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Effectiveness of M&E Systems in Zanzibar's Public Sector: The Role of Results Utilization

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Utilization of M&E information is considered one of the key components of a functional M&E system. The paper is about assessing the effect of the utilization of M&E information on the effectiveness of the M&E system in the Zanzibar public sector. The study adopted positivist and deductive research philosophy and a quantitative approach. Data were collected through a questionnaire constructed with five points Likert scale from 168 implementers of the Zanzibar Strategy for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction III (ZSSGRPIII. Stratified and simple random sampling was used in sample selection. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to data analysis. The results indicate that utilization of M&E information is a positive and significant predictor of the effectiveness of the M&E system. The findings underscore the importance of integrating M&E information into policy development, evidence-based decision-making, and budgeting processes. Policymakers and practitioners should prioritize the utilization of M&E findings to ensure more effective and informed decision-making. The study suggests the need for strategic interventions to enhance the utilization of M&E findings and improve the overall effectiveness of M&E systems in the Zanzibar public sector.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Utilization of M&E information is a critical aspect of an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. The utilization of M&E information plays a crucial role in ensuring accountability, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making. Various studies highlighted the importance of utilizing M&E information for various purposes. For instance, Briceno [1] emphasized that the benchmark for the success of an M&E system lies in the degree of utilization of the information produced. Governments and organizations that effectively utilize M&E information are better equipped to plan, implement, and monitor development initiatives. Based on the experience of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, Mackay [2] opined on four key uses of M&E information policy development. They are used for policy development, evidence-based policy-making and budgeting, Management performance and accountability. Likewise, UNDP [3] viewed that, evaluation findings are used to support programme improvement, building generalization for wider application and support accountability. Similarly, [4,5] proclaimed the fundamental use of M&E information in the provision of feedback into policy and budget decision-making and national planning. In addition, M&E information is used in improving policy analysis and policy development; helping in managerial activities such as program management and staff or institutional management; enhancing transparency and accountability [4,5].

Utilization of M&E information is considered one of the key components of a functional M&E system [6] and a result-based M&E system [7]. It enables policymakers and program managers to make informed decisions, allocate resources efficiently, and track progress towards desired outcomes and goals. Evidence from various countries demonstrates the significance of utilizing M&E information. For example, Peru and Colombia have successfully utilized M&E information in budget analysis and decision-making processes [2,4]. The demand and utilization of M&E information in the public sector are driven by the need for evidenced planning and decision-making [2].

In the context of project performance, previous studies have established a positive relationship between the utilization of M&E information and project outcomes. Studies conducted in Kenya have found that the utilization of M&E information has a significant effect on the performance of projects in various organizations [8,9,10].

However, despite the recognized importance of utilizing M&E information, there is an indication of underutilization of M&E inflammation among decision-makers [11] to fully embrace and integrate evaluation findings into policy development and program management. Therefore, it is imperative and worth addressing the effect of utilization of M&E information effectiveness of the M&E system, ultimately leading to more effective and informed decision-making in the public sector.

Underpinned by Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE), the paper focuses on assessing the utilization of M&E findings and its effects on the effectiveness of the M&E system in the Zanzibar public sector taking the case study of the Zanzibar Strategy for Economic Growth and Reduction of Poverty III (ZSGRP III) implemented from 2016-2020.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Operational Definitions

2.1.1 Effectiveness of M&E system

The effectiveness of the M&E system is the degree and ability of the M&E system to meet it's intended or set objectives. The system can produce expected and relevant information to be used for policy development, evidence-based policy-making and budgeting, management performance and accountability [2]. For this study, the effectiveness of an M&E system is referred to the ability of an M&E system to provide the means for compiling and integrating all the necessary information into the policy cycle, and therefore providing the basis for enabling sound governance and accountability in the policy [12].

2.1.2 Utilization of monitoring and evaluation

Utilization of Monitoring and Evaluation findings refers to the application of Monitoring and Evaluation results in decision-making,

improvement and learning, about programme implementation, inclusive of evidence-based policymaking [13]. The author adopted Mackay's [2] definition that, Utilization of Monitoring and Evaluation findings refers to the extent to which information generated from the monitoring and evaluation system is used in policy development, evidence-based policymaking and budgeting, management performance and accountability.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE)

The theory was developed by Michael Quinn Patton in 2008 [14]. The underlining principle of the theory is that an evaluation should be judged on its usefulness to its intended users [15]. Evaluation should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and the process, so the primary intended user should be engaged at the beginning of the evaluation. Patton [14] argues further that, research on evaluation demonstrates that: intended users are more likely to use evaluations if they understand and feel ownership of the evaluation process and findings.

In the same vein, Ramirez Kora and Brodhead [14] highlight that the engagement of key stakeholders leads to desired outcomes of the utilization of evaluation findings. The theory also emphasizes the utilization and actual use of evaluation findings because of constant consultation with the intended beneficiaries of the evaluation [16].

UTE is praised for its application in a variety of evaluative purposes i.e. formative, summative and developmental, it is people-centred and insists on the use of evaluation findings by all stakeholders [17]. Contrarily, UFE is accused because apparently that, different intended uses serve different purposes and typically different intended users on one hand. On the other hand, matching the evaluation purposes, resources and timeline to optimize use is challenging [16].

Even though some scholars [18,13,15] did apply UFE, they failed to link adequately the conceptual framework and the theory and consequently, it is weak in theoretical contribution. Besides the drawback, UFE has been successfully applied by several researchers. For example, McCulloch, [19] used UFE to undertake a study on Focused Evaluation of Second Chance Mississippi. Stakeholders managed to identify evaluation questions and finally, the finding managed to answer those evaluation questions. Okul and Nyonje [20] adopted UFE in assessing organizational leadership style and the utilization of evaluation results. Tshatsinde [21] used UFE to assess the Utilization of Evaluation Findings in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform in South Africa. Similarly, Tumusiime [22] used UFE to examine how the utilization of evaluation findings contributes to the performance of the public sector agencies using the Uganda Bureau of Statistics. Kabuye, Basheka and Byamugisha [23] assessed institutional design and utilization of evaluation results in Uganda's public universities just to mention few

UFE emphasizes the importance of the M&E system being designed and conducted in a way that maximizes its utility and use by stakeholders. In this study, UFE helps in understanding how M&E information is supposed to be utilized by decision-makers and other stakeholders. It provides insights into how the M&E system can be improved to enhance the utilization of information for decision-making, policy formulation, and program improvement. Furthermore, UFE highlights the importance of stakeholder involvement throughout the evaluation process and encourages evaluators to adapt their methods and deliverables to meet the specific needs of stakeholders. It can guide M&E practitioners including researchers in exploring how to make the M&E system more relevant, timely, and accessible to decision-makers and other users.

2.3 Empirical Literature

The essence of the utilization of M&E information in Utilization-Focused Evaluation theory (UFE). The major premise of the theory is that; evaluation should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and the process itself to inform decisions and improve performance. Several empirical studies have been conducted to determine the utilization of M&E information with the effectiveness of the M&E system.

Winiko [24] in his descriptive correlation study found that utilization of M&E results had a positive and statistically significant influence on the performance of the DET project as the study established that a 23.9% change in the

performance of the DET project was explained by utilization of M&E results. The study recommended that organizations intensify and improve the utilization of M&E results.

Mmasy [25] from a descriptive survey found that NGOs used the finding generated from the M&E system for decision-making in Arusha City. It was revealed that the organization carried out a baseline survey before the actual implementation of the project, and the initial data were compared with the results of the project The study recommends considering and accepting modern information and communications technology in carrying out monitoring and evaluations to capture real-time data.

A similar study was conducted by Tshasinde [21] focusing on the utilization of evaluation findings in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform in South Africa. The study found underutilization of M&E finding in the Directorate of Rural Development and Land Reform in South Africa. The condition was led by under-institutionalization of the evaluation function, lack of accountability over evaluation, poor planning, lack of understating of the usefulness of evaluation and lack of systematic implementation of evaluation findings. Utilization of evaluation findings was searched in the area of the strategic planning process, policy revision, budget allocation and re-prioritization, during determining of project and programme outcome or impact, as well strengthening the capacity of the department for service delivery.

Gamaba, Tukei and Birungi [13] conducted a study on the effect of implementation factors on monitoring & evaluation results utilization: evidence from the Malaria Control Programs in Mukono District, Central Uganda. The study found that there was insignificant effect of evaluation quality, capacity and communication but a positive significant effect of timeliness on the utilization of monitoring and evaluation findings. It was concluded that on average, monitoring and evaluation results were rarely utilized in the implementation of the malaria control programs among the implementing organizations.

Eremugo and Okoche [26] conducted a study to examine the influence of monitoring and evaluation system components on the performance of National Non – Governmental Organizations (NGOs): a case of Global Aim Uganda. Among other things, the study depicted a positive and significant correlation between utilization of M&E information and performance. Similarly, the regression model depicted a positive relationship between the predictor variable and the performance of Global Aim Uganda.

Masilo, Masiya and Mathebula [27] conducted a qualitative study on analysis of the influence of the M&E framework on service delivery within the Department of Home Affairs in South Africa. The study found that the non-utilization of performance information by units such as Strategic Planning, Policy Development, and Budgeting in their respective processes leads to recurring service delivery challenges and the non-achievement of targets and objectives. This suggests that the effectiveness of the M&E system is hindered by the limited utilization of M&E results. Furthermore, the information produced by the M&E system becomes less useful when it is not acted upon, negatively impacting service delivery. It also highlights the need for a culture of learning within the Department, wherein M&E systems should serve as vehicles for utilizing performance information to improve public sector management.

Kanyamuna [28] conducted a study to assess the functional status of the M&E system in Zambia's public sector. The study employed a descriptive research design with a mixed approach. Both the diagnostic checklist developed by Holvoet and Renard (2005) and the five-point LEAD scoring system were utilized in conjunction. Regarding the utilization of information from M&E outputs, the diagnostic results indicate that while M&E outputs may be available, their accessibility and utilization for management functions pose challenges across government structures and institutions outside the government. Consequently, the effective use of M&E outputs at local or decentralized levels received a dismal score of 1 point, indicating limited M&E action. Similarly, actors outside the government scored 1 point in their utilization of M&E outputs, while the utilization of M&E at the central level received a score of 2 points. These low scores suggest that the current Whole-of-Government M&E system (WoGM&ES) fails to inspire the demand for and utilization of M&E information in decision- and policy-making processes among key stakeholders in the country.

Amina and Ngugi [8] evaluate the impact of the utilization of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) results on the performance of drought resilience

projects by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) in Mandera County. The findings of the study indicate that the utilization of monitoring and evaluation results has a positive and significant influence on project performance, as evidenced by the statistically significant relationship at r=.231, p<0.005.

Makadzange [29] conducted an exploratory study on the institutionalization of monitoring and evaluation systems in Zimbabwe and Botswana. An International Atlas of Evaluation framework originally developed in the year 2002 was adopted as a guiding framework for the research. The findings depicted the existence of utilization of M&E information in Zimbabwe and Botswana at the level of 45% and 43% respectively. This implies that to some extent M&E information is used in decision-making including guiding the process of national planning. However, more efforts need to be invested to build a culture of the utilization of M&E information in all sectors.

Kalugampititya [30] to identify factors, which contribute towards the institutionalization of evaluation in developing countries in the Asia region. The study depicted limited or not evident utilization of evaluation in Sri Lanka, adequate use of evaluation in Nepal and the Philippines and low extent utilization in Bangladesh. The study mentioned a few evaluations conducted, lack of implementation of the national evaluation policy, management responsive to evaluation, lack of evaluation capacity resulting in a low quality of evaluation and limited dissemination of evaluation findings among others as key constraining factors. The study falls short of linking the existing extent of utilization of evaluation on the effectiveness of M&E system in respective countries.

Nabukalu, Asamani, and Nabyonga-Orem [31] conducted a study on Monitoring Sustainable Development Goals 3: Assessing the Readiness of low-and middle-income countries. Among other things, the study found that the challenge confronting monitoring of SDG3 is inadequate data availability, dissemination and utilization of M&E products.

Despite the existence of empirical studies examining the utilization of M&E information and the effectiveness of M&E systems, there is a knowledge gap about Zanzibar public sector. Studies in the subject are very minimum and many of them are organizational, sectoral or project specific as opposed to the wider public sector. Theoretical, extant studies were weak in linking the study variables with methodology and findings and so made little theoretical contribution. In addition, using UFE in this study goes deeper in analyzing how the principles and premises of UFE can be effectively applied in the Zanzibar public sector to enhance the utilization of M&E findings and improve decision-making and performance. Methodologies used in the existing studies, such as small sample sizes, non-probability sampling, reliance on descriptive statistics, and limited use of inferential statistical techniques. Addressing these methodological gaps by conducting rigorous research with larger sample sizes, probability sampling methods, and advanced statistical analyses would contribute to a more robust understanding of the utilization of M&E findings and the effectiveness of the M&E system in the Zanzibar public sector.

Based on the reviewed literature author tested the alternative (research) hypotheses that:

> *H_1: Utilization of M&E information has a positive statistical effect on the effectiveness of the M&E system*

3. METHODOLOGY

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

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

coordination, and implementation levels. Yamane's formula was applied to determine the sample size as follows $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)2}$, where n= number of samples, N= population size and e is the level of precision (Israel

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

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

The used regression model is $ME = \beta_0 + \beta_1 UTIME\alpha$

Where by

β_0 = Y-intercept
$B_1$are coefficients (constants)
ME = Monitoring and evaluation
UTIME = Utilization of M&E information
α represent the error term (the probabilistic nature of the model)

3. RESULTS

3.1 Sample Description

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

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

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

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

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

Position: The respondents held various positions within their respective organizations. The highest representation was found among Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officers, with 35 (22.2%) of the respondents. Planning Officers accounted for 32 (20.3%), of the respondents, followed closely by Statistical Officers with 31(19.6%) of the respondents. Program/Project Managers comprised 17 (10.8%) of the respondents, while 8 (5.1%) respondents held positions as Permanent Secretaries (PS), Directors of Planning, Policy, and Research (DPPR), or Managers. Other positions such as Budget Officers, ICT Officers, and various other roles were represented by smaller numbers of individuals, with percentages ranging from 2.5% to 6.3% as depicted in Table 1.

3.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics reported the mean score for using M&E information to improve effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery is 3.94, with a standard deviation of 0.992. This suggests that M&E information is reasonably utilized in this context. Similarly, M&E information is reasonably used to inform the budget and allocation of public resources within the organization. The mean score for this aspect is 3.78, with a standard deviation of 0.993. This indicates that M&E information is recognized as a valuable resource for informing resource allocation decisions.

Furthermore, M&E information is heavily used in policy development, with a mean score of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 0.868. This indicates a positive recognition of the role of M&E in policy formulation.

In the process of National, sectoral, and Project Planning, M&E information holds substantial importance. The mean score for this aspect is 4.10, suggesting a strong utilization of M&E information in these planning processes. The standard deviation of 0.925 indicates a moderate level of variability. Moreover, M&E information is used to assess the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving welfare, including poverty reduction. The mean score for this aspect is 3.77, indicating its value in evaluating the impact of interventions on welfare outcomes. The standard deviation of 0.977 suggests a moderate level of variability.

In case of utilization of M&E information by NGOs to advocate for better policies has a mean score of 3.91, indicating a strong recognition of the value of M&E information in advocacy efforts. The standard deviation of 0.993 suggests a moderate level of variability. Members of the House of Representatives also recognize the importance of M&E information for budget screening, ensuring government accountability, and improving services to citizens. The mean score for this aspect is 3.39, with a

Table 1. Sample distribution

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

Source: Field data 2022

higher standard deviation of 1.161. This suggests a relatively lower level of utilization compared to other areas. The result indicated that development partners intensively use M&E information in their decision-making processes to support development projects. The mean score for this aspect is 4.15, indicating a high level of recognition and utilization of M&E information by development partners. The standard deviation of 0.828 suggests a lower level of variability, while the range between the minimum score of 2 and the maximum score of 5 demonstrates a strong commitment to utilizing M&E information in decision-making.

In summary, the descriptive statistics reveal the varying levels of utilization of M&E information among different stakeholders in different organizations. While there are areas that may require further attention and improvement, overall, the utilization of M&E information is recognized as valuable in driving better service delivery, informing resource allocation decisions, supporting policy development, and promoting accountability. These findings highlight the importance of leveraging M&E information to improve overall organizational effectiveness and outcomes.

3.3 Inferential Statistics

3.3.1 Regression analysis (OLS)

Model Summary: The overall model fit was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.236$, $F(1, 156) = 48.320$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that approximately 23.6% of the variance in the effectiveness of the M&E system can be explained by the utilization of M&E information as depicted in Table 3.

ANOVA: ANOVA table indicates that the regression model, with UTIME as the predictor variable, significantly explains the variability observed in the dependent variable ME. The F-value and the associated p-value ($F\ 1, 156) = 48.320$, $p < 0.05$) provide strong evidence of a relationship between UTIME and M&E as indicated in Table.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for utilization of M&E information

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
In my organization M&E information is used to improve effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery	3.94	.992	1	5
In my Organization M&E information is reasonably used to inform the budget and allocation of public resources	3.78	.993	1	5
In my Organization M&E information is reasonably used to inform the budget and allocation of public resources	3.89	.962	1	5
In my organization M&E information are much used in policy development	3.74	.868	1	5
M&E information is much used in the process of National, sectoral and Project Planning	4.10	.925	1	5
M&E information is used to assess the effectiveness of an intervention for the improvement of welfare including poverty reduction	3.77	.977	1	5
Civil Service Organizations use M&E information to advocate for better policies	3.91	.993	1	5
Members of the House of Representatives use M&E information for budget screening to keep the government accountable for better service to the citizen	3.39	1.161	1	5
Development partners intensively use M&E information in their decision to support development projects	4.15	.828	2	5

Source: Research data (2022)

Table 3. Model summary analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error in the Estimate
1	.486[a]	.236	.232	.63812

a. Predictors: (Constant), UTIME
b. Dependent Variable: ME
source: Field data, 2022

Table 4. Results of correlation coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.001	.294		6.796	.000
	ULTIME	.512	.074	.486	6.951	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ME
Source: Field data, 2022

Coefficient: Based on coefficient indicates that UTIME is a statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable ME (t=6.796, p=0.000< 0.05). The findings suggest further that, for each unit increase in UTIME, the estimated mean value of the dependent variable ME increases by 0.512 as indicated in Table.

The findings call for policymakers to focus on promoting and enhancing the utilization of the M&E system across various levels of decision-making. This could involve developing user-friendly platforms, providing training and capacity-building programs, and fostering a culture of data-driven decision-making.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings are incongruent with various current studies as they highlight the importance of utilizing M&E information for decision-making, policy formulation, and program improvement. For example, Amina and Ngugi [8] demonstrated a positive and significant influence of the utilization of M&E results on project performance in drought resilience projects in Kenya. Winiko [24] found utilization of M&E results positively influenced the performance of a project. Likewise, Mmasy [25] highlighted the utilization of M&E findings in decision-making within NGOs and recommended the adoption of modern technology for real-time data.

Theoretically, the findings o are incongruent with Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) since it prioritizes the practical use of evaluation findings by key stakeholders. UFE emphasizes timely and relevant M&E information to meet the need of various users and their various use Lopez-Acevedo, Krause, and Mackay (2012) purported that a successful M&E system has three defining characteristics including intensive utilization of the M&E information provided by the system in one or more of the stages of the policy cycle. Krause (2010) noted even the most sophisticated M&E instruments are ultimately ineffective unless they are actively used by public officials for budgetary decisions as it demand driven.

5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION

Study findings established positive and significant relationship between M&E information utilization and effectiveness of M&E system. The set alternative (research hypotheses) that *H_1: Utilization of M&E information has a positive statistical effect on the effectiveness of the M&E system* accepted (t=6.796, p=0.000< 0.05).

The research highlights the importance of utilizing M&E information for decision-making, policy development, evidence-based policymaking, budgeting, management performance, and accountability. The effectiveness of an M&E system is determined by its ability to meet its objectives, provide relevant information, and contribute to sound governance and accountability. The research emphasizes the utilization of evaluation findings by intended users as a key factor determine the effectiveness of the M&E system. The findings underscore the importance of integrating M&E information into policy development, evidence-based decision-making, and budgeting processes. Policymakers and practitioners should prioritize the utilization of M&E findings to ensure more effective and informed decision-making. The study suggests the need for strategic interventions to enhance the utilization of M&E findings and improve the

overall effectiveness of M&E systems in the Zanzibar public sector.

CONTRIBUTION

The study contributes to the existing literatures regarding utilization of M&E information and the effectiveness of M&E systems and offers practical implications and recommendations for policymakers and practitioners to improve decision-making processes based on M&E finding

ETHICAL APPROVAL

Regarding research ethics, all ethical principles were observed before data collection, during data collection and data analysis and report writing. Specifically, research clearance and permit were granted from responsible authorities.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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