



Assessment of Capacity Building and Management Information Systems for Monitoring and Evaluation in Social Work Practice. Case Study of SOS Children's Villages Malawi

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ABSTRACT: Social work in Malawi originated from traditional kinship systems and evolved with missionary influence, becoming more structured post-independence. NGOs and international agencies have played a significant role in this transformation. Technological advancements have further professionalized the field. Key reforms include adopting evidence-based practices and digitizing processes to improve service effectiveness. Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) enhance social work outcomes through data-driven decision-making. Digital technologies streamline data processes but pose challenges in quality and complexity. Management Information Systems (MIS) improve efficiency and decision-making in social work. SOS Children's Villages exemplifies effective MIS use with their web-based management systems. While global research has extensively examined digitalization in social work, focusing on aspects like frontline workers' coping strategies, emotional labour, and the impact on social worker-client interactions, it often overlooks specific issues related to information systems and the necessary capacities for their effective use. Lagsten and Andersson (2018) highlight the need for research on how social workers' skills, competencies, and training affect the adoption and use of information systems. Current studies tend to identify barriers to digitalization without exploring how enhancing specific capacities can overcome these challenges. Further, opportunity exists to investigate the skills and competencies required for effective information system use, assess training needs, and examine the interaction between these capacities and organizational factors to optimize system utilization and improve service delivery. This paper provided a report on the issues of capacity building and management Information Systems for Monitoring and Evaluation in Social

Work Practice, the case study of SOS Children's Villages Malawi. The research revealed a notable gender disparity among respondents, with 66% identifying as male and 34% as female, highlighting potential challenges in gender inclusivity within roles involving Management Information Systems (MIS) for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). The majority (90%) of respondents are case managers, indicating that MIS utilization is primarily driven by this group within social work settings. Additionally, 38% possess over a decade of experience, suggesting a substantial reservoir of expertise that can be leveraged for mentoring and peer learning initiatives aimed at enhancing MIS capabilities among practitioners. A significant educational gap was identified, with 84% of respondents lacking formal education in IT, Information Systems (IS), or data analysis. This highlights the critical need for targeted training programs designed to equip social workers with essential technical competencies necessary for effective MIS utilization. Although all respondents use MIS in their work, only 38% feel very familiar with it, and even fewer (32%) express high confidence in their MIS skills. Common challenges reported include technical issues (78%) and insufficient training (64%), indicating a pressing need for comprehensive, practical training programs. Capacity-building programs, particularly workshops (98%) and online training sessions (80%), are widely embraced among social workers, with high satisfaction levels (76% satisfied, 14% very satisfied) indicating perceived effectiveness. There is a clear preference for regular (36%) or as needed (42%) training opportunities, emphasizing the importance of continuous professional development to sustain and enhance MIS utilization skills. Effective support mechanisms, evidenced by a robust communication network (95% acknowledgment) and high satisfaction with support services (76% satisfied,



14% very satisfied), play a crucial role in addressing challenges with MIS tools and enhancing overall user experience and proficiency. A significant majority (82%) of respondents report positive changes in organizational culture towards MIS integration since participating in capacity-building programs. These programs play a pivotal role in fostering a proactive and supportive approach to MIS utilization within organizational practices, contributing to improved efficiency and effectiveness in social work contexts. There is a clear call for more tailored training programs based on specific job roles and proficiency levels to maximize the relevance and impact of training initiatives, ensuring that social workers receive targeted support to enhance their MIS skills and proficiency effectively. Continued improvement in training content, methods, and feedback mechanisms is essential for addressing skills gaps and maintaining proficiency levels among social workers. Regular skills assessments and responsive training designs are critical steps towards ensuring that training efforts remain relevant and effective in supporting MIS utilization in social work practice. In conclusion, the survey underscores the importance of a holistic approach to capacity building in MIS utilization within social work. This approach includes addressing educational gaps, enhancing skills and competencies, fostering supportive organizational cultures, and continuously improving training programs to meet evolving professional needs. By prioritizing these areas, organizations can empower social workers to leverage MIS effectively, thereby enhancing service delivery and outcomes in social work practice. The researcher suggests several strategies to enhance social workers' ability to effectively use MIS for monitoring and evaluation, improving overall social work outcomes, such as regular capacity-building programs, ongoing technical support and training on ethical data management, and tailored training programs based on job roles and departmental needs. Future research should explore how organizational culture influences MIS adoption, develop tools for assessing specific training needs, investigate the integration of MIS with other organizational systems, and examine demographic factors impacting MIS use.

KEYWORDS: Capacity Building, Information Systems, Effective Utilisation, Management Information Systems (MIS), Monitoring and evaluation (M&E), Social Work, Non-Governmental Organizations.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Malawi Social Work Landscape

The history of social work in Malawi dates to pre-colonial times with informal support systems embedded in traditional kinship and community structures. The introduction of formal social work practices began with missionaries and evolved significantly post-independence in 1964. The involvement of NGOs and international agencies, coupled with technological advancements, has transformed social work into a more structured and professional discipline. Key reforms include the adoption of evidence-based practices and the digitization of processes, aimed at improving service effectiveness and efficiency (Barcham, 2020).

Innovation in Social Work

Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) in social work involves integrating research evidence, client preferences, and practitioner expertise to enhance intervention outcomes. The emphasis on EBP has led to the widespread adoption of M&E practices, which help measure the impact of interventions and inform data-driven decision-making (Sackett et al., 1996).

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) has been crucial for assessing project performance, ensuring accountability, and facilitating continuous improvement. Technological advancements have enhanced M&E capabilities, allowing for more sophisticated data analysis and informed decision-making (Patton, 2008).

Digitalization of Information through Digital technologies have revolutionized social work by streamlining data collection, storage, and analysis. These technologies improve efficiency, transparency, and the ability to share information among professionals, but also pose challenges related to data quality and the complexity of client issues (Gillingham, 2016).

Information Systems

Information Systems (IS) have been vital for managing information in organizations. They include hardware, software, data, people, and processes that transform raw data into useful information. Various types of IS, such as Transaction Processing Systems, Management Information Systems (MIS), and Decision Support Systems, support different organizational functions, contributing to improved efficiency and decision-making (Laudon & Laudon, 2019).



Management Information Systems (MIS)

MIS are instrumental in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of social work practice. They facilitate the collection, management, and dissemination of information, which is crucial for decision-making, monitoring, and evaluation. However, challenges such as rapid technological changes and capacity constraints can hinder the effective use of MIS (O'Brien & Marakas, 2011).

Impact of MIS in Social Work

MIS promote the availability and sharing of information, compliance with rules, and transparency. They support consistent decision-making and enable social workers to access comprehensive data on clients, enhancing service delivery. Despite these benefits, it is important to address the potential drawbacks, such as the risk of focusing on surface information and neglecting the complexity of clients' problems (Bargal, 2000).

SOS Children's Villages

SOS Children's Villages operates globally, providing family-like care and family strengthening services to vulnerable children. The organization has adopted MIS to track the impact of its services and improve efficiency. Initiatives like the web-based Results Management System and Real-time Monitoring Framework demonstrate the organization's commitment to leveraging technology for better program management and accountability (SOS Children's Villages International, 2022).

1.1. Problem Statement

In Malawi, social work organizations face significant challenges in effectively utilizing Management Information Systems (MIS) for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) due to capacity constraints (State of M&E in Malawi; Financial Report, 2014). There is a notable knowledge gap regarding the specific needs of social work and effective capacity-building strategies in Malawi. Lagsten and Andersson (2018) highlight the lack of research at the intersection of social work and information systems, despite growing interest in digital transformations within the field.

Technology is increasingly utilized by social workers in health and other areas to maintain client records, track progress, ensure confidentiality, conduct data analysis, and facilitate training and continuing education (Lagsten & Andersson, 2018; Ramsey & Montgomery, 2014). Contemporary social workers employ various electronic technologies for client

services, such as online counselling, video counselling, and self-guided web-based interventions (Reamer, 2015b). However, these advancements bring ethical challenges related to client consent, privacy, confidentiality, and professional competence (Reamer, 2015a).

Research on the contribution of information systems and technology to M&E in social work remains limited (Anadon et al., 2016), and there are few studies on the interaction between users and systems (Lagsten & Andersson, 2018). Specifically, in Malawi, there is a lack of understanding of the skills, knowledge, and competencies required by social workers for effective MIS utilization. Moreover, the effectiveness of existing capacity-building programs in enhancing MIS utilization for M&E in Malawian social work is unknown (Ylönen, 2022).

Challenges in implementing MIS in public sectors are often due to a lack of system application software, insufficiently trained employees, and inadequate planning related to the use of information (Al Moaiad et al., 2013). Ijoema (2018) suggests proper orientation and in-service training to ensure effective use of MIS for better decision-making.

These limitations hinder organizations' ability to accurately measure program effectiveness and demonstrate the value of social work interventions to stakeholders, missing opportunities for evidence-based decision-making and continuous program improvement. Inefficient use of MIS can also lead to resource wastage and ethical concerns regarding data privacy and confidentiality, affecting organizational credibility (Zhang, 2011).

This study aims to assess capacity constraints faced by social workers in utilizing MIS for M&E, evaluate capacity-building efforts, and examine the impact of these interventions on M&E practices. The research seeks to bridge the knowledge gap regarding MIS and M&E in Malawian social work, focusing on SOS Children's Villages Malawi.

1.2. Significance of the study

The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of capacity building programs in enhancing the utilization of Management Information Systems (MIS) for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in social work practice. It seeks to assess the current skills, knowledge, and technological competencies of social work staff to identify gaps that hinder effective MIS utilization. The research will also investigate the



impact of tailored capacity building training programs designed to empower social workers in using MIS for M&E purposes.

Additionally, the study intends to contribute valuable insights to the existing knowledge base by exploring how organizations navigate challenges related to capacity and MIS utilization for M&E. This understanding aims to inform decision-making, improve practices, and potentially innovate strategies for designing and implementing effective capacity building initiatives.

Furthermore, the findings are expected to facilitate speculation about similar organizations facing challenges in enhancing their M&E systems through MIS. The study will also formulate policy recommendations aimed at promoting a technology-driven approach to M&E within the context of development work.

In testing its hypotheses, the study will explore the causal relationship between capacity building initiatives and MIS utilization for M&E in social work practice. Specifically, it will test the hypotheses that there is either no significant association between training initiatives and MIS utilization or that comprehensive training leads to more effective MIS utilization in M&E.

Overall, the research aims to fill a knowledge gap regarding the impact of capacity building on MIS utilization and contribute to advancing practices in integrating technology for M&E in social work.

1.3. General Objective: To assess the effectiveness of capacity building programs in utilization of management information systems for monitoring and evaluation in social work practice.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the specific skills, knowledge, and competencies required for social workers in using MIS for Monitoring and evaluation.
2. To evaluate MIS proficiency among professional social work practitioners.
3. To evaluate effectiveness of available capacity building programs in increasing MIS utilization for M&E of projects.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the specific skills, knowledge, and competencies essential for social workers to effectively utilize Management Information Systems (MIS) for monitoring and evaluation in the field of social work practice?
2. What are the current proficiency levels of SOS Children's villages social workers in utilization of Management Information Systems (MIS), and what factors contribute to variations in their level of proficiency?
3. How effective are the existing capacity building programs in enhancing the utilization of Management Information Systems (MIS) for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of projects?

1.5. Hypothesis of the study

- There is no significant association between the extent of training and capacity building initiatives for social work practitioners and their utilization of MIS for monitoring and evaluation in social work practice.
- Social workers who receive comprehensive training and capacity building programs are more likely to demonstrate higher proficiency in utilizing MIS for monitoring and evaluation in their practice, compared to those with limited or no training.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Technological Acceptance

The exploration of technology acceptance has been thoroughly investigated through various models by scholars like Shroff et al. (2011) and Mugo et al. (2017). These models include the Diffusion of Innovation Model, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The Diffusion of Innovation Model, introduced by Rogers, explains how innovations spread among individuals and groups over time, highlighting the roles of different adopters and decision-making factors. TAM, developed by Davis, emphasizes perceived usefulness and ease of use as key determinants of technology adoption. TRA, by Ajzen and Fishbein, focuses on the relationship between attitudes, intentions, and behaviors, stressing the influence of attitudes and social norms on behavioural intentions.

Venkatesh et al. (2003) further expanded this discourse by proposing the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), which



integrates key constructs from various models to predict users' intentions and actual technology usage. UTAUT includes factors like performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. These models are essential for understanding the factors influencing technology acceptance and provide valuable insights for implementing and utilizing Management Information Systems (MIS) in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) within social work practice. Understanding these frameworks helps in identifying challenges and opportunities associated with technology adoption in social work contexts.

Models such as the Diffusion of Innovation Model, TAM, TRA, and UTAUT not only offer theoretical foundations for understanding technology adoption processes but also serve as practical tools for guiding effective technology implementation in various professional settings. In social work, applying these models can enhance capacity, improve MIS utilization, and optimize M&E processes, leading to better outcomes for clients and stakeholders. The examination of these frameworks highlights their significance in comprehending technology acceptance complexities and informs strategies for enhancing user adoption and engagement in the ever-evolving technological landscape.

Human Capacity Building Development (Instructional Design Models)

The field of instructional design offers several models, including the ADDIE, Dick and Carey, and Kemp Instructional Design Models, each tailored to systematically develop and evaluate training programs. The ADDIE model, originating from Florida State University, outlines a five-phase process—Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate—that ensures comprehensive planning and iterative improvement of instructional materials. Despite criticism for its rigidity, especially in today's fast-paced digital age, many instructional designers value ADDIE for its structured approach and emphasis on thorough evaluation to enhance learning outcomes.

In contrast, the Dick and Carey Systems Model expands on ADDIE by integrating formative evaluation throughout each stage, emphasizing the interplay between context, content, and instructional strategies. This model's detailed approach is particularly suited for complex learning initiatives like those involving Management Information Systems (MIS) for Monitoring and Evaluation

(M&E) in social work practice, where diverse learner needs, and specialized subject matter require continuous refinement. Meanwhile, the Kemp Instructional Design Model advocates for a continuous cycle of design, development, and assessment, focusing on learner-centered approaches to instructional planning. Ultimately, the choice of instructional design model depends on organizational goals, learner characteristics, and the complexity of the skills being developed, ensuring alignment with effective capacity building in social work contexts.

Social Work Evidence-Based Practice

Social work is a profession dedicated to promoting social change, development, cohesion, and the empowerment of individuals and communities. It is guided by principles of social justice, human rights, and respect for diversity (IFSW, 2014).

Integration of Evidence-Based Practice

Evidence-based practice (EBP) in social work integrates the best available research evidence, client preferences, and practitioner expertise to inform decision-making in interventions. This approach emphasizes the critical appraisal and application of research findings to improve outcomes and ensure effective interventions (Spencer et al., 2012).

Benefits of EBP

- **Effectiveness:** EBP enhances the efficacy of interventions by basing decisions on empirical evidence rather than intuition.
- **Accountability:** Practitioners are increasingly required to justify interventions with evidence, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- **Collaboration:** EBP fosters collaboration between social work and other disciplines, promoting comprehensive approaches to social issues.

Role of Management Information Systems (MIS) in Social Work

MIS, such as electronic information systems, play a crucial role in managing client information, enhancing efficiency, transparency, and service quality (Katri, 2022). However, their implementation requires addressing challenges like usability and user capacity (Ylönen, 2022).

Capacity Building for MIS Utilization

To optimize MIS utilization, social workers need adequate training and ongoing support to navigate technological advancements effectively (Gillingham, 2018). This includes understanding system



functionalities and adapting to evolving digital practices.

Drivers and Challenges of MIS Adoption

The adoption of MIS in social work is influenced by factors such as technological readiness, organizational culture, and user competence (Harris, 2021). Overcoming resistance and ensuring effective implementation are critical for leveraging MIS benefits (Bullock & Colvin, 2015).

Impact of MIS on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Practices

MIS enhances M&E practices by providing real-time data collection, analysis, and reporting capabilities (Kariuki, 2014). This supports evidence-based decision-making and improves program efficiency and accountability (World Bank Group, 2024).

Skills and Competencies for Effective MIS Use in M&E

Professionals require digital competencies encompassing information literacy, communication, safety, and problem-solving skills to effectively utilize MIS in M&E (Zhu & Andersen, 2022). This ensures accurate data management and ethical decision-making in digital environments.

Research Gap

At a global scale, significant research has explored digitalization within social work contexts, focusing on various aspects such as coping strategies of frontline workers with digital technologies (Breit et al., 2021), emotional labour induced by technology (Løberg and Egeland, 2023), and the impact of digital tools on social worker-client interactions (Nordesjö et al., 2022; Gillingham, 2021). However, these studies largely examine broader effects rather than specific issues related to information systems or the capacities necessary for their effective utilization in social work.

Identifying this gap, Lagsten and Andersson (2018) emphasize the need for targeted exploration into how social workers' capacities—such as skills, competencies, and training—affect the adoption and use of information systems. Existing research often identifies barriers to successful digitalization efforts without adequately exploring how specific capacities could mitigate these challenges or enhance system effectiveness. Focusing on capacity-related issues, this study aims to deepen understanding of their critical role in shaping outcomes of digital initiatives within social work.

Future research should adopt a multifaceted approach. Firstly, studies should delve into the specific skills and competencies that enable social workers to effectively navigate and utilize

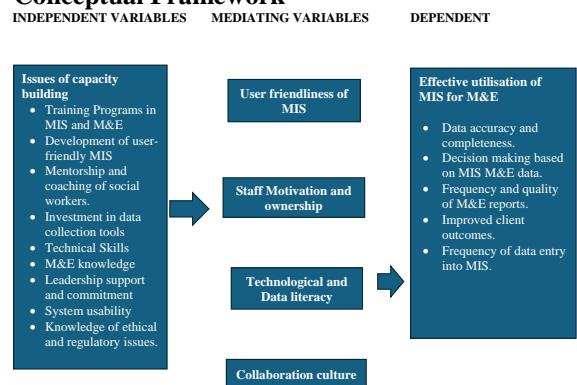
information systems, including assessments of training needs, evaluations of existing skill gaps, and strategies for enhancing digital literacy among professionals. Secondly, research should examine how these capacities interact with organizational factors such as leadership support and infrastructure to influence the successful implementation of information systems. Understanding these dynamics could inform targeted interventions and policies aimed at optimizing system utilization and improving service delivery in social work contexts.

In summary, while digitalization in social work has garnered significant global attention, there remains a clear need for more focused research into the specific capacities required for effective utilization of information systems. Addressing this gap can advance understanding of how social workers can leverage digital technologies to enhance their professional practice and improve client outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis in this study draws inspiration from Venkatesh et al. (2000) and their Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), which examines factors influencing technology adoption. This framework is particularly relevant for exploring capacity issues and the effective utilization of Management Information Systems (MIS) in monitoring and evaluation within social work practice. Additionally, the study incorporates elements from both the ADDIE model and the Carrey model to address capacity-related challenges.

Conceptual Framework



II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an exploratory sequential mixed method approach to comprehensively investigate capacity building and effective utilization of management information systems (MIS) for



monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in SOS Children's Villages Malawi. Quantitative methods involve conducting surveys among social workers to assess current MIS proficiency levels, identify influencing factors, and gather self-reported data on skills and competencies. Additionally, qualitative methods include in-depth interviews to explore social workers' experiences, challenges, and perspectives on MIS utilization for M&E, as well as their opinions on the effectiveness of training programs.

Research Design

This study employs an exploratory sequential mixed methods research (MMR) design to investigate the impact of capacity building on the utilization of management information systems (MIS) for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in social work at SOS Children's Villages Malawi.

Population of the study

This refers to the specific group of individuals who are the focus of the research (Cresswell, 2014). In the context of the study, the population of the study will encompass all social workers at all levels working in SOS Children's Village Malawi. These will include women and men who utilise MIS to monitor and evaluation purposes.

Data Collection Tools

The study employs a mixed methods approach to gather comprehensive data, utilizing surveys administered via Google Forms for geographically dispersed respondents. Also, face-to-face interviews are conducted with more accessible participants to delve deeply into their perspectives. Both qualitative and quantitative data are collected to capture attitudes, behaviors, and demographic characteristics, aiming for a holistic understanding of the research topic. Rigorous pre-testing of research tools ensures their reliability and validity, enhancing the accuracy and consistency of data collected.

These methods are selected to accommodate the complexity and depth required by the research objectives, ensuring robust data collection and analysis.

Data Analysis Tools

For quantitative data, SPSS and Excell were used to analyse the date to identify patterns and trends. For qualitative data Content analysis method was used to identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes) within data. The process allowed a researcher to explore and understand the underlying meanings and patterns

within the data, providing rich and detailed insights into the research topic.

Summary

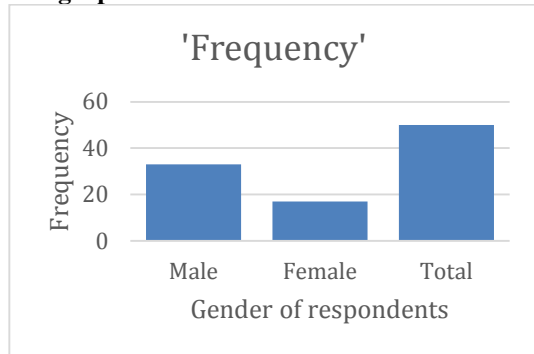
The research employed a sequential mixed method research design to assess the effectiveness of capacity building programs in utilization of management information systems for monitoring and evaluation in social work practice. For quantitative data, a systematic random sampling (SRS) was employed. For the qualitative phase of this study, the researcher employed non-probability purposive sampling techniques to select participants from the larger population. This approach involves selecting individuals based on their specific experiences that align closely with the researcher's area of interest (Creswell, 2016). Unlike quantitative studies that often require larger representative samples, qualitative research focuses on depth of understanding rather than breadth of representation (Creswell, 2016). Therefore, a smaller sample size of ten participants. In terms of data collection, a survey was conducted which was supplemented by an in-depth interview of key informants. These allowed the researcher to delve deeply into the thoughts, experiences, and perspectives of individuals, providing valuable insights that may not be captured through other research methods as well help to inform research findings. Key informants included managers, key social workers and M&E function coordinators who have expert knowledge or experience. Content analysis was used for data analysis to identify patterns and themes in the data, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Also, SPSS and excel was used for quantitative data to identify patterns and trends. This research method prioritized understanding the subjective experiences, perspectives, and meanings that individuals provided in line with the topic.



III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

RESULTS PRESENTATION

Demographic Data



When it comes to education background, a significant portion (84%) have no formal education in IT, IS, or data analysis, indicating a potential area for improvement in training and education. Also, 12% hold a certificate; 2% each have a bachelor's or postgraduate degree in IT related field.

Education Background in IT, IS, or Data Analysis	
Education Level	Percent
No formal education	84%
Certificate	12%
Bachelor's degree	2%
Postgraduate degree	2%

Skills, knowledge, and competencies for MIS Utilization

Key skills	
1	ICT Skills
2	Data entry and Management
4	Software Proficiency
5	Trouble shooting
6	Analytical skills
7	Ethical practice/Data protection

MIS Proficiency among Social Work Practitioners

Proficiency Rating	Percent
High	26%
Moderate	74%
Challenges	Percent

Technical issues	78%
Lack of training	64%
Insufficient data	52%
Lack of time	24%
Knowledge gap	2%
Availability of resources	2%

Effectiveness of Capacity Building Programs

Frequency of Capacity Building Programs	
Frequency	Percent
1-3 times	42%
3-5 times	46%
More than 5 times	12%

Effectiveness of Capacity Building Programs	
Effectiveness	Percent
Very effective	60%
Somewhat effective	40%
Satisfaction with Support Received	
Satisfaction	Percent
Satisfied	76%
Very satisfied	14%
Somewhat satisfied	8%
Neutral	2%

Recommendations for Future Training	
Training Areas	Percent
Advanced data analysis techniques	100%
Data visualization skills	66%

Descriptive analysis of MIS proficiency

Capacity building activities are designed to generally improve MIS utilisation to improve its effectiveness in SOS Children's Villages Malawi. The assumption made in this study was that as organizations undertake these activities, MIS utilisation for M&E practice also improves. Issues like confidence levels, frequency of use, and proficiency levels were explored in this study and their rates against the training received summarized in Table below.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Confidence	1.3200	.47121	50
Frequency Usage	1.5600	.70450	50
Proficiency	1.7400	.44309	50



Trained	1.1600	.37033	50
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Correlation analysis of the variables

Having measured these variables, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine the direction and strengths of these relationships at 95% level of confidence. To establish if there was any correlation between these proficiency variables and participation in training in MIS for M&E. Based on the responses, the relationships between the two were investigated. From the results, it shows that there was a strong positive correlation were as seen in Table below.

		Confidence	Usage	Proficiency
Confidence	Pearson Correlation	1	-.305*	-.669**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.031	.000
	N	50	50	50
Usage	Pearson Correlation	-.305*	1	.345*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031		.014
	N	50	50	50
Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	-.669**	.345*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.014	
	N	50	50	50

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

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

This helps to explain the 32% very confidence levels, 38% very familiarity levels, and the 26% high proficiency rating registered. This means that capacity building activities are perceived to contribute to a certain level to a better utilisation of MIS for M&E practice to some extent. Rejecting the null hypothesis that there is no influence between capacity building and effective utilisation of MIS for M&E in social work practice.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS DEMOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS

The survey revealed a notable gender disparity among respondents, with 66% identifying as male and 34% as female. This demographic breakdown underscores potential challenges in gender inclusivity within roles involving Management Information Systems (MIS) for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). These findings emphasize the importance of designing inclusive capacity-building programs that cater to the diverse needs of both male and female participants.

This agrees with a World Bank study of 2017, which found out that there are multiple factors holding back women's full participation as employees, entrepreneurs, consumers, and business leaders. As such Overcoming this challenge is particularly important for emerging markets, which urgently need to maximize their human capital for economic growth (Quentin & De La Briere., 2018). One way of doing it is to come up with inclusive capacity-building programs that cater to the diverse needs of both male and female participants.

Role Distribution and Expertise

A significant majority (90%) of survey respondents hold roles as case managers, indicating that MIS utilization is primarily driven by this group within social work settings. Furthermore, with 38% possessing over a decade of experience, there exists a substantial reservoir of expertise that can be leveraged for mentoring and peer learning initiatives aimed at enhancing MIS capabilities among practitioners.

Addressing skills gaps

The survey highlights a striking educational gap, as 84% of respondents lack formal education in IT, Information Systems (IS), or data analysis. This deficiency underscores the critical need for targeted training programs designed to equip social workers with essential technical competencies necessary for effective MIS utilization. As Zeidan & Bishnoi, (2020) observes that a gap exists between graduates' skills and competencies required by the industry. The results are significant as they have practical implications for both employers and academia in bridging the skills gap. Hence, making sure that this educational gap is bridged is essential for enhancing proficiency and ensuring that practitioners can maximize the benefits of MIS in their professional roles.



SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Proficiency Levels and Challenges

While all respondents use MIS in their work, only 38% feel very familiar with it, and even fewer (32%) express high confidence in their MIS skills. Common challenges reported include technical issues (78%) and insufficient training (64%), indicating a pressing need for comprehensive, practical training programs. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing both familiarity and proficiency in MIS to improve its effective use within social work practice. Yurkofsky et al., (2020) sums this up well by arguing that continuous evaluation and development practices form the foundation for continuous improvement in MIS utilization, which in turn can contribute to overall improvements in the practice it is being used.

EFFECTIVENESS OF CAPACITY BUILDING

Program Impact and Satisfaction

Capacity-building programs, particularly workshops (98%) and online training sessions (80%), are widely embraced among social workers. High satisfaction levels (76% satisfied, 14% very satisfied) indicate perceived effectiveness. However, there is a clear preference for regular (36%) or as needed (42%) training opportunities, emphasizing the importance of continuous professional development to sustain and enhance MIS utilization skills.

Addressing User Needs

Effective support mechanisms are crucial, as evidenced by a robust communication network (95% acknowledgment) and high satisfaction with support services (76% satisfied, 14% very satisfied). Challenges with MIS tools, although common (56% occasionally, 42% rarely), are mitigated effectively through these support systems, enhancing overall user experience and proficiency.

Cultivating a Supportive Culture

A significant majority (82%) of respondents report positive changes in organizational culture towards MIS integration since participating in capacity-building programs. These programs play a pivotal role in fostering a proactive and supportive approach to MIS utilization within organizational practices, contributing to improved efficiency and effectiveness in social work contexts.

These two addressing user needs and cultivating a supportive culture agrees with empirical findings by Asiedu, E (2015) which showed that cultural traits of

communication, motivation, growth opportunities and supervising support in organisations tend to make employees shift mind-set and help the firm in its competitive advantage. However, the discussion found out that employees within the company were not motivated enough to perform better due to lack of rewarding culture, growth opportunities (training) culture, communication and supervisory supportive culture. For this research emphasis is on growth opportunities and supervisory supportive culture.

Tailoring for Effectiveness

There is a clear call for more tailored training programs based on specific job roles and proficiency levels. This approach aims to maximize the relevance and impact of training initiatives, ensuring that social workers receive targeted support to enhance their MIS skills and proficiency effectively. This agrees with the assessment of Kunar, et al., (2022) who observed that the employees' education should follow their identified learning needs, and should be regularly revised, considering also the company needs and its human resource development strategy

Enhancing Skills and Continuous Learning

Continued improvement in training content, methods, and feedback mechanisms is essential for addressing skills gaps and maintaining proficiency levels among social workers. This agrees with Arulsamy, A., et al., (2023) assessment that regular skills assessments and responsive training designs are critical steps towards ensuring that training efforts remain relevant and effective in supporting MIS utilization in social work practice.

V. CONCLUSION

A Holistic Approach to Capacity Building

In conclusion, the survey underscores the importance of a holistic approach to capacity building in MIS utilization within social work. This approach includes addressing educational gaps, enhancing skills and competencies, fostering supportive organizational cultures, and continuously improving training programs to meet evolving professional needs. By prioritizing these areas, organizations can empower social workers to leverage MIS effectively, thereby enhancing service delivery and outcomes in social work practice.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher suggests the following strategies that aim to enhance social workers' ability to effectively use MIS for monitoring and evaluation, improving overall social work outcomes.



1. Conduct regular capacity building programs focusing on advanced data analysis and visualization skills.
2. Provide ongoing technical support and training on ethical data management.
3. Implement structured capacity-building programs covering basic and advanced MIS functionalities.
4. Develop a policy for regular assessments of social workers' MIS skills with feedback mechanisms.
5. Integrate advanced data analysis techniques into training for better planning and decision-making.
6. Tailor training programs based on job roles and departmental needs for relevance.
7. Increase investment in technical support resources, including IT teams and peer mentoring programs.

Based on the findings and the current scope of research, several areas for further studies can be identified to deepen the understanding and enhance the effectiveness of MIS utilization for M&E in social work practice. Exploring these areas further can provide valuable insights and contribute to the development of more effective MIS training programs, policies, and practices in social work

1. Examine how organizational culture influences the adoption and effective use of MIS for M&E in social work practice.
2. Develop and validate tools for assessing the specific training needs of social workers based on their roles, responsibilities, and existing skill levels.
3. Investigate the benefits and challenges of integrating MIS with other organizational systems, such as financial management, HR, and program management systems.
4. Examine how demographic factors such as age, education level, and prior IT experience influence MIS proficiency among social workers

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