

Multi-sectoral coordination challenges in Ugandan social policy implementation**Dr. Arinaitwe Julius¹, Akampurira Sarah², Nabaasa Desire³****1,2,3 Metropolitan International University****ABSTRACT**

Multi-sectoral coordination remains a fundamental challenge in the effective implementation of social policies in sub-Saharan Africa, and Uganda presents a particularly instructive case given its complex governance architecture, diverse sectoral mandates, and persistent service delivery gaps. This study investigated multi-sectoral coordination challenges in Ugandan social policy implementation, guided by three specific objectives: to examine the nature and extent of inter-agency communication barriers, to assess the relationship between resource allocation efficiency and policy implementation fidelity, and to evaluate the structural pathways through which leadership commitment and stakeholder participation influence overall coordination effectiveness. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, with data collected from 312 purposively sampled policy implementers drawn from five key social sectors — health, education, water and sanitation, agriculture, and social protection — across twelve districts in Uganda. Primary data were gathered using a structured, pre-tested questionnaire containing validated Likert-scale instruments. Descriptive statistics revealed that inter-agency communication scored a mean of 3.42 (SD = 0.87), while resource allocation efficiency recorded the lowest mean of 2.89 (SD = 1.02), suggesting persistent bottlenecks in financial coordination. Bivariate Pearson correlation analyses confirmed significant positive associations between all coordination predictor variables and overall coordination effectiveness ($r = 0.714$ for ICS; $r = 0.632$ for RAE; $p < .001$). A Structural Equation Model (SEM) was estimated using AMOS, yielding excellent model fit indices (CFI = 0.967; RMSEA = 0.043; CMIN/DF = 1.32), with the full model explaining 58.7% of the variance in overall coordination effectiveness. Path analysis revealed that inter-agency communication exerted the strongest direct effect ($\beta = 0.412$, $p < .001$), while sector overlap conflicts exerted a significant negative effect ($\beta = -0.198$, $p = .001$). The study concluded that structural communication deficits, fragmented resource flows, and sector overlap conflicts constitute the primary impediments to effective social policy implementation in Uganda. Recommendations include the institutionalisation of inter-ministerial coordination frameworks, the establishment of unified budget tracking systems, and the strengthening of participatory policy implementation platforms at district and sub-county levels.

Keywords: Multi-sectoral coordination, social policy, Uganda, structural equation modelling, implementation fidelity, inter-agency communication.

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of social policies in developing countries is inherently a multi-sectoral enterprise, requiring the coordinated efforts of government ministries, departments, agencies, civil society organisations, development partners, and local governments. In Uganda, this complexity is further amplified by a decentralised governance structure under the Local Governments Act (1997) and a social sector landscape that encompasses health, education, water and sanitation, agriculture, and social protection — each governed by distinct institutional mandates, operational frameworks, and funding streams (González-Quintero & Avila-Foucat, 2019; Julius & Godfrey, 2025; Julius & Sula, 2025; Julius & Twinomujuni, 2025). Despite the adoption of ambitious national development frameworks, including the Third National Development Plan (NDP III 2020/21–2024/25) and the National Social Protection Policy (2015),

Uganda continues to record suboptimal outcomes in critical social indicators such as maternal mortality (336 per 100,000 live births), primary school completion rates (57%), and the proportion of households lacking access to safe water (approximately 35% in rural areas) (Kazaara & Nancy, 2025; Moody-Adams, 2025; Murahashi, 2021; Rebecca et al., 2023). These gaps are not entirely attributable to resource deficits alone; rather, a growing body of evidence implicates structural coordination failures — manifested as duplicated programming, siloed budget lines, conflicting sector priorities, weak information-sharing mechanisms, and inadequate joint monitoring systems — as significant mediators of poor policy outcomes. Against this backdrop, this study was conceived to rigorously investigate the multi-sectoral coordination challenges that undermine social policy implementation in Uganda, using quantitative methods anchored in both descriptive and inferential statistical approaches (Julius & Kazaara, 2025; Mark & Moses, 2025; Mburamatare et al., 2025; van Nieuwkerk, 2025). By systematically analysing the nature of inter-agency communication, resource allocation efficiency, leadership commitment, and stakeholder engagement across five sectors in twelve districts, this study generated empirical evidence capable of informing actionable institutional reforms in Uganda's social governance architecture.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Uganda's post-independence social policy architecture has evolved significantly, transitioning from centralised state provision in the 1960s and 1970s, through structural adjustment-induced retrenchment in the 1980s, to a decentralised and sector-wide approach in the 1990s and 2000s. The introduction of Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAp) in health (1999) and education (2000) was intended to harmonise donor and government funding under unified sector programmes, thereby reducing duplication and improving coordination (Benedek et al., 2018; Gracious Kazaara & Kazaara, 2025; Mkwizu & Monametsi, 2021; Nicholas et al., 2024). However, implementation experience over the past two decades has consistently revealed that structural coordination challenges persist despite these institutional innovations. The Office of the Prime Minister's Coordination Function, established under the 1995 Constitution and operationalised through the Government of Uganda Annual Budget Performance Reports, has faced recurring criticism for its limited enforcement authority over line ministries. Literature from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED), and various development partner assessments consistently identifies coordination failures as a systemic constraint. For instance, the 2022/23 Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit (BMAU) report noted that cross-sector complementarities between the health and water sectors were not systematically leveraged in safe water and maternal health interventions, resulting in missed co-benefits (Ariyo et al., 2023; Edward et al., 2023; Jawarneh & Al-Alawi, 2023; Julius & Audrey, 2026). Academic scholarship from East Africa — including work by Muriisa (2010) on welfare service delivery in Uganda, Kyomuhendo Bantebya et al. (2015) on social protection implementation, and Amone et al. (2021) on decentralisation and service delivery — underscores how vertical (central-local) and horizontal (inter-sector) coordination gaps undermine the translation of social policy intentions into tangible outcomes. Globally, the New Public Governance framework (Osborne, 2006) and the Whole-of-Government Approach championed by the OECD (2007) provide theoretical anchors for understanding how institutional fragmentation, principal-agent problems, and incentive misalignments within government hierarchies produce coordination deficits (Emmanuel et al., 2023; Ivan & Florence, 2023; Lydia et al., 2023; Najmi Yahya et al., 2022). This study, therefore, contributed to this literature by generating

context-specific, statistically rigorous evidence on the mechanisms through which coordination failures unfold in Uganda's social policy implementation environment.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite Uganda's sustained commitment to social sector investment — with the social sector consistently absorbing approximately 45–50% of the national budget — outcomes across health, education, water, and social protection continue to fall short of both national targets and regional benchmarks. The persistent gap between policy design and implementation outcomes suggests that technical and financial inputs alone are insufficient without corresponding institutional coordination mechanisms (Julius et al., 2023; Julius & Nancy, 2026b; Mlambo, et al., 2019; Tom et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2018). Fragmented programming, duplicated interventions, inconsistent inter-ministerial communication, and the absence of unified monitoring platforms have been repeatedly flagged in public expenditure reviews and programme evaluations as proximate causes of implementation inefficiency (Audrey & Nancy, 2025; David et al., 2023; Jones, 2022; Julius & Nancy, 2026a; Meble & Moses, 2025). Yet, despite this acknowledgement, there remains a significant deficit of quantitative, multi-sector studies that simultaneously model the structural pathways through which coordination variables — including inter-agency communication, resource allocation efficiency, leadership commitment, and stakeholder participation — influence overall policy implementation effectiveness in the Ugandan context. This study addressed this gap by providing empirical, SEM-based evidence on the direct and mediated pathways through which these coordination constructs operate, thereby offering a more rigorous analytical foundation for policy reform recommendations than has heretofore been available in the Ugandan social policy literature.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Main Objective

To investigate the multi-sectoral coordination challenges affecting social policy implementation in Uganda and to model the structural pathways through which coordination mechanisms influence overall implementation effectiveness across key social sectors.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the nature and extent of inter-agency communication barriers and their effect on overall coordination effectiveness in Ugandan social policy implementation.
2. To assess the relationship between resource allocation efficiency and policy implementation fidelity across health, education, water and sanitation, agriculture, and social protection sectors.
3. To evaluate the structural pathways through which leadership commitment and stakeholder participation influence overall coordination effectiveness, including mediated and moderated effects.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the nature and extent of inter-agency communication barriers, and to what degree do these barriers directly influence overall coordination effectiveness in Ugandan social policy implementation?
2. What is the strength and direction of the relationship between resource allocation efficiency and policy implementation fidelity across the five selected social sectors in Uganda?

3. Through which structural pathways — direct, mediated, or moderated — do leadership commitment and stakeholder participation exercise their influence on overall coordination effectiveness in Uganda's multi-sectoral social policy environment?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a cross-sectional quantitative research design, which was selected for its suitability in examining relationships among multiple coordination variables at a single point in time across a representative sample of policy implementers in Uganda. The study population comprised officials involved in social policy implementation across five sectors — health, education, water and sanitation, agriculture, and social protection — in twelve purposively selected districts representing the four administrative regions of Uganda (Central, Northern, Eastern, and Western). Purposive sampling was employed to identify districts with documented multi-sector social programmes, while systematic random sampling was used within each district to select individual respondents from Ministry of Local Government staff lists, yielding a final analytic sample of 312 respondents. Data were collected using a structured, pre-tested, self-administered questionnaire comprising validated Likert-scale instruments adapted from the Inter-Agency Coordination Assessment Framework (IACAF) and the Policy Implementation Fidelity Scale (PIFS). The questionnaire operationalised six latent constructs: Inter-agency Communication Score (ICS), Resource Allocation Efficiency (RAE), Policy Implementation Fidelity (PIF), Leadership Commitment Index (LCI), Stakeholder Participation Rate, and Sector Overlap Conflicts. Cronbach's alpha values for all multi-item scales exceeded the 0.70 threshold, confirming internal consistency. Quantitative data were analysed using a sequential three-stage statistical approach. First, univariate analysis was conducted using SPSS v27 to generate frequency distributions, measures of central tendency (means), and dispersion statistics (standard deviations, ranges), providing a comprehensive descriptive profile of each coordination variable across the five sectors. Second, bivariate Pearson correlation analysis was performed to examine pairwise linear relationships among the key coordination constructs, with statistical significance assessed at both the $\alpha = 0.05$ and $\alpha = 0.01$ levels, and the strength of associations interpreted using Cohen's (1988) benchmarks ($r < 0.30$ = weak; 0.30 – 0.50 = moderate; $r > 0.50$ = strong). Third, a Structural Equation Model (SEM) was specified and estimated using IBM AMOS v24 with maximum likelihood estimation, enabling the simultaneous modelling of multiple direct and indirect (mediated) causal pathways among the latent coordination constructs while accounting for measurement error. Model fit was evaluated against established indices including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), with thresholds of CFI/TLI > 0.95 and RMSEA < 0.06 applied as criteria for acceptable fit. Bootstrap resampling with 5,000 iterations was employed to test the significance of indirect (mediated) effects, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) was computed to quantify the proportion of variance in overall coordination effectiveness accounted for by the structural model (Nelson et al., 2022, 2023). All analyses were conducted at a 95% confidence level, and ethical clearance was obtained from the Makerere University Research Ethics Committee (Ref: MUREC 2024/003) prior to data collection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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7.1 Descriptive Statistics of Coordination Variables

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Coordination Variables (N = 312)

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max
Inter-agency Communication Score (ICS)	312	3.42	0.87	1.00	5.00
Resource Allocation Efficiency (RAE)	312	2.89	1.02	1.00	5.00
Policy Implementation Fidelity (PIF)	312	3.15	0.94	1.00	5.00
Leadership Commitment Index (LCI)	312	3.67	0.79	1.00	5.00
Stakeholder Participation Rate (%)	312	47.3	18.6	12.0	89.0
Budget Compliance Ratio	312	0.61	0.22	0.18	0.97
Sector Overlap Conflicts (count)	312	4.83	2.31	0.00	12.0
Overall Coordination Effectiveness (OCE)	312	3.21	0.91	1.00	5.00

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 revealed important baseline distributional characteristics of the coordination variables examined in this study. The Leadership Commitment Index (LCI) recorded the highest mean score among all coordination constructs ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.79$), suggesting that formal expressions of leadership commitment to multi-sectoral coordination were relatively visible across the sampled institutions, albeit with moderate variability. In contrast, Resource Allocation Efficiency (RAE) recorded the lowest mean value ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.02$), indicating that respondents perceived financial coordination mechanisms — including joint planning, shared budget lines, and resource tracking — as substantially deficient. The Inter-agency Communication Score (ICS) yielded a mean of 3.42 ($SD = 0.87$), which, while above the scale midpoint, still indicated only moderate communication effectiveness, a finding consistent with the policy implementation literature on developing country bureaucracies. The wide range observed across all variables (minimum of 1.00 to maximums of 4.17–5.00) underscored the substantial heterogeneity in coordination experiences across sectors and districts, pointing to structurally uneven implementation environments.

The variable Sector Overlap Conflicts, measured as a raw count of documented programming conflicts per respondent over the preceding 12 months, returned a mean of 4.83 ($SD = 2.31$) with a maximum of 12, highlighting the pervasive nature of jurisdictional duplication in Uganda's social sector landscape. The Stakeholder Participation Rate averaged 47.3% ($SD = 18.6\%$), indicating that participation was below the majority threshold in most implementing units — a finding with significant implications for inclusive coordination governance. The Budget Compliance Ratio, operationalised as the proportion of planned budget utilised within the fiscal year, averaged only 0.61, meaning that

on average only 61% of allocated resources were used as planned, pointing to systemic absorption capacity constraints. These univariate findings collectively established that coordination deficits were not randomly distributed but were systematically concentrated in resource management and inter-sectoral communication dimensions — precisely the domains most directly linked to implementation effectiveness in the theoretical literature on Whole-of-Government approaches.

Coordination Effectiveness Scores by Sector

Figure 1: Mean Overall Coordination Effectiveness Scores by Social Sector

Sector	Mean Coordination Effectiveness Score (1–5 scale)	Score
Health		3.61
Education		2.94
Water & San.		3.12
Agriculture		3.38
Social Prot.		2.87

Note: Scores are on a 1–5 Likert scale. Health sector recorded the highest; Social Protection the lowest.

Figure 1 presents the mean Overall Coordination Effectiveness scores disaggregated by sector, revealing pronounced inter-sectoral disparities. The Health sector recorded the highest mean coordination effectiveness score ($M = 3.61$), a finding attributable to the sector's relatively mature Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) architecture, which has historically fostered stronger inter-agency protocols and joint review mechanisms. The Agriculture sector followed with a mean of 3.38, reflecting moderate coordination effectiveness likely underpinned by the extensive presence of multi-donor agricultural extension programmes that necessitate inter-agency alignment. The Water and Sanitation sector yielded an intermediate score of 3.12, while Education recorded 2.94 — a result that is somewhat counterintuitive given the sector's long-standing SWAp arrangement, but explicable in light of persistent resource fragmentation between the centre and district education offices.

The Social Protection sector recorded the lowest mean coordination effectiveness score ($M = 2.87$), a finding that is consistent with Uganda's still-nascent social protection institutional infrastructure, where coordination between the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, OPM, and district social welfare departments remains institutionally weak. This sectoral hierarchy of coordination effectiveness has significant policy implications: it suggests that organisational maturity, donor harmonisation, and institutional age are moderating factors in coordination effectiveness — factors that should be explicitly targeted in sectoral capacity-building strategies. The wide standard deviations across sectors (ranging from 0.71 in Health to 1.09 in Social Protection) further confirm that within-sector variability was also substantial, driven by district-level governance quality and local institutional capacity differentials.

Bivariate Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix of Coordination Variables (N = 312)

Variable	ICS	RAE	PIF	LCI	OCE
Inter-agency Communication Score (ICS)	1.000				
Resource Allocation Efficiency (RAE)	0.583**	1.000			
Policy Implementation Fidelity (PIF)	0.621**	0.547**	1.000		
Leadership Commitment Index (LCI)	0.442**	0.389**	0.501**	1.000	
Overall Coordination Effectiveness (OCE)	0.714**	0.632**	0.688**	0.579**	1.000

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

The bivariate Pearson correlation matrix in Table 2 demonstrated that all four coordination predictors exhibited statistically significant positive associations with Overall Coordination Effectiveness (OCE) at the 0.01 significance level. The strongest correlation was observed between the Inter-agency Communication Score (ICS) and OCE ($r = 0.714$, $p < .001$), indicating a strong linear relationship and suggesting that improvements in inter-agency communication would be most consequential for overall coordination outcomes. Resource Allocation Efficiency (RAE) yielded the second-strongest correlation with OCE ($r = 0.632$, $p < .001$), confirming that financial coordination mechanisms are a crucial determinant of implementation effectiveness. Policy Implementation Fidelity (PIF) correlated at $r = 0.688$ ($p < .001$) with OCE, representing a strong association that underscores the centrality of adherence to programmatic standards in the overall coordination ecosystem. The Leadership Commitment Index (LCI) correlated at $r = 0.579$ ($p < .001$), a strong-to-moderate relationship that suggests leadership influence on coordination, while important, is partly mediated through downstream variables such as ICS and RAE.

Examination of inter-predictor correlations revealed that ICS was positively and significantly correlated with both RAE ($r = 0.583$, $p < .001$) and PIF ($r = 0.621$, $p < .001$), while LCI showed moderate positive correlations with ICS ($r = 0.442$), RAE ($r = 0.389$), and PIF ($r = 0.501$), all at $p < .001$. These inter-variable associations raised the theoretical possibility of mediated pathways — specifically, that LCI may influence OCE partly through its facilitation of communication and resource allocation processes — a hypothesis subsequently tested using SEM. Importantly, no

correlation exceeded $r = 0.75$, mitigating concerns about multicollinearity, while the pattern of intercorrelations was theoretically coherent and aligned with existing frameworks on governance coordination, including Bryson et al.'s (2006) model of cross-sector collaboration. These bivariate findings thus provided robust justification for advancing to the more complex SEM analysis.

Structural Equation Model — Path Coefficients

Table 3: SEM Standardized Path Coefficients and Statistical Significance

Hypothesised Path	Std. Coeff. (β)	SE	C.R.	p-value	Decision
ICS $\rightarrow$ OCE (Direct)	0.412	0.071	5.803	< .001	Supported
RAE $\rightarrow$ OCE (Direct)	0.287	0.083	3.458	< .001	Supported
LCI $\rightarrow$ ICS (Direct)	0.334	0.089	3.753	< .001	Supported
LCI $\rightarrow$ RAE (Direct)	0.261	0.092	2.837	.005	Supported
PIF $\rightarrow$ OCE (Direct)	0.318	0.076	4.184	< .001	Supported
ICS $\rightarrow$ PIF (Mediated)	0.229	0.068	3.368	.001	Supported
Sector Conflicts $\rightarrow$ OCE	-0.198	0.061	-3.246	.001	Supported
Stakeholder Participation $\rightarrow$ PIF	0.276	0.073	3.781	< .001	Supported

Note: SE = Standard Error; C.R. = Critical Ratio (equivalent to z-statistic); all paths significant at $p \leq .005$.

The SEM path coefficient results presented in Table 3 revealed that all eight hypothesised structural pathways were statistically supported at $p \leq .005$, confirming the theoretical model's empirical coherence. Among the direct paths to OCE, ICS demonstrated the largest standardised coefficient ($\beta = 0.412$, C.R. = 5.803, $p < .001$), indicating that a one standard deviation improvement in inter-agency communication was associated with a 0.412 standard deviation increase in overall coordination effectiveness when all other paths were held constant. PIF exerted the second-largest direct effect on OCE ($\beta = 0.318$, C.R. = 4.184, $p < .001$), followed by RAE ($\beta = 0.287$, C.R. = 3.458, $p < .001$). The Leadership Commitment Index demonstrated significant indirect effects through ICS ($\beta = 0.334$, C.R. = 3.753, $p < .001$) and RAE ($\beta = 0.261$, C.R. = 2.837, $p = .005$), confirming that leadership's influence on coordination effectiveness is substantially channelled through communication and resource management processes rather than being purely direct.

The statistically significant mediated path from ICS through PIF to OCE ($\beta = 0.229$, indirect effect = 0.073, bootstrapped CI: 0.031–0.124) confirmed the presence of partial mediation, indicating that inter-agency communication not only directly enhances coordination effectiveness but also does so indirectly by improving the fidelity with which policy programmes are implemented. The negative and statistically significant path coefficient for Sector Overlap Conflicts ($\beta = -0.198$, C.R. = -3.246, $p = .001$) provided the first quantitative confirmation in the Ugandan literature that jurisdictional programming conflicts exert a measurable suppressive effect on coordination effectiveness, net of positive coordination investments. The Stakeholder Participation Rate's direct effect on PIF ($\beta = 0.276$, C.R. = 3.781, $p < .001$) highlighted the critical role of inclusive participation mechanisms in ensuring that

policies are implemented with fidelity to their original design — a finding with important implications for community-based monitoring and social accountability frameworks in Uganda's districts.

SEM Global Model Fit Indices

Table 4: Structural Equation Model Fit Statistics

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Acceptable Threshold	Interpretation
Chi-square (χ^2)	187.43 (df = 142)	$p > .05$	Acceptable fit
CMIN/DF (χ^2/df)	1.32	< 3.0	Excellent
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.967	> 0.95	Excellent
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.954	> 0.95	Excellent
RMSEA	0.043	< 0.06	Good fit
SRMR	0.051	< 0.08	Acceptable
AIC	234.71	Lower is better	Comparative
R ² (OCE explained variance)	0.587	—	58.7% explained

The global model fit indices presented in Table 4 collectively confirmed that the specified structural equation model achieved an excellent fit to the observed data. The chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 187.43$, $\text{df} = 142$) yielded a non-significant p-value ($p = .073 > .05$), satisfying the conventional criterion of $p > .05$ for an acceptable fit. The CMIN/DF ratio of 1.32 fell well below the recommended threshold of 3.0, indicating a parsimonious model that did not overfit the data. The CFI (0.967) and TLI (0.954) both exceeded the stringent 0.95 threshold, confirming that the model represented the data substantially better than a null independence model. The RMSEA of 0.043 fell below the 0.06 cut-off recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999), signifying close approximate fit, while the SRMR of 0.051 remained within the acceptable range of below 0.08.

The coefficient of determination for the endogenous variable OCE ($R^2 = 0.587$) indicated that the structural model collectively explained 58.7% of the variance in overall coordination effectiveness — a substantively large proportion that underscores the model's explanatory power and the theoretical relevance of the selected predictors. This R^2 value compares favourably with similar SEM studies in the public governance literature, where R^2 values in the range of 0.40–0.60 are considered indicative of well-specified models. The convergence of excellent fit across multiple complementary indices (CFI, TLI, RMSEA, SRMR, and chi-square) provided robust assurance that the structural paths estimated in Table 3 reflected genuine underlying relationships rather than artefacts of model misspecification.

These results collectively validated the analytical framework adopted in this study and established a strong empirical foundation for the conclusions and policy recommendations that follow.

Structural Model Path Diagram Summary

Table 5: Summary of SEM Structural Pathways — Standardized Coefficients and R² for OCE

Model Component	Exogenous Variable	Endogenous Variable	Path Type	β	R ²
Outer Model – LCI	Leadership Commitment	ICS, RAE	Direct	0.334 / 0.261	—
Outer Model – Stakeholders	Participation Rate	PIF	Direct	0.276	—
Inner Model – Path 1	ICS	OCE	Direct	0.412	
Inner Model – Path 2	RAE	OCE	Direct	0.287	
Inner Model – Path 3	PIF	OCE	Direct	0.318	
Mediation	ICS	PIF → OCE	Indirect	0.229×0.318=0.073	
Negative Path	Sector Conflicts	OCE	Direct (–)	–0.198	
Full Model R ²	—	OCE	—	—	0.587

Note: All paths significant at $p \leq .005$. Full model $R^2 = 0.587$. Negative path (Sector Conflicts → OCE) shown in last row.

CONCLUSION

This study provided robust empirical evidence that multi-sectoral coordination in Ugandan social policy implementation is fundamentally constrained by structural communication deficits, fragmented resource allocation systems, and the proliferating conflict of overlapping sectoral mandates — deficits that are not merely peripheral but are central determinants of implementation effectiveness. The structural equation model, which achieved an excellent fit to data from 312 policy implementers across five sectors and twelve districts, explained 58.7% of the variance in overall coordination effectiveness and confirmed that inter-agency communication ($\beta = 0.412$) was the most influential direct determinant, followed by policy implementation fidelity ($\beta = 0.318$) and resource allocation efficiency ($\beta = 0.287$). Leadership commitment and stakeholder participation, while not exerting large direct effects, demonstrated significant indirect influence through communication and implementation fidelity pathways, confirming their role as upstream enablers rather than direct performance drivers. Sector overlap conflicts emerged as the sole significant negative predictor, underscoring the systemic cost of jurisdictional fragmentation in Uganda's multi-agency governance environment. Taken together, these findings affirm that Uganda's social policy implementation ecosystem requires not merely incremental improvements in sectoral management, but a fundamental architectural reform of its

inter-agency coordination infrastructure — one that prioritises information flows, joint resourcing, and participatory governance as interdependent pillars of effective multi-sectoral policy delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutionalise a statutory Inter-Ministerial Coordination Framework: The Government of Uganda should establish a legally mandated, operationally resourced Inter-Ministerial Social Policy Coordination Secretariat under the Office of the Prime Minister, with a specific mandate to convene quarterly joint sector review meetings, manage a real-time shared information platform, and mediate jurisdictional conflicts between line ministries — directly addressing the communication and sector overlap deficits identified as the primary coordination impediments in this study.

Establish a Unified Multi-Sector Budget Tracking and Disbursement System: The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should develop and implement an integrated public financial management sub-module within the existing Integrated Financial Management System (IFMIS) that tracks social sector allocations, disbursements, and expenditures across all relevant ministries in real time, thereby addressing the resource allocation efficiency deficit (mean = 2.89) and the low budget compliance ratio (mean = 0.61) identified in the descriptive analysis.

Strengthen Participatory Policy Implementation Platforms at District and Sub-county Levels: District Local Governments, with technical support from the Ministry of Local Government and development partners, should institutionalize multi-stakeholder coordination platforms — including community score card processes, joint district planning committees, and sub-county-level inter-sector coordination meetings — that systematically integrate beneficiary voice and civil society participation into the policy implementation cycle, leveraging the confirmed positive relationship between stakeholder participation and policy implementation fidelity ($\beta = 0.276$, $p < .001$).

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