%; high=38.9%). Fusing both “critical” and “high” percentages of respondents in monitoring and evaluation provides 83.9% and 79.9% respondents respectively who believed that increasing the sense of ownership among direct beneficiaries is a critical purpose in M&E.

Figure 21: Direct beneficiaries’ response – Monitoring – Purpose

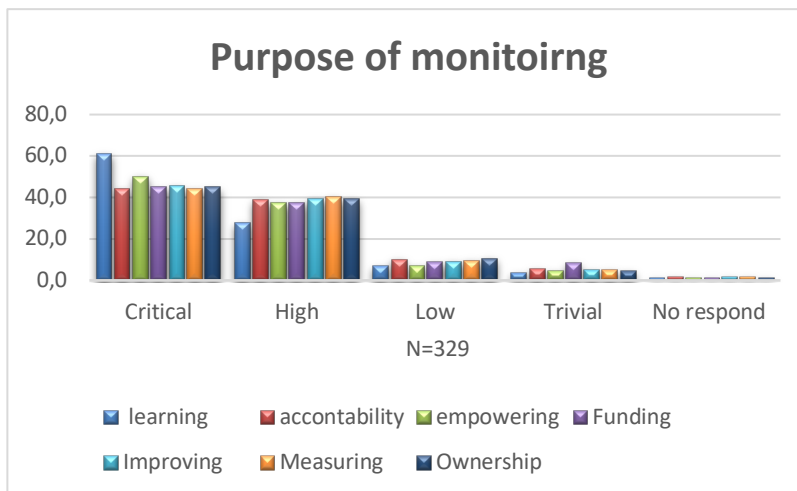
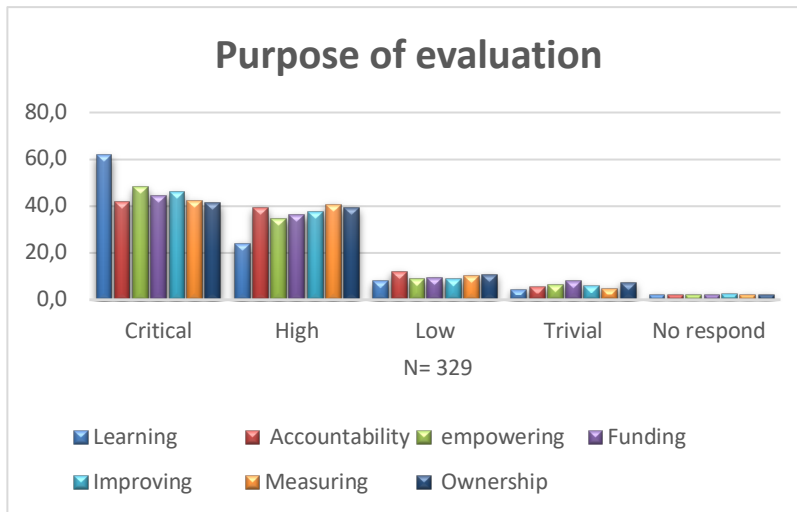


Figure 22: Direct beneficiaries’ response – Evaluation – Purpose



Source: Author’s own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

The data evinces that the seven purposes of M&E are critical. In fact, measuring change as purpose is critical in monitoring, but highly important in evaluation. Nonetheless, if all the purposes are ranked in terms of percentage of respondents, the data provides a different picture. The purpose of shared learning among the organization and the direct beneficiaries stands out as the most critical purpose in both monitoring and evaluation. Empowering the direct beneficiaries is the next critical purpose in monitoring projects being followed by improving project planning and efficiency, and measuring changes. Increasing the sense of ownership of direct beneficiaries falls at the fourth level in its criticality. Satisfying the funding agencies for future funding is the least critical in monitoring as compared to other critical purposes.

In evaluation, shared learning as its purpose stands out, followed by improving project planning and efficiency. Empowering the direct beneficiaries and measuring changes fall at the third ranking next to shared learning and improving project planning and efficiency. Satisfying funding agencies are at the fourth level in their criticality, and the least purpose of evaluation according to the data in its criticality, is increasing a sense of ownership of direct beneficiaries.

It is important to note that although all the respondents perceived the criticality of the seven purposes undertaken in the analysis, the percentages of the respondents ascribed to each purpose within the criticality of the purposes are not the same. Among all the critical purposes, facilitating shared learning between the organization and the direct beneficiaries is the most critical of all.

The data collected from the AP staff shows that the purpose of facilitating shared learning between WVE and the direct beneficiaries seems to be critical in monitoring and evaluation. However, the number of staff who believed that this purpose is critical is equal to those who believe that it is highly important in monitoring a project. But in evaluation, the number of respondents who think that this purpose is critical is greater than those who believed it is highly important. The data makes one thing clear, that is, doing M&E for the purpose of learning is critical if conflation of the percentage of “critical” and “high” respondent is considered. Noticeably, the data also discloses that meeting accountability is a critical purpose for monitoring. However, half of the respondents believed that it was a critical purpose for evaluation and half of the respondents believed that it was highly important.

The data indicates that empowering the direct beneficiaries through participation was a critical purpose in both monitoring and evaluation, according to the majority of the respondents. Those who think it was highly important are the minority in monitoring and evaluation comprising 18.8% and 25% respondents respectively. Satisfying the funding agency for further funding was also a critical purpose in monitoring and evaluation. Further, in the monitoring, improving project planning and efficiency, such as use of time, cost and resources, by providing useful information to managers and decision-makers is critical in monitoring but half of the respondents thought it was critical (50%) and high (50%) purpose in evaluation. Measuring change is also a critical purpose for both monitoring and evaluation. Increasing the sense of ownership between WVE and the direct beneficiaries was a critical purpose in monitoring and evaluation according to the majority of the respondents.

Generally, the majority of the staff believed that all the seven purposes of M&E were critical purposes. However, among these critical purposes, the majority of the respondents within the critical category increasing ownership of the direct beneficiaries stands out, being followed by empowering, and satisfying the funding agencies.

Figure 23: Staff response – Monitoring – Purpose

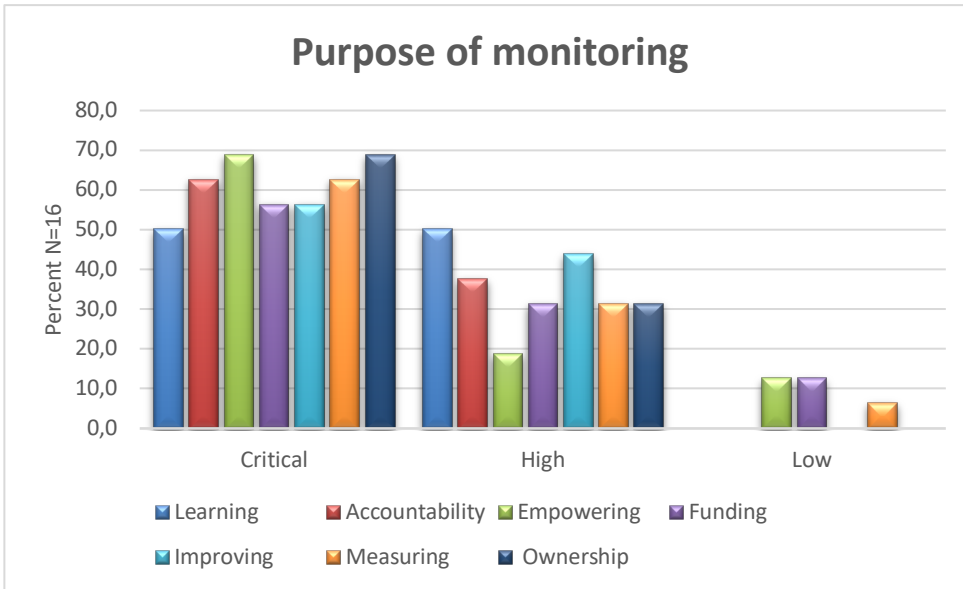
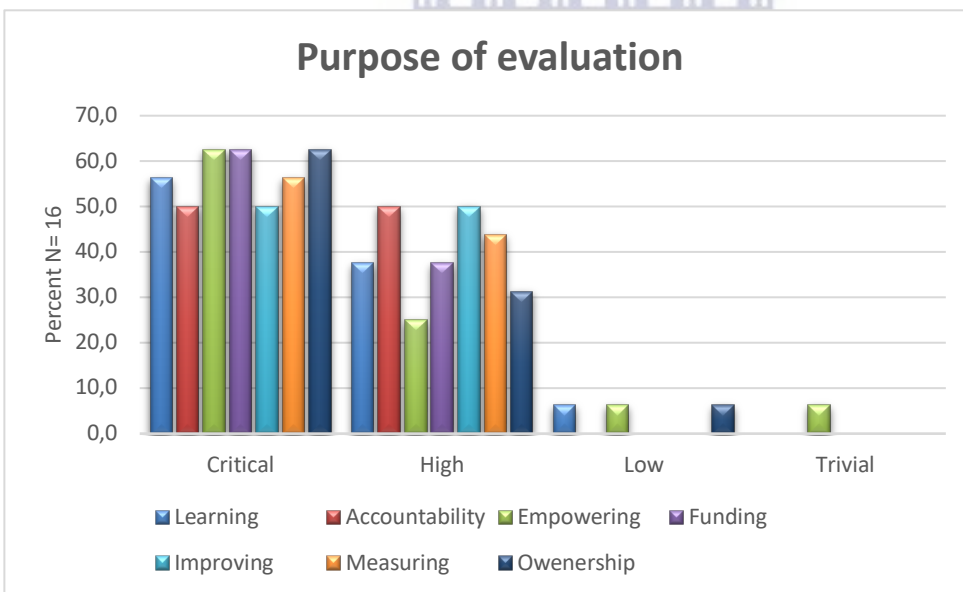


Figure 24: Staff response – Evaluation – Purpose



Source: Author’s own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

The qualitative data interviews and FGD identified the most important purposes in the WVE. The result is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Summary of Interviewees’ response to purpose of M&E

| Interview (N=26) | | Focus Group Discussion (N=6) | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Monitoring | Evaluation | Monitoring | Evaluation |
| Improve planning; correct errors | | Improve implementation; correct errors | |
| Measure achievement | Measure success, failure, impact, and changes | | Assess efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, impact; compare changes |
| Accountability | Learn and share experience | Learning and sharing best practice | Learning |
| Ensure sustainability | Satisfy donors | | |

Source: Author’s analysis of empirical data

As Table 3 shows, the interviews and FGD identified a limited number of the most important purpose of M&E as compared to the quantitative results. Monitoring was used for improving project planning through timely taken corrective measures when errors occurred, whereas evaluation was not regarded as improving project planning. While measuring achievement and accountability were perceived to be the most important among the interviewees, they were not mentioned in the FGD. The interviewees believed that measuring success, failure, impact and change brought due to the project deemed to be most important purposes of evaluation which also seems to be shared by the FGD, although the FGD thought that evaluation was done for assessing efficiency and effectiveness are also additional purposes for evaluating programs. Learning or capturing lessons that could be shared, especially best experiences perceived to be most important by both the interviewees and the FGD, except monitoring by the interviewees. It is important to note that accountability, satisfying donors, and ensuring sustainability were not mentioned in the FGD.

Most of the purposes mentioned by interviewees and the FGD, such as learning, accountability, improving planning and efficiency, satisfying funding agencies, and measuring changes are consonant with that of the quantitative results. However, empowering the direct beneficiaries and increasing sense of ownership were mentioned neither by the interviewees nor by the FGD.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data collected disclosed that the seven purposes of M&E were critical, although the qualitative data did not indicate anything about ownership and empowering as purposes of M&E.

The results of the empirical data presented above revealed the nature of one of the key determinants of M&E, namely: its purposes. Shared learning, meeting accountability, empowering the direct beneficiaries, satisfying the funding agencies or donors, improving project planning and efficiency, measuring changes, and creation of sense of ownership for direct beneficiaries are the key purposes that both monitoring and evaluation wrestle to address. Therefore, in the ensuing section, each purpose is discussed in light of the empirical results presented above.

6.5. Shared learning

The results of the data have clearly indicated that shared learning in M&E is a critical purpose in both monitoring and evaluation. Shared learning is basically the purpose propagated by the PM&E approach. Several PM&E scholars (such as, Cousins & Earl, 1992; Estrella, 2000; Greene et al., 1989; Probst, 2002; Tapella & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014) have argued that the purpose of M&E is learning, particularly because PM&E foundational theory came from the concept of organizational learning as part of organizational development and change. Preskill and Torres (2000) also maintain that learning occurs when individuals or groups within social contexts make sense out of it. Especially Pateman (1970) pronounces that despite the aspect of the participation, learning occurs. Guijt (2000) even stated that one of the key elements that makes PM&E, is learning that occurs during participation of all stakeholders.

The purpose of evaluation is that of conventional M&E. According to World Vision, “The purpose of evaluation is to build an evidence base that enables WV and its partners to improve programme effectiveness ... increase accountability ... advocate for change” (WV, 2018: 22). While the documents use the term “learning” five times for the monitoring section, it does use none for the evaluation section. The evaluation is clearly conventional, as WV states that its approach is scientific and evidence-based that enables WV, not its direct beneficiaries, to improve its partners, who are not direct beneficiaries. Partners are government officials and relevant sector professionals, religious organizations or other similar NGOs, and local communities, which at some level includes direct beneficiaries. Therefore, while the goal of monitoring includes shared

learning between the direct beneficiaries and WVE, evaluation's purpose does not state clearly about shared learning.

The question that then arises is how did the majority of the direct beneficiaries, the staff and interviewees and FGD respondents claim that shared learning is a critical (indispensable) purpose of M&E in the organization? The nature of monitoring in WV has to be made clear at this juncture. There are two levels of monitoring, according to the program monitoring guide: monitoring that tracks outcomes, and monitoring that tracks routine data. The former is done on a less frequent basis (every 6 to 18 months) which is most probably done during annual community review, whereas the latter is regularly recording progress for administrative purposes; this does not include the community participation but the community might hear the report. The former can be regarded as progressive evaluation (WV, 2016b). Therefore, monitoring includes evaluation, as in WVE evaluation takes place at the end of the program, which might be closer to be closed down. In the evaluation the purpose is to improve effectiveness, accountability and advocacy, which in fact, accrued knowledge is gained for the local and international community (WV, 2018).

It is probably because of the dual nature of monitoring and because of the annual community review and planning meeting that the direct beneficiaries and the staff thought that shared learning was one of the critical purposes of M&E. The document on this meeting claims that the purpose of monitoring is “to provide useful information to local decision-makers” (WV, 2016a: 2). Providing information, not the creation of information through participatory monitoring, to the local decision-makers, which are not clearly stated, is seen to be the key purpose. It also claims that the purpose is to gather together all monitoring information, reflect on it, and make use of it, assuming that such process empowers the stakeholders to review the progress.

Therefore, empowering in this sense is providing information about the progress of the project towards the community vision for discussion during the meeting. The role of WV is to help the local stakeholders to adapt the gained information from the monitoring progress and experience. The question is, who is the source of this learning? According to PM&E, the local stakeholders participate in all levels of M&E processes and the learning happened both in the direction of the project team, the organization, and the direct beneficiaries.

The problem with the PM&E approach pertaining to shared learning is that it does not clearly answer the questions, “Who decides that actual learning is happening?” and “What is the standard for knowing whether shared learning is occurring among the local stakeholders, and between the organization and the direct beneficiaries?” In participatory monitoring, shared learning is assumed to be happening through active participation of the direct beneficiaries from the very beginning to the end of the M&E process. But the data in this research indicates otherwise. The direct beneficiaries believed that shared learning had been happening among themselves and in WVE. Contra the personal profile of the respondents in this research, all believed that shared learning is a crucial purpose.

Therefore, it might be argued that what shared learning means, probably depends on the perspective of the person learning. Furthermore, shared learning can most probably occur within a hybrid approach. Pateman’s (1970) theory of participation is probably compatible to this proposal as she thinks that participation is more of a process and flexible in its consequences; therefore full, partial and pseudo participation are different arrangements of participation that in all of them learning occurs. Stufflebeam’s (2000) model of evaluation, which is conventional, also claims to be contributing knowledge, which is the result of learning. Therefore, the occurrence of shared learning could only be said to be happening by those who participated in the process and thus the result indicated that shared learning can happen within a hybrid approach.

6.6. Meeting accountability and satisfying donor needs

The empirical result has demonstrated that accountability is critical for evaluation and highly important for monitoring. In other words, it is indispensable in evaluation which cannot be escaped in any way as compared to its role in monitoring. Meeting accountability is critical in conventional M&E (Probst, 2002) although it is also perceived to be one of the determinants in PM&E even though it is achieved through negotiated contracts among participants (Alkin & Klein, 1972). Accountability and evaluation, in particular, are intertwined. Mutual accountability is one of the tenets of democratic participation (Dinbabo, 2003; Dinbabo, 2014; Samuels & Ryan, 2011). Therefore, whether it is participatory (Fetterman, 1996) or conventional, according to Alkin and Klein (1972) accountability is one of the key purposes of M&E, which comprises three areas: goal

and objective accountability, program (process-monitoring) accountability, and outcome accountability.

Scholars purport that one of the key differences of conventional M&E and PM&E is that conventional M&E works to determine the merit, impact or effectiveness of a project for public accountability for soliciting future funding, mostly through summative evaluation (Probst, 2002). Accountability, however, is a negotiated contract between the local community and the project provider in the PM&E. Estrella and Gaventa's (1998) review of research works on PM&E revealed that one of the purposes of M&E in this approach is for public accountability. In the same vein, Campilan's (2000) analysis of twelve case studies showed that one of the purposes for which PM&E was conducted is for ensuring greater public accountability. The conventional approach may focus on the purpose of demonstrating accountability, which needs independent researched to achieve high levels of objectivity (Martin et al., 2011).

The empirical evidence in this research revealed that accountability is critical in both monitoring and evaluation. It confirms what is stated in the M&E documents. The LEAP 3.1 document underscores accountability, as "A" stands for accountability in the M&E, which is defined as "to be accountable to communities and supporters by sharing programme information, consulting with communities, promoting participation and collecting and acting on feedback and complaints" (WV, 2018: 3). The definition encapsulates both conventional M&E and PM&E approaches while supporting donors, referring to the conventional M&E and highlighting the importance of community participation. Accountability at different levels of WV is emphasized: operation director, technical program manager, area program manager, and development facilitator. These staff members ensure: that basic accountability requirements are met; effective community engagement; that information is accessible to all stakeholders, including feedback; that complaints are collated and analyzed across all programs and action is taken in response (WV, 2018).

One of the things that is assessed during monitoring, according to LEAP 3.1, is to ensure that programs demonstrate shared ownership and implementation with key stakeholders, according to their capacity and agreed roles, and accountability to children and communities. The purpose of evaluation is also stated clearly as "increasing accountability by sharing evaluation results in appropriate ways with all key stakeholders, including communities, partners, host governments and supporters" (WV, 2018: 22). Therefore, M&E "enables improved communication and

accountability to supporters as well as to the children, families and communities WV serves” (WV, 2018: 3).

WV’s understanding of accountability thus involves all stakeholders, not just donors, according to LEAP 3.1. Fetterman (1996) notes that participatory evaluation possibly involves an outside evaluator to help the local community in providing it with tools and knowledge for continuous self-assessment and accountability. LEAP 3.1 also claims that sustainability is a WV goal, which includes social accountability, whereby “on-going activities by citizens and local groups hold government service providers accountable for the quality and quantity of services delivered for children against their plans and policies, and generate evidence for policy dialogue” (WV, 2018: 12). This goal is achieved through programs during the project’s life cycle where local groups and organizations develop their capacities and skills.

The findings of this research indicated a kind of hybrid approach, which mixes conventional M&E and PM&E models, as it attempts to embrace aspects of both approaches. In doing so, the findings imply the possibility of accommodating participation to some extent in the accountability process and intentionally incorporated into it although accountability is not explicitly stated in the annual community review document. The question whether accountability is done only for public consumption is not emphasized, but it is emphasized for sustainability. It can be argued that accountability as a purpose of M&E in both approaches, that is, conventional M&E and PM&E are highly important and therefore cannot be the distinctive characteristic for only conventional M&E.

Satisfying the funding agencies or donors is an aspect of conventional M&E’s purpose (Probst, 2002). In this research study, respondents from both methods are of the opinion that satisfying donors for future funding in both monitoring and evaluation was a critical purpose of the M&E process. Martin et al. (2011) observe that donors hold varied interests in evaluation theories and approaches at different levels of evaluation. Development organization must have clear objectives, obtain funding, demonstrate measurable results in a short period of time to satisfy donors, and be efficient and quick to use limited funds (Nelson & Wright, 1995). Such demand is incumbent on the side of development organizations. The WV LEAP 3.1 document contextualizes donors as key stakeholders in decision-making, especially during the closure of projects. They deserve to receive the M&E reports through the national office.

Estrella (2000) highlights that donors are interested in PM&E because of its emphasis on achieving results and objectives, over and above financial reports. In any case, whether satisfaction of donors shifted to achievement and objectives of projects or conventional modes of M&E for the purpose of getting continuous support, is not a conflicting motivation, because funding is important in both cases, whether to empower the local community for sustainability or achieving the objectives of the project. Therefore, M&E has to take the donors' vested interest in the project seriously. *The downside of PM&E is its lopsided obsession and commitment to local stakeholders or the local community.* Stakeholders must include all of those who are affected by the result of the project. If this is the case, then donors could be regarded as key stakeholders as they have a vested interest in the project. If this is granted, then satisfying donor needs is one of the key purposes of M&E in both approaches – conventional and participatory. The data in this research ratified its critical place in the M&E process.

Meeting accountability and satisfying donor needs cannot be separated. Accountability is not simply financial auditing, as some would like us to assume; rather, it is a comprehensive element in the M&E process that all parties who are affected by the project would love to see if visions and objectives are realized and resources are properly used. Similarly, funding agencies or donors want to see their investments bearing fruit for the betterment of the community and that resources are being used for the intended purpose. If this is taken into account, meeting accountability and satisfying donors cannot be the aspect of only conventional M&E purposes; rather, they are aspects of both approaches, inasmuch as the donors are considered stakeholders of an intervention.

6.7. Empowering the direct beneficiaries/local stakeholders

Empowering the direct beneficiaries through participation is critical in monitoring and highly important in evaluation according to the empirical findings of this research. Empowering the local community as the purpose of M&E, is one of the tenets of PM&E. According to Fetterman (1996), evaluation encompasses training, facilitating, advocating, illuminating and liberating and making users self-sufficient through the PM&E process. Probst (2002) agrees that PM&E is intended to enable organizations and groups to track their capacities so that they can trace their progress and success and it is enhancing the local stakeholders' capacity for self-reflection, learning, and social

responsiveness. Transformational Participatory Evaluation (T-PE) particularly claims to empower those who are less powerful. However, it is at this particular area that conventional M&E and PM&E are acutely distinct; and advocates of the participatory approach have lodged severe criticisms against the conventional approach.

Pace the above researchers, in this research the results of the data have shown that empowering local stakeholders can also be included within the conventional M&E. The results ratified what is stated in WVE documents. The annual community review meeting guiding document crafted a fairly participatory monitoring proposal within the conventional model. It insists that the purpose of monitoring is to empower local stakeholders to review the progress towards the vision of the project and to help the local community to adapt what is learned from the project into their normal child-well-being vision (WV, 2016b). The program monitoring guide declares the key principles in the monitoring process, one of which is empowering and building local capacity; therefore, it tracks how effectively the program team empower the community and related partners. The program teams ensure that the communities “take increasing level of responsibility for the planning, implementation and use of monitoring information” (WV, 2016a: 1). The LEAP 3.1 document (WV, 2018: 15) highlights the importance of “empowering communities, families, and children themselves to overcome the root causes of their vulnerability.” Thus, empowering families, children and communities is the aspiration of WVE. If this is the case, then both the direct beneficiaries and the staff believed that empowering direct beneficiaries is one of the highly important purposes of M&E, albeit in the interview and the FGD it did not surface.

Empowerment is a vague concept that hampers scholars from lucidly defining it, despite its popularity. Oakley (1991b) defines empowerment in terms of enabling participants by developing their skills and abilities. PM&E, which claims to be empowering the local stakeholders, is criticized for its claim on two grounds: first, it has a simplistic understanding of power and how empowerment occurs, and it treats empowerment as a technical method of evaluating project (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). Cleaver (2001) observes that the focus on techniques disengaged PM&E from its intent of empowering the local stakeholders. Furthermore, empowerment has a negative presupposition that prides itself as being an intervening force in the lives of local stakeholders to give them power to enable them to realize their own potential (Nelson & Wright, 1995). Parfitt’s (2004) inquiry about how to reconcile the demand for efficient delivery, for rules

and regularity on the side of the development organization, and the demands of empowerment of the local community on the other hand, needs closer attention. However, the quantitative and qualitative findings in this research study did not reveal how the empowerment took place.

6.8. Measuring changes and improving project planning and efficiency

According to Campilan (2000) (see also Ikebuaku & Dinbabo, 2018), the very concern of M&E is to track changes that occurred due to a given intervention, for the purpose of making decisions for future action. This is true for both conventional M&E and PM&E. The results in this research also affirm that measuring change is one of the critical purposes in the M&E process, according to the direct beneficiaries and it is highly important in both monitoring and evaluation, in the opinion of the staff. Both groups deemed it one of the key purposes of M&E, as the data showed.

Similarly, LEAP 3.1 (WV, 2018) states that the purpose of monitoring is to assess the progress toward objectivities or the intended child well-being outcomes, that is, positive changes achieved, while evaluation measures indicators established at baseline at the end of a program cycle to assess the extent to which the program achieved the objectives, that is, the change brought about because of the intervention. The approach is conventional in its epistemological stance. Campilan (2000) observes that PM&E does not differ from the conventional approach in this regard. However, the difference is how the measuring is done, who is doing it, and for what purpose. PM&E creates an environment that enables the stakeholders. But whether this is happening or not, the quantitative and qualitative data did not enable the researcher to know with certainty. Nevertheless, this study concludes with confidence that measuring change is one of the critical purposes of M&E in both approaches. Therefore, for purposes of this study, there is no difference between the two approaches in this regard.

Improved project planning and efficiency needs information that helps the decision-makers (who those persons or group might be). The purpose of providing information to decision-makers is deemed to be critical in both monitoring and evaluation, according to the results from the quantitative and qualitative data, although the results are mainly attributed to the characteristics of conventional M&E. Alkin and Klein (1972) insist that evaluation must clearly summarize the process, to provide information for decision-makers. It needs to guide decision-making (Stufflebeam, 2000), particularly aimed at improved management (Wholey, 1981). From the

conventional M&E point of view, it must provide evidence regarding the effectiveness of the program for the purpose of improving a proposed intervention (Scriven, 1986).

The annual community review and planning document (WV, 2016a: 2) declares that “the primary purpose of monitoring [in WV] is to provide useful information to local decision-makers.” This is done through the annual review and planning as part of the monitoring process. Presumably, local stakeholders gather the information during this meeting, reflect on it and apply it. LEAP 3.1 (WV, 2018) clearly states that the purpose of monitoring is to encourage engagement among top management and to improve the effectiveness of programs. It is also crystal clear, according to LEAP 3.1 (WV, 2018), that the purpose of evaluation is to build on evidence-based (which is the conventional approach) evaluation that enables the WVE and its partners to improve program effectiveness, and to determine the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the program. The document has registered that whether it is monitoring or evaluation, one of their functions is to provide evidence-based information to decision-makers. These decision-makers could be local, national, or international.

The answer to the question, “Who makes the decision whether the project is effective, and efficient or not for further improvement?” is a matter of debate. For the PM&E, it is the local stakeholders even controlling the funding resources and decision-making (Estrella & Gaventa, 1998). Such aspiration of PM&E seems to be ambitious and does not seem to be aligning itself with the reality of the development context on the ground. Controlling all the decision-making process and resources by direct beneficiaries might only occur under conditions where direct beneficiaries are the sources of project funding and related sources, which is mostly unlikely in development organizations, run by either the government or NGOs.

If resources are not arising from the direct beneficiaries, then those who provide resources have a vested interest in the intervention and the right to be part of decision-making. In such scenario, M&E serves in providing the necessary information for all stakeholders at different levels involved in a project and who are affected by the project. Decision-making should involve all the stakeholders at different levels, not only the local stakeholder, to improve the project and to value its efficiency and effectiveness. If this is so, the conventional M&E and PM&E have commonality

in this particular purpose – improving project planning and efficiency by providing information to decision-makers who have vested interests in the projects, although at times the ways in which it is done, differs.

Hence, measuring change and providing useful information to managers and decision-makers (which involves local communities at different levels of involvement) to improve project planning and efficiency are compatible and regarded as critical purposes in both conventional M&E and PM&E.

6.9. Creation of a sense of ownership

PM&E claims that one of its aims is to create a sense of ownership within the local stakeholders (Beyene & Dinbabo, 2019; Cousins & Whitmore, 1998; Probst, 2002). However, Probst (2002) admits that building ownership in PM&E is challenging because it involves self-determination, data collection and analysis, dealing with sensitive information regarding failure, catching up on changing information needs, and utilizing findings in decision-making.

LEAP 3.1 (WV, 2018) states that evaluation provides the opportunity to build local ownership of the project by local stakeholders, that is, family, communities, and partners, to improve the sustainability of a program. However, this claim speaks of building ownership of the program for sustainability, not owning the M&E system per se. Still, through participation of local stakeholders, according to the document, the technical program manager is responsible to make sure that the sense of ownership among the local stakeholders is created, which might as well include the practice of M&E, albeit impossible to be certain. Further, at the design stage of the monitoring process, ensuring local ownership of the monitoring system is considered as a good strategy for the success of monitoring programs (WV, 2016b).

The empirical findings of this research have demonstrated that the sense of ownership was one of the critical purposes of WVE, although such purpose is not mentioned by the FGD and interviewees. But this result does not inform much about how the sense of ownership was built, but an attempt was made. Moreover, the WVE document and respondents claim the possibility of creating a sense of ownership within the local stakeholders within WVE's M&E framework, albeit no certainty from the data is gained as to how it happened regarding owning the M&E process.

All the findings, therefore, show that shared learning, as the purpose of M&E, is critical (Tapella & Rodriguez-Bilella, 2014). It is most probable that it can be exercised within the conventional M&E. Regarding accountability and satisfying donor needs, there are the two key purposes of M&E, as the result indicated. Furthermore, both accountability and satisfying funding agencies can possibly be practiced in both conventional M&E and PM&E because both approaches believe that accountability is part and parcel of the exercise of M&E. Donors are among those who have vested interests in the program.

The finding has shown that empowering local stakeholders – the claimed prerogative of the participatory approach – can also be practiced within the conventional- or the participatory approach. Measuring changes and providing information for improving project planning and efficiency are compatible in both conventional and participatory approaches. Finally, creating a sense of ownership, though admitted by researchers that it is a challenge to fully practice by PM&E, there is a possibility of exercising it within the hybrid approach, although the result in this research is unable to verify it through qualitative data. Therefore, the research found that the purposes of monitoring and evaluation are the key determinant elements in the M&E process. Furthermore, the findings have demonstrated that virtually all the purposes of M&E explored and analyzed in this research can most likely be practiced in both conventional M&E and PM&E.

6.10. Creation of indicators

The creation of indicators for M&E is one of the key determinant stages in the M&E process. Scholars have argued that one of the differences between conventional M&E and PM&E is the creation of indicators. Indicators are pre-defined and are objectives in the conventional M&E, whereas they are flexible and negotiable in PM&E, to accommodate different views (Estrella, 2000). Conventional M&E local stakeholders or direct beneficiaries have no input in the creation of indicators because indicators are created and ratified by funding agencies or project staff (Probst, 2002).

The aim of the analysis was to explore whether the difference between conventional M&E and PM&E on the creation of indicators existed or not and to explore the possibility of combining the two approaches in the creation of indicators for M&E. First, the study presents and analyzes the data collected from direct beneficiaries; then it presents the data from staff respondents in the

quantitative section of the data, followed by the qualitative data results. Finally, the study discusses the results of both the qualitative and quantitative methods.

According to the data (see the tables below), the dominant approach seems to be negotiation among different stakeholders: donors, top managers, external experts, and direct beneficiaries in both monitoring and evaluation. However, among others, the majority of the respondents agreed that indicators were also created by project managers in M&E. A combined percentage of agreed and strongly agreed responses indicates that the project managers had influence in the creation of indicators in the M&E process. External experts were also believed to be slightly dominant actors in the creation of indicators, as the majority of the respondents agreed that they did so. Nonetheless, those who strongly disagreed and disagreed were a significant percentage who believed that external experts were the ones who created the indicators. The sum of those who agreed and strongly agreed that external experts created the indicators, is 50.1% (in monitoring) and 50.2% (in evaluation) respectively, whereas the sum of those who disagreed and strongly disagreed, is 47.2% (in monitoring) and 49% (in evaluation) respectively. As the data indicates, the percentage difference is not that significant in both cases; therefore, it seems that the external experts were not as dominant as project managers and donors, although they were perceived to be influential actors in the process of creation of indicators.

The direct beneficiaries were also influential actors in the creation of indicators, both in monitoring and in evaluation, according to the majority of the respondents. The combination of respondents' percentages who agreed and strongly agreed that direct beneficiaries in M&E, indicates that direct beneficiaries were purported to be dominant in the creation of indicators. But there were also significant percentages of respondents who believed that direct beneficiaries were not involved in the creation of indicators in monitoring (40.7%) and in evaluation (39.9%). Likewise, the majority of respondents believed that indicators were created through negotiation with the direct beneficiaries in both monitoring and in evaluation.

This can be verified by subsuming the percentages of those who responded *agreed and strongly agreed* to the claim presented in the survey questions for each possible actor in the creation of indicators for the monitoring process. This resulted in the following ascending order: external

expert: 50.8%, direct beneficiaries: 57.2%, donors: 57.5%, negotiation with direct beneficiaries: 60.2%, project managers: 63.8%, and through negotiation among donors, top managers, external experts, and direct beneficiaries: 65.7%. Therefore, the summation shows the combined percentages of those who agreed and strongly agreed to the claims that these actors were active in the creation of indicators to monitoring. However, the summation percentage demonstrates that negotiation among these key stakeholders occurred during the creation of indicators; therefore, it is most probable that the creation of indicators for monitoring was done through negotiation.

Likewise, subsuming the percentages of those who responded positively, that is, agreed and strongly agreed to the claims in the survey for each possible actor in the creation of indicators for evaluation, resulted in the following ascending order: external expert: 50.2%, donors: 58.1%, direct beneficiaries: 59.3%, project managers: 59.8%, through negotiation among donors, top managers, external expert, and direct beneficiaries: 61.4%, and negotiation with direct beneficiaries: 66.6%. Hence, the summed data indicates that all the actors influenced the process of crafting indicators, which most probably happened through negotiation among the various actors.

Table 4: Direct beneficiaries’ response – creation of indicators for monitoring

| Survey questions | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | No response |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Indicators are created by donors | 29.8% | 27.7% | 20.1% | 20.7% | 1.8% |
| Indicators are created by project manager | 23.1% | 40.7% | 20.4% | 14.0% | 1.8% |
| Indicators are created by external expert | 15.8% | 35.0% | 27.7% | 19.5% | 2.1% |
| Indicators created by direct beneficiaries | 21.9% | 35.3% | 25.2% | 15.5% | 2.1% |
| Indicators are created by negotiation with direct beneficiaries | 25.5% | 34.7% | 24.3% | 13.7% | 1.8% |
| Negotiation among donors, top managers, external expert, and direct beneficiaries | 20.7% | 45.0% | 15.8% | 16.7% | 1.8% |

N=329

Source: Author’s analysis of empirical data

Table 5: Direct beneficiaries’ response – creation of indicators for evaluation

| Survey questions | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | No response |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Indicators are created by donors | 28.0% | 30.1% | 21.3% | 19.8% | 0.9% |
| Indicators are created by project manager | 25.5% | 34.3% | 22.8% | 16.4% | 0.9% |

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Indicators are created by external expert | 14.9% | 35.3% | 27.7% | 21.3% | 0.9% |
| Indicators are created by direct beneficiaries | 23.4% | 35.9% | 27.4% | 12.5% | 0.9% |
| Indicators are created by negotiation with direct beneficiaries | 23.4% | 43.2% | 19.8% | 12.8% | 0.9% |
| Indicators are created by negotiation among donors, top managers, external expert, and direct beneficiaries | 15.2% | 46.2% | 19.1% | 18.5% | 0.9% |

N=329

Source: Author's analysis of empirical data

Like the direct beneficiary respondents, the data collected from the staff show that indicators were created through negotiation among the different stakeholders: direct beneficiaries, donors, project managers, and external experts in both monitoring and evaluation processes. More especially, the data reveals that the majority of the respondents strongly believed that donors were not involved in the creation of indicators in the monitoring process as compared to evaluation. Those who believed that donors were the ones creating indicators are insignificant in percentage as compared to those who believed that donors were not involved in the creation of indicators.

However, the data shows that project managers were the dominant actors in the creation of indicators in the monitoring process, despite a good number of respondents thinking that they were not the ones who created the indicators. It is important to note that in the evaluation process, there was an equal percentage of respondents who indicated that the project managers were the one who created the indicators and those who did not believe that the project managers were not the ones who created the indicators. Moreover, the data further indicates that the combination of those who agreed and those who strongly agreed exceeded the number of those who disagreed. Hence, it is quite probable to conclude from the data that in evaluation, the project managers had a strong influence in creating indicators, while the external expert was not probable among one of the dominant actors in the creation of indicators for M&E. The external expert was not the dominant actor in the creation of indicators for evaluation (56% disagreed and strongly disagreed) as compared to other actors, according to the staff respondents. However, the data evinces a combination of the percentages of those *who agreed and strongly agreed* (50.1%) and those who

disagreed and strongly disagreed (50%) regarding the external experts' involvement in the creation of indicators for monitoring.

According to the majority of the staff respondents, direct beneficiaries were the creators of indicators in monitoring (50% agreed; 6.30% strongly agreed) as opposed to evaluation (37.50% disagreed; 18.80% strongly disagreed) as the majority of the respondents did not ascribe to the claim that they were creators of the indicators. In fact, a number of respondents disagreed (37.50% disagreed; 6.30% strongly disagreed) with the claim that direct beneficiaries were involved in the crafting of indicators in monitoring. Likewise, there were a good number of respondents (31.50% agreed; 12.50% strongly agreed) who agreed that the direct beneficiaries were creators of the indicators for the evaluation process. Nevertheless, the data reveals that indicators for both monitoring and evaluations were created through negotiation among key stakeholders, such as the direct beneficiaries, donors, top project managers, and external experts.

A summation of the percentages of those who responded positively to the claims (agreed and strongly agreed) for each actor in the creation of indicators in monitoring, provides the following percentages in ascending order: external expert: 50.1%, direct beneficiaries: 56.3%, through negotiation with direct beneficiaries: 56.3%, project managers: 68.8%, and through the negotiation among donors, top managers, external expert and direct beneficiaries: 81.3%. The data, therefore, indicates that the majority of respondents thought that the indicators were created through negotiation in the monitoring process. But 68% (disagreed and strongly disagreed) rejected the claim that donors created indicators for monitoring.

In contrast to the data in monitoring, in evaluation the conflation of the percentages of those who responded positively (agreed and strongly agreed) to the claims of the survey question regarding the role of each possible actor in the creation of indicator, produces a different result. In ascending order: through negotiation with direct beneficiaries: 56.3%, project managers: 62.5%, and through negotiation among donors, top managers, external expert and direct beneficiaries: 75%. Although 75% of the respondents believed that the creation of indicators was through negotiation, a significant number of respondents believed that donors, external experts, and direct beneficiaries were *not creators* of indicators in evaluation, as the summation of strongly disagreed and disagreed responses result in donors: 62.6%; external expert: 56.3%; and direct beneficiaries: 56.3%.

Table 6: Staff response – creation of indicators for monitoring

| Survey questions | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | No response |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Indicators are created by donors | 6.3% | 25.0% | 43.8% | 25.0% | - |
| Indicators are created by project manager | 12.5% | 56.3% | 31.3% | - | - |
| Indicators are created by external expert | 6.3% | 43.8% | 37.5% | 12.5% | - |
| Indicators are created by direct beneficiaries | 6.3% | 50.0% | 37.5% | 6.3% | - |
| Indicators are created by negotiation with direct beneficiaries | 18.8% | 37.5% | 31.3% | 12.5% | - |
| Indicators are created by negotiation among donors, top managers, external expert and direct beneficiaries | 50.0% | 31.3% | 12.5% | 6.3% | - |

N=16

Source: Author's analysis of empirical data

**Table 7: Staff response – creation of indicators for evaluation**

| Survey questions | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | No response |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Indicators are created by donors | 12.5% | 25.0% | 31.3% | 31.3% | - |
| Indicators are created by project manager | 25.0% | 37.5% | 37.5% | - | - |
| Indicators are created by external expert | 12.5% | 31.3% | 43.8% | 12.5% | - |
| Indicators are created by direct beneficiaries | 12.5% | 31.3% | 37.5% | 18.8% | - |
| Indicators are created by negotiation with direct beneficiaries | 18.8% | 37.5% | 18.8% | 25.0% | - |
| Indicators are created by negotiation among donors, top managers, external expert and direct beneficiaries | 50.0% | 25.0% | 12.5% | 12.5% | - |

N=16

Source: Author's analysis of empirical data

The quantitative data collected from respondents from the direct beneficiaries and the staff has shown that the majority of the respondents believed that indicators were created through negotiation among stakeholders: donors, top managers, external experts, and direct beneficiaries.

The qualitative data probably yielded a slightly similar (although not identical) result from that of the quantitative data, although the majority of the interviewees believed that WVE created indicators. One respondent was even of the opinion that WVE theoretically believed and desired that direct beneficiaries should participate in the creation of indicators, practically it was the WVE's input that took the greater share (MR, age 41, Sidama). Others also think that "indicators are pre-defined ... top-down" (FGD, Group I). Such descriptions by the respondents can be misunderstood unless their statements were unpacked by other interviewees' descriptions of the process, not least because the interview also revealed that there were other participants in the creation of indicators: government sector offices were one of the key stakeholders in programs and projects (MR, age 55, Sidama). Direct beneficiaries also participated in the creation of indicators directly and indirectly. For example, some of the interviewee respondents commented on the process in this manner: At the baseline assessment stage, direct beneficiaries identify problems and their root causes through a tool called "problem tree" (MR, age 55, Sidama). Identified problems would be converted into objectives and become the basis for the creation of indicators. Then, indicators created in this process are compared with the generic or standardized indicators of WVE (MR, age 40, Sidama; MR, age 55, Sidama; MR, age 32, SNNP). A more detailed description of how direct beneficiaries were involved in the creation of indicators was offered by this respondent:

We do not use this technical term, "indicator," but we ask them [direct beneficiaries] to express what kind of community they would like to see in the coming years (let's say in two years). When they are asked in such manner, they articulate their dreams. Indicators are within this articulation. For example, in our case, *Wearama Kebele*, they articulated that they have several springs of waters and after four years they want to see these springs being cared for and to drink pure water from them. Such articulation of need is an indicator in itself. The MEAL officer takes this articulation and matches it with the list of indicators provided by WVE. Hence, the direct beneficiaries express their own indicators in their own words. These same indicators are already formulated in scientific words and the only thing is to choose the

right indicators from the list of indicators that represent the indicators articulated by the direct beneficiaries. This is, in fact, for the monitoring design and process (FR, age 40, Sidama).

The data from the interviewees reveals that there were different stakeholders involved in the process: standardized indicators that probably were global indicators (FR, age 37, Sidama) allowed the international stakeholder to have a say in the process, the national office of WVE, Area Program staff, government sector office experts or specialists, religious leaders, community influential leaders, children (direct beneficiaries) and M&E experts.

Therefore, the greater number of respondents in the quantitative and qualitative data result shows that creation of indicators was mainly a negotiated process that involved several stakeholders ranging from international to the local that were directly or indirectly involved in the program.

This empirical result of the research confirms that indicators are indispensable in M&E despite differing approaches because they measure changes (so also Seasons, 2017). However, the dispute among practitioners and scholars is who creates them and how are they created and the nature of indicators. Indicators are pre-defined and are objective in conventional M&E, whereas in PM&E they are flexible and negotiated to accommodate different views (Estrella, 2000). This difference between the two approaches does not negate the existence of the indicator in PM&E; the only difference is their nature, that is, negotiable or not; flexible or not; not least, who creates them.

The results of the data indicated that the majority of the direct beneficiaries think that indicators are created through negotiation among donors, top managers, external experts, and direct beneficiaries. This might be concomitant of the nature of WV as an international NGO. WV is one of the largest international NGOs that is a multi-country and multi-layered organization that is mainly involved in child-well-being intervention around the globe. It functions in collaboration with host governments, community-based partners, and local stakeholders or communities. All stakeholders, at global, national, regional and local levels, demand to know the outcome and impact of the intervention made by it. For instance, the global board requires evidence-based reports on the impact of its projects to meet accountability and knowledge production requirements (Carboni & Morrow, 2011). Although no globally mandated indicators for measuring child well-

being outcomes existed (WV, 2014), WV is obligated to create a standardized but flexible indicator that might satisfy different levels of stakeholders, contexts and cultures. Therefore, it developed a compendium or menu of indicators based on research and sources from reputable international organizations, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WV cumulative knowledge and from a long-term development program experience across 50 developing and low-economy countries (Carboni & Morrow, 2011).

The compendium of indicators assumed to be flexible and can be used in any country in different contexts and each country and local context can select appropriate indicators from the compendium. Community perceptions could be easily linked to indicators in the compendium. Community perception should be established before selecting indicators through a participatory process, which includes children, especially the most vulnerable (WV, 2014). Then the selection process is executed by those who design the M&E process. However, the compendium of indicators, although flexible and adaptable to the context and to the community perception, are created for outcomes, not outputs; therefore, they are used for measuring baseline and evaluation purposes, not for regular monitoring purposes, albeit that some relevant indicators can be used for monitoring. Therefore, indicators for monitoring are developed at the project level (Carboni & Morrow, 2011). It seems that monitoring indicators are selected by partners and the local community along with the accountable staff, according to LEAP 3.1. Program monitoring guidance for LEAP 3 (WV, 2016b) states that there are community-generated indicators that involve children and vulnerable groups.

In all probability, the direct beneficiaries were thinking that their participation was in selecting from the standardized indicators and proposing their own indicators during the baseline study as a negotiation among the different stakeholders. Similarly, the majority of the staff thought that the indicators were created through negotiation among donors, top managers, external experts, and direct beneficiaries. A similar view was reflected from the qualitative data. It appears that this is a PM&E approach. On the other hand, it also seems to be a conventional approach, because the M&E seeks to base its measurement on objective and standardized indicators. However, as Carboni and Morrow (2011) indicate, WV is obliged, because of its organizational nature, context, culture, and varied stakeholders, to standardize its indicators and at the same time make them

flexible. Therefore, a complex and rigorous process of creation, accommodation of local voices and contexts took place.

It is important to note that the challenge is addressing stakeholders. A lopsided approach such as only local stakeholders and only top management, never solves the problem. An access point for all concerned stakeholders needs to be crafted in the indicators. The result of this section indicates that there is a possibility of making a combination of conventional M&E and PM&E approaches in the creation of indicators that involve virtually all the concerned stakeholders.

Thus, indicators being one of the key determinants of the M&E process, according to the findings of this research, they were most probably created participatorily within pre-defined and standardized indicators, including all interested stakeholders at different levels and stages of intervention. Therefore, it should not be an either/or approach; it should be both.

6.11. Methodology

Among all the determinants of conventional M&E and PM&E, the method is the center of contention. The disagreement on methodology depends on the epistemological commitment. The two broader approaches – conventional and participatory – purported to be differing in their methodology. The former values a hypothetical deductive mode of inquiry, quantitative measure, quasi-experimental design, and statistical analysis as typical methods; therefore, baseline studies, pre-defined variables, objectives, verifiable, valid and reliable indicators are fundamentally important for the collection of data (Probst, 2002). But the latter focuses on the purpose of monitoring and has no one-fit-for-all method. This section presents the quantitative and qualitative data results on the methodology – first, the quantitative data from the direct beneficiaries and staff, then the qualitative data, and finally, a discussion of the results.

Tables 8 and 9 below show that the majority of the direct beneficiaries agree that WVE used, in the M&E process, an established research design, statistical quantitative analysis and qualitative method, and the tools that were applied regard the monitoring process as an end in itself, that they encouraged creativity to adapt the tools to the context of the program or project and that they accommodate the voice of the voiceless.

Table 8: Direct beneficiaries’ response – methodology in monitoring

| Survey questions: WVE uses | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | No response |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Established research design | 45.3% | 32.8% | 14.0% | 5.5% | 2.4% |
| Only quantitative statistical analysis | 35.0% | 42.2% | 13.1% | 7.3% | 2.4% |
| Both qualitative and quantitative methods | 42.2% | 36.2% | 13.1% | 5.8% | 2.7% |
| The tools regard the monitoring process as the product | 20.7% | 51.7% | 16.1% | 7.3% | 4.3% |
| The tools encourage creativity to adapt the tools to the context of the program or project | 45.0% | 32.5% | 10.3% | 9.7% | 2.4% |
| The tools accommodate the voice of the voiceless | 35.3% | 40.7% | 14.3% | 2.4% | 2.4% |

Table 9: Direct beneficiaries’ response – methodology in evaluation

| Survey questions: WVE uses | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | No response |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Established research design | 41.0% | 35.9% | 13.1% | 7.3% | 2.7% |
| Only quantitative statistical analysis | 31.3% | 44.1% | 14.6% | 7.3% | 2.7% |
| Both qualitative and quantitative methods | 42.2% | 35.3% | 11.6% | 8.2% | 2.7% |
| The tools regard the monitoring process as the product | 23.4% | 50.2% | 16.4% | 7.3% | 2.7% |
| The tools encourage creativity to adapt the tools to the context of the program or project | 45.6% | 31.0% | 11.6% | 9.1% | 2.7% |
| The tools accommodate the voice of the voiceless | 32.2% | 44.1% | 12.5% | 8.5% | 2.7% |

Source: Author’s analysis of empirical data

Similarly, a considerable percentage of staff respondents agreed that WVE used in its M&E process established research design, qualitative and quantitative methods, and the tools also regarded the monitoring process as the product, encouraged creativity to adapt the tools to the

context of the program or project, and accommodated the voice of the voiceless. However, they rejected the notion that WVE used only quantitative statistical analysis.

Table 10: Staff response – methodology in monitoring

| Survey questions: WVE uses | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| Established research design | 31.3% | 56.3% | 12.5% | - |
| Only quantitative statistical analysis | - | 12.5% | 68.8% | 18.8% |
| Both qualitative and quantitative methods | 25.0% | 68.8% | 6.3% | 25.0% |
| The tools regard the monitoring process as the product | 12.5% | 81.3% | 6.3% | - |
| The tools encourage creativity to adapt the tools to the context of the program or project | 25.0% | 68.8% | 6.3% | 6.3% |
| The tools accommodate the voice of the voiceless | 25.0% | 62.5% | 62.5% | 6.3% |

Table 11: Staff response – methodology in evaluation

| Survey questions: WVE uses | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| Established research design | 31.3% | 31.3% | 43.8% | 25.0% |
| Only quantitative statistical analysis | 6.3% | 12.5% | 56.3% | 25.0% |
| Both qualitative and quantitative methods for all evaluation | 25.0% | 56.3% | 12.5% | 6.3% |
| The tools regard the monitoring process as the product | 12.5% | 75.0% | 12.0% | - |
| The tools encourage creativity to adapt the tools to the context of the program or project | 18.8% | 12.5% | 12.5% | 6.3% |
| The tools accommodate the voice of the voiceless | 25.0% | 56.3% | 12.5% | 6.3% |

Source: Author's analysis of empirical data

A similar result was found from the qualitative data. Almost all the interviewees and FGD respondents believed that WVE used scientific methods in M&E. It is argued that scientific methods aim to avoid biases in the findings of the M&E. Tools such as survey questions, interviews, focus group discussion, random sampling and quality assurance, and log frame were employed for both the monitoring and the evaluation processes. In other words, both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied (MR, age 40, Oromia; MR, age 41, Oromia; MR, age 55, Oromia; MR, age 41, Oromia; MR, age 33, SNNP; MR, age 35, SNNP; MR, age 50, SNNP; FM, age 55, Sidama; MR, age 43, SNNP; FM, age 37, Sidama; MR, age 55, Sidama; MR, age 41, Sidama).

Scholars agree that methods for M&E should be scientific, therefore, it should involve careful research (Boruch et al., 1978; Dinbabo, 2014; Suchman, 1967; Wiess, 1972;) and should be objective (Stufflebeam, 2000) in the conventional approach. However, researchers and practitioners of PM&E also concur that PM&E can use both qualitative and quantitative methods (Estrella, 2000; Probst, 2002) which is scientific in itself. But Blauert's (2000) work has elaborated on the possible methods that could be used in practice: that there is no consistent or one-fits-all methodology and approach to participatory methods; therefore, methods such as descriptive narrative, discussion groups, interviews, recipient observation, a large gathering of participants, interviews, questionnaires, group discussion, and visual techniques are some of the methods used.

But the question of rigor in PM&E has been an issue for a while; scholars maintain that rigor mitigates the participatory core principle – the participation of local stakeholders. The higher up the information needed along the type of analysis, the further away the local group would be from participation. Further, it is argued that objectivity is unrealistic in PM&E, as its epistemological commitment is constructivism. Additionally, since it involves unskilled participants, it mitigates the quality of the result. This seems to be the belief of the majority of direct beneficiaries and the staff respondents that participation of local direct beneficiaries watered down the quality of the product of M&E. However, Guijt (2000) argues that questionnaires and interviews can be more participatory than visual methods.

There is currently consensus among scholars that quantitative and qualitative methods can be used in PM&E, which are the character traits of conventional M&E, to ensure rigor and participation

and to accommodate the different information needed (Estrella, 2000; Probst, 2002). This research confirmed what is already known among M&E scholars and practitioners.

Regarding the issue of rigor and addressing different stakeholders, WVE employed qualitative and quantitative methods and varied tools that are stakeholder- and program-specific to capture data. It also used monitoring processes for active participation, which encapsulate both monitoring and evaluation in the process, where experts, local decision-makers, and direct beneficiaries interact and participate in a meaningful way at the ground level. Information and perspectives gained from the ground are documented and passed on to the next level of stakeholders, who also analyze the information along with the community perspectives in the reports, to pass on to the next level of stakeholders. In such manner, the chains of stakeholders are involved in the process of monitoring, which feeds into the evaluation that is usually done at the closure of a project.

This research, along with previous research, have confirmed that conventional M&E and PM&E converge in their methodology and the lack of rigor in participatory processes can be remedied through quantitative and qualitative methods.

6.12. Chapter summary

In this chapter the research explored four themes through the quantitative data analysis. The issue of power was discussed in detail and the participation theme can also be gleaned from demographic data. Ownership of the monitoring and evaluation process involves initiating, controlling, and influencing the process of the M&E. The conventional approach is owned and controlled by the top management while the local communities own and control the participatory processes. The research found that the top management initiated and controlled the implementation process, but the local stakeholders or direct beneficiaries' perspectives found emphasis, their voices being incorporated as direct beneficiaries although they were not the ones initiating and controlling many of the implementing processes. It may appear contradictory, but whether it is actually conflicting or not cannot be verified from the findings, as they do not inform how the process of incorporating the voice of the direct beneficiaries, occurred.

The results also showed the critical importance of shared learning, as a purpose of M&E, accountability, satisfying donor needs, empowering local stakeholders, creating a sense of ownership, measuring changes, providing information for improving project planning and

efficiency. The research findings demonstrated that although these purposes are a mixture of conventional M&E and PM&E, all of them are practices in one M&E system. This most probably indicates that apart from their epistemological commitment, the two approaches can be synthesized within one system of M&E.

On the creation of indicators, the research revealed that indicators were created through negotiation among different stakeholders. Direct beneficiaries created their own indicators during the designing and planning stage (participatory approach) which would be compared to the standardized or generic indicators created by WV to be included in the designing and planning. The research has also shown that participation, activities, purpose and nature of participation in WVE that all stakeholders were involved implicitly and explicitly including global, national, regional, and local stakeholders. Methodologically, WVE uses scientific research and evidence-based methodology: qualitative and quantitative approach within its participatory processes.

Perhaps the most compelling finding of this research is that key determinants, namely: ownership of the M&E process, purpose, creation of indicators and methodology of conventional M&E and PM&E can be combined in one M&E system. Therefore, the findings show that a hybrid approach to M&E is a possibility and a reality. The next chapter explores the rest of the determinants: participation, the role of an expert, local context, and the use of M&E findings.

CHAPTER 7: PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS (PART II): EXPLORING WORLD VISION ETHIOPIA'S M&E DETERMINANTS

7.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the rest of the determinants of monitoring and evaluation (M&E): participation, the role of experts, local context, and use of the results of M&E. It presents and discusses seven sub-themes, under the theme of participation, followed by the role of experts, context, and use of the findings of M&E as major themes. First, it offers the results from the quantitative and qualitative data under each theme of determinants; then it provides a discussion of the results, followed by a summary and conclusion.

7.2. Participation

One of the key differences between conventional M&E and participatory M&E (PM&E) is the answer to the question, “Who participates in the process of M&E?” In conventional M&E, scholars have argued that those who participate are project staff and external consultants, whereas stakeholders participate at a consultant-level through participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques. The purpose of the local stakeholders’ participation – if there is one – is to extract information, not to include their voices in decision-making. In contrast to the conventional M&E, participatory M&E claims to involve “a wide range of stakeholders at every stage of the process.” The stakeholders are involved in all processes of M&E, from the beginning, including the planning, gathering, analysis and use of information (Dinbabo, 2003, 2011; Estrella, 2000; Guijt, 2000, Probst, 2002). The purpose of participation of the local stakeholders in the M&E process is to enhance shared knowledge, increase a sense of ownership and self-determination, to strengthen organization, and to promote institutional learning (Probst, 2002).

This section presents the quantitative and qualitative data collected from direct beneficiaries of World Vision Ethiopia (WVE) and staff from three Area Programs (APs) (quantitative) and interviews and focus group discussion, analysis, followed by a discussion of the findings. The aim of the analysis is to identify the key participants, the purpose of participation, the level of participation, activities of the participants, and the nature of participation in the M&E process to explore the possibility of combining participation in both approaches (conventional and

participatory). Therefore, it first presents the quantitative data and then the qualitative data in the ensuing section, followed by a discussion of the results.

7.2.1. Who is involved in the M&E process?

Who is involved in the process of M&E is the key question in both conventional M&E and PM&E. In the conventional M&E, the top management staff (Estrella, 2000) are said to be the ones who do all the processes with the inclusion of the external expert. In PM&E the local stakeholders are the primary actors in the M&E process. This sub-section analyzes data to identify the primary actors within the process of M&E. First, it presents the data collected from the direct beneficiaries and the staff; second, it presents the data collected from the qualitative research.

According to the majority of the respondents from direct beneficiaries in the quantitative data, all the direct beneficiaries were participating in the M&E process. However, among others, top management staff project managers and an internal M&E expert were probably the most active top management staff who work with the direct beneficiaries. Further, the data indicates that top management staff were not the only ones involved in both M&E processes.

Figure 25: Direct beneficiaries’ response to who participates in monitoring process

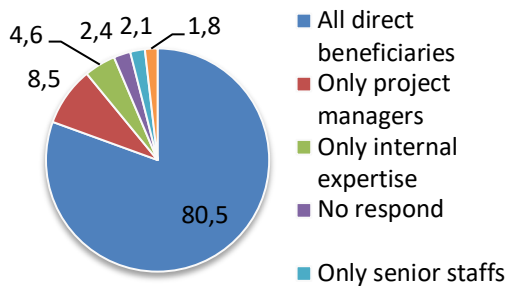
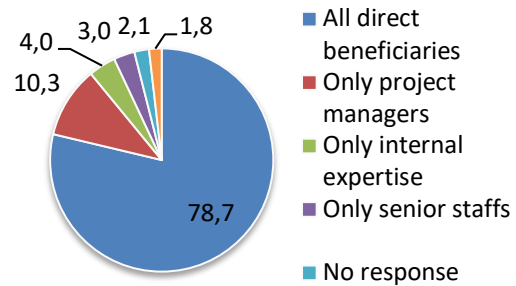


Figure 26: Direct beneficiaries’ response to who participates in evaluation process



N=329

Source: Author’s Analysis of empirical data

Like respondents from the direct beneficiaries, the majority of the staff believed that in both monitoring and evaluation, all the direct beneficiaries were participants. Project managers were probably working with the direct beneficiaries in the M&E process. However, unlike the

monitoring where the internal expert was involved, in the evaluation, the external expert was most probably involved in the monitoring process.

Figure 27: Staff response to who is involved in the monitoring process

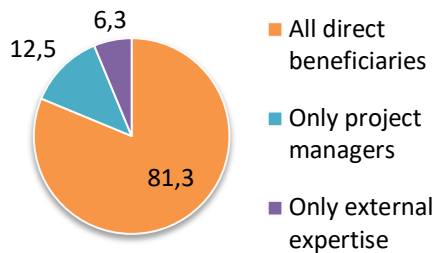
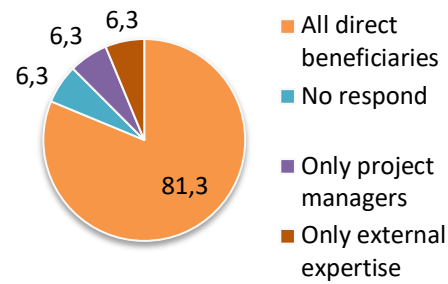


Figure 28: Staff response to who is involved in the evaluation process



Source: Author’s analysis of empirical data

The qualitative data indicated that there were several stakeholders involved in an intervention undertaken by WVE. According to a respondent – MR, age 55, Sidama, the term “stakeholder is complex as it directly and indirectly includes a wider community that affects a given project.” Therefore, stakeholders include higher government officials, district officials, government sector experts, WV global, national and local staff, *kebele* leaders, ethnic group leaders, religious leaders, village leaders, faith-based organizations, community volunteers, school children, women’s and children’s representatives, children parliament members, direct beneficiaries, mothers, persons with disabilities, and caretakers (MR, age 40 Sidama; FR, age 37, Sidama; FR, age 32, Sidama; MR, age 32, SNNP; MR, age 33, SNNP; MR, age 50, SNNP). Additionally, the international NGOs who work with WVE and sector offices such as agriculture, education, planning and economy, social affairs, children and women affairs are involved (FGD, Group II). All these stakeholders are involved in the M&E process at different stages of the program, at different levels of participation.

Although the quantitative results showed that the claims of both direct beneficiaries and the staff, that all direct beneficiaries were involved in the M&E process, the qualitative results disclosed that there were other important stakeholders who had parts in the M&E process. Therefore,

according to the data, the M&E process directly and indirectly involved a wider community of stakeholders at different levels of participation and stages of the M&E process.

7.2.2. Stakeholder activities in the M&E process

It is probable that stakeholders participate in both conventional M&E and PM&E. While it is important for PM&E, *who* is participating in the process, it is equally important *what* activities the stakeholders are participating in. In section 5.1, the data indicated that all direct beneficiaries and a wide range of stakeholders participated in the M&E process, but it does not indicate in what activities these actors were participating. This section aims at identifying the specific activities of M&E actors, in particular the direct beneficiaries, so that it could be determined whether these activities can be combined within the conventional-participatory monitoring evaluation. This section first presents the quantitative data collected from respondents' direct beneficiaries; this is followed by the qualitative data gathered from the staff.

It is clear from the quantitative data presented below that the majority of the respondents believed that the direct beneficiaries participated mainly at the planning stages of the M&E process followed by the implementation stage. Only 8.8% of the respondents thought that they participated in data collection in the monitoring component. Therefore, according to the majority of the direct beneficiaries' perspectives, they mainly participated in the planning stage in the M&E process.

Figure 29: Direct beneficiaries' response to their activities in the monitoring process

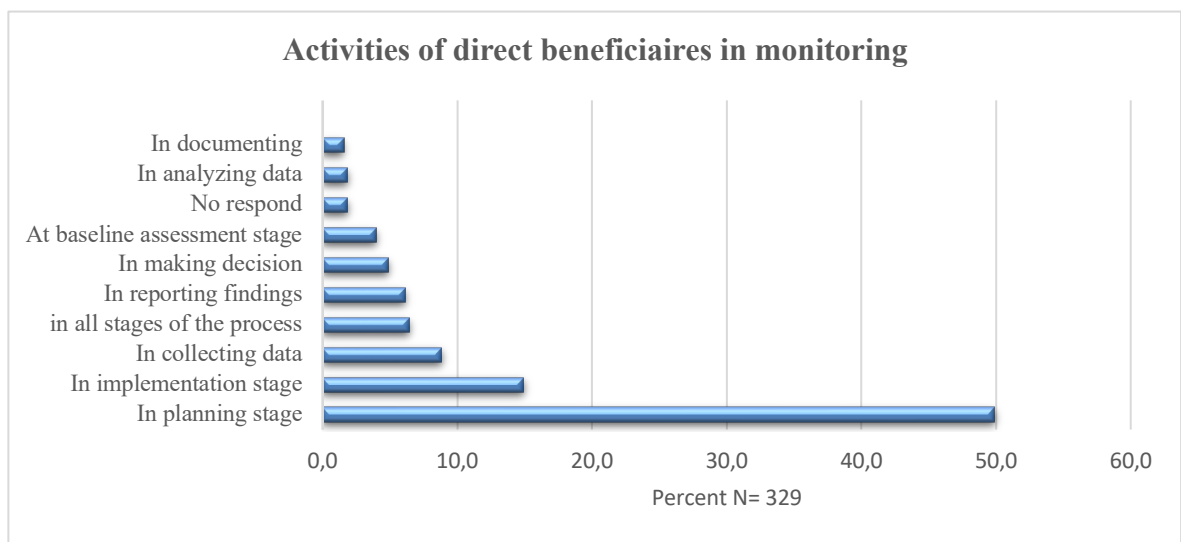
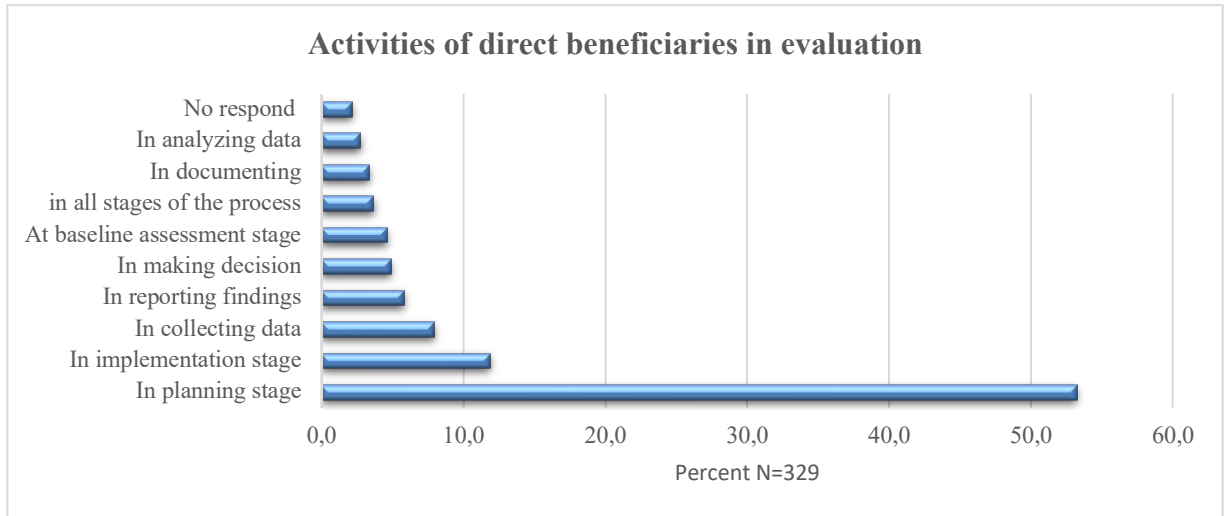


Figure 30: Direct beneficiaries’ response to their activities in the evaluation process



Source: Author’s own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

Like the respondents from the direct beneficiaries, the majority of respondents from the staff believed that the direct beneficiaries participated in the planning stages of the M&E. In the evaluation process, an insignificant number of respondents from the staff thought that the direct beneficiaries participated in all stages.

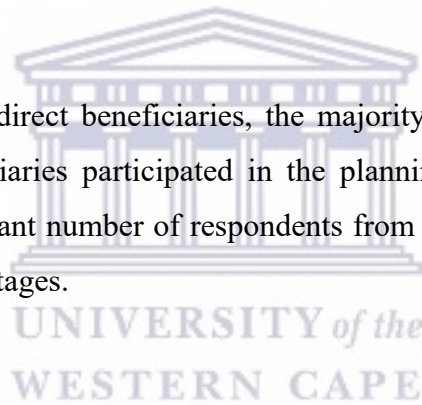


Figure 31: Staff response to the activities of direct beneficiaries in monitoring

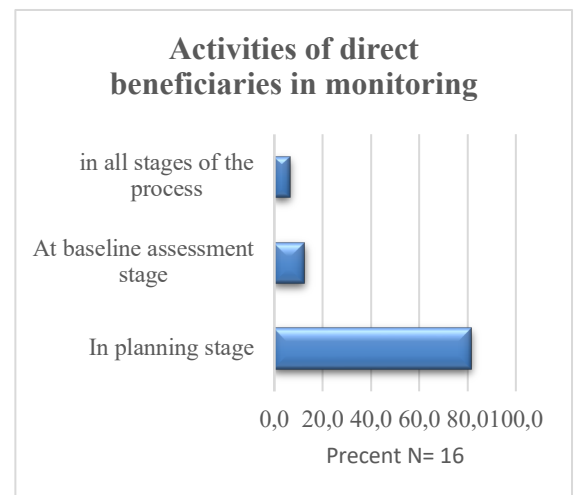
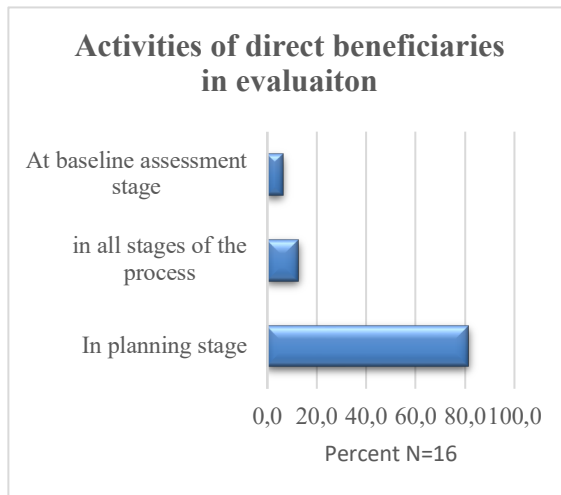


Figure 32: Staff response to the activities of direct beneficiaries in evaluation



Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

The qualitative data results can be seen under two categories about the activities that the direct beneficiaries participated in, and those they did not participate in, during the M&E process. First, the community representatives of direct beneficiaries participated in: (1) designing stage (needs assessment and baseline studies), such as decision-making, designing, planning, and articulating their needs and problems, and visions or dreams, and creating objectives; (2) implementation stage, including reporting on the performance of the project during meetings and during the annual review, and planning meetings, that is, suggesting, commenting, reviewing project plans, witnessing project activities, discussing implementation of projects, directly monitoring buildings, and education (MR, age 55, Sidama; MR, age 32, SNNP; MR, age 48, SNNP; MR, age 33, SNNP; MR, age 29, Sidama; MR, age 35, SNNP; FR, age 37, Sidama; MR, age 36, Sidama; MR, age 40, Oromia; MR, age 32, SPNN; MR, age 40, Oromia; MR, age 43, SNNP; MR, age 41, Sidama).

In addition to the data from the interviews, the FGD, Group II, identified activities of direct beneficiaries, such as processing complaints made against WVE staff, data collection as supervisor, facilitating leadership meetings, and percolating lessons from the project. However, there were also other participants involved in the monitoring and evaluation according to the qualitative data: government partners who represent the direct beneficiaries (MR, age 32, SNNP; FR, age 34, Sidama).

Second, direct beneficiaries did not participate in data analysis, report findings, designing questions, budgeting, designing the whole system of M&E, creation of standardized indicators, and creation of questions. The pronounced reasons for them not participating in these, included: it was not within their area of authority, especially budgeting; their numbers – as WVE direct beneficiaries, there were many of them in different projects, and it was unrealistic to have all of them participate in the monitoring process; and they lacked the required skills and knowledge regarding creation of indicators, and building their capacity or empowering them in the area of knowledge requires longer time, human and financial resources, which consume the budget intended for the core project (MR, age 55, Sidama; MR, age 29, Sidama; MR, age 33, SNNP, MR, age 35, SNNP, and MR, age 32, SNNP). The qualitative data seemed to indicate that the direct beneficiaries participated in the majority of activities pertaining to the monitoring and evaluation

processes, albeit that their participation was through representatives from either the government officials or from direct beneficiaries.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data evince that although the direct beneficiaries participated through their representatives, they were involved at different stages and in different activities of the M&E process.

7.2.3. Purpose of participation

The two approaches, conventional M&E and PM&E, involve participation, although it is purported that they differ in their purposes. The purposes of participation are generally categorized in two: participation as a means, and participation as an end. While the former perceives it a means to achieve organizational efficiency, the latter understands it as furthering the goal of empowering, equating, and democratizing governance (Puri, 2004).

This sub-section presents the survey data collected from both direct beneficiaries and staff, as well as the qualitative data, for analysis and discussion. The ranking of level of importance is categorized as critical, high, low, and trivial, for the quantitative data. At times, it is difficult to differentiate between critically important and highly important; in this research the former refers to indispensability while the latter refers only to importance. First, a presentation of the data collected from the quantitative research, that is, the respondents from the direct beneficiaries, followed by the data from the staff; the qualitative data is ensued by the discussion of the result.

The quantitative data indicates that the majority of the respondents believed that the seven purposes of monitoring were critically and highly important in WVE monitoring projects. It is important to note that the majority of respondents indicated that the purpose of participation in monitoring was to consult stakeholders (53.3%) and to empower direct beneficiaries (50.2%) and to engage direct beneficiaries (49.8%). But in the evaluation consulting (56.2%), engaging (50.2%), gathering information (45%) and reporting findings (42.9%) these stand out among others as critical purposes. Hence, consultation and empowering probably were the two critical purposes according to the respondents from the direct beneficiaries. Others, such as engaging stakeholders, gathering information from direct beneficiaries, sharing learning from the direct beneficiaries, reporting findings, and sharing responsibility, could be ranked next to the first two critical purposes. However, as compared to the aforementioned critically important purposes, which the

majority thought the purpose of participation was to include direct beneficiaries in decision-making, received a smaller number of subscribers (39.8%) among the respondents within the critical category.

Although the majority of the respondents believed that all the purposes listed in the questionnaire were important, either critical or high, the data shows that they were careful in categorizing the level of importance of each purpose in the monitoring process. This is demonstrated in the data, for example, the purpose of participation to report findings was regarded by a significant number of respondents as highly important (42.2%). The majority of direct beneficiaries also believed that the purpose of including direct beneficiaries in decision-making, was highly important (41.6%) but not critical in doing the monitoring of a project. Nevertheless, blending the percentages of respondents in the category of critical and high indicates that these purposes of participation were perceived to be valued for doing monitoring projects.

Similarly, the data collected from direct beneficiaries regarding evaluation evinces that these purposes had high regard in the WVE. However, there are differences in their particularity of ranking. Consulting stakeholders remains the top critical purpose, according to the majority of respondents, followed by engaging stakeholders. In terms of direct beneficiaries, gathering information from the direct beneficiaries was deemed to be critical, followed by reporting findings. However, making direct beneficiaries' part of decision-makers (39.8%), sharing responsibility (39.2%), and empowering direct beneficiaries (37.4%) were deemed to be less critical, as compared to other critical purposes within the category of criticality. It is worthwhile to note that the data indicates that empowering direct beneficiaries was considered to be highly important, but not that critical. In the monitoring process, it was considered to be among the top critical purposes.

Generally, the data portrays that the seven listed purposes of evaluation were important and valued within the organization, WVE, for performing monitoring and evaluation, although the percentage subscription of respondents to a particular purpose was meticulously different among the purposes.

Figure 33: Direct beneficiaries' response to the purpose of participation in monitoring

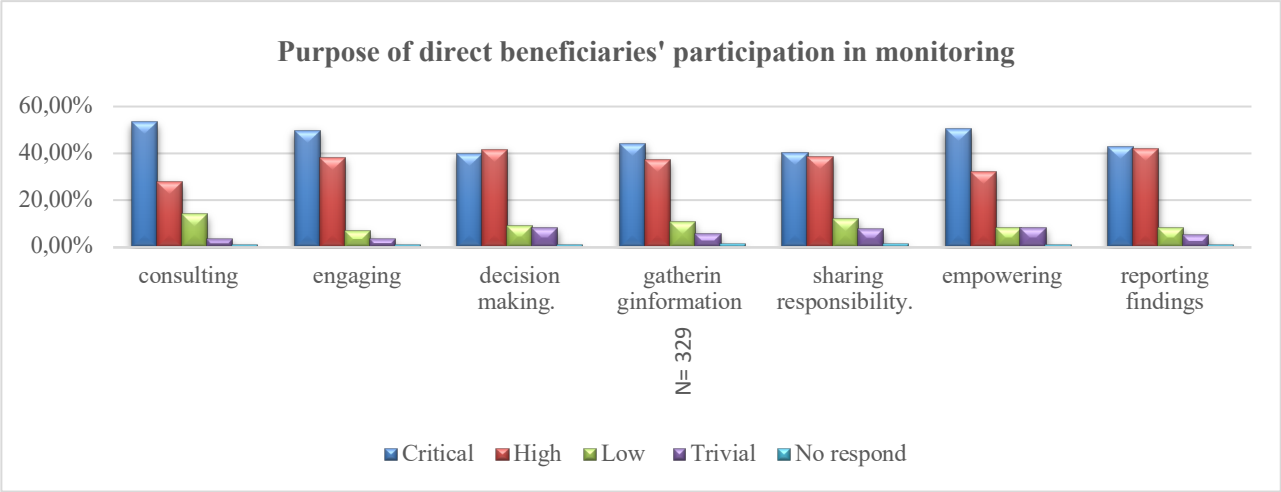
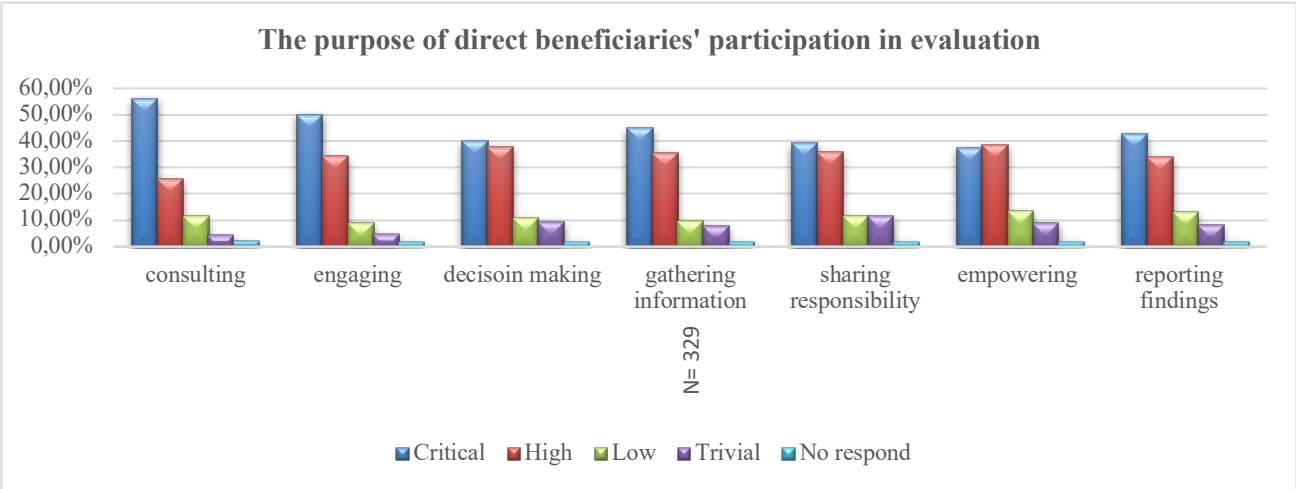


Figure 34: Direct beneficiaries’ response to the purpose of participation in evaluation



Source: Author’s own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

Unlike the perspective of the majority of the direct beneficiary respondents who thought that the seven purposes were critically important in doing monitoring project work, the staff believed that they were not critical. Rather, the majority of the staff respondents indicated that the seven purposes of participation were highly important for monitoring. However, the data shows that among those indicators purported to be critical by some of the respondents, there are some purposes that received greater subscribers. For example, engaging the stakeholders, and consulting, stand out, followed by to empower direct beneficiaries, sharing responsibility, and empowering. Further still, within the category of highly important ranking, the purpose of

participation for reporting findings is at the top of all, receiving the extreme majority of respondents as compared to other purposes. It is also important to note that unlike the direct beneficiaries' perspective, the participation for the purpose of consulting stakeholders was perceived by lesser staff respondents as critically important in the monitoring process. However, a combination of percentages of respondents to critical and highly important categories indicates that these purposes were valued for doing monitoring in the organization.

The data further indicates that the purpose of participation for consulting, engaging stakeholders, and gathering information, were perceived to be the most critical purposes in the evaluation process by the majority of staff respondents. In the category of highly important, the majority of respondents indicated that, among others, the purpose of participation is including direct beneficiaries in decision-making stands out, followed by report findings. Still, the combination of respondents who subscribed to critical and high, indicates that the seven purposes of participation in evaluation were highly valued in the organization.

Figure 35: Staff response to the purpose of participation in monitoring

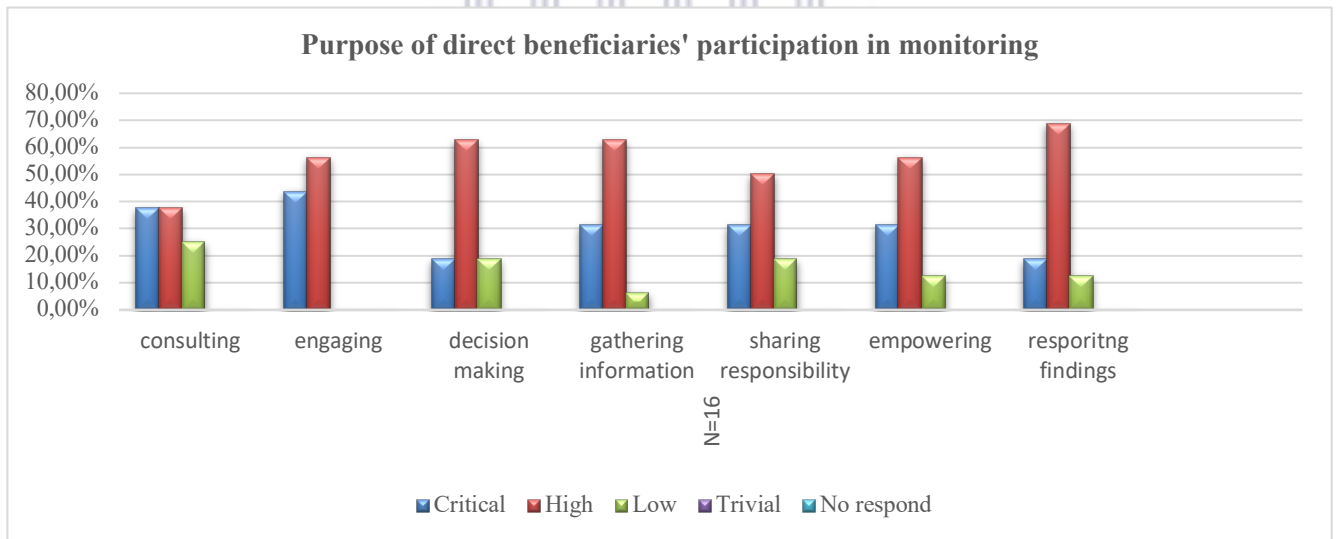
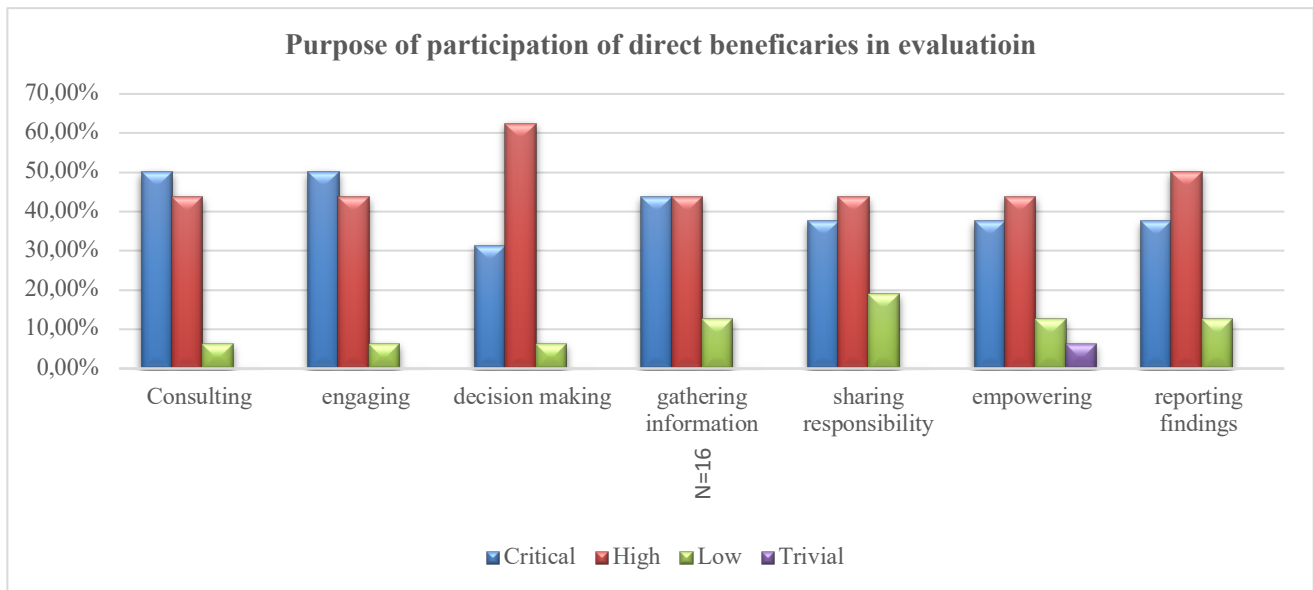


Figure 36: Staff response to the purpose of participation in evaluation



Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

The qualitative data reflects a similar perspective on the purpose of participating direct beneficiaries in the M&E process, although it discloses additional purposes. The critical purposes, according to Group II, FGD, were to improve ownership, capacitate the direct beneficiaries, create accountability and transparency (e.g. whether resources were used for intended targets, as agreed), know together whether the project is going right or wrong, gain idea as an input, mobilize resources and community, improve quality, share responsibility, amend projects when change is required, ensure ownership and sustainability, scale up best practices (learning), and to enhance stakeholders' learning. The interview data yielded a similar result, but participants cited additional purposes like to plan together, to develop leadership education (MR, age 55, Sidama; MR, age 32, SNNP; MR, age 48, SNNP; MR, age 33, SNNP; MR, age 29, Sidama; MR, age 35, SNNP; FR, age 37, Sidama; MR, age 36, Sidama; MR, age 40, Oromia; MR, age 32, SPNN; MR, age 40, Oromia; MR, age 43, SNNP; MR, age 41, Sidama).

The data from the quantitative and qualitative methods affirm that the direct beneficiaries in the M&E process had a high regard in WVE for the the seven purposes of participating (consulting, engaging, decision-making, gathering information, sharing responsibility, empowering, and reporting findings), which probably indicates that they were visibly exercised. However, the qualitative data included other purposes such as accountability, developing leadership, ensuring

ownership, scale up learning, and mobilizing resources. Hence, M&E covers a wider range of purposes which were deemed to be highly important in WVE.

7.2.4. Actors' levels of participation

Participation presupposes the issue of power. This is because PM&E is mainly performed in a highly formal and public situation in local communities (Dinbabo, 2003; Probst, 2002) in the presence of local authorities and outsiders, which activates local power relations (Mosse, 2001). Both direct beneficiaries and staff of WVE in three APs were asked to rank the level of participation of different actors and qualitative questions were also administered as primary data. In this section, therefore, the level of participation of each actor is presented from the data. The aim is to see whether the issue of power dynamics exists among these actors and to identify the dominant actors and to determine the effect of this dominant actor in the participation process and how the power relationship be resolved in a hybrid approach (conventional plus participatory approach). Most importantly, it is to identify whether the levels of participation as a determinant of PM&E could be used for the conventional M&E. First, quantitative data from direct beneficiaries and staff is presented and then qualitative data is provided, followed by a discussion of the results.

According to the quantitative data, the majority of respondents from direct beneficiaries believed that the participation of boys under 20 years of age, adult men, men with disabilities, village men-leaders, village women-leaders, and government officials in monitoring, was high. But the participation of adult women, girls under 20 years of age, women with disabilities, girls with disabilities, boys with disabilities, in monitoring, was extremely high. Nevertheless, the data indicates that all actors' levels of participation seem to be extremely high when blending the categories of extremely high and high, in the monitoring process.

The number of respondents who deemed that some of the actors' levels of participation was low and extremely low, was insignificant. However, it is important to observe that physically challenged boys under 20 years of age and physically challenged adult men's levels of participation were deemed to be low by a significant number of respondents (22.2% and 23.1% respectively) although the majority did not subscribe to it. A combination of the percentages of respondents who subscribed to low and extremely low provides significant percentages of

respondents who thought that the participation levels of the physically challenged boys and adult men, were low.

In the evaluation, however, the data portrays a different picture from that of monitoring. It discloses that the levels of participation of adult women, girls under 20 years of age, boys under 20 years of age, physically challenged women, girls, and boys, were extremely high, whereas those of adult men, influential village men and women leaders, and government officials were high. Another observation is that a significant number of respondents believed that the participation levels of the physically challenged adult women, girls and boys under 20 years of age, and the physically challenged men, were low, especially when the percentages of respondents who subscribed to low and extremely low are merged, the percentage is high. Nonetheless, if the percentages of respondents who subscribed to extremely high and high are merged, the actors listed in the questionnaire are regarded as actively participating in evaluation processes.

Figure 37: Direct beneficiaries’ response to actors’ levels of participation in monitoring

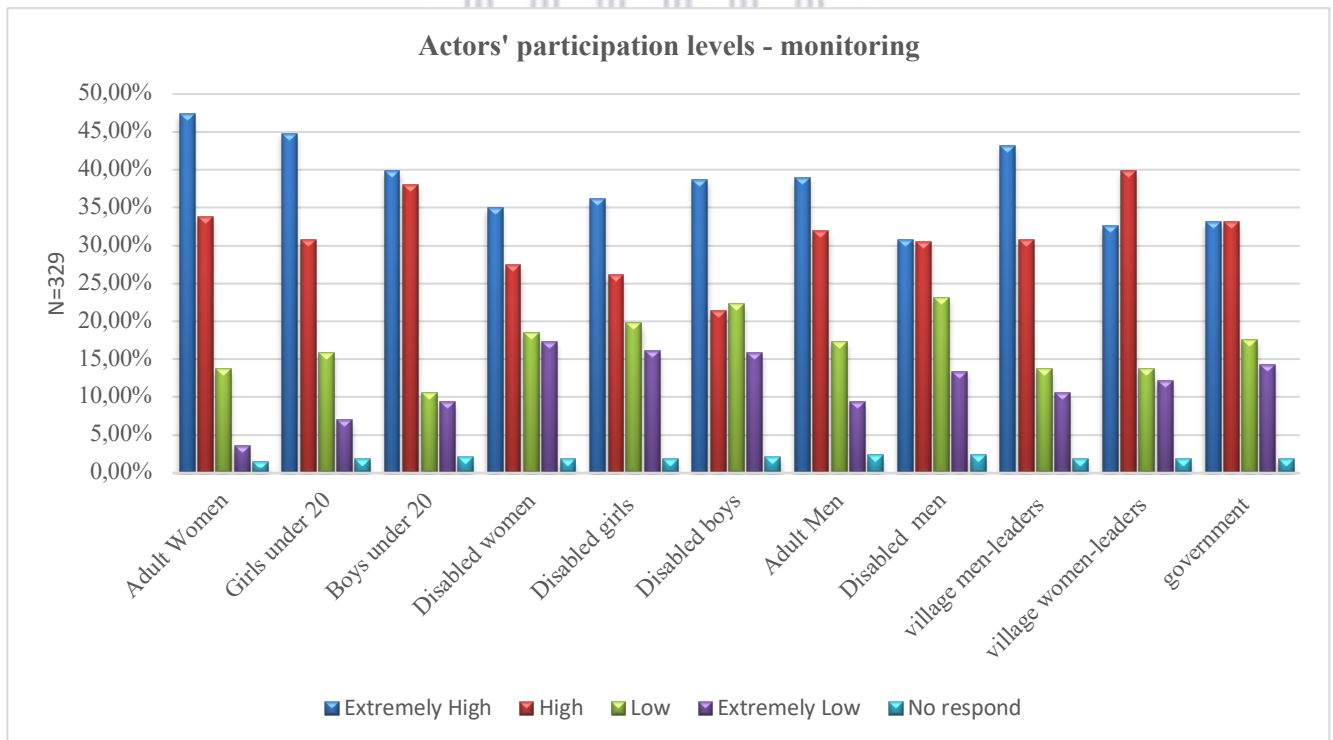
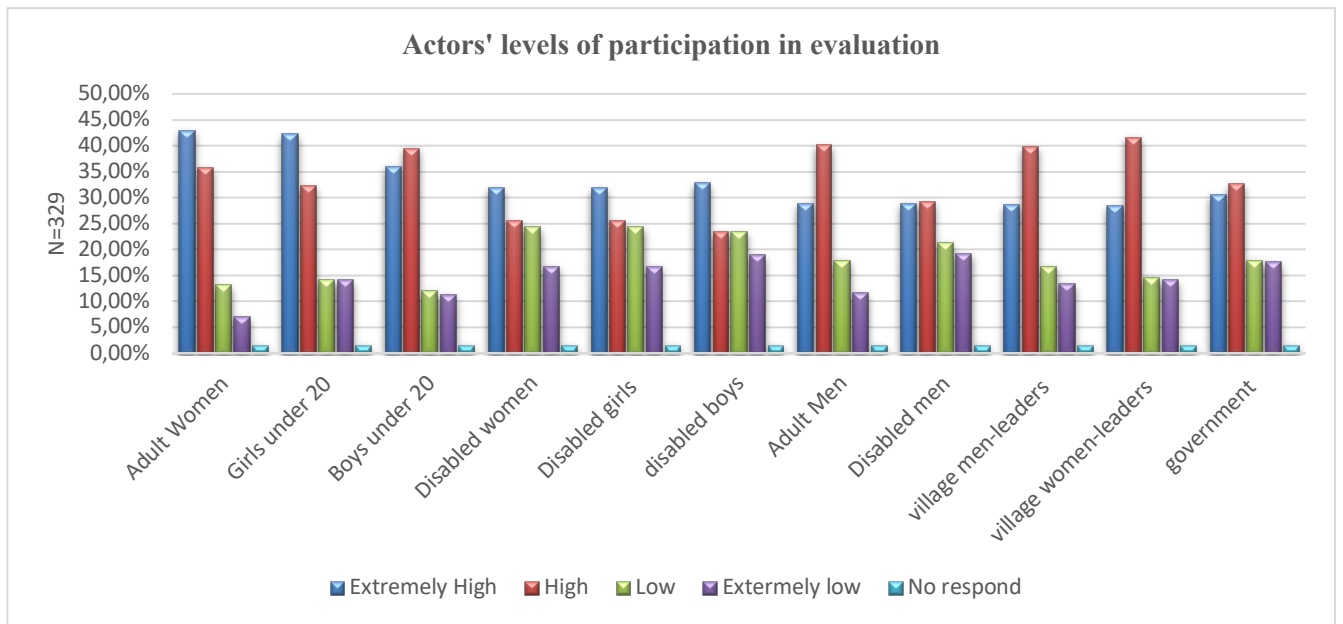


Figure 38: Direct beneficiaries’ response to actors’ levels of participation in evaluation



Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

Unlike respondents from the direct beneficiaries, the majority of staff respondents indicated that the majority of actors' levels of participation were high, not extremely high, in the monitoring process of a project. It is also important to note that the majority of the respondents believed that the participation levels of influential village women leaders were extremely high. This is slightly different from the views of the direct beneficiaries about the participation levels of influential women village leaders in the monitoring process, which was considered to be high. Further, the local government officials' levels of participation were also deemed to be extremely high by the majority of the respondents.

Adult women, girls and boys under twenty, adult men and influential men village leaders' levels of participation were high, according to the majority of staff respondents. The participation levels of the physically challenged women, girls, and boys were also high. But it is worthwhile to note that significant percentages of staff respondent still believed that physically challenged girls' and boys' levels of participation were low. Nevertheless, a merged percentage of respondents in the categories of extremely high and high indicates that the majority of staff respondents believed that the actors' levels of participation in monitoring were high.

Surprisingly, the data collected for evaluation from the staff discloses, unlike the levels of participation in the monitoring, that influential men village leaders were extremely high, whereas influential women village leaders' levels of participation were high. In addition to this, the local government officials' levels of participation were extremely high, which slightly differs from the case in the monitoring process. But still, a merged percentage of respondents indicates that a significant percentage of respondents believed that physically challenged girls' and boys' levels of participation were low. Notwithstanding the slight differences between extremely high and high, the data indicates that all the actors, listed for the respondents in the questionnaire, were believed to have high levels of participation in the evaluation process of a project.

Figure 39: Staff response to actors' levels of participation in monitoring

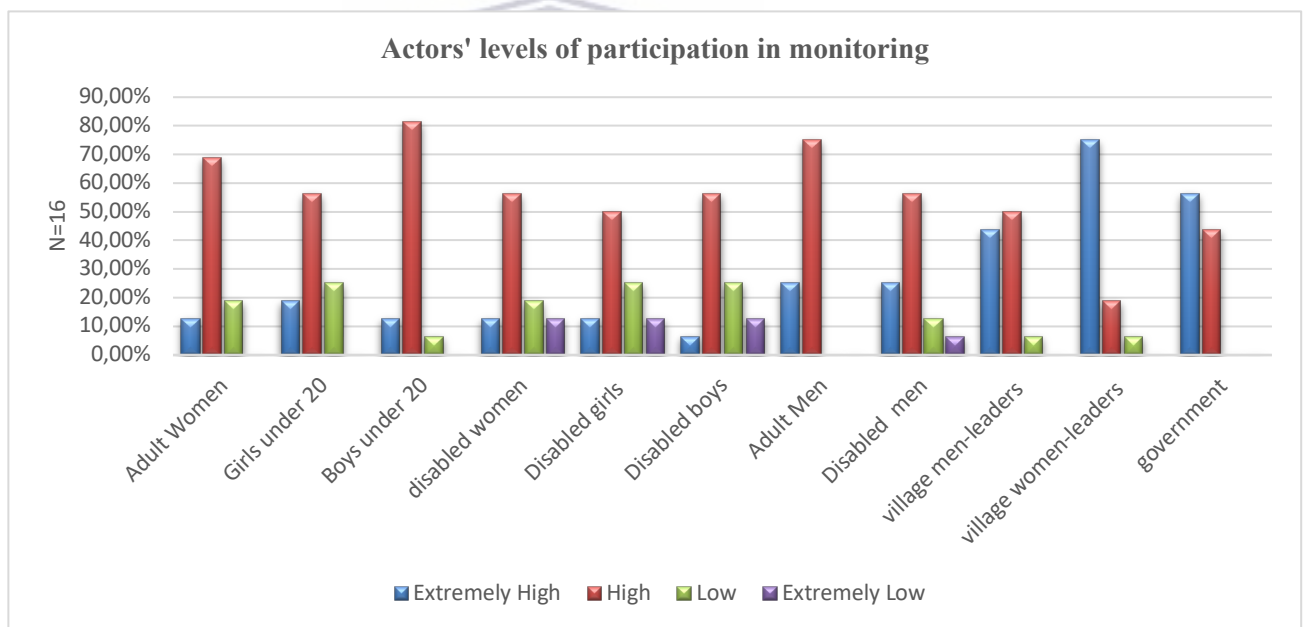
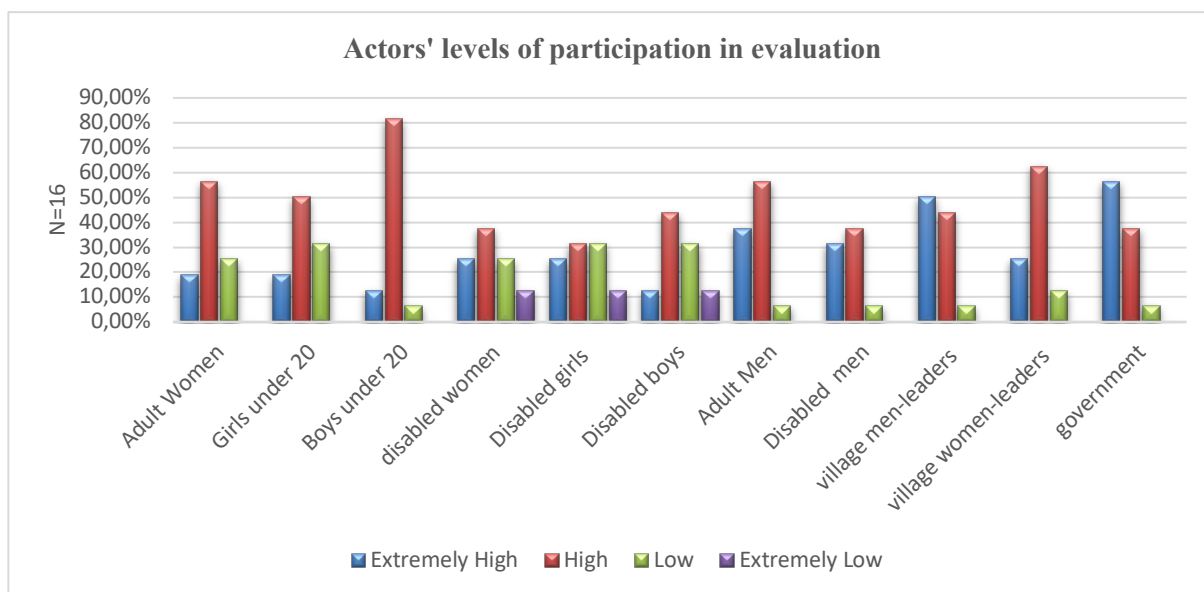


Figure 40: Staff response to actors' levels of participation in evaluation



Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

Regarding the levels of the actors' participation within the direct beneficiaries, the qualitative data informs a similar perspective. Adult women's participation was high, as they were with their children, as they served in committees, for instance in school committees and hygiene and sanitation committees. They were directly involved in the monitoring and the evaluation of these projects (MR, age 55, Sidama; MR, age 40, Sidama; MR, age 40, Oromia). The participation levels of children – both boys and girls – were high; for example, they had their own parliament (FR, age 34, Sidama; FGD, Group I). The participation levels of the influential individuals, mostly men, religious leaders, and village leaders – both women and men – were high, but the participation levels of government officials, including *Kebele* leaders and community leaders, were extremely high, particularly in the evaluation processes, as they were involved in accounting, direct evaluation, and monitoring the progress on their own (FR, age 34, Sidama; MR, age 50, Sidama). But there was low participation of physically challenged stakeholders (MR, age 55, Sidama) although they participated in the annual review and planning meetings.

However, the data in both the quantitative and qualitative results more or less depicted a similar perspective on the different actors' levels of participation. The actors under question in this research, according to the majority of the respondents, in both methods, demonstrated that they were actively participating in both the monitoring and the evaluation processes of WVE.

7.2.5. Direct beneficiaries' participation in the M&E process

Although the possibility of participation of stakeholders exists in conventional M&E and PM&E, there are dissimilarities in the nature of participation of the stakeholders, particularly the direct beneficiaries' experience. For example, Carpentier (2012) argues that participation involves a person having an implicit and explicit decision-making role in a process; this is central to participation, for "participation is not the same as access and interaction," argues Carpentier (2012). A similar position is sustained by Oakley (1991b), Cohen and Uphoff (1979), Pearse and Stiefel (1980).

The aim of this section is to explore the nature of participation of direct beneficiaries or local stakeholders in the process of M&E, to identify which characteristics of participation can possibly be used in conventional and participatory approaches. To do so, some key lists of the nature of participation in conventional approaches were provided to the respondents to strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree with the claim attached to each nature to describe which claim represents the nature of their participation in WVE M&E projects. The same questions were also administered to the WVE staff from three APs, for the same purpose. The qualitative data was also presented to the FGD and the interviewees. First, the quantitative data collected from the direct beneficiaries and staff is presented, and then the qualitative data.

The quantitative data evinces that the nature of the participation in the monitoring project, of the majority of the respondents from the direct beneficiaries, was through representatives who did not have power over the process. Rather, they were receivers of instructions from a monitoring expert or staff. The majority of respondents also considered that their participation was a contribution of labor in return for material incentive.

The majority of the respondents indicated that the goal of their participation in the monitoring was to meet predetermined objectives set by WVE, to get legitimacy for monitoring processes by donors, and to achieve cost-effectiveness in the process of monitoring. Furthermore, the majority of respondents believed that their participation in the process of monitoring produced poor quality results.

The survey questions for evaluation also produced a result similar to that of the monitoring. In both cases, monitoring and evaluation, a merged percentage of the categories strongly agree and agree indicates that the majority of respondents agreed to the claims provided.

Table 12: Direct beneficiaries’ response to their participation in monitoring

| Survey questions: Actors | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No response |
|---|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------|
| They are nominated representative with no power | 24.0% | 45.9% | 20.1% | 2.7% | 2.7% |
| They are receivers of command from monitoring expert | 30.1% | 39.2% | 24.9% | 3.0% | 2.7% |
| They contribute labor in return for material incentive | 30.4% | 31.9% | 20.1% | 14.9% | 2.7% |
| Their participation is encouraged to meet predetermined objectives | 27.4% | 46.8% | 17.6% | 5.2% | 3.0% |
| They participate to get legitimacy for the monitoring process by donors | 28.6% | 31.3% | 29.8% | 7.9% | 2.4% |
| Their participation is used to achieve cost-effectiveness | 18.8% | 35.3% | 32.2% | 11.2% | 2.4% |
| Their participation in the process produces poor quality results | 30.7% | 30.4% | 21.3% | 15.2% | 2.4% |

N= 329

Table 13: Direct beneficiaries’ response to their participation in evaluation

| Survey questions: Actors | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No response |
|---|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------|
| They are nominated representative with no power | 19.8% | 48.3% | 19.8% | 9.1% | 3.0% |
| They are receivers of command from monitoring expert | 30.1% | 38.3% | 23.1% | 5.5% | 3.0% |
| They contribute labor in return for material incentive | 17.0% | 33.1% | 28.9% | 17.9% | 3.0% |
| Their participation is encouraged to meet predetermined objectives | 26.7% | 47.7% | 14.3% | 8.2% | 3.0% |
| They participate to get legitimacy for monitoring process by donors | 23.1% | 31.9% | 33.4% | 8.5% | 3.0% |
| Their participation is used to achieve cost-effectiveness | 19.1% | 34.3% | 29.5% | 14.0% | 3.0% |
| Their participation in the process produces poor quality results | 25.5% | 29.8% | 24.9% | 16.7% | 3.0% |

N=329

Source: Author’s own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

Like the data from the direct beneficiaries, the data from the staff respondents indicates that the majority of the staff respondents believed that the direct beneficiaries participated in the

monitoring process through representatives who did not have power over controlling both the monitoring and the evaluation processes. Further, the data provides a result similar to that of the direct beneficiary respondents, disclosing that the majority of the respondents from the staff believed that the direct beneficiaries' participation both in monitoring and evaluation was to contribute labor in return for material incentive and their participation in the process produced poor quality results.

However, unlike the majority of direct beneficiary respondents, the majority of the staff respondents disagreed with the claims that the direct beneficiaries were receivers of commands from a monitoring expert; likewise, the majority disagreed that with the claims that the direct beneficiaries' participation was to meet predetermined objectives, to get legitimacy for monitoring processes by donors and to achieve cost-effectiveness.

Hence, the data collected from the staff respondents indicates that the perspectives of the direct beneficiaries regarding the nature of their participation in the M&E process, significantly differs from the direct beneficiary respondents.

Table 14: Staff response to the nature of participation in monitoring

| Survey questions: Actors | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No response |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| They are nominated representative with no power | - | 68.8% | 25.0% | 6.3% | - |
| They are receivers of command from monitoring expert | 6.3% | 37.5% | 43.8% | 12.5% | - |
| They contribute labor in return for material incentive | 25.0% | 37.5% | 37.5% | - | - |
| Their participation is encouraged to meet predetermined objectives | 6.3% | 18.8% | 75.0% | - | - |
| They participate to get legitimacy for monitoring process by donors | 6.3% | 31.3% | 62.5% | - | - |
| Their participation is used to achieve cost-effectiveness | - | 18.8% | 81.3% | - | - |
| Their participation in the process produces poor quality results | 25.0% | 62.5% | 6.3% | 6.3% | - |

N=16

Table 15: Staff response to the nature of participation in evaluation

| Survey questions: Actors | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No response |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| They are nominated representative with no power | 12.5% | 56.3% | 25.0% | 6.3% | - |

| | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| They are receivers of command from monitoring expert | 6.3% | 25.0% | 50.0% | 18.8% | - |
| They contribute labor in return for material incentive | 12.5% | 43.8% | 37.5% | 6.3% | - |
| Their participation is encouraged to meet predetermined objectives | 12.5% | 18.8% | 68.8% | 12.5% | - |
| They participate to get legitimacy for monitoring process by donors | - | 25.0% | 56.3% | 18.8% | - |
| Their participation is used to achieve cost-effectiveness | - | 25.0% | 75.0% | - | - |
| Their participation in the process produces poor quality results | 18.8% | 56.3% | 12.5% | 12.5% | - |

N=16

Source: Author's own analysis and construct of empirical data (2022)

According to the interviewees, the direct beneficiaries, due to their large numbers, participated through their representatives. In the words of one respondent:

There are women, men, children, physically challenged representatives who participate in the process. These representatives participate in designing, creation of questions, data collection and analysis, and report. ... Their representatives participate in the process through focus group discussion and interview (MR, age 42, Oromia).

The direct beneficiaries were not only represented by elected beneficiaries' members, but also by government officials, local leaders such as *kebele* leaders, religious leaders, village leaders and ethnic traditional leaders who have influence and the power to make decisions. However, the respondents pointed out that these representatives did not have power over deciding on the budget and to change the standardized indicators, albeit that they had power to create their own indicators that would be matched with the standardized indicators (FR, age 34, Sidama; MR, age 32, SNNP; MR, age 55, Oromia; MR, age 32, SNNP; FR, age 37, Sidama; MR, age 55, Sidama; MR, age 34, Oromia).

Another respondent (MR, age 34, Oromia) pointed out that "During [project] implementation the direct beneficiaries also participate ... in contributing labor, for example for the water project, they dig holes." Such participation, according to the respondent was sharing responsibility. However, yet another respondent indicated that, "if a direct beneficiary is invited to participate in design, planning or creation of indicators that might take weeks, he/she demands payment for each day" (MR, age 43, SNNP). Participation was not perceived as a means of achieving cost-effectiveness;

rather it was understood as requiring a huge amount of human and financial resources (MR, age 40, Oromia; MR, age 40, Sidama). One respondent presented his case regarding the nature of beneficiaries' participation with regard to cost and responsibilities:

There was an experience regarding participation in cost sharing. An agreement was concluded that the cost of the project should be shared among three stakeholders, that is, the government, direct beneficiaries, and WVE. However, the project failed because the government and the direct beneficiaries did not carry out their responsibilities despite a signed partnership agreement. This is probably because of dependency syndrome that assumes every project should be done by donors. Such mentality is not only in the direct beneficiaries' perception but also in the government officials'. Another example would be in our recent project that we are building for the community. We agreed with the community that WVE provides the material and the community supports by fetching water to mix cement. But nobody came to do the job. Such incident destroys the project (MR, age 43, SNNP).

A similar view was reflected by other respondents of the interview that participation was not cost-effective, therefore it was not done for the sake of achieving cost-effectiveness. Although the majority of the respondents did not express views that by participating, the direct beneficiaries produce poor quality in M&E findings, they pointed out that there was a disadvantage on the side of the direct beneficiaries due to lack of skills and expertise in the field which, in fact, waters down the quality (FR, age 34, Sidama, MR, age 36, Sidama; MR, age 55, Oromia; MR, age 34, Oromia; MR, age 32, SNNP; MR, age 48, SNNP; MR, age 32, SNNP; MR, age 40, Oromia)

The nature of participation disclosed from both methods, is mixed. While the quantitative data disclosed that the nature of participation was virtually conventional in nature and that the direct beneficiaries had representatives who did not have decision-making powers, the quantitative data depicted that the representatives of direct beneficiaries were indeed powerful, as they included government officials, religious leaders, and community leaders who had power to influence the process. Cost-effectiveness in participation was not achievable; on the contrary, participation was expensive. In addition to this, the respondents from the direct beneficiaries perceived that they were receivers of commands to meet predetermined objectives and to get legitimacy from donors, which is absolutely the nature of conventional approaches and cost-effectiveness in participation, whereas the staff rejected all such claims. Thus, the data in this section presented mixed perspectives about the nature of participation.

7.2.6. Challenges of participation

This section presents the results related to the challenges and problems of the application of participation. This topic arose from the qualitative research in the course of interviews that the researcher deemed worthy of attention. Therefore, it presents only the qualitative result that the interviewees and FGD provided.

The first challenge is time constraint; monitoring is daily routine work that imposes a huge demand on the direct beneficiaries to be involved in regular monitoring processes (MR, age 40, Sidama). Full participation of direct beneficiaries takes weeks (MR, 43, SNNP)). Second, participation requires a good number of staff to supervise a large number of direct beneficiary participants in a given project. Third, direct beneficiaries at times distort the actual situation of the project through exaggeration of a problem or an issue to receive more funding and support (FR, age, 40, Sidama). The respondent expressed it this way:

Misinformation provided by the direct beneficiaries, thinking that if they distort the actual situation by exaggerating the problem or the issue, they would be provided with more funds and support (FR, age 40, Sidama).

The fourth challenge is language barriers (FR, age 40, Sidama). It is hard to present indicators in a local language that the direct beneficiaries use. Fifth, direct beneficiaries demand per diems for participating in the M&E process, as they think that participation is another means of getting income (MR, age 43, SNNP). Sixth, stakeholders do not comply with agreed-upon shared responsibilities between them and WVE. Seventh, other NGOs' experience – they provide the funds and do not ask the beneficiaries to participate; if they do, they provide a per diem. Eighth, past individual conflict or offence with the staff interred during discussion over M&E and distorted because the beneficiaries used the time as a tool for revenge (MR, age 32, SNNP). Ninth, distance is another problem to participate, as direct beneficiaries need to travel on foot from far places (MR, age 32, SNNP). Tenth, organizing indicators collected from local stakeholders is another challenge because participants proposed different indicators for the same project, with different indicators (MR, age 40, Oromia). Eleventh, the complexity of stakeholders in participation, as different information is needed from different stakeholders, including accountability. Twelfth, direct beneficiaries do not want to offend the donors or staff, lest they forfeit the project and the resources. All these shortcomings of participation deserve attention for further discussion.

The data collected through the quantitative and qualitative methods regarding participation: participants, activities of participants, the purpose of participation, levels of actors' participation, and the nature of participation presented above need to be summarized due to the size of the data. According to the data, stakeholders were complex and cover a wide range of them. As for the direct beneficiaries, they were all involved in the M&E process, which seems to be contradictory to the data regarding the nature of participation that indicated participation was through representatives. The respondents mainly participated in the activities of the planning stage, according to the quantitative data; but the qualitative data indicated that they participated in the designing stage mainly, and in the implementation stages in several different activities. Regarding the purpose of participation, the data showed that consultation, empowering, engaging, and gathering information were the top critical choices, although all purposes under investigation were considered highly valuable to WVE's purpose of participation, according to the quantitative data. The qualitative data reflecting building ownership, empowerment, accountability, learning and developing leadership seemed to be highly valued. Data from both methods on the actors' levels of participation disclosed that all actors were actively participating. The nature of participation, as presented above, portrayed a mixed result.

The above evidence from quantitative and qualitative methods has demonstrated the key determinant of M&E – participation. The next section presents a detailed discussion of the following findings from the data: the purpose of participation, actors or stakeholders involved, participants' activities, and levels and nature of their participation.

7.3. Participants, activities, purpose and nature of participation

One of the critical tenets of PM&E is participation, but the purpose of participation in the process is decisive in the theory of participation. There are at least two categories or models of the purpose of participation, namely, participation as a means and participation as an end. The former uses it to achieve efficiency (Puri, 2004); and project design (goal and target) and management are in the hands of the authority, and participants use it to achieve predetermined objectives; a power relationship is top-down (Lane, 1995). The latter uses participation for furthering empowerment, equity, and democracy (Puri, 2004); and power flows from the bottom up, where the community initiates actions and are in control (Lane, 1995); participation as an end also enhances shared

understanding, sense of ownership, and self-determination, and participants track their progress and success (Probst, 2002). In order to discuss the results of the data in this section against these two categories of the purposes of participation, it is mandatory to have the right context, background and perspective of how WVE runs its development program, and how it conducts its monitoring and evaluation processes.

The results of the data, provided above, are on the identity of the participants, their activities during participation, and the purpose of their participation. First, the majority of the respondents from the direct beneficiaries, the staff members in the quantitative research group, and also the interviewees and FGD participants in the qualitative research group, indicated that *all direct beneficiaries participate* in both monitoring and evaluation processes in the planning stage. In the words of Estrella (2000), the issue of participation is, “who is measuring and how different concerns and interests are negotiated and represented... [participation is the] ‘axis’ around which the participatory monitoring and evaluation process revolves” and participants are “beneficiaries; project or programme staff and management; researchers; local and central government politicians and technical staff; and funding agencies.”

Estrella’s (2000) perception of participants is not limited to the direct beneficiaries, which this research also confirms, as the respondents in the qualitative data argued that participants and stakeholders are complex and M&E involves a wider community, not only direct beneficiaries or local stakeholders. Guijt (2000) and Martin et al. (2011) have shown in their research that PM&E should include a wider range of stakeholders. Therefore, argues Martin et al. (2011), that participation should be accommodating and convenient for different interested stakeholders. Thomas et al. (2012), who attempted to identify theory of participation also indicated that the original type of participation is a sense of belonging, to be part of the whole, not just to have power over some decision-making process. In other words, the complexity of participants makes participation a complex business; and thus, it should be flexible, as Bigger (1968) theorized it. Accordingly, activities involved in the participation, the purpose of participants, and participant levels and its nature, might be recognized differently by these different stakeholders, based on their expectations. This in turn, makes the negotiation (Estrella, 2000) an extremely complex matter, as interest varies and it depends on the number of participants or negotiators.

The results indicated that the direct beneficiaries were not involved directly, but through their representatives, as it is, according to the majority of the respondents, impossible to have all the direct beneficiaries participate because they are many. Bigger's (1968) understanding of flexibility – active and process nature of participation – although it is philosophical, makes sense in terms of the nature and the ways in which participation occurs. That is to say, the ways in which participation occurs is not uniform, but flexible; in fact, it is active. If this is taken into account, participation is not simply to have the power to make decisions, but to be part of the whole (Thomas, 2012a). In other words, being represented is one of the ways in which participation occurs; to be part of the whole through a part (which is representatives in this case).

According to the results of the data, therefore, the direct beneficiaries, through their representatives, participated in the planning and designing stages of the monitoring, which is consonant with the monitoring documents of WV, as presented elsewhere (chapter 6). For Martin et al. (2011), participating in the designing and planning stages of M&E, renders the participation authentic in terms of scope, sufficient rigor, and provision of information. Respondents argued that at this stage the direct beneficiaries' representatives articulate their needs and visions therefore they make decisions regarding what they want and their future. At the implementation stage, especially in monitoring, direct beneficiaries participated in different activities, such as suggesting, commenting, reviewing plans, or at times, even directly monitoring, depending on the type of project. The kind of activities in which the direct beneficiaries participate, depend on the kind of project. Guijt's (2000) findings concur with the results of this research, as he argues that involvement in the activities of M&E varies, that is, from a small initiative to key activities which involve diverse stakeholders in varying degrees of involvement.

Further, the seven purposes, namely: consulting stakeholders, engaging stakeholders, making direct beneficiaries decision-makers, gathering information, sharing responsibility, empowering the direct beneficiaries, and reporting findings, indicated that they are all key purposes of participation in monitoring and evaluation of WVE according to the data. In these purposes of participation, one finds most of the levels of participations which are adumbrated by Pretty (1995). It is important to note that all the results reflect the character traits of PM&E, which perceives participation as an end in itself, that is, empowering the community, which Oakley (1991b) calls an active and dynamic form of participation, enabling people to play an increasing role in

development activities. Not only the approach of PM&E is reflected in the results, it also reflects the conventional M&E that uses participation as a means, such as the purpose of gathering information, consulting, and satisfying donor needs.

The majority of the respondents from the direct beneficiaries and the staff conformed to what the WV documents have stipulated in the M&E process. Participation, however, according to the documents, is emphasized in the monitoring and not in evaluation, as evaluation is performed at the end of the project cycle. The results raise a crucial question about the differences between conventional M&E and PM&E. In many cases, the WV approach, according to the documents, is conventional in nature as it seeks objective, value-free judgment of the project's merit, effectiveness and efficiency; on the other hand, active participation of the local community is aspired and probably practiced on the ground as respondents confirmed in the result. It seems probable that WVE did this by intentionally crafting a plan for active participation of local stakeholders for jointly executing the design and planning stage of the development program and monitoring its progress.

However, the results also disclosed that the conventional nature of M&E which seems to be conflicting with that of the above lofty description of participation not least because, regarding the nature of participation in WVE, the majority of the direct beneficiaries thought that their participation is through representatives who did not have power over controlling the whole M&E process. In fact, the data from the qualitative research explicated what this meant, because participants knew that they did not have power over changing the standardized indicators, although they had the right to create their own indicators, which could be matched against the standardized indicators. They also had no power over the budget, they did not participate in data analysis, reporting, and creation of questions.

The direct beneficiaries also believed that the goal of their participation is to meet predetermined objectives to get legitimacy for monitoring processes by donors, and to achieve cost-effectiveness (however this is qualified by the qualitative data) in the process of M&E; they believed that contributing labor, which is participation that brought income to them. Further, respondents from both the quantitative and qualitative groups believed that participation produced poor quality. Nonetheless, the WVE AP staff did not agree with the direct beneficiaries' position as they did not

think that the direct beneficiaries merely receive commands from the monitoring expert and participate to meet predetermined objectives, to get legitimacy from monitoring processes by donors and to achieve cost-effectiveness. Whether this conflicting perspective on the nature of participation could be ascribed to the attempt to use a mixed approach or not, cannot be ascertained, although there might be a probability that this is a reflection of the hybrid approach.

This conflicting result is likely due to the double nature (conventional and participatory) of the monitoring and evaluation practiced in WVE according to the pattern the data offers. WVE desired to address the various interests of all its stakeholders at different levels (local, regional, national, and global), particularly because it uses standardized indicators and development objectives, which might be negotiated or contextualized at the local level.

At this juncture, therefore, it might be argued that the participation is not authentic. But suffice to remind that Martin et al.'s (2011) argument that for authentic participation to occur, it has to happen in the designing and planning stages to provide sufficient rigor and provision of information. Aubel (2004) also confirmed by his research that it is not realistic to prescribe the same level of community participation across programs. Level of skill required, degree of responsibilities, and level of competency the program requires are some of the issues that militate the full participation of local stakeholders. The toughest part of PM&E, according to Aubel (2004), is the planning stage as it requires a process of negotiation, contention, and collaborative decision-making among various stakeholders. Further, research by Probst (2002) revealed that even within an entirely PM&E approach, full participation of local stakeholders, particularly in decision-making, cannot be sustained. Levinge Delville (as quoted in Neef (2003) even insisted that the true moment of participation in PM&E occurs during the diagnosis and inquiry period.

These researches' results already indicated that full and perfect participation is unlikely, even in a purely PM&E approach. In particular, Estrella and Gaventa (1998) show that there is a continuum between conventional M&E and PM&E. Therefore, the practices of WVE depict one of the ways in which conventional M&E and PM&E could be jointly used without being opposing each other, because who participates is negotiable; the purposes of participation if monitoring encapsulates evaluation, are compatible with the conventional approach; level of participation and roles differ

depending on the kind of role; and the nature of participation is influenced by the kind of activities participants are involved in. It is likely to have a hybrid approach if it is intentionally planned.

7.3.1. Actors' levels of participation and power dynamics

The results indicated that all direct beneficiaries participate in the M&E process, but what would be their levels of participation at the designing and planning stages, as well as in the monitoring process, is discussed in this section, along with the issue of power dynamics. According to Kincheloe and McLaren (2005), power dynamics are related to race, class, gender, ideology, discourse, education, religion, social institutions, and cultural dynamics, which are engraved within a social system. Power does not always manifest itself directly; it is pervasive and subtle, influencing desires, opinions, and thoughts of the other. Foucault (1978) argues that power is always present in social relations. Campilan (2000) posits that M&E creates room for individuals to exert power over others in determining how to interpret changes.

The results of the data regarding the intensity of participation of different actors indicated that the participation levels of adult women, girls under twenty, and influential men – such as village men leaders – were extremely high in the monitoring process, according to the majority of the direct beneficiaries. But staff respondents think that all actors participate highly in the monitoring, if not extremely. Women leaders' level of participation, however, was extremely high in monitoring. Government and religious leaders were also part of this participation in the M&E process. This data, in all likelihood, reflects the numerical and physical presence of the actors, rather than their power within the community, but political theorists argue that physical presence is necessary in participation in order to act (Thomas et al., 2012). However, the subtlety of power is complex, despite its physical presence. Mosse (2001) and Probst (2002) compellingly argue that participation occurs in highly formal and public events in a local community in the presence of local authority (e.g., cultural, religious, etc.), which activates local power relations rather than thwarting it. For instance, village leaders might monopolize meetings in local communities; those abusing their positions of authority, home in on issues of gender, ethnic origin, age, and social position; resultantly, conflicting interests and needs influence the meetings intended for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Therefore, the results of the data must be analyzed based on the community's context and power relations, particularly related to gender, age, and body ideology, as Carpentier's (2012) theory of participation cautions, because participation exists in a process and localities involving specific actors. Thomas et al. (2012) points out that participation is relational and it is a way of life; and if such way of life is interrupted, then change is resisted, as Levy-Bruhl (1965) argued. In this study, the data was collected from three different regions, dominated by three different localities and regional ethnicity: Hula, by the Sidama ethnic group and culture; Shashego, by the Kembata ethnic group; and Shashemene, by the Oromo ethnic group. An overview of each age- and gender-related culture and power relationship is required to understand what underpins the power relations actually working, despite the numerical results produced by the data.

Hula, which is in the Sidama region, is a patriarchal society,

... where males/husbands make important social, economic, and political matters in the family affairs ... power within the family is not evenly distributed among members ... Sidama women could not take part in elder's council (Songo) meetings of their respective localities. They are not allowed to participate in important political, economic, and social matters of their community. They do not even involve in issues concerning themselves. They are considered simply housewives ... (Dagne, 2021: 5–20).

Similarly, according to Belachew Gebrewold-Tochalo (2002), Kembata, where Shashego AP functions, is a patriarchal and gerontocratic society that,

... [excludes] women from political and public affairs ... they do not have the good social position and esteem which men enjoy [and married women are] entirely dependent on their husbands. They cannot take decisions by themselves; they need the ratification of their husbands ... (Gebrewold, 2002: 2017, 2021).

This study's data indicates only the numerical differences but does not indicate the dynamics of the power differences within Hula and Shashego because of their specific gender-related cultures. Women's participation in the M&E process would be affected and the result of the M&E would reflect the voices of the male direct beneficiaries.

In the Oromo culture in general and the Arsi Oromo in particular, where Shashemene AP functions,

... males are the most preferred ones ... a man on the other hand is a pillar of strength for his family as well as his lineage. Women are less valued ... they are not included in Gada

through which they could have obtained public recognition ... [m]en participate in the Gada process and rituals and have the right to attend all discussions and decisions made on the day-to-day life of the community (Deressa, 2002: 64).

In addition to this, Deressa (2002: 66) indicates that the Sharia law aggravated the situation – while the “Gada practices exclude women by prohibiting their participation in the public,” Sharia law forced women “even to mask their faces when they are out for work.” In other words, the culture and religion of Arsi Oromo obliterate women’s participation in the public sphere. In such male-dominant cultural and religious environs, female participation in the M&E processes would be severely hampered.

In patriarchal communities, age differences result in power differences. The Shashego, Hula, and Shashemene cultural environs are patriarchal and gerontocratic societies where older persons would be respected and their voices are heard more affirmatively than the younger ones (Ogato, 2016). For example, according to the “Sidama worldview, old age commands respect and recognition, as the advancement of age is often associated with experience and wisdom” (Hameso, 2006: 62). This is true, not only for Sidama, but for the other two as well: Oromo and Kembata. The data shows that the majority of the direct beneficiaries were young females (see data on demography). These two demographic characteristics of the direct beneficiaries have direct bearing on the process of M&E, as public participation in the patriarchal and gerontocratic society favors older and male participants, although elderly women also have the leverage of being heard, as Neef (2003) noted, that meetings in a local community can be monopolized by village notables.

According to WVE documents (WV, 2011a, 2014, 2016b, 2018) all speak about participation of stakeholders in the process of monitoring that includes children, women, persons who are physically challenged, government officials, and program or project staff. However, the documents do not clearly discuss the power dynamics among these participants due to cultural, age, and gender differences, although tools are crafted to handle children’s participation. This study’s quantitative data results simply demonstrate that there were extremely high levels of participation and high participation, which would generally infer that all the actors had high participation levels in both monitoring and evaluation processes. According to the majority of direct beneficiaries and the staff, the qualitative data provides a window of how age-related power dynamics were handled, for example, “... children separately discussed their objective through the tools provided by WVE”

(FR, age 32, Sidama). But from the data it is hard to ascertain how the cultural, religious, and age differences manifest in the power relationships. Puri's (2004) argument that participation is a simplistic understanding of community, reduces the complexity of community into a simple whole. It downplays the dynamic nature of community, which encapsulates several strata of differentiation, contestation, and power. Therefore, for purposes of this study, it might be safe to say that the issue of power dynamics is not clearly and intentionally taken as an issue within the WVE M&E system.

7.3.2. Challenges of participation

Numerous researchers have identified several criticisms and challenges of participations (such as, Chambers, 2006; Cleaver, 2001; Henkel & Stirrat, 2001; Kothari 2001; Mohan, 2001; Neef, 2003; Nelson & Wright, 1995; Parfitt, 2004; Pretty, 1995; Probst, 2002; Puri, 2004; Rahnema, 1997), which the researcher explored elsewhere in this study; there is therefore no need for belaboring the points here.

As the qualitative result disclosed, participation is easier said than done. Previous researchers and practitioners have shown that the participatory approach has numerous methodological challenges and weaknesses: it is inconsistent; objectivity is unrealistic; including all stakeholder perspectives is illusionary; it produces poor quality results; it is bound by techniques and instruments; its lack of documentation, and scale-upping are problematic (Campilan, 2000; Cleaver, 2001; Estrella & Gaventa, 1998; Guijt, 2000; Kothari, 2001; Martin et al., 2011; Pasteur & Blauert, 2000). Participation itself ignores those who are not organized and total participation is illusionary (Probst, 2002); the same level of participation across programs is unrealistic (Aubel, 2004); and there is a huge gap between theory and practice (Turreira-Garcia et al., 2018). In terms of cost and resources: it is a costly process, beneficiaries face financial constraints, and the theory itself underestimates costs (Guijt, 2000; Probst, 2002). Regarding time: negotiation takes time, and it is administratively cumbersome (Guijt, 2000; Pasteur & Blauert, 2000). Finally, participation wrongly assumes that stakeholders want to participate (Probst, 2002).

These weaknesses and challenges of participation were also confirmed by the results of this study – they are listed in the results discussion and do not need to be repeated here. This research has disclosed additional shortcomings of the participatory approach, particularly in the area of

assumption. Participatory approaches, as Probst (2002) indicates, assume that direct stakeholders want to participate. However, the findings in this research indicate that participants regard participation itself as a means of income, and they do not comply with the agreement made between them and WVE. This does not mean that they did not participate just for the sake of participating in the project; instead, they participated because of the potential financial gain; not to get the benefit of participation that the theory claims to provide. Transparency is another challenge that this research has disclosed, for participants can distort information due to different motivations, either to receive more funds, to offend the donors, or to use it as a means of revenge to settle scores between staff and beneficiaries. Communication between the staff, national, and international stakeholders is challenging, as language is a barrier at the local level. Furthermore, the matters of age and gender differences were not taken into consideration in the theory of participation.

The results of this study have confirmed the weaknesses and challenges identified by other researchers and also discovered additional weaknesses and challenges. This might require the participatory approach to be mingled with the conventional approach, as Martin et al. (2011) have already argued.

This research study avers that it is most probable to adopt a hybrid approach to conventional M&E and PM&E, where all stakeholders who have vested interests in the intervention can have active participation. A potential concern is that, at times it portrays a seemingly conflicting picture as it embodies the character traits of both approaches. On the other hand, this could very well be the feature that appeals to stakeholder needs and demands. This hybridization can be done by emphasizing highly dynamic participation of local stakeholders at the designing and planning stages of the M&E process. Moreover, an extremely active participation of local stakeholders can boost the monitoring process, which requires regular participation if monitoring is extended to encapsulate evaluation. Therefore, participation, which is one of the key determinants of PM&E, can in all likelihood be intentionally combined within the conventional M&E with authentic participation. In this research, the issue of power dynamics that occurs within the participatory approach still continues to be a buffering issue as it is subtle and engraved within the social fabrics of where WVE is functioning, particularly because of culture, religion, age, and gender.

7.4. Role of M&E expertise or external professional

Another area of difference between conventional M&E and PM&E is the role of M&E expertise. Estrella (2000) indicates that external professionals are contracted to perform the evaluation without significant involvement of the stakeholders. Therefore, in the conventional M&E, internal or external expertise makes interpretation, judgment and recommendation based on the result of scientific inquiry methods, whereas in the PM&E, the expert plays the role of facilitator. The results from both quantitative and qualitative groups are presented in Tables 16, 17, 18 and 19 below. First the quantitative and then the qualitative results are presented, followed by a discussion.

According to the quantitative data, the majority of the respondents believed that M&E was run by a specialized expert who was commissioned by donors to present a more objective point of view on the project. The role of the expert, as understood by the majority of the respondents, was to make judgment on the merit and demerit of the project rather than empowering direct beneficiaries in both monitoring and evaluating projects. The data further shows that the majority of the respondents indicated that the role of the expert was to provide tools for the M&E process and to help decision-makers determine the standard for judging the project.

Table 16: Direct beneficiaries' response to the role of the expert in monitoring

| The expert | Yes | No | No response |
|--|-------|-------|-------------|
| Commissioned by donors to present more objective point of view | 73.9% | 24.0% | 2.1% |
| Specialized expert in monitoring | 80.5% | 17.6% | 1.8% |
| Makes judgment rather than empowering direct beneficiaries | 56.8% | 41.6% | 1.5% |
| Provides tools for monitoring process | 74.8% | 23.7% | 1.5% |
| Helps decision-makers determine standard for judgment | 76.9% | 21.6% | 1.5% |

N=329

Table 17: Direct beneficiaries' response to the role of the expert in evaluation

| The expert | Yes | No | No response |
|--|-------|-------|-------------|
| Commissioned by donors to present more objective point of view | 72.9% | 25.5% | 1.5% |
| Specialized expert in evaluation | 80.2% | 18.2% | 1.5% |
| Makes judgment rather than empowering direct beneficiaries | 58.4% | 40.1% | 1.5% |
| Provides tools for monitoring process | 72.0% | 26.4 | 1.5% |
| Helps decision-makers determine standard for judgment | 72.6% | 25.8% | 1.5% |

N=329

Source: Author's analysis of empirical data

Staff respondents differed in their opinions from that of the direct beneficiaries regarding the role of the expert. In the monitoring process, the majority of staff believed that the expert was not commissioned by donors to present a more objective point of view about a project. However, it is particularly important to note that all the respondents confirmed that the expert was commissioned by donors to present a more objective point of view on a project in the evaluation of a project. Nonetheless, the majority of the respondents rejected the claim that the role of the expert was to make judgments about a project rather than empowering the direct beneficiaries in both monitoring and evaluation processes. Instead, the role of the expert in both monitoring and evaluation, as provider of tools for M&E and helping decision-makers to determine standards for judgment was confirmed by the majority of the respondents.

Table 18: Staff response to the role of the expert in monitoring

| Monitoring officer | Yes | No | No response |
|--|-------|-------|-------------|
| Commissioned by donors to present more objective point of view | 31.3% | 56.3% | 12.5% |
| Specialized expert in monitoring | 87.5% | - | 12.5% |
| Makes judgment rather than empowering direct beneficiaries | 18.8% | 68.8% | 12.5% |
| Provides tools for monitoring process | 75.0% | 12.5% | 12.5% |
| Helps decision-makers determine standard for judgment | 75.0% | 12.5% | 12.5% |

Table 19: Staff response to the role of the expert in evaluation

| Evaluation officer | Yes | No | No response |
|--|-------|-------|-------------|
| Commissioned by donors to present more objective point of view | 100% | - | - |
| Specialized expert in evaluation | 43.8% | 56.3% | - |
| Makes judgment rather than empowering direct beneficiaries | 25.0% | 75.0% | - |
| Provides tools for monitoring process | 81.3% | 18.3% | - |
| Helps decision-makers determine standard for judgment | 75.0% | 25.0% | - |

Source: Author's analysis of empirical data

The qualitative data revealed that there was internal and external expertise in the M&E work in WVE. External evaluators usually were hired mainly at the terminal evaluation but rarely for major projects' closing and designing. It was mainly an internal expert or evaluator from the headquarter doing the evaluation. External evaluators used WVE's indicators. If the external evaluator is evaluating, the internal evaluator shall never be part of the process, except facilitating logistics for the external evaluator (FR, age 37, Sidama). Regarding the role of an internal M&E expert, one of the interviewees commented:

The role of MEAL expert is to make sure or ensure that the projects are implemented in accordance with the standard set by WVE and meet the goal. It does a quality assurance work. The MEAL officer facilitates all the monitoring and evaluation processes based on scientific or WVE recommended method (MR, age 40, Oromia).

The internal expert prepares the design and implementation for the M&E of the project, facilitates the logistics for the external evaluator, and prepares reports (FR, age 37, Sidama; MR, age 55, Sidama; MR, age 40, Sidama; MR, age 36, Sidama; MR, age 35, SNNP; MR, age 40, Oromia).

Both the quantitative and qualitative results showed that the expert was appointed by the donor agency (WVE), made judgement about the project, and provided tools and supported decision-makers for M&E according to the direct beneficiaries. However, although the staff agreed with the direct beneficiaries at some point, they rejected the notion that experts make judgement of the project rather than empowering the direct beneficiaries in both monitoring and evaluation. They also rejected that the expert produces an objective point of view in the monitoring results. The qualitative result showed an agreement with the quantitative result on who appoints the experts and produced the impression that the role of the internal expert was to facilitate the M&E process to maintain the scientific standard in all aspects, although the internal expert did not participate in the actual evaluation if an external expert was hired.

Mertens and Wilson (2019) identified several roles of M&E experts depending on the needs of the M&E, such as managerial, detective, designing, negotiating, diplomatic, researching, judging, reporting, and facilitating use of the findings. But the two major differences among conventional M&E and PM&E regarding the role of an evaluator, is that for the former it is the expert that makes the interpretation, judgment, and recommendation but the latter facilitates the process.

The findings of the data in question indicated that the majority of the direct beneficiaries believed that the monitoring was run by a specialized expert commissioned by donors to present a more objective point of view on the project, whereas the staff respondents rejected this claim. It is likely that the direct beneficiaries did not have access to know who assigned the monitoring specialist as they are not part of the staff, whereas the staff probably know who assigns the personnel. However, the staff agreed that the evaluator is assigned by donors, which allows the researcher to infer that there is a possibility of assigning an external evaluator, as D-ME specialists are internal staff, just as the monitoring practitioner. Both in monitoring and in evaluation, the expert has to present data based on objective results, although in the monitoring, participation is mandatory (WV, 2018).

It is the opinion of the majority of scholars and research results that experts are needed because of the skills required to plan, analyze, interpret, document, and report results whether the expert is a facilitator or direct implementer (see, for example, Estrella, 2000; Fetterman, 1996; Patton, 1997; Preskill & Torres, 2000; Probst, 2002). This is in harmony with the theories of Scriven (1986) and Guba and Lincoln (1989), who hold an opposite epistemological stance the former positivist and the latter subjectivist because the qualitative data result indicated that it is hard to categorize the role of the expert into one compartment, as the expert played the role of facilitator as well as used scientific standards to produce a report on the effectiveness of the project. WVE seems to be using internal staff specialists at different levels to address the needs of information and knowledge to different stakeholders in the monitoring area, although the evaluation still involves different levels of specialists – most likely an external professional consultant.

The role of the expert in the M&E process seems to be complex and several layers of specialists in the process are needed to do the M&E, whether in the conventional or participatory approach. But still, the difference between the conventional and the participatory approaches regarding the role of the expert depends on the kind of information, the level of precision, the purpose of M&E, and the nature of the organization. Both approaches can be used at different levels and are driven by different needs within a program, requiring different levels of expertise.

7.5. Local context in M&E

Rog (2012) adumbrated context in five key areas: problem context, broader environment, intervention context, evaluation context, and decision-making context. However, context also

includes both culture and knowledge. Kirkhart (2010: 401) defined the former as “a set of beliefs, attributes, values, knowledge, and skills that collectively creates identity” and it “represents an intersection of identifications held by individual plus identifications collective groups such as organizations, institution, communities, societies, and nations.” Therefore, according to Kirkhart (2010: 411), all evaluation including monitoring theories have a cultural footprint “that must be understood and engaged to achieve valid understandings and determinations of merits and worth.”

In this regard, culturally sensitive and responsive evaluation needs are consonantal with other evaluation approaches concerned with democracy, social change, inclusion, and power relations. However, one of the key elements of context in M&E is indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is a cumulative “body of strategies, practices, techniques, tools, intellectual resources, explanations, beliefs, and values accumulated over time in a particular locality, without the interference and impositions of external hegemonic forces” (Emeagwali, 2014: 1).

This section presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative data. In the former, two questions were posed to the respondents from the direct beneficiaries and the staff to ascertain whether the cultural context and indigenous knowledge were considered in the M&E process in WVE that might provide insight to the understanding of context and indigenous knowledge as determinant of M&E. In the latter, the researcher compiled semi-structured questions for the interviews and for discussion on the issues depending on the interests of the interviewees and FGD participants. First up, is the presentation of the quantitative results, followed by the data gathered from the qualitative research; this is rounded off with a discussion.

The quantitative data indicates that the majority of the respondents from the direct beneficiaries subscribed to the claim that WVE’s M&E process incorporates direct beneficiaries’ indigenous knowledge. It also shows that the majority believed that the process of M&E was sensitive to their local culture.

Figure 41: Direct beneficiaries’ response to the local context role in monitoring

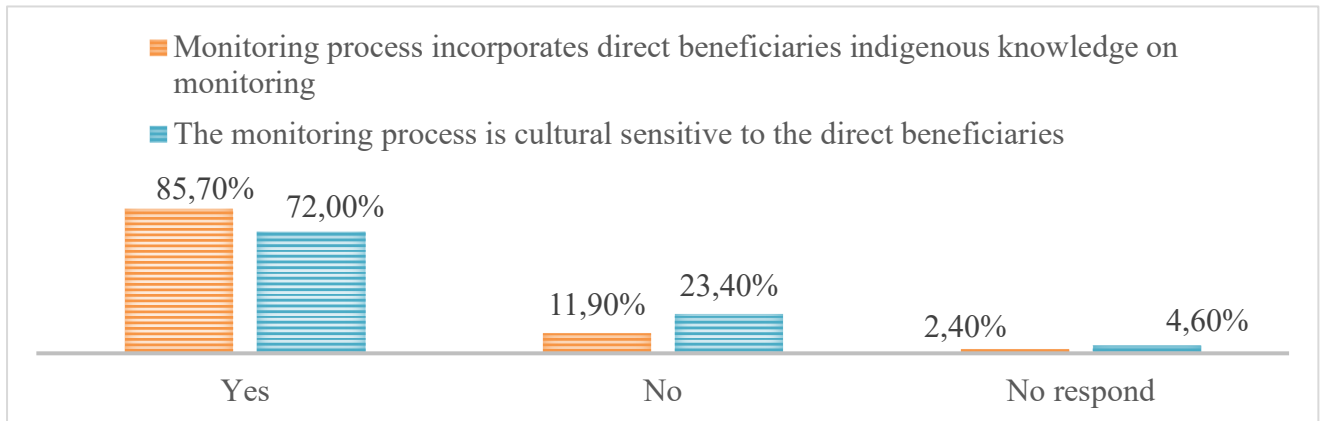
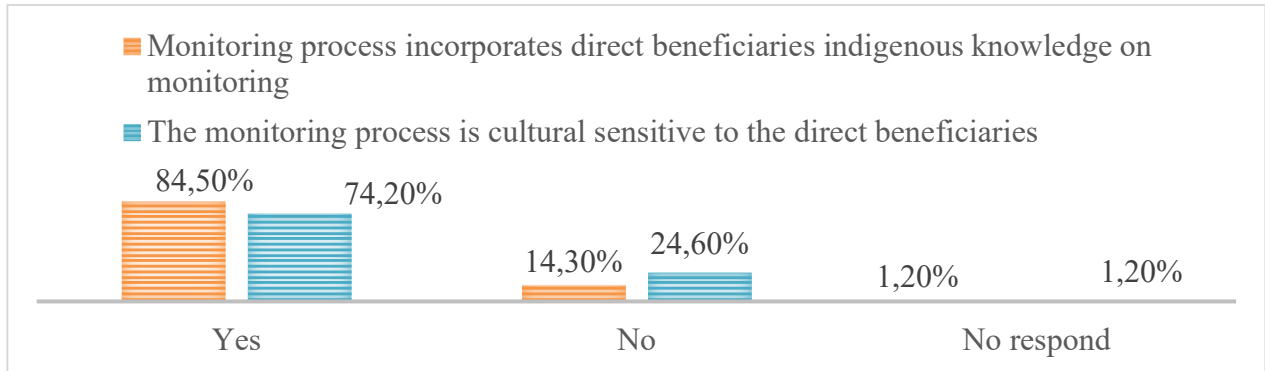


Figure 42: Direct beneficiaries' response to the local context role in evaluation



Source: Author's analysis of empirical data

Similarly, the data collected from the staff respondents demonstrated that the majority of the respondents believed that the M&E process incorporated direct beneficiaries' indigenous knowledge and was sensitive to the local culture of the direct beneficiaries.

Figure 43: Staff response to the local context role in monitoring

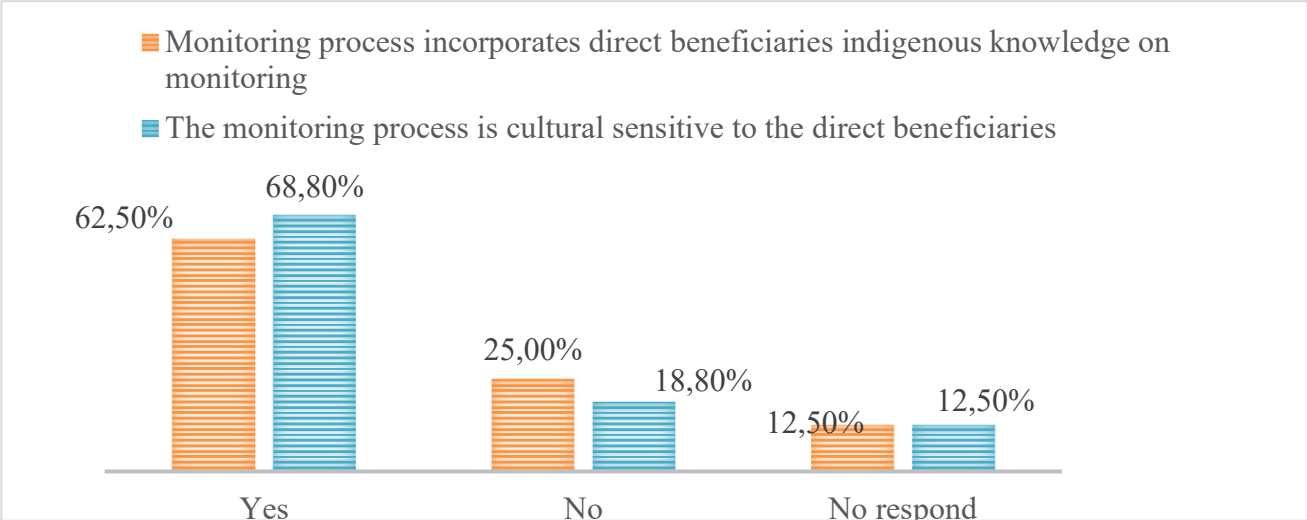
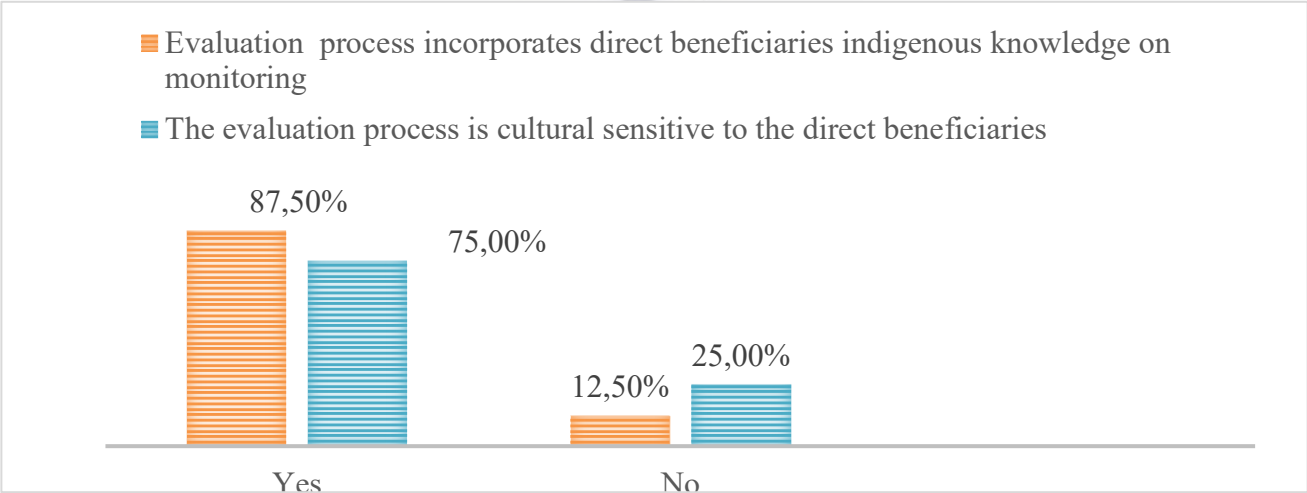


Figure 44: Staff response to the local context role in evaluation



Source: Author’s analysis of empirical data

Interview respondents and FGD participants focused mainly on contextualizing indicators when answering context and indigenous knowledge questions:

WVE uses quarterly review with government and annual community review for monitoring, which includes beneficiaries and other stakeholders. During the meeting, different tools are used, such as FGD. In addition, in annual community review, different target groups, that is, children, adults (boys and girls), people with disability are involved in the review and comment what should be improved, what should continue. Similarly, in quarterly review, the government sectors provide information. These are some of the ways we use indigenous knowledge to improve the program (FGD, Group I).

Others asserted that indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge cannot be differentiated. In the words of an interviewee, “It is hard to create a boundary between scientific and indigenous in M&E because M&E is based on observation, which might be applied for both” (MR, age 40, Oromia). Still another respondent commented that including traditional ethnic-based government leaders, and village leaders is by default using indigenous knowledge:

In Oromo ethnic group, there is a traditional governance – *Gada* – that includes many things. WVE includes *abagadas*, *adesinke*, village elders, and model residents of direct beneficiaries in the process of designing projects, monitoring and evaluation; therefore, WVE employs indigenous knowledge on monitoring and evaluation.

One of the respondents even reflected a negative attitude:

I think indigenous knowledge would be included in one way or another. However, sometimes indigenous knowledge has a negative effect. For example, female genital mutilation is highly valued based on indigenous knowledge that claims if girls are not mutilated, they would misbehave. Even the girls themselves are victims of this knowledge because they believe that their parents’ knowledge regarding such practices reflects their parents’ care for them, therefore, it is true (FR, age 37, Sidama).

Such a legitimate argument from a female respondent illustrates what it means to have an indigenous M&E system that involves social values and relationships. However, most of the interviewees concurred with one of the respondents’ answers to this issue:

I have never seen such practice [accommodating indigenous knowledge of the community]. Even I have not heard any suggestion as to including indigenous knowledge of the farmer to be included either in the production of tools or in the process of monitoring and evaluation (MR, age 55, Sidama).

Although the quantitative result depicted that context and indigenous knowledge were incorporated into the M&E system, the quantitative result showed that indigenous knowledge was not part of the M&E system, albeit that some respondents argued that the indigenous knowledge was included through the different cultural and religious leaders’ participation in the process.

The importance of context and indigenous knowledge is without question, although scholarly work on these topics is meager, compared to the discussion on participation. With regard to indigenous knowledge, however, a number of scholars are making progress in challenging the conventional

as well as the scientific modes of participatory approaches. Scholars (such as Asante, 1990; Carroll, 2008; Chilisa, 2012; Chilisa & Malunga, 2012; Chilisa & Preece 2005; Easton, 2012; Mkabela, 2005; Muwanga-Zake, 2009; Reviere, 2001) argue for indigenous M&E, which bases its approach and epistemology on indigenous knowledge.

Both the majority of the direct beneficiaries and the staff respondent agreed that the M&E process is sensitive to the culture of the community and incorporates indigenous knowledge. However, it is unclear how to verify from the quantitative data, the manner in which such incorporation of indigenous knowledge was done. WV's important documents on M&E address context sporadically, but context is defined as political, security or social change as short-term shock such as seasonal drought (Evidence and Learning); hence, context is not understood in terms of cultural and indigenous knowledge. However, WV program teams are encouraged to be culturally sensitive when including children and youth, but no emphasis is placed on such issues as the scarcity of the discussion on culture and context in the documents (Handbooks for Development program approach). The documents address the contextualization of tools, plans, and flexibility and there seems to be a people and culture department at WV's national office but still no discussion or guidance on culture and indigenous knowledge of the community.

The qualitative data, however, provides insights into the issue of indigenous knowledge. The respondents seemed to think that their contribution of ideas, comments, and decision-making as an application of indigenous knowledge feed into the system. If Emeagwali's (2014) comprehensive definition is noted, the input that emerged from the direct beneficiaries and the local stakeholders might be considered as inclusion of indigenous knowledge. However, some of the respondents argued that it is hardly possible to establish a boundary between indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge, which might be compared to that of Agrawal (1995a) and Thamas Hey (Agrawal, 1995b) who argue that there is no need to categorize scientific against indigenous knowledge.

The other important aspect that respondents raised regarding indigenous knowledge is about value judgement. Female genital mutilation, for instance, is highly valued in the community such as in SNNP, Sidama and Oromia, for it is an evaluative standard in the indigenous knowledge system of the community, whether a girl is behaving in accordance with the knowledge and value of the

community or not. This is a challenge in such a particular context where the project involved itself in child well-being. In fact, Semali and Kincheloe (1999) contend that indigenous knowledge is under construction and always in progress. However, it is an important indication that indigenous knowledge needs scientific knowledge to refine itself from knowledge that affects the community itself. Likewise, scientific knowledge needs indigenous knowledge where it attempts to resolve problems claimed to be affecting society, particularly because indigenous knowledge itself has been providing solutions for generations; although at times it just needs boosting, sharpening, and sifting. It might be argued that scientific knowledge and indigenous knowledge should not be pitted against each other; instead, it is much better to acknowledge that both are not perfect, therefore, they need each other to resolve problems in a specific context around the globe.

7.6. Use of M&E findings

Patton (1997:24) lucidly states that the aim of M&E is to inform “decisions, clarify options, identify improvements, and provide information about programs and policies within contextual boundaries of time, place, values, and politics.” This utilization theory of M&E is akin to that of conventional M&E. It assumes a larger number of interested groups, that is, from the organization, mainly managers and the staff, although the representatives from the direct beneficiaries are considered to be part of the users, they are not the forefront of the stakeholders. The PM&E approach theorizes that the use of M&E should be to foster improvement, and self-determination (Fetterman, 1996) and the impact of evaluation would be used by undifferentiated groups of users as well as decision-makers (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). M&E needs to meet the accountability requirements, that is, it should address all “who are intended to use the findings, persons who may otherwise be affected by the evaluation, and those expected to contribute to the evaluation” (Stufflebeam, 2000: 280).

The purpose of this section is to explore what happens to the findings of the M&E in WVE to gain insight into the understanding of the determinant of M&E that might be combined for the possibility of a hybrid approach. Therefore, it first presents the quantitative data collected from the direct beneficiaries and staff, followed by the qualitative data collected from interviews and the FGD. Lastly, it discusses the results.

Table 20 below shows the quantitative results. The majority of the respondents from the direct beneficiaries believed that the result of the M&E findings circulated only among the top management, and findings were injected into the planning stage with little input from direct beneficiaries. On the other hand, the data indicates that the direct beneficiaries also perceived that the findings of the M&E increased their understanding and experience, and that they were involved in decision-making based on the findings of the M&E. The data also disclosed that it was the contention of the direct beneficiaries that the findings of the M&E produced knowledge that can be used for any place in the world and for local places, in particular.

Table 20: Direct beneficiaries' response to the use of monitoring findings

| Survey questions: WVE uses | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No response |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Findings circulate only among heads of WVE | 44.1% | 35.6% | 10.9% | 8.2% | 1.2% |
| Findings loop into planning stage with little input from direct beneficiaries | 33.7% | 44.4% | 17.0% | 3.6% | 1.2% |
| Findings increase understanding of direct beneficiaries' experience | 38.6% | 43.8% | 11.2% | 5.2% | 1.2% |
| Direct beneficiaries involved in decision-making based on the findings | 30.7% | 51.1% | 9.7% | 6.7% | 1.8% |
| Findings produce knowledge that can be used for any place in the world | 29.5% | 41.6% | 19.5% | 8.2% | 1.2% |
| Findings produce knowledge that can only be used for local places | 24.6% | 31.6% | 23.1% | 19.5% | 1.2% |

N=329

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Table 21: Direct beneficiaries' response to the use of evaluation findings

| Survey questions: WVE uses | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No response |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Findings circulate only among heads of WVE | 39.8% | 38.0% | 13.1% | 8.2% | 0.9% |
| Findings loop into planning stage with little input from direct beneficiaries | 31.6% | 46.2% | 15.8% | 5.5% | 0.9% |
| Findings increase understanding of direct beneficiaries' experience | 37.1% | 44.7% | 11.2% | 6.1% | 0.9% |
| Direct beneficiaries involved in decision-making based on the findings | 30.1% | 48.0% | 13.1% | 7.9% | 0.9% |
| Findings produce knowledge that can be used for any place in the world | 28.0% | 44.1% | 16.4% | 10.6% | 0.9% |
| Findings produce knowledge that can only be used for local places | 35.6% | 21.9% | 21.3% | 20.4% | 0.9% |

N=329

Source: Author's analysis of empirical data

However, Tables 22 and 23 below show that a considerable percentage of the staff respondents disagreed with the claim that findings circulated only among the heads of WVE, looped into the planning stage with little input from direct beneficiaries, and produced knowledge that can only be used for local places. But the majority agreed with the claims that findings increased the understanding of direct beneficiaries' experiences, direct beneficiaries involved in decision-making processes based on findings, and findings produced knowledge that can be used for any place in the world.

Table 22: Staff response to the use of monitoring findings

| Survey questions: WVE uses | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No response |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Findings circulate only among heads of WVE | 6.3% | 6.3% | 62.5% | 6.3% | 12.5% |
| Findings loop into planning stage with little input from direct beneficiaries | 6.3% | 31.3% | 43.8% | 6.3% | 12.5% |
| Findings increase understanding of direct beneficiaries' experience | 12.5% | 56.3% | 18.8% | - | 12.5% |
| Direct beneficiaries involved in decision-making based on the findings | 25.0% | 25.0% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 12.5% |
| Findings produce knowledge that can be used for any place in the world | 12.5% | 68.8% | 6.3% | - | 12.5% |
| Findings produce knowledge that can only be used for local places | 6.3% | 12.5% | 37.5% | 31.3% | 12.5% |

N=16

Table 23: Staff response to the use of evaluation findings

| Survey questions: WVE uses | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| Findings circulate only among heads of WVE | 12.5% | 25.0% | 50.0% | 12.5% |
| Findings loop into planning stage with little input from direct beneficiaries | 6.3% | 12.5% | 43.8% | 37.5% |
| Findings increase understanding of direct beneficiaries' experience | 18.8% | 37.5% | 37.5% | 6.3% |
| Direct beneficiaries involved in decision-making based on the findings | 25.0% | 43.8% | 31.3% | |
| Findings produce knowledge that can be used for any place in the world | 12.5% | 68.8% | 12.5% | 8.3% |

| | | | | |
|---|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Findings produce knowledge that can only be used for local places | 6.3% | 18.8% | 43.8% | 31.3% |
|---|------|-------|-------|-------|

N=16

Source: Author's analysis of empirical data

The use of the results of the M&E, according to the interviewees, was for feedback for the next planning and for decision-makers (MR, age 55, Sidama; MR, age 36, Sidama; MR, age 43, SNNP; MR, age 32, SNNP; MR, age 48, SNNP; MR, age 34, Oromia; MR, age 55, Oromia). For the direct beneficiaries, the result was used for learning (MR, age 41, Sidama; MR, age 32, SNNP; MR, age 33, SNNP; MR, age 41, Oromia; MR, age 40, Oromia). But a written report did not reach the direct beneficiaries, as one of the interviewed respondents informs:

Every year, what had been learned from the process would be documented. We have minute recording system that records meeting discussion with the community. New learning would be listed and they would be shared to project officers. These learnings come from the direct beneficiaries during annual community review. In the discussion, government bureau, the direct beneficiaries and WVE staff participate. However, the direct beneficiaries do not receive compiled learning reports in writing (MR, age 32, SNNP).

The learning gained from the direct beneficiaries was an input to the project staff rather than learning shared with the direct beneficiaries, according to the above informant. This was also confirmed by another informant:

The report comes to us and also to the WVE top leadership. Direct beneficiaries would be called to meet together including the disabled, children, and mothers to hear the testimony about the project and to hear WVE evaluation report. This gathering also is a time to evaluate WVE project (MR, age 33, SNNP).

The formal reports were difficult for the direct beneficiaries to understand, as the indicators were difficult to read. Therefore, there was no way to communicate in written format until now (FM, age 37, Sidama). However, through the meeting, the report of the result was communicated for correction, improvement and accountability purposes (FM, age 55, Sidama; MR, 43, SNNP). WVE mainly used the result of the M&E for learning to improve future programs to avoid or limit failure by improving plans, and for reporting to donors, as it is mandatory for accountability (FGD, Group I).

The quantitative and qualitative results informed that the results were virtually a similar position with regard to the use of the results, although the direct beneficiaries subscribed to all the claims provided in the questionnaire, whereas the staff were critical of each claim. However, the qualitative results disclosed the nature of the use of the result, mainly for feedback and improvement and the findings of the M&E that were not issued in writing to the direct beneficiaries, which might place them in a disadvantaged position; although documentation like minutes were recorded whenever meetings took place, but it was not available to them. Nevertheless, the direct beneficiaries received reports for accountability, validated reports, and commented on correction through the meeting.

The M&E results or findings have to be useful for all stakeholders who have vested interests in the intervention. The M&E results are used to foster improvement and self-determination (especially PM&E) (Fetterman, 1996), to bringing about transformational learning (Preskill & Torres, 2000).

The majority of the respondents concurred that the results of the M&E increased their understanding and they were also part of decisions made, based on the findings and the knowledge gained from the findings believed to be used in other places. However, contrary to what the document claimed, that the reports of the findings should be available for all interested individuals or groups (LEAP 3.1), the majority of the respondents indicated that the M&E findings circulated only among the top management and little input from the direct beneficiaries was injected into the planning process. This contradicts what the respondents said about increased learning, and making decisions based on the M&E results. What might be inferred from the anomaly, is that the findings probably were not available to the direct beneficiaries in writing and they did not have a chance to know whether their input had been taken well and injected into the process of improving the project planning.

This might be confirmed from the majority of the staff respondents' position who indicated that the findings increased their understanding of direct beneficiaries, that they were involved in decision-making based on the findings, that the findings produced knowledge that can be used beyond the local context. However, the majority also rejected the notion that the findings were

circulated only among heads of WVE, that findings looped into the planning stage with little input from the direct beneficiaries, and that the finding produced knowledge that can only be used for local places, which contradict the position of the majority of the respondents from the direct beneficiaries.

The PM&E is concerned with who uses the findings (Guijt, 2000). In conventional M&E the findings are for donors and top managers. However, in PM&E, the documentation of findings is a challenge, as it involves various stakeholders, perspectives, ways of communication, literary styles and languages (Guijt, 2000; Probst, 2002). WVE's approach provides a lot of emphasis on monitoring, which functions as evaluation at two levels. One, routine monitoring and intermittent monitoring, the latter being executed by staff on a regular basis, which solves the problem of having the cost and time of direct beneficiaries, while the latter involves an active participation of monitoring outcomes of the project. In fact, at the stage of designing and planning M&E, the stakeholders are involved, as it was argued in the earlier section of this document.

If this analysis is taken into account, there is a high probability to conclude that one of the determinants of M&E, that is, the use of M&E findings probably addresses the issue of both approaches separately, attempting to address if they combine the needs of their stakeholders.

7.7. Chapter summary

This chapter explored additional key determinants of M&E in the WVE M&E system, aiming at searching for the possibility of combining determinants of the conventional M&E and the PM&E. It also explored participation, the role of expertise, local context and the use of M&E findings. The most obvious findings that emerged from the analysis of the results, were that these key determinants can be combined into one system of M&E. Nonetheless, the research was unable to verify whether indigenous knowledge would be part of the key determinants in the hybrid approach, as WVE did not incorporate it in its system of M&E. The next chapter presents the most important findings of the research and puts forward recommendations.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Introduction

This research set out to explore and answer the question: “What determinant of conventional and participatory monitoring and evaluation approaches can be combined in developing a better approach for monitoring and evaluation?” This chapter presents the aim and objectives of the research, a summary of the findings, the conclusion of the research, and recommendations based on the findings of the research.

The aim of this research study was to identify the determinants of conventional and participatory monitoring and evaluation approaches that can be combined in order to explore a hybrid approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) address the needs of stakeholders. The research had three objectives. The *first* was to empirically explore whether World Vision Ethiopia’s M&E system had incorporated the key determinants that the two approaches, conventional M&E and PM&E (PM&E) deem critical for their respective approach. The *second* aim was to empirically identify the key determinants of M&E from both approaches that can be combined with a common theoretical and epistemological stance from the case study. The *third* aim was to propose a hybrid approach that incorporates key determinants from both approaches. The *fourth* aim was to provide policy-makers and other stakeholders in Ethiopia with a comprehensive understanding of M&E processes with recommendations for the way forward.

8.2. Research findings

The research identified a number of key determinants from each approach that can be combined, which might allow to craft a hybrid approach that encapsulates both approaches. The summary highlights the more significant findings that emerged from this research on each key determinant.

8.2.1. Ownership of the M&E process

This determinant is key for the PM&E approach (Probst, 2002; Guijt 2000). Both qualitative and quantitative results indicated that top managers – mainly experts – own the process, in that they initiate and control the process. But the empirical findings from the qualitative and quantitative data indicate that the majority of respondents believed that the perspectives of the direct

beneficiaries were emphasized within the process. The findings clearly demonstrate that the two approaches are partially mixed here, as the initiating and controlling by the top management and experts are characteristics of conventional M&E, while emphasizing that the perspectives of the direct beneficiaries are characteristic traits of PM&E.

8.2.2. Purpose of M&E

The research empirically found that all the seven purposes of M&E investigated in this research are critical in WVE M&E. These purposes are: shared learning between WVE and the direct beneficiaries; empowering the direct beneficiaries; meeting accountability to different stakeholders; empowering the direct beneficiaries; satisfying donors and funding agencies; improving project planning; measuring change; and increasing a sense of ownership (although empowering and ownership as a purpose of M&E were not mentioned in the qualitative data). These purposes are mixture of both approaches. Normally measuring changes, accountability, improving projects and plans are determinants of both approaches. Although the answers to the questions, “who and for whom” – pertaining to satisfying donor needs, empowering the direct beneficiaries, and increasing a sense of ownership – purport that the two approaches are distinct from each other, this research has empirically shown that in WVE the purposes of the two approaches were combined. Therefore, the most obvious finding from the exploration of this key determinant is that they can indeed be practically combined within a single approach.

8.2.3. Creation of indicators in the M&E process

The exploration focused on answering the question, “Who created the indicators?” The result has shown that the majority of the respondents in the quantitative and qualitative data believed that the creation of indicators in WVE is through negotiation among top managers, external experts, and direct beneficiaries. As the qualitative data unpacked the process, the funding agency (WV) created a standardized and globally usable indicator for its organizational functioning in different parts of the world. These indicators were contextualized during baseline assessment, problem analysis, and vision-casting process through discussion with direct beneficiaries, during which the direct beneficiaries articulated their vision, desires and measurement in their own words, which turned out to be indicators and objectives for the project. These identified objectives and indicators in the words of the direct beneficiaries would be reworded and matched with standardized indicators into

scientific wording by the expert. Therefore, the research has shown that both standardized indicators and indicators expressed in the words of the direct beneficiaries can indeed be combined in one M&E system.

8.2.4. Methodology of M&E

Despite their distinctions on ontological assumption and epistemological commitment, several researches have shown that there are no significant differences in methodological commitment, as both approaches employ quantitative and qualitative approaches. The only significant difference is that for the conventional approach, the process of M&E is an end in itself, whereas for the participatory approach, the result is valued. This research has also established that both quantitative and qualitative methods and tools can be used in both approaches.

8.2.5. Participation

The research explored six areas of participation: participants, activities of participants, purpose of participation, level of participation, nature of participation, and challenge of participation. This determinant is the distinctive determinant and character trait of PM&E. A summary of findings on each aspect of participation is presented below.

- **Participants:** This study has found that not only the direct beneficiaries participate in the M&E but also a wider community of stakeholders, including funding agencies, government sector, direct beneficiaries' representatives, community leaders, and religious leaders participated in WVE's M&E process. The research also has shown that the area of stakeholders is a complex issue and cannot be limited to local direct beneficiaries. The research found that participants are a complex grouping in a given intervention, ranging from global to local direct beneficiaries. Therefore, a hybrid approach is the best approach to create access to a complex and varied interested stakeholders to be participant in the M&E process.
- **Activities of participants in the M&E process:** At times, the conventional approach allows for participation. Therefore, this research went into a deeper level of exploration, not only regarding who participates in the M&E process, but also in what activities these different actors participate in the M&E process. The findings of the exploration demonstrated that the direct beneficiaries participated in: (1) *designing and planning stage*: decision-making;

articulating problems, needs, and vision; creating objectives and expressing indicators; (2) *implementation stage*: reporting on the performance; suggesting, commenting, reviewing plans; direct monitoring in some projects like schools and buildings; processing complaints; collecting data; facilitating community meetings; capturing learning. The direct beneficiaries did not participate in budgeting, data analysis, report findings, design and creation of questions, budgeting, and creation of standardized indicators because the activities require specialized skills to perform them effectively. The research thus found that the two approaches can be combined in a single M&E system, because each aspect of the M&E process requires special skills and resources. Therefore, participation of direct beneficiaries in all aspects of activities of M&E is probably impossible, according to the findings of this research.

- ***Purpose of participation***: The two approaches purported to entail participation within their approaches, but it is necessary to consider the purpose of participation at a deeper level, which this research committed to do. Accordingly, the research explored seven purposes of M&E: consult stakeholders; engage stakeholders; involve direct beneficiaries in decision-making; gather information from direct beneficiaries; share responsibilities with direct beneficiaries; empower direct beneficiaries; and report findings. These seven purposes are represented in both the conventional and participatory approaches. Consulting, gathering information and reporting are used in conventional M&E, which employs participation as a means to achieve efficiency. Others, such as empowering direct beneficiaries, making direct beneficiaries a part of decision-making, and sharing responsibilities with direct beneficiaries, are key features of the participatory approach. Hence, the research found that these seven purposes of participation were critical and highly valuable for WVE. Granting that these purposes entail aspects of participation that are upheld by both approaches, the research clearly demonstrates that the purposes of conventional M&E and PM&E cannot be contradictory, but that participation can be used as a means and an end in itself within one M&E system, that is, as a means to be effective and efficient in the system of the monitoring and as a means to empower and transform the local community.
- ***Stakeholders' level of participation***: One of the key issues in participation is the power relationship among the participants, which might be demonstrated at the level of

participation. This research undertook to investigate the level of participation of different actors in the WVE M&E process. The research indicates that the level of adult women, girls, and boys under twenty, disabled girls, boys, men and women, adult men, men-village leaders, women-village leaders, and government sector office experts were all actively participating in the M&E of WVE. However, the research was unable to verify from the data collected through quantitative and qualitative methods whether the power relationship is negatively affected because of culture, age group, and education, although some respondents from the interviews indicated that children were participating separately. Therefore, the research has established that the participants were actively participating in the M&E. However, it is unable to verify whether the power relationship within cultural settings where old age, and patriarchy, and gerontocracy that influence social power structures of the society, affected the participants' level of participation. Other researchers have shown that power in a community and society cannot be avoided due to its subtle nature.

- ***Nature of participation:*** The result of the exploration on the nature of participation in WVE showed mixed results, in that the direct beneficiaries believed that the nature of participation was through representatives who did not have power. In summary: they received commands or expertise from senior staff; they contributed labor for material incentives; their participation was to get legitimacy from donors; and their participation produced poor quality. On the other hand, while the staff agreed on the rest, they disagreed that the participation of direct beneficiaries was not to meet predetermined objectives, to get legitimacy from donors, and to achieve cost-effectiveness. The qualitative data result has shown that the direct beneficiaries were participating through representatives of powerful leaders of the community such as government, community leaders, village-man leaders, village-women leaders and religious leaders. Therefore, they have power to control the process but do not have power over budgeting and administrative issues. Participation of direct beneficiaries produced poor quality and it was not cost-effective. The reason for conflicting results is due to the nature of the closed questionnaire but the qualitative results resolved the conflict. Therefore, the research findings clearly indicate that there is a mixture of both conventional and participatory approaches. It also confirmed previous research that there was no full and complete participation in any condition.

- Challenges of participation:** The findings clearly indicated that there are several challenges. In summary: monitoring is a daily routine and it is therefore challenging for the direct beneficiaries to participate; participation needs large numbers of staff to facilitate large numbers of direct beneficiaries; full participation is difficult in an intervention that entails large numbers of direct beneficiaries; direct beneficiaries distort the actual situation of a project through exaggeration of problems; language barriers make it hard to communicate global indicators in local languages; organizing indicators collected from direct beneficiaries; direct beneficiaries demand payment for participation; direct beneficiaries do not comply with agreements; direct beneficiaries conflict with staff and deter honest discussion; distance from the project location is a barrier for direct beneficiaries; complexity of stakeholders, as they need different information; direct beneficiaries did want to offend donors or staff; direct beneficiaries have difficulties reading the formal written reports; it is time- and resource-consuming to train and capacitate direct beneficiaries. The research confirmed previous research that identified the downside of participation. Therefore, perhaps one of the most compelling findings is that participation is not a panacea for the area of M&E; rather, it needs a conventional approach, to be effective.
- Role of the expert:** The findings showed that the direct beneficiaries believed that the WVE M&E experts were appointed to provide tools and support for decision-makers, maintain scientific standards, analyze data, and to report in writing. But the staff respondents in the quantitative data rejected the idea that it is required by donors to present more objective viewpoints on the project and to judge the project, while the direct beneficiaries agreed. Therefore, the findings indicated that the expert plays the role in both the conventional and participatory approaches.
- Context:** This study has clearly indicated that contextualization was done through the process of creation of indicators, during discussion with the direct beneficiaries' representatives. However, the research found that indigenous knowledge was not in the system of WVE and therefore the research cannot verify whether including indigenous knowledge was possible in the combination of both approaches.
- Use of M&E findings:** The research on this determinant produced a mixed result, in that while the direct beneficiaries believed that they had learnt and developed their

understanding of a project based on the results of the M&E, they indicated that the report was sent to the headquarters of WVE, not to them. They also believed that they participated in decision-making based on the findings of the results of the M&E. On the other hand, they also believed that their inputs to the decisions were not fully taken on board. Such discrepancies and contradictions were explained through the respondent of the key staff who rejected the notion of limited input from the direct beneficiaries. Regarding the report – the researcher observed that a written report was not available to the direct beneficiaries, but a report was made available orally in the meeting. Nonetheless, the use of the M&E findings is most probably combinable, based on deeper analysis of this research.

8.3. Theoretical and conceptual reflections on the findings

This research discussed several paradigms, theories, and concepts for the interpretation of the findings, namely: M&E theories, participation theory and concept, and theories of context. M&E paradigms and theories are multiple: positivist (method), pragmatist (use), constructivist (values), and transformative (social justice). At the risk of simplicity, these theories and paradigms can be generalized under positivist and constructivist (use, values, social justice). Participation theory – there is no consistent fully-fledged theory of participation but a working concept is summarized in this research; therefore, in this research, participation is conceived as a sense of belonging, reciprocity, mingling with the other, having commonality and relationship, interacting to create new knowledge, resorting to action and power to affect and to be affected, engaging in experience, and being emotionally immersed. The purpose of participation is neither a means nor an end, but both, as concluded in this research. The concept of context is understood as the setting, broader environment, multicultural, assumptions, aesthetic, ethnographic, symbolic, ecological; therefore, a comprehensive culturally responsive approach should be used, including indigenous knowledge.

The philosophical commitment of this research is emergent realism, which argues that both elements of positivism (validation paradigm) and constructivism (relativism or multiple reality). According to emergent realism, reality exists in meaningful patterns, without human awareness and experience. Humans react to the world through their senses, which provide raw material to the mind, then the mind processes the raw material, organizing it into perceptions. Accordingly, although there is a single reality, there is a possibility of multiple perceptions. According to

emergent realism, context is complex; therefore, causal processes should be context-sensitive. However, some implications of perception could go beyond a particular context. Emergent realism believes that understanding advances progress and some perspectives are more warranted than others.

The problem with positivism is ignoring context, values, and multiple perceptions of a single reality, whereas the constructivist weakness is to deny an observant independent reality of social processes and failure to answer the question. Constructivism further denies the multiplicity of paradigms, which is against its own core tenet that reality is multiple. If reality is multiple, the paradigms can possibly be multiple. Therefore, multiple paradigms can also be employed as a general approach. If this is so, then it is plausible to argue for the possibility of combining two ontological paradigms and theories that result in a combined method and operational concepts.

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher argues that both conventional M&E and PM&E can be combined in a single M&E system, based on the ontological (emergent realism), methodological, and practical aspects. The findings of the research also established that participation cannot be compartmentalized, as there are different aspects of participation and levels of participation. Therefore, it is hardly possible to measure the reality of participation, as it is relative and can be constrained by different factors, such as culture, values of a specific context, resources, time, and interest of the participants; and power cannot be avoided because of its subtlety in nature. Therefore, participation is a relative concept and depends on the perception of the participants. The findings also demonstrated the complexity of the roles of stakeholders in the M&E process, and if participation is desired, the context of a stakeholder is multiple and should be understood accordingly, which in turn compels one to use a multiple paradigm and combined approach to address a multiple-stakeholder reality and perspective.

The research identified key determinants for a hybrid approach, based on the emergent realism epistemological perspectives. It is because of the nature of the determinants that they can be employed for a hybrid approach. The empirical evidence demonstrated that stakeholders, purpose of M&E, methods, the role of the expert, context, and the use of M&E are determinants that are multiple in nature. Participation also has a complex nature, as extensively argued in this research, that the level of participation is relative, depending on the perspective of the participant and their

interest. Participation is also multiple in its application and purposes, which can also be applied in both approaches. Therefore, these determinants serve as conceptual and determinant variables for the construction of a practical framework for fieldworkers.

8.4. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the study puts forward the following recommendations to WVE, the Ethiopian government, and beyond, for policy consideration and future study:

8.4.1. Recommendations to World Vision Ethiopia

Through the course of the study, the research has disclosed the following areas that need special attention for policy or practical review on WVE's M&E system.

8.4.1.1. Participation

The research revealed that WVE has a hybrid approach to M&E – especially with monitoring being a process of evaluation, encapsulating M&E at the same time. Although such strength of the M&E system is in place, there are areas that need special attention for action:

- Although WVE has attempted to include persons with disabilities, their participation, according to the findings of this research, is not significant, as compared to other stakeholders. A more inclusive policy needs to be crafted to include the physically challenged ones to be part of decision-making processes in the M&E process.
- Power relationships should be explicitly stated or there should be a policy of M&E that addresses power difference due to culture in specific local contexts. For instance, where this research was conducted, patriarchy, gerontocracy, and an age ladder are extremely valued. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the research to consider crafting methodology or policy regarding power relations among stakeholders during participation in the M&E process.
- The research has also shown that agreements made with the direct beneficiaries and partners for sharing responsibilities were not carried out by the direct beneficiaries and this affected the project negatively. It is the recommendation of the research to WVE to make

the agreement binding and include accountability where the M&E should be strengthened with a system that clearly engages the participants.

- The research has also found that the reporting of M&E was not properly disseminated to some of the stakeholders, not least the evaluation. The handbook of M&E registers that the report must be accessible to all interested stakeholders. However, the research has shown that this has not been happening on the ground, as the staff at the APs did not receive evaluation reports, although they had access to the monitoring report. Further, the direct beneficiaries had not been receiving information and evaluation reports in writing. The researcher recommends that WVE take quality action or craft a mode of communication to disseminate the learning captured through the M&E process to all the stakeholders.

8.4.1.2. Indigenous knowledge

This research has disclosed that WVE has no clear policy, method or philosophical stance regarding using indigenous M&E systems. It is the researcher's recommendation that indigenous knowledge on M&E should be explored and studied for effective ownership of the process of M&E.

8.4.1.3. Gender representation of staff

The research has also manifested in its demographic data that in the Area Programs where this research was conducted, the number of female staff was much smaller, compared to the male staff. This affects the female direct beneficiaries' participation and interaction during the M&E process as they lack adequate female representatives among the staff who might bridge gender-related barriers. Therefore, the research recommends that WVE attend to the imbalance in female representation in the M&E unit.

8.4.2. Recommendation to the Ethiopian Government, development sector and beyond

As discussed in the research in the introduction, Ethiopia is struggling to be successful in poverty eradication goals due to corruption and inefficiency and ineffectiveness of project performance. This indicates that there is lack of transparency and accountability in the ways in which projects are being managed, especially the M&E wing, which is most probably the weakest one. The research recommends that the hybrid approach to M&E contributes to addressing most of the

stakeholders in the process of M&E performance and improves successful completion of development project.

8.4.3. Recommendations to the academic field of M&E

Attempts have been made to explore the determinants of conventional M&E and PM&E. This research found that several determinants could possibly be combined to address all stakeholder needs but its result needs to be experimented in the field. Therefore, it needs further study in multiple contexts and programs to verify whether such approach is viable for M&E. Second, indigenous knowledge of the M&E system in the hybrid approach needs further investigation.

8.5. Contributions to knowledge to the field of M&E

The results of the study make a significant contribution to the understanding of M&E approaches in several ways. First, there has been no research work specifically dedicated to exploring determinants of M&E used in the conventional and participatory approaches to combine the two approaches. To the knowledge of the researcher, this research is the first of its kind in undertaking the exploration to fill the knowledge gap; therefore, the research contributes in shedding new light regarding the possibility of combining determinants of M&E in the creation of hybrid approaches. Second, the research contributes in narrowing the gap between the conventional and participatory approach debate, as it has shown through empirical evidence that the determinants can function in the hybrid approach. Third, the result of this research enhances the understanding of the character traits of the M&E determinants, and their way of application. Fourth, the research recommendations are compatible with practitioners of M&E in conducting their fieldwork.

8.6 Chapter summary

This research has attempted to answer the research question: “What determinants of conventional and participatory monitoring and evaluation approaches can be combined in developing a better approach?” Accordingly, the research adumbrated four specific objectives through which the research question was addressed: (a) to empirically explore whether World Vision Ethiopia’s M&E approach has combinatory determinants of M&E or not; (b) to identify determinant in conventional and PM&E approaches that can be combined to craft a hybrid approach which encapsulates the features of both approaches; (c) to provide policy-makers and other stakeholders

in Ethiopia with a comprehensive understanding of M&E processes while making recommendations for the way forward.

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that virtually all the key determinants of WVE's approach to M&E are combinable determinants: ownership, purpose of M&E, creation of indicators, methodology, participation, and the role of the experts. However, this research was unable to explore whether indigenous knowledge is a combinable determinant or not, particularly because WVE did not have this determinant in its system of M&E. Further, the research was unable to explore theoretical and epistemological paradigms of WVE from the data collected.

The research has also identified six key determinants of M&E from the case study that can be combined to develop a hybrid approach that most probably address the needs of multiple stakeholders within a project or a program. The research also argued that emergent realism can be used as a theoretical and epistemological paradigm for a hybrid approach. Finally, the research has met the third objective by providing a comprehensive review of theoretical and conceptual frameworks and a literature review on the features of conventional M&E and PM&E, exploring their weaknesses and strengths, the importance of context, and indigenous knowledge and from this exploration the research developed key determinants that can be further explored within the research. Consequently, the process of the research and the result of the research produced a comprehensive understanding of M&E, which makes a significant contribution to the policy-makers in Ethiopia and beyond.

With regard to the results of the data, this research concludes with most certainty that the following key determinants of conventional M&E and PM&E can be combined for crafting a hybrid approach, namely: ownership of the M&E process, the purpose of M&E in a particular project, creation of indicators, methodological approaches, participation (participants, activities of participants, purpose of participation, level of participation, nature of participation), the role of experts, and context that can function under emergent realism's theoretical and epistemological stances.

8.7. Future research areas

The research has not only indicated the determinants of conventional M&E and PM&E that can be combined, but also revealed lacunae of knowledge in the area of indigenous knowledge as a determinant in the hybrid approach, whether it is compatible or not needs full-fledged research. Therefore, the researcher recommends for future research, a focus on whether indigenous knowledge be included in the hybrid approach. Methodologically, the research employed only descriptive statistics which limits it in some respect, therefore the researcher recommends further research using other available methodologies to verify the result.



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