

Resource Mobilization Strategies, Resource Utilization and Sustainability of Community Based Organizations in Developing Countries: Emerging studies of CBOs in Arua District, Uganda

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between resource mobilization strategies, resource utilization, and the Community-Based Organizations Sustainability in the Arua District, Uganda. The study used a quantitative technique to obtain data. Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample determination table was used to select 291 CBOs from a population of 1182 CBOs operating in the district. A hierarchical regression model was applied to determine the predictive power of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The findings showed a significant positive association between resource mobilization strategies and CBOs Sustainability. A significant positive relationship was established between resource utilization and CBOs Sustainability. The findings further indicated that resource mobilization strategies and resource utilization are important predictors of CBOs Sustainability. From this study CBOs Sustainability depends on its ability to mobilize and utilize resources to achieve its goals, which hinges on resource based theory and the resource dependence theory. The study has implications for reconsidering policy directions in the way CBOs operate and generate resources using various techniques to sustain their operations.

Keywords: Resource Mobilization Strategy, Resource Utilization and CBO Sustainability

Introduction

Community-based organizations (CBOs) have long been an important aspect of global development efforts (Arora, 2016). Literature has demonstrated the importance of CBOs in the local socioeconomic and physical developments of either conflict-affected or non-conflict-affected areas of lagging regions of the world (Abegunde, 2017). Community-based interventions, according to Barr, Dekker, and Fafchamps (2015), are channelled through such CBOs. CBOs are founded by groups of people who have a shared objective of assisting impoverished people by organizing people around specific needs and interests. According to Abegunde (2017), the origins of CBOs in Africa can be traced back to post-conflict rebuilding, which was marked by a lack of official support and an increased requirement for self-help initiatives. In South Africa, for example, CBOs usually function at the grass-roots level and are directed by members of the local community who want to achieve certain goals (Olagoke, Netsai, Ronald, & Talitha, 2016). According to Perold and Graham (2017), most African CBOs are funded locally through membership fees and volunteer effort, among others. Despite being

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important contributors to development at the grassroots level, particularly in areas with limited state intervention, CBOs in Africa are frequently overlooked (Perold & Graham, 2017).

In Uganda, CBOs have been recognized as a means of reducing poverty in the community (Manges, 2021). According to Ugandan legislation, a CBO is one that operates at the sub-county level or lower with the goal of promoting and advancing the well-being of community members (NGO Registration Act, 2016). In Uganda, a CBO is entirely managed by Ugandans and engages in NGO activities that supplement government work but not for profit or commercial gain (The National NGO Policy, 2010). According to Nuamanya (2013), CBOs are legitimate partners of the government who can mobilize and attract additional resources to supplement the government's efforts in national development. CBOs are grassroots organizations formed to promote community development (Kato, Okot, & Obua, 2013). As CBOs carry out their mandates and strive for a consistent impact, the sustainability of their interventions is critical. The ability of an organization to withstand internal and external influences that affect its operations and survival is referred to as sustainability (Okorley & Nkrumah, 2012). The implementation of sustainability shouldn't wait till a grant expires, claims Riggs (2012). Sekajingo (2007) asserts that CBO projects need to take sustainability into account. Most CBOs will devolve into one-time entities that cannot follow their operations beyond the funding cycle if sustainability is not successfully integrated into CBO programming. As a result, sustainability appears to be a global issue that the majority of non-profit organizations and CBOS run into when carrying out their missions globally.

For instance, the USAID (2016) Civil Society Organization (CSO) Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia singled out financial viability as the most challenging aspect of sustainability for civil society organizations, CBOs included. A similar sustainability index for Sub-Saharan Africa by USAID (2015) associated the declines in overall sustainability scores with funding challenges facing such organizations. The CBOs' ability to mobilize resources is so essential to sustaining their operations. Sustained differences in performance are also attributed to the variations in capabilities and resource endowments across organizations. For instance, the Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) assumes that organizations are under external influence and emphasizes that an organization's capability to acquire and utilize resources is crucial to its survival and development in a dynamic environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). The resource-based theory, on the other hand, places more emphasis on internal resources and contends that an organization can outperform others based on skills, or qualities, that enable the organization to implement a strategy more successfully and efficiently than others (Barney & Clark, 2007). According to Farukuoye, Kochl, Nixdorf, and Witte (2021), the environment in which resources are mobilized is increasingly competitive. As such, in the non-profit sector, it is apparent that some organizations easily attract rich resources while others struggle to survive (Wei, 2017). The viability of an organization's survival is linked to their ability to adapt to changing donor trends and to their willingness to explore alternative sources of funding (Farukuoye *et al.*, 2021).

CBOs specifically endeavor to use various approaches and techniques to mobilize resources in pursuit of their mission. Such approaches include mobilizing subscriptions, fines, and individual contributions; income from selling goods and services; unsolicited contributions from local leaders; and specific fundraising events (Asiimwe, 2016; Kato *et al.*, 2013). Whereas others

submit grant proposals or sign memoranda of understanding with local governments (The Non-Governmental Organizations Regulation, 2016). Farukuoye *et al.* (2021) broadly categorize the funding sources as grants, individual giving, corporate giving, crowdfunding, and sales of goods and services. Regardless of the diverse strategies, few community-based organizations have their own financial resources that they generate internally (Kato, Okot, & Obua, 2013; Wei, 2017), and such sources of funding are frequently insufficient to meet their growing organizational needs (Rehema, 2014). From the above synthesis, even though opportunities for resource mobilization may seem to be available from a variety of sources for all non-profit organizations, CBOs seem less competitive in resource mobilization in comparison to other non-profit organizations, hence creating the first knowledge gap that informs this study. Such major challenges have led to the collapse or stagnation of noble creativity by CBOs (Ochieng, Mala, Mumbo, Aila, & Odera, 2012). The second knowledge gap arises from the fact that when CBOs acquire so-called insufficient resources, they do not sustain operations beyond the first cycle of funding. There could be variations in the resource utilization processes between CBOs and other not-for-profit organizations. Therefore, the study also seeks to lay the foundation upon which CBOs can sustain their operations through effective and efficient utilization of resources.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Theoretical underpinning

The study was based on the Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) and the Resource-Based Theory pioneered by Penrose (1959). The Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), advanced by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), presupposes that organizations are under external influence. It also presupposes that the capacity to obtain and keep resources is essential to organizational sustainability (Wei, 2017). The theory also makes the extra assumption that no organization is fully independent; rather, they depend on those other organizations for many of the resources they themselves need. Therefore, to obtain the resources they require, they need to transact with others who are outside their environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). The idea also highlights that an organization's ability to acquire and maintain resources is essential to its ability to endure and grow. Organizations face difficulties not only because of their dependence on their environment but also because it is unreliable. The environment may change, new businesses may join or leave, and the availability of resources may become limited. Organizations risk either not existing or modifying their operations in response to these environmental influences when the environment changes. The RDT's emphasis on an organization's capacity to obtain and manage resources makes it pertinent to the research. This is true because effective and organized resource mobilization assures that beneficiaries will continue to get services from the organization and promotes organizational sustainability (Farukuoye *et al.*, 2021). The limitation of RDT is its presupposition that organizational survival and success are not always achieved by making internal adjustments.

Whereas the resource-based theory emphasizes internal resources. The reason why certain organizations consistently outperform others is the basis of the theory developed by Penrose (1959). RBT sees organizations as a well-organized collection of resources. The theory argues why organizations with valuable, uncommon, unique, and well-organized resources may perform better by equating organizations to a combination of various capabilities (Barney, 2001). It investigates the root causes of persistent performance gaps across firms. It is assumed that businesses will consistently outperform others if they possess unique competencies or traits

that allow them to follow a strategy more effectively and efficiently than others (Barney & Clark, 2007). Numerous proponents of the resource-based perspective acknowledge the significance of resources, tangible as well as intangible, for the accomplishment of organizational strategic planning (Bagire & Namada, 2013). According to the theories presented above, a company can establish a durable competitive advantage by enhancing its special assets and competencies. Because it places such a strong emphasis on how special resources and capabilities can help ensure an organization's viability and survival, the resource-based theory also becomes pertinent to the study.

Conceptual Review

Community Based Organizations

A community-based organization is defined by several parameters. A CBO refers to an organization that operates at the sub-county or lower level aimed at improving the welfare of the community and must be managed by Ugandans, according to Ugandan legislation (The National NGO Policy, 2010, NGO Regulation, 2016; NGO Registration Act, 2016). Kagan (2013) posits that they are single-purpose organizations, operating at sub-county levels to promote community wellbeing. Consistent with Kato et al. (2013), a CBO is synonymous with "a grassroots organization," which is typically composed of individuals or groups who join to pursue their own interests. CBOs are also seen as small NGOs registered to function within their home district's jurisdiction (Bagire, Aosa, & Awino, 2014). While CBOs engage in NGO-type actions as defined by the National NGO Policy (2010), they differ from NGOs in nature and purpose since they serve a specific population in a confined geographical area (Harley, Rule, & John, 2003; Kato *et al.*, 2013; NGO Registration Act, 2016). Tirivanhu (2020) argues that CBOs emerge partly due to the poor performance of local government institutions in service delivery.

Most scholars suggest that as CBOs advance their own interests and the wellbeing of their communities, attention must be paid to sustaining such operations. As the CBO achieves financial success, it will be able to offer its services over an extended period. This viewpoint is compatible with the assertions by Rehema (2014) that the most crucial aspect of sustainability is improving financial security and independence from donors. Even if a donor withdraws financial support, the usual occurrence of CBOs collapsing will become a thing of the past (Okorley & Nkrumah, 2012). As a result, CBOs must demonstrate their ability to survive if primary donor financing is withdrawn. Since organizational leaders, donors, and communities are all interested in establishing sustainable organizations, the need for institutional sustainability is more critical than ever (Arora, 2013; Cheptot, Iravo, & Wamalwa, 2017).

CBO Sustainability

Several scholars concur that organizations that do not have a culture of sustainability will not thrive and will eventually die out (Arora, 2016; Wanjiku, 2016). The preceding investigations established that sustainability requires a system to self-perpetuate using locally acceptable solutions. Sustainability measures an organization's capability to achieve its mission, attend to its stakeholders, and perpetuate itself over time (Kerine, 2015). Seltzer (2014) emphasizes three key types of sustainability: institutional, financial, and programmatic. Smaller organizations, particularly CBOs, lack the capability to obtain considerable finance to ensure their long-term sustainability (USAID, 2015). As such, CBOs frequently lack adequate funding and rely primarily on volunteer labor to complete their functions (Perold & Graham, 2017). Consistency

in funding hampers the long-term survival of organizations. This issue is exacerbated for local CBOs, which have always relied on funding from foreign donors since their inception. When such sources of funds run out, the CBOs become vulnerable and close. Very few of these organizations, according to the CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa by USAID (2014), can continue to function for more than half a year without extra funding. CBO promoters worry a lot about whether their donors will continue to pay for program expenditures, divert their attention to other more urgent issues, or even force them out of business. Consistent planning and execution are exceedingly challenging due to the ambiguity around donor money (Rehema, 2014). Arora (2016) contends that finding new sources of funds is critical for CBOs' continued existence, financial independence, and sustainability.

Despite the above operational environment, it is hard to find leaders who are passionate about sustainability and businesses that are fully committed to it. Employees won't follow bosses if sustainability issues are not on their minds (Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to consider sustainability when developing any venture. This is so because before any investment, stakeholders will always want to know the sustainability plans, even during the proposal preparation process (Riggs, 2012). Although it is well known that donor support must be temporary, it is more crucial to consider how the CBO can assure sustainability once the donors have left (Lelegwe, 2015). Sustainability must be integrated into the project exit process because donor finances are transient (Banya, 2012). The method employed to cut back on resources while making sure that the accomplishments of the project are not put at risk is crucial. The donors and organizations they fund may decide on suitable capacity-building strategies to enable these organizations to continue operating beyond direct funding.

Resource mobilization strategy

Resource mobilization pertains to all processes required for acquiring additional or new resources for the organization. It is viewed as a management technique to secure externally or internally available resources, both non-financial and financial, to support organizational activities (Rehema, 2014). According to Bagire *et al.* (2012), one of the main concerns of CBOs is securing the necessary funding to support their beneficiaries. Apart from advocating for the rights of the poor, CBOs most significantly mobilize resources for social and economic development. According to Ochieng *et al.* (2012), those who cannot demonstrate the ability to gather the resources needed to carry out their mandates remain inactive. Resource mobilization strategy provides an essential roadmap and spells out how resources are to be leveraged to meet an organization's resource needs (Farukuoye *et al.*, 2021). The strategy helps an organization have a plan, define beforehand where resources are needed, and assess appropriate possibilities for raising them. A good resource mobilization strategy clearly enables an organization to coordinate how to contact resource partners and build a long-lasting relationship with them.

According to Venture for Fund Raising (2010), acknowledging the necessity of resource mobilization and becoming committed to carrying out this work should serve as the foundation for any plan of resource mobilization. Farukuoye *et al.* (2021) prioritize developing a common picture of the ideal resource mobilization approach for the organization and ranking the strategies identified according to expected benefits and what it takes to get resources from each strategy. Organizational leaders must institutionalize systems to create an environment that is conducive to resource mobilization and partnerships. CBOs use different strategies to mobilize

resources, including membership fees, developing fundable proposals, signing partnership agreements for resource exchange arrangements, volunteer effort, social enterprises, and holding fundraising events (Asiimwe, 2016; Kato *et al.*, 2013). This study focused on three strategies, namely, investment strategy, strategic partnerships, and a diversified donor base, which are the least explored strategies since scholars suggest that local players such as CBOs do not gain as much from these funding strategies as their international counterparts, including from the new global discourse of localization, which encourages collaboration with local actors (Atim. 2022). The CBOs that get the niche right are well placed for sustainability.

Investment strategy

Many non-profit organizations do not only rely on donations. For instance, a study by Abegunde (2017) established that money created through association investments accounts for 15.8% of the funds that CBOs generate in Ile Ife, Nigeria. Lu, Shon, and Zhang (2019) argue that non-profits would have a better chance of surviving if they largely relied on commercial income. They should invest or discover options within their means to sustain their operations. While Harir (2015) calls this "income from investments," Farukuoye *et al.* (2021) call it 'social enterprise' that complements income from donations and grants. According to the 2015 CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa, organizations in Uganda continue to look for ways to increase their earnings through commercial activity revenue. However, based on the index above, the income from investments only accounts for 2–5% of an organization's overall operational budget. This resource option requires spotting the right business, crafting its plan, and investing funds. In other words, a social enterprise starts with broad business ideas (ideation), business model development, and business plan development (Farukuoye *et al.*, 2021). The most essential thing is that proceeds from such investments must be reinvested in the organization (Caritas, 2007). The CBO's experience, special knowledge, or interest is important for choosing investments, as is considering the potential returns on investment and the work required to monitor them. Such resource mobilization practices should not distract CBOs from core business to avoid instances of 'mission drift' (Asiimwe, 2016).

According to Joshi (2016), once a particular funding period ends, CBOs can start charging minimal fees for such projects. Farukuoye *et al.* (2021) suggest that at this point a CBO can start to ask 'what if questions, like what if: we start charging our beneficiaries for some services; we start offering our services to third parties; we start renting our equipment, etc. It is required that any revenue collected from the sales of goods and/or services that is larger than the administrative costs associated with the sale be reinvested in accordance with the organization's priorities (The NGO Act, 2016). However, according to Venture for Fund Raising (2010), some non-profit organizations have a problem since they view earning from investments as a form of profit-making. This interpretation contends that organizations that are meant to serve their communities without charging a fee undermine their 'not-for-profit' principles by employing income-generating strategies. In this opinion, the income-generating approach compromises the 'not-for-profit' ethics of organizations that are expected to give free services to their communities. This is also consistent with Fourie and Kakumba (2011), who argue that pursuing business interests weakens the traditional focus of non-profit organizations. However, the NGO Act (2016) permits direct or indirect participation in any gainful activity as long as it serves the organization's economic objectives. Barasa and Nyaga (2021) encourage CBOs to initiate income-generating activities to raise passive income to fund some of their project activities.

Descending views seem to indicate that CBOs lack the level of expertise required to undertake such ventures. In conclusion, it appears that different CBOs have different justifications for engaging in profit-making ventures through social enterprises.

Diversified donor base

Majority organizations are becoming aware of the necessity to diversify their resource base to increase the predictability of funding. Farukuoye *et al.* (2021) argue that rather than focusing energy on soliciting large amounts from big funders, it is recommended that organizations focus on creating a diverse mix of funding sources from individual donors, corporations, and international organizations. Such a funding mix helps spread the risk when a funder falls short or ends engagement. The Venture for Fund Raising (2010) further advises that once an organization has a donor on board, it should not risk losing them by spending all of its attention on attracting new ones. However, according to USAID (2010), nearly all local CBOs are reliant on a few donors, which is a common mistake made by the CBOs. They are unwilling to consider alternative options. When that source is depleted or exhausted, the organizations find it difficult to secure new funding, causing programs to be compromised or cancelled (Rehema, 2014). Mavuto (2013) notes certain constraints imposed on organizations, such as restricting CBOs from engaging with other donors while they are being funded, which limits their capacity to diversify their financing sources. Because of the competition for finite grant resources, organizations must reconsider their alternatives for diversified and multiple funding streams that will assist them in carrying out their projects.

Strategic partnerships

Resource mobilization and partnerships have become key areas of importance for 21st-century development agencies. Donors are becoming more selective, preferring to finance organizations working in consortia or partnerships. Having a previous record of collaboration increases an organization's desirability to donors. Many CBOs form strategic partnerships to meet such donor expectations. They use cooperation models to raise resources and manage the overall costs of delivering services (Bagire, Aosa, & Awino, 2014). Many international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) work with CBOs either by channelling funds to them or by providing technical assistance. NGOs function as mediators, acquiring substantial grants and redistributing them to faith-based and community-based organizations (Harley *et al.*, 2003; Abigail, Fafchamps, & Owens, 2003). CBOs are frequently found strongly networked with one another and affiliated with NGO networks, allying with the government in anticipation of opportunities for resource mobilization. While Ochieng *et al.* (2012) claimed that CBOs acquire visibility, experience, or access through these networks, the kinds of networks in which they participate do not always offer value in terms of resource mobilization.

Another approach to strategic partnership is for local CBOs to identify influential individuals to promote resource mobilization. According to the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa (2015), these collaborations are critical to submitting grant applications. The strategic partnership method capitalizes on the advantages of collaboration as well as the possibility of securing joint funding. Partnerships enhance the profile of such CBOs and eventually attract their own donors. Such collaborators may use "jigsaw mode" to co-design solutions with a common goal (Ranade & Hudson, 2003). According to this principle, if everyone is looking at the same picture, they may, among other

things, apply for grants together, share fundraising tools, and improve their proposal-writing skills. The CBOs may as well designate one of their partners as the lead agency in resource mobilization. The concept of a consortium approach to resource mobilization is introduced here. A consortium is defined as the gathering of organizations or entities with the goal of engaging in a common activity, such as resource mobilization (Jones, Evans, & Kimberlee, 2010). The consortium members can pool their resources and apply for grants as a single body. This allows them to combine their skills and knowledge for a common goal. A consortium leader can seek funding on behalf of partners. Consortia can also help partners acquire resources by establishing links, pairing member organizations with resource providers, obtaining formal confirmations, and/or being accompanied during their initial encounter with a donor. As a result, the consortium leader serves as a conduit between community-based organizations and the donors (SAT/The International HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2004). Knowing that organizations are authentic and being clear on who is able and equipped to lead the CBOs' interest in accessing funding are key membership requirements for the CBOs' consortium's success, as many CBOs lack governance tools like constitutions, policies, and procedures, which scare off potential funders (Jones *et al.*, 2010; Rehema, 2014).

Resource utilization

CBOs, like other non-profit organizations, are not supposed to generate and amass wealth while carrying out their activities. They are instead conduits for aid, development, and relief resources to reach the intended stakeholders (Bagire *et al.*, 2014). An established system is required to ensure that non-financial and financial resources are used for their intended purposes. To avoid ambiguity and suspicion, an organization must maintain accountability and transparency in financial matters through adequate documentation, accounting policies, and record-keeping methods (Okorley & Nkrumah, 2012). According to Farukuoye *et al.* (2021), resource utilization entails not only stewardship but also providing a detailed account of how resources were used, updating, thanking, and recognizing the donor for the use and impact brought by their support. However, due to constraints on funding and a lack of understanding of appropriate financial management, most CBOs appear to fail to undertake yearly financial audits, maintain accurate records, or generate annual reports. This is detrimental to resource utilization. Appropriate resource usage necessitates understanding two key concepts: efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency assesses how well resources are used to achieve predetermined goals. It is about 'doing things right for the intended purpose (NGO Quality Assurance Mechanism, 2007). In contrast, effectiveness is defined as 'doing the right things.' It determines if activities were carried out as planned. Effective utilization of resources can also result from strictly adhering to the approved project plan and determining how successfully the budget was managed (Venture for Fund Raising, 2010). According to Rehema (2014), many organizations lack strong financial management systems, even though showing value and accounting to funders is critical. Funders are increasingly interested in having access to current information about an organization's finances and operations (Bray, 2010). Thus, in addition to Bagire *et al.* (2014), some donors post their staff to be hosted by recipient organizations, send monitors on a regular basis, or supervise them through reporting systems.

Empirical Review and Hypotheses Development

An organization must assemble resources if it is to continue to exist. This supports Walker and McCarthy's (2014) conclusion that the availability of resources gave the CBOs a clearer path to

survival. According to a study by Ssesanga (2021), resource mobilization strategies and CBO success are strongly correlated. Following a study of the empirical literature, this partially depends on how many months or years of anticipated funding an organization will receive from a certain strategy.

Investment strategy and CBO Sustainability

According to Trend Reporters (2014), the investment approach (social enterprises) generates a stable source of income that enables these groups to become self-sustaining, which is consistent with the techniques singled out in this study. Organizations are increasingly using the sale of commodities and/or services to raise resources. The idea of business-non-profit engagement is brought about by relying on income from social enterprises (Watson, Wilson, & Macdonald, 2018). According to Lu, Shon, and Zhang (2019), non-profit organizations would have a higher likelihood of survival if they primarily relied on commercial revenue. Ssesanga (2021), who advises CBO leaders to engage in revenue-generating activities including delivering consultancy services, collecting user fees for services, conducting commerce by selling T-shirts, and organizing marathons, among others. Organizations can attain this by both creating new revenue-generating activities and commercializing already-existing programs or activities if they are to generate income (Farukuoye *et al.*, 2021). Social businesses can offer a funding source that can sustain the organization, albeit a relatively new one for most CBOs. Whether such income is reinvested in the organization to achieve sustainability is still an open subject. Sustainability is assured when this is done. Thus, we hypothesize in **H₁** that ***Investment strategy has a positive relationship with CBO Sustainability.***

Diversified Donor Base and CBO Sustainability

Creating a diverse funding mix seems to be important for the sustainability of CBOs. This is because other donors choose a long-term approach, offering effective and sustainable aid, while others would rather donate occasionally (Nageswarakurukkal, Gonçalves, & Moshtari, 2019). Diversifying donor sources reduces vulnerability to shifts in the availability of funds (Otieno, Ng'endo, & Odero, 2021). While maintaining established donors is crucial, it is more sustainable to do so while also looking for prospects from rising donors (Farukuoye *et al.*, 2021). Organizations that have a diversity of financing sources will be less vulnerable. They have a chance to continue operating even if one donor discontinues funding. Diverse funding streams reduce overdependence and enable the continuation of services. This explains why Wei (2020) argues that such non-profit organizations must look at the external environment since they may be unable to generate sufficient resources internally. Dependence on one donor makes it difficult to prepare a budget or plan, particularly during times of a global financial crisis. It demands searching for [new] funders, approaching them, and submitting proposals if the CBO is to have sustainable funding (Olagoke *et al.*, 2016). From the synthesis of the above, maintaining positive relationships with previous donors is essential for increasing their commitment and ensuring its sustainability. Secondly, constantly searching for new donors also increases the chances of continuous funding and, hence, sustainability. Thus, it is hypothesized in **H₂** that ***Diversified donor base has a positive effect on CBO Sustainability.***

Strategic Partnership and CBO Sustainability

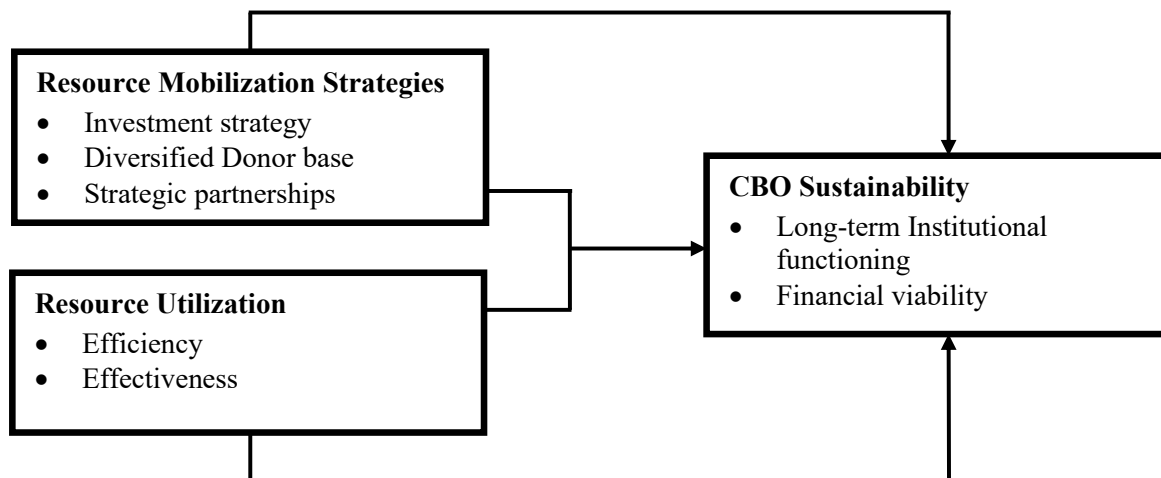
Organizations that are unable to raise money on their own are given competitive precedence when applying for grants through a consortium. Donors are increasingly choosing to support

institutions or organizations that are willing to collaborate and form partnerships with other organizations or that have detailed methods for doing so (Rehema, 2014). Only organizations that succeed in building the most individual and sustainable relationships with their resource partners will be successful in resource mobilization and sustainable in their operations (Farukuoye *et al.*, 2021). Local CBOs can form alliances with organizations that have stronger revenue potential and efficient fundraising strategies (UNICEF, 2016). According to Forrest and Wiek (2015), CBOs need to develop strategic partnerships to obtain the necessary resources, services, and knowledge. In the long run, a solid relationship between partner and organization helps to increase the effectiveness of fund-raising and improve donor retention rates (Olagoke *et al.*, 2016). The emerging trends appreciate the importance of consortiums. Thus, we hypothesize in **H₃** that ***strategic partnerships have a positive effect on CBO sustainability.***

Resource utilization and CBO Sustainability

The way organizational resources are utilized is a hinge for sustainability. According to Gutiérrez *et al.* (2015), for an organization to be sustainable, an environment in which all resources are responsibly used to the greatest extent possible to advance organizational goals must be established. For instance, Farukuoye *et al.* (2021) assert that structured and efficient resource mobilization ensures the continuation of an organization's service provision to beneficiaries. Organizations that follow best practices in accurate and timely financial reporting, transparent accounting standards, and recording methods are likely to continue to receive funding from donors and have a higher possibility of sustainability. More effective cost control is one of the very first steps toward sustainability. This is accomplished by having the capacity to forecast, track, and warn of overspending or underspending of budget line items or categories over time. Osoo (2016) suggests that financial management policies should be reinforced within the organization to ensure accountability and reduce misallocations. For a CBO to attain effective and efficient resource utilization, scholars and practitioners seem to agree on the necessity of clear procedures on the use of resources, developing and implementing legal agreements, monitoring, and reporting how resources are used (Farukuoye *et al.*, 2021). They must therefore have open systems and internal management controls that guarantee the maintenance and responsible management of the monies they receive (Ortega, Licerán, & Luis, 2020). When there is the right resource utilization, it brings about an advantageous combination of cost, quality, and sustainability. Thus, we hypothesize that: **Resource utilization has a positive effect on CBO sustainability (H₄).** The conceptual framework in Figure 1 below summarizes the study hypotheses.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: modified from Cheptot, Iravo and Wamalwa (2017); Kerine (2015); Resource Mobilization Strategy for UNRWA 2012-2015.

Methodology

The study used a quantitative and cross-sectional design to collect data. The population comprised 1,182 CBOs. 291 CBOs of Arua district were selected as guided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The sample was selected using a simple random sampling technique where a list of CBOs operating in Arua District was obtained from the Community Based Services Department in an excel file. Random numbers were assigned to each CBO in spreadsheet using the RAND function which automatically sorted the entire list of CBOs randomly. The top 291 CBOs were selected for this study. In total, 278 valid responses were received, accounting for a response rate of 95.5% that was used in further analysis. The high response rate is attributed to two main factors. First, the focus and purpose of the research were very appealing to most CBO promoters, and so they felt motivated to participate in the study. The effective coordination between the research assistant and sampled respondents within the CBO networks simplified the identification and generation of the required responses.

Validity Test

The validity of the instrument was tested using exploratory factor analysis to determine the factor structure and the significance of each component using Eigen values. Only those with factor loadings above 0.5 were used in the subsequent analysis for each variable. Those that cross loaded were deleted from the factor structure. The explanations of the factor structure for each variable under investigation are explained below.

Factor structure for resource mobilization strategy

According to the findings in Table 1, the resource mobilization strategy contains three factor structures. In order of importance, the criteria were strategic partnerships (Eigen value = 8.692, variance = 28.972%), investment strategy (Eigen value = 5.606, variance = 18.685%), and a diversified donor base (Eigen value = 5.047, variance = 16.823%). The underlying three factors account for 64.48% of the variance in resource mobilization strategies, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Factor structure for resource mobilization strategy

Factor Loading	1	2	3
Strategic Partnerships (1)			
Partnerships provide the CBO more exposure.	.852		
Partnerships aid in raising a CBO's profile.	.844		
Partnerships improve the likelihood that CBOs will be able to obtain in-kind resources.	.820		
The CBO is a member of other umbrella organizations	.816		
The CBO has access to powerful people who facilitate their access to resources.	.810		
Donors prefer only supporting the CBO in partnerships with other organizations.	.786		
Most funding for the CBO comes from collaborative proposals.	.783		
Partnerships boost CBOs' chances of accessing financial resources.	.781		
The CBO is a member to a consortium	.766		
When applying for funds, consortium enables CBOs to gain competitive priority.	.765		
The CBO is willing to collaborate with other organizations on resource mobilization	.733		
The CBO and local governments work on joint projects.	.721		
The CBO is a member of the District NGO network	.710		
Investment Strategy (2)			
The CBO explores investment opportunities regularly.		.796	
The CBO's investment decisions are guided by a business plan.		.780	
Surplus from the investment is reinvested into the organisational programs		.779	
The CBO has investments that earn income for the organization		.757	
The CBO has a business that brings income		.751	
Income from the investments makes the CBO self-sustaining		.733	
The CBO fulfils its mission effectively and regularly		.679	
Investment strategy fits very well with CBO non-profit ideology		.660	
Diversified donor base (3)			
The likelihood of funding is increased by having many donors.			.733
The CBO looks for ways to attract additional donors.			.722
The founders seek out international resources to mobilize resources			.719
Local donations provide a sizable portion of the CBO's funding.			.705
The CBO is funded by several sources.			.703
The CBO's leaders recognize the value of diversifying financing sources.			.647
Even with the withdrawal of one donor, the CBO can nevertheless carry with its operations.			.638
The CBO's executives can handle several donations.			.630
The CBO retains its current regular donors while looking for new ones.			.514
Eigen Value	8.692	5.606	5.606
Variance (%)	28.972	18.685	16.823
Cumulative Variance (%)	28.972	47.657	64.48

Source: Primary Data (2018)

Factor structure for resource utilization

The factor structure of resource utilization was determined using efficiency and effectiveness, as summarized in **Table 2**. The results showed that efficiency was a more pertinent factor (Eigen value = 3.859, variance = 38.591%) in the measurement of resource utilization than effectiveness (Eigen value = 2.937, variance = 29.371%). Cumulatively, both efficiency and effectiveness explained approximately 68.0% of the variance in resource utilization.

Table 2: Factor structure for resource utilization

Factor Loading	1	2
Efficiency (1)		
The CBO makes sure that accountabilities are prepared on schedule	.838	
The use of resources is continually tracked	.794	
The entire CBO staff is aware of sound financial management	.748	
The CBO use funds as planned	.738	
The CBO completes the project within the designated time range	.644	
Effectiveness (2)		
To protect its resources, the CBO has established policies and procedures.		.893
The CBO has plans for routine reporting on resource use.		.771
The CBO has reliable financial management procedures in place to make sure the monies are applied as intended.		.709
To fulfil the CBO goal, all organizational resources are prudently used to their fullest extent.		.606
Eigen value	3.859	2.937
Variance (%)	38.591	29.371
Cumulative variance (%)	38.591	67.962

Source: Primary Data (2018)

Factor structure for CBO sustainability

CBO sustainability was conceptualized with two constructs as portrayed in the conceptual framework, in which long-term institutional functioning (Eigen value = 7.597, variance = 34.531%) more prominently explained CBO sustainability than financial viability (Eigen value = 6.301, variance = 28.639%). Cumulatively, both factors contributed approximately 63.2% to the measurement of CBOs sustainability, as shown in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: Factor structure for CBOs Sustainability

Factor Loading	1	2
Long term institutional functioning (1)		
The CBO leaders have established an environment within the organization that is favourable for obtaining resources and forming partnerships.	.910	
The CBO leadership is committed to making interventions sustainable.	.885	
From the beginning of every initiative, the CBO plans for sustainability.	.872	
The CBO leaders show dedication to taking on the mission of resource mobilization.	.865	

The CBO may be able to recruit volunteers from the local area.	.793	
Financial viability (2)		
The CBO has steady income that enables it to fund ongoing projects and launch new ones.		.792
The CBO has sufficient funds to sustain itself in the near term.		.786
The CBO has consistent and reliable local financial backers.		.767
Organization provides goods and services that are responsive to customer needs and foresee emerging areas of need.		.761
Even in the absence of outside funding, the CBO can continue to function.		.754
Eigen value	7.597	6.301
Variance (%)	34.531	28.639
Cumulative variance (%)	34.531	63.170

Source: Primary Data (2018)

Reliability Test

The Cronbach's alpha test was done to measure the reliability of the study variables, and all the variables met the threshold as defined by Nunnally (1978), as the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all study variables was above 0.7. This implied that the results could be relied upon in further analysis to draw valid conclusions and inferences. **Table 4** below displays the results.

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Investment Strategy	8	.929
Diversified Donor Base	9	.896
Strategic Partnerships	13	.953
Resource Utilization	10	.922
CBO Sustainability	22	.916

Source: Primary Data (2018)

Operational measures of the study variables

The study used variables whose measures were developed by other scholars and modified to suit the context of the study. The modified items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale with Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Not Sure (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5), as shown in **Table 5**.

Table 5: Measurement of the study variables

Variables and constructs	Operational measures
<p>Resource Mobilization strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment strategy Diversified donor base Strategic partnerships 	<p>Resource mobilization strategies refers to the approach of acquiring, utilizing, managing, reporting, monitoring, and evaluating assistance, in clear, methodical, predictable, and well-coordinated way (Bagire et al., 2014; Rehema 2014).</p>

Resource utilization

- Efficiency
- Effectiveness

Resource utilization refers to how resources are responsibly used to best achieve organizational mission. (Bagire et al., 2014; CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa, 2015; Okorley & Nkrumah, 2012; SAT/The International HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2004; NGO Quality Assurance Certification Mechanism, 2007; Venture for Fund Raising, 2010).

CBO Sustainability

- Long term Institutional functioning
- Financial viability

According to several studies (Arora, 2016; Gutiérrez et al., 2015; Lelegwe, 2015; Rehema, 2014; Riggs, 2012; Seltzer, 2014; The CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa, 2015; Wanjiku, 2016), sustainability is the system's capacity to continue operating using methods that have received local approval.

Source: Literature Review

Results

Descriptive statistics

The study collected data from 291 selected CBOs in Arua district. From the findings, the majority (62.2%) of respondents were male, and most (39.6%) respondents were within the 29–39-year age group, with potential to steer the CBO's operations for sustainability. Most respondents (32.0%) held certificates, implying that the respondents were able to read and write. Results further showed that most (62.6%) respondents were CBO coordinators, resource mobilization officers, and accountants in order of importance. In relation to CBO characteristics, 54.3% of the CBOs studied were formed between 2014 and 2016. Most CBOs (75.9%) had between 1 and 3 personnel, demonstrating that most CBOs operate on a small scale, perhaps due to their budget. The statistics also showed that 65.1% of CBOs only operated in one sub-county. This is consistent with their size in terms of personnel. Additionally, most CBOs were found to have agriculture as their primary subject focus. The majority of CBOs (45.7%) had physical offices and were legitimately registered at the sub-county level.

Correlation analysis

The associations between the research variables were established using a correlation analysis. To quantify the strength of the association between the study variables, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to measure the magnitude of the relationship between the study variables. The analysis explicitly looked at whether a linear link existed, where it did, and how strong and in what direction it was. The results in **Table 6** indicate that resource mobilization strategies and CBO sustainability are strongly correlated ($r = .563$, $p = .01$). The analysis also shows that all aspects of resource mobilization strategies, including investment strategy ($r = .482$, $p = .01$), a diversified donor base ($r = .505$, $p = .01$), and strategic alliances ($r = .391$, $p = .01$), have a strong positive association with CBO sustainability. Equally, resource utilization and CBO sustainability are significantly positively correlated, according to the correlation analysis ($r = .598$, $p = .01$).

Table 6: Correlation analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Resource mobilization strategies (1)	1							
Investment Strategy (2)	.849**	1						
Diversified donor base (3)	.826**	.695**	1					
Strategic partnerships (4)	.755**	.383**	.383**	1				
Resource utilization (5)	.771**	.697**	.771**	.438**	1			
Effectiveness (6)	.763**	.690**	.738**	.451**	.936**	1		
Efficiency (7)	.698**	.630**	.720**	.380**	.951**	.781**	1	
CBO Sustainability (8)	.563**	.482**	.505**	.391**	.598**	.551**	.576**	1

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

Source: *Primary Data (2018)*

Regression Analysis

A hierarchical regression analysis was run to ascertain the effect of confounds and unique contributions of the independent variables on the dependent variables, which is observed by the R square change in the regression model. The estimation of three models is summarized in Table 7. Model 1 controlled for CBO's age, the number of employees, and the operational coverage. The findings reveal that the age of the CBO (beta = 0.189, $p < 0.01$) and the number of employees (beta = 0.137, $p < 0.05$) were two control variables that significantly improved the sustainability of the CBOs. The predictive power of Model 1 was 3.8% (R squared change = .038), although there was no significant influence of the control variables on the sustainability of CBOs (F statistic = 4.624, $p < .01$) in the model.

The second model, which adds resource mobilization strategies on top of the control variables, demonstrates that these strategies significantly increase the sustainability of CBOs (beta = 560, $p < 0.01$). Model 2 is statistically significant (F statistic = 133.453, $p < .01$) and has a predictive power of 31.3% (R squared change = .313). Model 3 also includes control factors, resource mobilization strategies, and resource utilization. The model's findings demonstrate that resource utilization significantly improves CBO sustainability (beta = 384, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that the CBO's sustainability will improve with improved resource utilization in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Additionally, it was discovered that resource utilization only explained 5.9% of the variation in CBO sustainability (R square change = 0.059) and is hence an appropriate predictor at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$, F change = 27.882). In model 3, the beta value of resource mobilization strategies was reduced with the introduction of resource utilization, which probably implies a partial intervening effect. With the addition of resource consumption in model 3, the beta value of resource mobilization strategies decreased, which is likely an indication of a limited intervening influence.

Table 7: Regression model for CBO Sustainability

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.220 ^a	.048	.038	.61046	.048	4.624	3	274	.004
2	.601 ^b	.361	.351	.50122	.313	133.453	1	273	.000
3	.648 ^c	.420	.409	.47823	.059	27.882	1	272	.000

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	3.949	.139		28.465	.000
	Age of CBO	.138	.044	.189	3.109	.002
	Number of staff employed	.056	.025	.137	2.258	.025
	Coverage of operation	.051	.049	.062	1.043	.298
2	(Constant)	1.802	.218		8.267	.000
	Age of CBO	.132	.036	.181	3.629	.000
	Number of staff employed	.059	.020	.144	2.894	.004
	Coverage of operation	.025	.040	.030	.623	.534
3	Resource mobilization	.574	.050	.560	11.552	.000
	(Constant)	1.509	.215		7.010	.000
	Age of CBO	.118	.035	.162	3.385	.001
	Number of staff employed	.059	.019	.145	3.041	.003
	Coverage of operation	.019	.039	.022	.479	.632
Resource mobilization strategies	.271	.074	.264	3.642	.000	
Resource utilization	.357	.068	.384	5.280	.000	

Source: *Primary Data (2018)*

Dependent Variable: CBO Sustainability

- a. **Predictors:** (Constant), Job position, Highest education level, Age group
- b. **Predictors:** (Constant), Job position, Highest education level, Age group, Resource mobilization strategies
- c. **Predictors:** (Constant), Job position, Highest education level, Age group, Resource mobilization strategies, Resource utilization

Discussions

Investment strategy and CBO Sustainability

According to the findings, there was a strong positive correlation between investment strategy and CBO sustainability. This implies that investment in sustainability practices are likely to improve on CBO’s ability to achieve its goals in the community. This can be through engagement in social enterprises, business development models and business development plan for enterprise continuity. For instance CBOs can deliberately create business wings, sell goods, services directly or charge fees for their services. Once the administrative costs are deducted, the excess revenue can be utilized to sustain CBO operations. The assertion is supported by

Trend Reporters' (2014) that investments can produce reliable revenue streams that aid organizations in becoming self-sustaining. This justifies why Cheptot *et al.* (2017) encourage CBOs to establish enterprises to generate their own money, which Harir (2015) refers to as an entrepreneurial path to sustainability. Investments in social enterprises are a good way to supplement other sources of income and show how self-sufficient and financially independent an organization can be in the long run (Farukuoye *et al.*, 2021; Trend Reporters, 2014; Venture for Fund Raising, 2010).

Diversified Donor Base and CBO Sustainability

The findings also revealed a strong correlation between a diversified donor base and CBO sustainability. This implies that for CBO to sustain their operations, they need to secure additional resources to form a diverse mix of donors. It further implies that if CBOs need to sustain their operations they should not restrict themselves to single source of funding. While the CBOs pursue additional donors they should not lose sight of retaining the existing sources of donations. This is in line with by Joshi (2016) who states that CBOs should not only look at traditional resources to finance their operations but also explore new opportunities and learn about donations from various donors to spread the resource base of CBOs for financial sufficiency and sustainability. When a funder falls short or terminates an engagement, the CBO spreads the risk within the funding mix (Farukuoye *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, a CBO's financial sustainability can be evaluated in large part by looking at its funding base (Cheptot *et al.*, 2017). This is because some of the funders take a long-term approach to providing sustainable funding, while others donate on a regular basis. Ensuring a mix of the two is important for sustainability.

Strategic Partnership and CBO Sustainability

The findings also revealed a strong positive correlation between strategic partnerships and CBO sustainability. The CBOs need these partnerships since most donors prefer financing organizations that are working with others. These partnership makes the CBOs become visible, build experience and be part of a large network locally, nationally and internationally that are essential for resource mobilization. Through such collaborations CBOs can apply for joint grants which otherwise they cannot attract on their own. Strategic partnerships build the CBO profiles to later acquire independent resources to sustain their mission. The assertions converge with Joshi's (2016) that forming new partnerships is essential for building a sustainable CBO. Similarly, collaboration across organizational boundaries is increasingly recognized as critical to the success of sustainability goals (Wu, He, & Duan, 2013). Strategic partnerships help CBOs obtain the necessary resources, services, and knowledge that are crucial for sustainability (Forrest & Wiek, 2015).

Resource utilization and CBO Sustainability

Resource utilization and CBO sustainability are positively and significantly correlated in this study. This implies that even when CBOs acquire resources, it is equally important to utilize the resources for the intended purpose if they are to be sustainable. This requires CBOs to avoid issues that cause any suspicions that relate to misuse of donor funding. To ascertain the correct utilization of resources, practices such as keeping up to date records, showing value for money, conducting annual audits and reporting to the donors are examples of effective and efficient resource utilization. This agrees with Chepkuto and Kwasir (2022) that proper use of funds and

internal control significantly improve the performance and sustainability of community-based organizations. This further agrees with Gutiérrez *et al.* (2015) that to achieve sustainability, it requires creating an environment where all resources are efficiently and effectively used to meet the CBO's mission with the view of achieving sustainable operations (Okorley & Nkrumah, 2012).

Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between resource mobilization strategies, resource utilization, and the CBOs sustainability. The results depict that resource mobilization strategies significantly predict CBOs Sustainability. Implying that CBOs sustainability hinges on resource mobilization strategies (investments, strategic partnerships, and diversifying donor base) and resource utilization as significant predictors. CBO capability to mobilize resources using the aforementioned strategies are critical for CBOs Sustainability. The CBOs are encouraged to follow existing procedures and policies in mobilizing and utilizing resources to safeguard the interests of the different stakeholders to achieve their goals.

Practical implication

CBOs currently face intense competition for resources from other organization in an effort to achieve their missions in the dynamic environment. The survival of an organization in the volatile environment is linked to its ability to adapt to changing trends and willingness to explore alternative sources of funding. However, the study established that for CBOs to survive in the volatile environment attention should be put on resource mobilization strategies (investment, diversified donor base and strategic partnerships) and resource utilization. This therefore implies that once the CBOs have mobilized the required resources, mechanisms need to be developed on how to utilize the resources to reach the intended goals. Reviewing the strategies regularly based on the expected benefits and the changing environmental dynamics is equally important. Those strategies that are not viable can be modified or abandoned.

Theoretical implication

The data of the study validated the theoretical the assumptions of Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) and Resource-Based Theory in explaining CBOs Sustainability where resources endowment and the level of utilization influences CBO sustainability. Similarly, the assumptions of the RDT on the ability of the organization to acquire and maintain resources is key to the organization's survival and development has also been upheld by the study findings. The importance of how organizations manage the interests of those they depend on for resources and support has also been proven by the study, which is consistent with a resource-based view that emphasizes the organization's ability to utilize the acquired resources to achieve its goals.

Recommendations

CBOs to sustain their operations they need to invest in social enterprises to generate additional incomes after the withdrawal of donor financing. This could be done by providing services at some cost or by selling any other goods or services that provide the organization with extra resources. CBOs should also establish and fortify more strategic partnerships. CBOs that work in partnership have a higher chance of securing funding to support their activities. Finally,

CBOs need to implement and uphold good resource utilization procedures if they are to be sustainable. They need to keep records of all financial transactions, provide detailed accountability reports, appreciating and recognizing the donor for supporting the CBO operations. This gives donors confidence that the resources entrusted to the CBOs have been used within their mandates.

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