Assessing the validity of microcredit impact studies in Uganda

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Abstract
A number of developing countries including Uganda have of recent experienced tremendous growth of microfinance industry in financial and credit service provision. Microfinance development in developing countries and its' impacts on the poor’s livelihood have been a central point of focus by academic community and development stakeholders. A number of actors like donors and government agencies have accredited microcredit as a program to help the poor improve their living conditions, fight extreme poverty and reduce the number of people living in absolutely lacking situations.

The growth of microcredit schemes in Uganda has incited donors, government agencies, different microfinance institutions, individual and academia to measure the achievements of the program in relation to its’ different objectives. Despite the growing efforts and attention to measure microcredit impacts on livelihood transformation, less focus has been given to this scientific process of measuring program impacts. Ensuring credibility and validity is an important aspect that guarantees realistic representation and quality in scientific research when researchers seek to understand what has been achieved.

It is upon the above background that this study established strong interest to understand and explore how different scientific research processes of impact evaluation relate to the quality of impact reports or outcomes measured. The study examines the main debate about microcredit impacts, this is aimed at providing necessary information required (epistemological benefit) to understand microcredit impacts within different perspectives of development. Different researchers’ background more specifically their academic qualifications, expertise, gender, institutions attached to and roles played during different impact studies is assessed by this study. The study looks at different methods of data collection, analysis employed by different microcredit impact studies and they impacted on different studies being assessed.

The study uses text and systematic method of data and information analysis, different articles searched from Linnaeus University library website and other organizational reports got from different organizations databases, form set of data used in this study. A total of sixteen impact studies done in Uganda have been systematically reviewed. Conceptual framework in which validity is used as the main tool in the analytical discussion of study has been employed.

Key words: validity, microcredit, development and impact assessment
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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACORD</td>
<td>Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMFIU</td>
<td>Association of Microfinance Institutions in Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCA</td>
<td>Accumulated Savings and Credit Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoU</td>
<td>Bank of Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMF</td>
<td>Commercial Microfinance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGDs</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussions</td>
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<td>FOCCAS</td>
<td>Foundation for Credit and Community Assistance</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Products</td>
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<td>GNI</td>
<td>Gross National Income</td>
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<td>GNI</td>
<td>Gross National Income</td>
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<td>GTZ</td>
<td>German Technical Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGA</td>
<td>Income Generating Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTD</td>
<td>Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAK</td>
<td>Makerere University Kampala</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDI</td>
<td>Microfinance Deposit taking Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>Microfinance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFIs</td>
<td>Microfinance Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISR</td>
<td>Makerere Institute of Social Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSI</td>
<td>Management System International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Nongovernmental Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Promemoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRESTO</td>
<td>Private Enterprise Support Training and Organizational Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDWs</td>
<td>Rural Development Workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ROSCA  Rotating Savings and Credit Associations
SACCOs  Savings and Credit Cooperatives
SPEED  Support for Private Enterprise Expansion and Development
UBOS  Uganda bureau of statistic
UNHS  Uganda National Housing Survey
USAID  United States Agency for International Development
Ush  Uganda shillings
UWESO  Uganda Women Effort to Save Orphans
UWFT  Uganda Women Finance Trust
VSLA  Village Savings and Loans Association
WID  Women in Development
WV  World Vision
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I would like to in an exceptional way recognize great contribution of my supervisor, Mr. Heiko Fritz whose input has been very important in completion of this study. This study went through a number of phases and reviews before reaching the final stage; Heiko has been very helpful in all these stages of thesis development. I learnt a lot under his supervision, I have gained skills and knowledge that will not only be helpful in my professional career development but also daily life. I am greatly thankful for his enormous efforts dedicated to making this process complete.

I would also like to recognize all my teachers and friends’ inputs and best wishes during this study. You motivated and encouraged me during this study process. I am thankful that your inputs have benefited this study in many ways.
Dedication

This piece of work is dedicated to my deceased parents, my special Mummy Semmi Olwit and daddy, Mr. Olwit John Arwa who on his death bed repeatedly asked other family members to educate me. I am greatly happy that your wish has been honoured and may this work (achievement) give you happiness and joy wherever you are as we work to extend your wish to the rest of the family members.

I also in such a special way thank my family for the love and patience exhibited during this course of the study that I have been sometimes unable see and keep in touch with them. This piece of work is dedicated to all of you with a lot of love for such patience and sacrifice.
1.0. Introduction

1.1. Problem discussion

A number of developing countries and development actors among different agencies have received microcredit as one of those programs with great potential to reduce extreme poverty and increase access to financial services to the extreme poor. (Haana and Lakwo, 2010; Beisland and Mersland, 2012). The development in microfinance industry has led to the rise and efforts by different actors to document evidence of what has been achieved in relation to poor population increase of income, food and access to health as main indicators of livelihood. Beside the above, little efforts have been directed toward understanding the scientific process of impact assessments yet this is an important practice in academic and scientific studies. It is important that different actors carrying out impact studies look at it as process within scientific research practice geared toward meeting certain goals instead of looking at it as a practice to ‘‘keep donors happy and not use them that much’’ (David Hulme, 2000 p.80).

The argument that ‘‘feasibility of impact assessments in developing countries’’ may be problematic because of professionals gap, communication problems and illiteracy, aligns to the interest of this study to assess validity of microfinance impact studies in Uganda and how well the scientific research processes of program evaluation is met to level that quality is not compromised (David Hulme, 2000). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985); Maxwell (1996); Merriam (1998) and Schwandt (1997) as cited by Creswell and Miller (2010, p.1) ensuring validity in qualitative research has been presented as perplexing across different levels of studies. Despite this focal problem that reigns in qualitative research, a lot of microfinance impact studies reviewed during the study focused on assessing microfinance impacts in Uganda while little attention is given to the process of assessing research validity.

1.2. Purpose and relevance of the study

Reducing the number of persons living in extreme poverty and attaining development for and by the least developed countries has been the central interests and priorities of donors, international organizations, government agencies and academic community. Development therefore, as a holistic concept cannot be attained with some factions of the world population still living in appalling conditions. This aligns to the effort and initiative of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as some of the major motivational device to ‘‘increase development efforts in and on behalf of poor countries, and the resulting publicity aid increases suggest they can claim considerable achievement on the score’’ (William Easterly, 2008 p.26)
Similar to the above, statistics from Uganda Bureau of Statistic (UBOS) as cited by Shenggen Fan et al (2004, p.14) shows that Uganda has not only remained underdeveloped but it’s also greatly affected by poverty indices. Rural areas are reported to be highly impoverished as compared to urban centres. This is an important phenomenon for development stakeholders and academic community, as they tirelessly work understand different perspectives beneath, dynamic of development and poverty as comprehensive concepts.

It has been based on the above information that this study developed strong interest to explore how different microfinance impact debate conforms to the scientific process of carrying out research. The study found it important to motivate debates about the validity of different microfinance impact studies carried out while considering researchers background, data set used, and sources of such data and choice of methodologies used by different impact studies. This is an important point in social science and for scholars as the growing need to uphold quality and validity of impact studies is to be met. It is correspondingly important for development agents to treat with care and value program evaluation and get good results because it add values and deeper understanding of what has been achieved.

1.3. **Objective of the study**

The objective of this study has been to critically review microcredit impact studies in Uganda and find out how they align to scientific procedure of carrying out research. The under listed research questions have therefore been designed to operationalise and meet the purpose and objective of this study.

1.4. **Research questions**

- How does microfinance impacts studies arguments in Uganda add to different understanding of development or poverty?

- Is there any potential bias on the impact studies because of choice of methods of data collection, analysis and sources of data used in microfinance impact studies in Uganda?

- Is there any systematic bias in the impact studies due researchers’ background?

The first question is aimed at understanding what has been written about microcredit schemes in relation to Uganda population livelihood transformation. Exploring the first question provides the study with knowledge and evidence (epistemological benefit) of what has been written about microcredit and what areas has been less explored.
Question two provides a platform to understand the link between choices of methods of data collection, types of studies, method of data analysis, sources of different data and the quality of studies presented. The identification of the above set of questions conform to Glenn’s (2008, pp.2) key aspects to consider when choosing research questions. Glenn affirms that research questions should be researchable and interesting in social science. Consideration of time, resources and what credentials are required while carrying out research by students are key points whose observations lead to completion of the study (ibid).

Asking and exploring question three helps the study define the potential link between researchers’ background and impact studies narrative or quality. It is understandable that studies carried out by academic researchers are likely to have better quality and argument as compared to those studies carried out by development agents who have been implementing such programs. Understanding researchers’ backgrounds help the audience to treat different data met with care and distant themselves from potential bias that could have possibly been carried forward by them. Examining researchers’ backgrounds also helps in assessment of the quality of studies carried out based on professional level of the researchers and their abilities to carry out quality studies.

1.5. Conceptual framework and methodology
This study uses conceptual framework to critically review the validity of different microcredit impact studies carried out in Uganda. Understanding impact assessments process is one of the fundamental areas whose upholding is very important in ensuring quality of any scientific research.

The study uses text and systematic analysis as a method of data collection and analysis. Different scientific documents like articles and organisational reports were searched with the help of Linnaeus university library, where google scholar and LIBRIS were used. The use of text analysis supports a systematic and rigorous review or evaluation of different developmental programs that have been initiated by different stakeholders. It recognizes that there are usually different and often conflicting accounts of what has happened and what has been achieved by programs (David Hulme, 2000 p.86). Impact assessment or evaluation process is an important procedure to study because it facilitates consistent and logical trace of arguments based on different evidence provided (ibid).

1.6. Summary of thesis structure
The structure of this thesis is aligned as per the Linnaeus University Peace and Development Work Guideline. Chapter one of this study presents a brief introduction where problem being investigated, purpose, research objective and research questions are discussed. Conceptual or analytical frame, methods of the study, limitations, delimitations and other ethical considerations forms chapter one of the study.
Chapter two of this piece of work presents a detailed discussion of conceptual framework structured as; understanding the roles of conceptual framework in social research, examining different key concepts in the study that include validity, impact assessment and development. The chapter looks at how conceptual framework is being used as a lens to understand phenomena being studied and how this guides the analytical discussions of this study.

Chapter three of the work gives background information about microfinance industry in Uganda and related literature about this topic being investigated. Chapter four presents a discussion of methods of data collection and analysis employed by the study in which text and systematic review is employed by the study. Data collected from scientific journals and other impact studies searched with the help of Linnaeus university library one search, LIBRIS, Google scholars and information from international reputable organisations are used in the study.

Chapter five presents a more descriptive discussion of the findings while looking at the main microfinance impact debate in Uganda, choices of methods of data collection used by different impact studies reviewed and researchers’ background. Chapter six gives a more analytical presentation of the study in which validity and how different impacts provide a great understanding of development. This is examined as per the structured forms of validity procedures discussed in chapter two that is structured as per the different research questions.

1.7. Limitation
Since this has been a desk study, I have been unable to move to the field to interview different participants who could have provided more relevant field data for this study. I have been unable to meet and interview different microfinance institutions providing microcredit services to the population of Uganda.

The study has been unable to meet microfinance clients in Uganda to find their experiences and views about microfinance impacts to their status. Because of the above, this study therefore has been dependent on microfinance impact studies carried out in Uganda. Keen note has been taken during document selection where scientific articles and organisational reported have been used.

It is also worth noting that this study has only used information or data written in English as the researcher has been able to understand and use well English during the study. It is possible that this could have limited access and use of other relevant information written in other languages.
It was also unexpected that this study would be faced with a challenge of few microfinance impact studies done in Uganda although there is a continual growth of microfinance industry in Uganda and other sub Saharan developing countries. This raises a great concern and question of different stakeholders check the progress of their program.

1.8. Delimitation
It has been the interest of this study to find impacts of microfinance on livelihood transformation in Uganda amidst other microfinance overriding impact on the development as a broader concept.

The study also focuses on researchers’ backgrounds, methods of data collection, analysis, types and sources of data used and possible lessons drawn. In other words, this has been study a methodological study that aimed to understand both impact and the scientific process of program evaluation.

This study has been aware that there are broader producer of ensuring quality of scientific researches but because of time and need to be more critical and comprehensive, the study examined validity as a procedure of measuring quality in scientific study categorized as internal and external.

The study made possible attempts to use the most recent impact studies more especially from year 2000s as microcredit is a recently adopted program in Uganda. More attention has been given to the most recent microcredit impact studies because they possess recent pieces and as well can facilitate a better understanding of microfinance market in Uganda.

1.9. Ethical consideration
The study was not faced with numerous ethical challenges to adhere to apart from ensuring proper referencing and recognizing different sources used in this study. The study also tried as much as possible to keep the original meaning or purpose of different texts reviewed and used in the study.

The study minimised as much as possible errors related to interpretations, referencing and plagiarism as un-recommended practices in academic thesis writing.
2.0. Theory and analytical framework discussion

2.1. Conceptual framework and how is it important in social research.

The study adopted conceptual framework to understand different key concepts, variables and define how it facilitate operationalization of different research questions posed by this study. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p18) as cited by Maxwell, J. A. (2005 p39), conceptual framework is considered “as a visual or written product, one that explains, either graphically or in narrative form the main things to be studied—the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them.” Defining the main concepts in the study, examining their importance and how they relate, is social science has enabled the study meet its’ purpose.

Conceptual framework sometime can be used in “broader sense” to mean real “ideas and beliefs that one holds about the phenomena studied, whether these are written down or not.”

In some cases conceptual framework can be referred to as the “theoretical framework or idea context for the study” (ibid).

2.2. Defining key concept in the study:

This chapter provide brief understanding to some of the main concepts whose understanding is very important in this study. The definition of these key concepts demonstrates how they are conceived and contextualised in this study. The key concepts to be considered here include validity, microcredit, impact assessments and development.

(i) Validity

According to Schwandt (1997) as cited by Creswell and Miller (2000, p124) validity is “how accurately the account represents participants’ realities of the phenomena and how that is credible to them.” Hamersley and Atkinson (1998) as cited by Creswell and Miller (2000, p.124) consider validity as not the data the researchers deal with but the meanings researchers make of such data; what he refers to as “inferences.” Kimberly A. Neuendorf (2002, pp.113) looks at validity as “the level to which measuring procedure represents the intended and the only intended concept.” These delineations align to the aim of this study to look at the different processes of microcredit impact assessments done in Uganda.

The aim of any scientific research is to have a plausible, honest and defendable work or outcome, and for this to be attained in qualitative research, different mechanisms or what could be referred to as strategies used to carry those studies have to be well examined. This requires looking at different categories of validity as complementing concepts of each other rather contrasting them. Internal
validity is more focused on examining causes and effects of the phenomena being studied. Something that Cook and Campbell (1979) as cited by R. Burke Johnson (1997, p.287) refers to as the level to which a researcher is reasonable in “concluding the causal.”

Description and interpretation is an important component of internal validity because it provides a causal link between what has been observed by the study and impetrad as participants’ experiences, ideas and views; this is referred to as descriptive validity by some scholars (R. Burke Johnson, 1997). It’s the desire of qualitative studies to present factual evidence of what has been found out, provide accurate information of participants’ views, experiences or encounters enhance understanding and knowledge of phenomena being investigated. This allows understanding participant real world through the study done (ibid).

Cook and Campbell (1979) as cited by (R. Burke Johnson, 1997) look at external validity as a process in which researchers or the study make general conclusions or generalisation from the findings beyond their study. For a study to be able to make such generalisation there is need to take in to account units of variables being studied, sample categories, size and how well this represent the entire population from which the sample has been drawn from (ibid). Theoretical validity takes into account the level of discussion or explanation in the study, how well it matches with data collected and analysed. The impact of different strategies like prolonged field work or time taken in the field during the study is believed to bear impact on the amount and quality of the work presented (R. Burke Johnson, 1997). The above discussion gives us fundamental knowledge of validity as the main concept in this study.

(ii) Impact assessments:
Impact assessment is considered as a tool through which sponsors and implementers of certain programs validate or check impacts, improve effectiveness and efficiency of their interventions. The process is expected to generate more specific and accurate information which in some cases serve the purpose of accountability of what has been done and achieved by different people involved in the programs (David Hulme, 2000).

Despite the key objective of any evaluation or impact studies, it has to be more systematic and derive informed assessments of the activity while linking its cost, objectives, context and impacts. Second to the above, is what and how different methods data collection and analysis employed while carrying impact assessments affect the final outcome of the study and lastly but not least is that impacts assessments are purpose driven (ibid). This has been the cornerstone of this study as it sought to find how different processes taken by researchers while carrying microcredit impact assessments in Uganda align to the scientific quality in research.
(iii) Examining the concept of development

Microfinance has been portrayed by pro-development mainly the donor community and NGOs as a development program that could reduce extreme poverty among the poor and by another block as an investment opportunity to increase access to finance services to the poor (L. Haan and L. Alfred, 2010). It is satisfactory to examine microfinance impacts within the development discourse, understand development in broader sense and examine how microfinance effects overlap to a broader concept development.

This chapter therefore give a wealth of understanding of the term development, a concept that this is very helpful in the analytical discussion as the study sought to understand how different results of the impact assessments carried out in Uganda fit in the overall understanding of the development.

Todaro and Smith (2011, pp.5) consider development as process through which human improve their lives and capabilities by raising their level of living, self-esteem and freedom. Building of infrastructural facilities like roads, hospitals and improving technological communication is expected to increase people’s level of awareness, aspirations and widen their opportunities to better lives; this is an overarching understanding of development that does not look at human growth from a single point of life. The above explanation of development considers people’s means of livelihood, quality of life, access to opportunities and social acceptability (ibid).

The measurement of development has been defined and perceived differently by different schools of thoughts; traditional economic perspective basically considered development as way through which a nation register a sustained rates of growth of income per capita as a requirement of a country to widen its output or production at faster rate than its population growth rate (Todaro and Smith, 2011 pp.15).

Economic wellbeing or status of the country’s population is determined through subtraction of Gross national income per capitol from the inflation rate, in other words inflation is GNI per capita. According to this school of thought, economic growth is the main stream of development. The challenges of poverty, unemployment and income distribution can be settled through the trickle down effects of economic development (ibid). This is an insightful old economic view of development which this study finds useful in examining and analysing the trend of discussions covered by different microfinance impact assessments carried out in Uganda.

Unlike traditional economic perspective of development, Amartya Sen argues that development should look beyond economic growth which considers people’s income and wealth as means to development but as development or ends in themselves. He asserts that capability function is the
most important to both the poor and non-poor, in other words giving value or attention to what someone does with what he has is more important than his or her possession and the characteristics of those commodities (Todaro and Smith, 2011 pp17). Sen refers this as a “functioning; what people can do with the commodities of a given characteristics they possess or control” (ibid).

Sen’s Perspective broadens understanding of development to look at people’s freedom of choices and control over their lives as an important aspect of understanding their wellbeing. The identification of constraints between communities and people gives a very insightful preposition not to consider communities or people as homogenous because factors that influence their accessibility to opportunities and their exposure to risks vary enormously. Different commodities accessed by poor or non-poor in one area might have different value and serve different purpose for another person and in another area, so values of these commodities cannot be treated homogenously in different areas (ibid).

Sen’s perspective of wellbeing goes beyond economic perspective, Sen looks at people’s health, nourishment, ability to cloth well, their literacy level, life span and above all acceptability and ability to participate in the community freely. Freedom to move, chose what to do or chose what to be, are all aspects of wellbeing that Sen gives attention when looking at development (ibid, pp.19). Another component of development pointed out by Sen is happiness. Sen asserts that increase in one’s income simultaneously increases their ability and chances of getting out of extreme poverty. This means that he or she can meet the basic health services, get educated and can afford to feed on good food thus lowering their level of deprivation and increasing their level of happiness. Although it deserves to be noted that this is one of those components that may possibly lead to happiness (Todaro and Smith, 2011 pp.19).

Amartya Sen provide a wider understanding of development that goes beyond the commonly perceived and used economic development perspective. Assessing quality of life through capability approach, that is through what someone is able to do, commonly referred to as “functioning” gives chance to look at enormous variables affecting people. These are very important variables which in some cases are ignored when we examine development from certain perspective (J. Defilippis and S. Saegert, 2012, pp.320).

Sen asserts that a person’s ability to participate in community events freely, have some respect and walk freely in the society without shame, escape morbidity, mortality and is adequately nourished are important elements worth understanding when we look at what successful life entails (ibid).
With these varying perspectives although complementing in some aspects, it can therefore be understood that defining development or underdevelopment can not only be seen from measuring of people’s income, employment and inequality but rather as a multidimensional concept involving “transformation in social structures, popular attitude and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of poverty.” The embracing of social change in the system, providing flat form for meeting basic needs and a transition from unsatisfactory conditions of life to material and spiritually well off is a fundamental point for observation (Todaro and Smith, 2012 pp.16). The contrasting of the different perspectives of development is expected to inform this study of different positions and critically assess how the different microcredit impacts influence Uganda development.

2.3. Why is the conceptual framework important in research and how will it be used as a lens to understand phenomena being studied?

Creswell and Miller (2000, p.125) asserts that one angle of determining credibility in a study is through looking at researchers, who in some cases determines how long the study takes or how long data collection should be. How he or she develops the analysis and narrative of the data processed. This is a very important lens to operationalize different research questions posed that look at both backgrounds, methods of data collection and analysis used in microcredit impact assessments in Uganda. Altheide and Johnson (1994) cited by Creswell and Miller (2000), refers the process where researchers return to their data time and over again to see if the “construct, categories, explanation and interpretations make sense” and if there is close interactions in the entire process as way of attaining credibility and validity in scientific research (ibid).

Another perspective of determining validity in qualitative research asserts that reality is socially constructed and is what participants perceive to be, and as linked to this study that prioritizes examining validity of impact assessment done in Uganda. It’s believed that checking how accurate participants’ realities have been represented in the final account”’ is a fundamental concern of validity. And this is why this study considered looking at what has been written about microcredit in Uganda, what methods of data collection and analysis have been used, and how do they relate to the findings (Creswell and Miller 2000, p.125).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994 p8) as cited Creswell and Miller (2000 p.125), “post positivist research consists of rigorous methods and systematic form of inquiry,” this is a farther aligned argument and a conceptual lens expected to guide this study.
2.4. How is the framework used as an analytical tool in the analysis section of this study?

The purpose of this section of the study is to give detailed procedures of determining validity in social research and how it is used as an analytical tool in assessing the validity of microcredit impact assessments in Uganda. It reflects how looking at different method of data collection and analysis, type of data and their sources, background of researchers and different findings are important in social research and how this is used as analytical lens in this study.

Creswell and Miller asserts that researchers need to look for “convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study.” The “systematic process of sorting through the data” to enable the development of themes and sub-themes in research is believed to be very eminent in avoiding repetition. Creswell stresses that for this to be done, there is need to look through different methods like review of different documents, interviews and observations employed by the studies. The theming or grouping of different related ideas or evidence in research allows connectivity and consistent flow in research presentation (Creswell and Miller, 2000; Firebaugh, 2008 pp.64; Anthony and Leech, 2006, p239)

For clear understanding, the study provide example of how sometimes studies can be specifically broken down as; the types of data and its sources, background of researchers or investigators carrying out the study, the theory being employed more precisely, the perspectives being used to “interpret the results of the study” and “method of both data collection and analysis used to investigate the problem (Anthony and Leech, 2006; Firebaugh, 2008). This is an important structure that has been used to streamline argument and structure this piece of work.

As posed in the research question, understanding the background of researcher is very eminent when assessing validity in qualitative research since the researcher in that case is treated as an instrument upon which what is being done rely and can be well conveyed (Nahid Golafshani, 2003). It deserves to be recognised that validity and ability to carry out virtuous and quality research is directly linked to the potential and expertise of the researcher (ibid).

Researchers’ ability to “self-disclose their assumptions, beliefs, and biases” from their studies and their abilities to declare their roles and positions are fundamental in tracing the credibility and validity of any study. This is attainable in a study like this by finding out the roles and positions of different researchers (Creswell and Miller, 2000 p.127). Carrying out a validity assessment is easier and possible when researchers use epilogues and interpretive commentaries throughout the
discussion of their findings and bracket themselves out by describing personal experiences clearly (ibid).

Validity assessment in scientific research can farther be ensured by tracing the roles of participants in the study. The interaction between the researcher and the study participant is viewed as one way through which data can be cross checked, and study participants input about the structure of the study and their experiences are put in to consideration (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Anthony and Nancy (2006) refers this as informant feedback process which involves a systematic way of getting ‘feedback about one’s data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions from the study group’ as a way of allowing members who have been part of the study take a review positions to ensure credibility. This is a very important account as it leads to the matching of data collected and analysed with the final output of the study.

As reflected through different research questions posed, this study consider providing its findings with regards to different data collection and analysis methods, background of the researchers, types and sources of data used, and how the different evidence presented conform to the scientific method of carrying out scientific research. As validity is one of those ways of measuring quality in research, this study systematically reviewed different qualitative studies done, their methods of data collection and analysis. Case studies, deductive and inductive, field and secondary (desk) study based were considered for this study.
3.0. Microfinance industry in Uganda

This chapter provide basic and recent facts about economic and microfinance growth and market in Uganda. A preview of the country’s performance in terms of financial services provided, number of people being served and the roles of different actors in microfinance market in Uganda. Historic to current microfinance market growth in Uganda is discussed as per categories of microcredit service providers, proportion of rural and urban population accessing microfinance services.

3.1. Microfinance growth in Uganda

Microfinance industry in Uganda is believed to have rapidly developed in the recent years as result of interplay of factors that include though are not limited to different donors’ programs like USAID-PRESTO, Microsave, EU-SUFFICE, USAID-SPEED, GTZ-Sida FSD Program, USAID- Rural SPEED, FSDU-DFID who have been able to directly and indirectly provide a number of financial services in the market. Beside availing funds to different organisations and participants, donors have been involved in trainings, entrenchment of sound practices, provision of wholesale loans, support systems development and provision of institutional technical assistance of both private and government agencies in Uganda (AMFIU, 2008).

As microfinance industry grew and became more independent, donors have fairly refocused their contributions to capacity development instead of funds provision. Many MFIs are believed to be getting their capital from the money market as the number of their clients increase (ibid).

Microfinance industry in Uganda has witnessed the growth can be categorised and discussed in three main categories of service providers. It is important to understand and discuss the emerged category of microfinance service providers in the market because it gives a fair account of who, and how many people benefit from microfinance development Uganda (AMFIU, 2008 p.13). The dominant three main microfinance categories in Uganda are discussed below;

(i) Formal financial institutions that include banks, Credit Institutions, and Microfinance Deposit-taking Institutions (MDIs) form the first set of microfinance category in the country. Bank of Uganda under the Financial Institutions Act 2004:13 and the MDI Act of 2003 have therefore been legitimised to perform oversight roles or monitoring operations of the institutions in the financial market (AMFIU, 2008 p.13).

Wholesale institutions lending to MDIs and other MFIs so that financial services are downscaled to traditionally microfinance clientele zone has been witnessed and Centenary Bank that has 80% of its business (clients) in the microfinance portfolio, and has made initiatives to open more branches in
different parts of Uganda. These branches are expected to serve more low income people both directly and by offering loan and deposit facilities for the local MFIs/ SACCOs (ibid).

Enormous development under this category has therefore been very eminent in increasing access to financial services by both formal institutions and low income earners in different areas of the country.

ii) Second in this category are semi-formal financial institutions, which have some form of legal status but are not directly monitored by BoU. SACCOs registered under the Cooperative Societies Statute of 1991, MFIs registered under the Companies Act and microfinance NGOs registered under the non-governmental organizations (NGO) Statute form the highest number of service providers in Uganda.

Tier 4 institutions, more specifically SACCOs seen as very important in reaching the rural areas because of their simple organizational structures that are cost effective, and their ability to respond to clients’ needs because of member-based and 21 member-governed are some of those MFI institutions that have been applauded for increasing subsidised credit to Ugandans (ibid).

iii) and thirdly is informal setup, these include “all other member-based associations, including village savings and loans associations (VSLAs), accumulated savings and credit associations (ASCA) and rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs),” and self-help groups operating in the market (AMFIU, 2008).

Despite this development in microfinance industry in Uganda, it’s surprising to note that only 38% of Uganda’s population had access financial services of any sort. 18% were able to access formal financial services, 3% were able to access financial services from semiformal institutions, 17% from informal sources. 62% of the country population remained ‘un-served by any form of financial services. The 38% of the population who had access to microcredit and financial services still felt underserved as many could not access the desired services in the expected time (ibid).

Up to 16% of Uganda who had access to financial services were served by formal banks, 2% were served by MDIs, 2% by SACCOs, 1% by MFIs and 17% by informal financial groups, more rural people (65%) than urban people (58%) remained unserved. Statistic farther shows that 71% of Ugandans preferred to save although many of them preferred to buy livestock, land or other valuables instead of saving cash (AMFIU, 2008). 54% of the people, who borrowed loans, did it from their friends and relatives; this number is greater than percentage of people who borrowed loans from informal, semi-formal and formal institutions combined (ibid).
The development of microfinance act that was presented to the parliament in 2001/2002 supported transition of microfinance institutions into deposit taking, this progress was registered as a result of Bank of Uganda, Uganda central government and different donor agents’ efforts to support microfinance industry in Uganda (ibid, pp1).

According to Seibel et al (2002), women formed the largest portion of the market size of 4.5 million of the total of 8.8 although they remained the highly improvised (55%) and run small scale IGA activities that require continual taking of credit and making of different required deposits. The dominancy of women in the finance market is witnessed across different category of services provided, 60% of the borrowers in the market are believed to be women.

This is because of ‘Uganda’s National Gender Policy of mainstreaming women’ geared toward supporting women involvement in socioeconomic and political affair of the country. A number of different NGOs and other financial organisations like ‘UWFT, FINCA, FOCCAS and UWESO’ have prioritised providing financial services of up to 95-100% rate to women. UMU and PRIDE too, serve mainly women at a rate of 70% and 57% respectively while non-gender focused or bias institutions like Centenary bank, have 30 to 40% of women clients. The tendency of this rising up to 50% with CMF taking up to 52% is potentially higher if consideration is given to weekly meetings (ibid).

Despite the above notable development of microfinance market in Uganda, it demands to be noted that only a small section of the population have access to micro finance services with rural areas highly affected as many people are still lacking access to the microcredit services. It is an overriding characteristic that most NGOs that provide microfinance services and other financial institutions do not take voluntary savings from clients who want to save with them.

This is believed to have limited long time accumulation of resources that could have been invested by this majority poor. Information from this study farther shows that most of the IGAs started in Uganda are as a result of long term small savings (Seibel et al, 2002).

Stringent terms and conditions like compulsory savings before one takes a loan and compulsory non withdrawable during repayment period and demand for highly valued collaterals while taking the loans have been viewed as common characteristics dominating microfinance market in Uganda. This does not only limit the poor from acquiring the loans but it makes these borrowed loans less beneficial for clients (ibid).
3.2. Review of related literature

Literature review chapter informs us about what has been written about the topic and what new area of focus the current takes based on such information. Detailed discussion about microcredit impacts on the income, food security and access to health and how this relates to the recommended practice in scientific research is farther examined in this section. Literature review is important because it enable the study to start the main impact debate from empirically informed position.

3.2.1. Contending microfinance debate in Uganda’s market

Leo de Haan and Lakwo Alfred (2010) assert that development of microcredit in Sub-Saharan Africa emerged in two categories after the Second World War; the first category arouse as a formal financial sector that was being implemented by commercial banks whose main aims were to provide financial services to the urban dwellers at the expense of the rural poor.

The second category was donor led, where funds were directed through “development financial institutions” to boost microfinance industry although this never witnessed any good progress as those who were concerned more especially government officials and politicians did not provide these services to extreme poor. The above trend however changed after the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development in which two sides, the pro-financial stability and the one that considered microfinance as poverty alleviation program (ibid).

According to Leif Atle Beisland and Roy Mersland (2007) microfinance industry later on witnessed farther development as three categories of “formal institutions, informal self-help schemes and ad-hoc schemes” emerged in Uganda’s market. The first set of organizations were those considered to be incorporated like the banks or non-bank financial institutions, non-state actors which in most cases have been referred to as non-profit making originations or NGOs and the last but not least were those “formally registered members-based organizations for example savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOs).”

Informal self-help schemes are asserted to be mainly formed by the local people who had less external support from other organizations. Its members met periodically, contributed their savings and loaned to each other with a flexible payment period (ibid). Ad-hoc scheme has been receiving loan support from developmentally focused organizations whose aims have been to provide financial services to the poor at subsidized rates and with flexible payment period (Leif Atle Beisland and Roy Mersland, 2012).
A study done by Leo den Haan and Alfred Lakwo in (2010, p.537) in rural areas of Northern Uganda in which microcredit clients were put against non-clients showed that access to ‘‘microcredit improved the financial assets portfolio of it clients as oppose to non-clients.’’

Although this evidence is contradicted by the fact that increase in one ‘‘financial assets portfolio might lead to a reduction or loss of one’s natural, physical or social assets portfolio’’ (ibid).

According to Gripe (2002) as cited by Alfred and Haan (2010), microcredit could provide an immediate alternative or assistance to the rural poor but it might not lead to sustainable security that protects such persons from future related shocks. The impact of microcredit in rural Uganda is farther seen for providing rural population with capital to diversify their economic activities to trading in manufactured goods from the routine activities of fishing as compared to non-clients (ibid).

William Muhumuza (2005) through his piece of work that focused on looking at the impact of ‘‘NGOs' micro-credit programmes and poverty reduction in Uganda’’ cast doubt over the roles of microcredit in helping the rural population out of poverty. He asserts that different beneficiaries who received loans from the above mentioned organizations invested their loans in different small scale income generating activities. Retail trade took up to 67.5% and agriculture with 32.5% respectively. This was believed to have led to increase clients’ households’ expenditures and source of income although the greatest dilemma is how to distinguish household income raised as result of loan from that raised from routine family sources of income.

The impacts of different loans received is believed to be merger as borrowers tended to diversify their received funding to other household needs like paying school fees for the children, meeting immediate consumption needs. Accrued benefits from women borrowers were reportedly consumed domestically as compared to accrued benefits from men. This rendered microcredit as a tool providing the poor with access to financial services and helping them to respond to immediate basic life needs although access to these services do not guarantee leaping away from poverty as most IGAs are not sustainable (ibid, pp.20).

Increase in households’ assets like poultry, beds, mattresses and micro enterprises are some other pieces of evidence demonstrating the ability of rural population to be active in the market. With this ongoing popular debate about the impact of microcredit in transforming the lives of people in Uganda, considerate amount of efforts has been directed toward understanding these debated results has been measured in a scientifically accepted ways.
4.0. Methodological discussion

This chapter presents text analysis as methodological tool used by the study to collect and analyse data. Section 4.1 below gives a great understanding of the use of text analysis method in social science and how it’s used as data collection and analysis tool in the study. Section 4.2 discusses how much and what category of data has been selected for the study and what influenced the choice of data selection.

4.1. Text and systematic review

According to Abbas T.C (2003), data collection is a technique used to collect empirical data for research. Data can be categorized as primary or secondary although for this study, microfinance impacts studies has been given priority as the main set of data analysed since the researcher prioritized to review the methodological process of impact studies one in Uganda. Different set of data collected from different scientific sources like articles, different microfinance institutions reports in Uganda, reports from international organizations and different documents of Uganda government were reviewed and analysed during the study course.

Alan Mckee (2003, p1-2) in his book “textual analysis, a beginner guide” refers text analysis as a way through which researchers gather information to aid their understanding of different phenomena investigated. Norman Fairclough (1992) points out the need for explicit, systematic and detailed analysis of data in order to derive something more meaningful from it. He farther points out that structure of the text, clarity, proper use of language are important elements of text analysis. As text analysis is treated as a methodological tool to understand trend of events in social science (ibid), this study is used to understand how different microfinance impact assessments carried out in Uganda provide a great account of participants experiences. The study explores how different impact studies meet scientific process of carrying out research, how different evidence documented in those impact studies give a better understanding of clients livelihood transformation or development as a broader concept.

Kromrey (1998) as cited by Wilfried Bos and Christian Tarnai (1999) consider texts as “exclusive subjects of content analysis” that cannot be understood separately. Texts and content are intertwined components of each other whose understanding needs close and clear understanding of the two. In this study, text analysis is seen as an overarching method of analysis facilitating the study process, this therefore call for a specific use of systematic review as type of text analysis used in this study.

Aligned to the interest of this study, systematic review method structured as per review scope, questions and protocol provides a methodological approach through which the study is understood.
and carried out. The need to define scope and aim of the study and consider the experiences and views of different stakeholders against explored research questions, allows inclusion of different participants whose inputs may be highly beneficial to the study (Liz Victor, 2008).

The search for relevant pieces of evidence to ensure that the research purpose and objective are answered is another concern raised and addressed by the systematic review method. This conforms to section 4.3 of the study that look at data selection procedure in which detailed account of how, why and where different data have been selected (ibid). The search for relevant information calls for comprehensive inclusion of all the relevant information in which both published and unpublished, government agencies reports, other non-governmental reports are considered (Liz Victor, 2008).

Another important point to note as the study used systematic review is quality appraisal of evidence reviewed that allows assessment of quality, strength of different evidence and quality visa vie conclusions of different impact studies reviewed (ibid). As it remains the primary goal of this study to assess the validity of different microfinance impact studies done in Uganda, systematic review methods, recommend extraction of different methodological information about studies being reviewed, their sample characteristics and methods of analysis. This does not only align to the study research questions that looks at how the choices of methodologies used by different impact studies relate to the quality of their findings but is also one of the key procedure to be considered while measuring quality in scientific studies (Liz Victor, 2008).

4.2. Justification for choice of method used by the study

The study found it more rewarding to use systematic review method of data analysis against other methods because it encouraged a wide or comprehensive search and coverage of information reviewed. It provided a methodological practice that encouraged and ensured transparent and rigorous process during the study and facilitated the process of deriving highly credible and quality findings (Liz Victor, 2008).

The above unique qualities of the proposed methods of analysis therefore enabled my study to widely search for range of microfinance impact studies done in Uganda, critically and systematically reviewed them through a very transparent procedure. This is a methodological practice that is highly supportive in ensuring validity of impact or scientific studies that different researchers should adhere to in their study processes.

This method of data analysis was farther chosen because it facilitates examination of effects of different programs or interventions, allows a wide derivation of conclusions for different audiences and purposes (Liz Victor, 2008). This study uses systematic review method of data analysis because
it supports combining and investigation of outputs of different researches or studies related to the phenomenon being studied (Piet Daas and Judit Arends-Tóth, 2012 p.4). Different data collected has been reviewed, analysed and qualitatively discussed and structurally presented under different themes. These were some of the reviewed and considered methodological benefits that influenced the use of this method in the study.

4.3. Data selection procedure
Mary C.L and Marius A.J (1994) assert that the nature of text reflects the link between the text and reality but it is the researcher’s responsibility to bring this reality in clear fashion that can be understood by it intended audience. Positivist perspective commands that language be treated as an accurate objective reality, this therefore calls for proper identification and vigilance of what type of data is used in a study as way of ensuring quality and clarity (ibid).

The study took a keen responsibility during data selection. As this study’s main aim has been assess the validity of microfinance impact assessments in Uganda, it was therefore eminent that different scientific articles, organizational reports and information from different government of Uganda agencies on this topic were selected.

Henrik Toft Sorensen, Svend Sabroe and Jorn Cm-Sen (1996) assert that secondary data in some cases face challenges “of selection and quality, as the methods of their collection are not under the control of the researcher, and that they are sometimes impossible to validate.”

This explains why different data required for this study has been searched with the help of Linnaeus University One search, Libris, google scholar, ERIC. Different other organizations databases were also searched as a way of upholding quality and using scientifically recognised set of data for the study.

The selection of these set of data was in line with the study purpose, questions posed and even different analytical and methodological choices to be used in this study. As already highlighted above, the study used the university search system, different organizational databases to filter and get information that met the purpose of this study. The question of how much information the study used was so much dependent on how much has been written about the topic being studied and how credible these information were. As much as possible relevant information was searched and used in this question. These are summarized in the below set of questions asked below;

• What kind of data is required for this study?
• How do I chose or select those set of data required for this study?
• What amount of data is required for the success of this study?
The above choices of data, its sources and amount put into consideration possible challenges emerging as result of technological development that are likely to compromise on the different quality of data. Good data sources need to reflect or depend on the research questions to be answered by the study. Authenticity of data sources in some cases can be attained if comparison of different sources is done (Henrik Toft Sorensen, Svend Sabroe and Jorn Cm-Sen, 1996). This explains the choices of data type that included scientific sources of information like articles reviewed in the study and other organisations’ reports.
5.0. Descriptive discussions of the study findings

This chapter presents descriptive discussions of the study findings themed as; 5.1, discussing the main argument for microcredit impacts on its clients in Uganda. The main debate about microfinance impacts is supported by different evidence attained from a number of impact studies systematically reviewed. Section 5.2 gives information about sources of data used in the study, number of documents reviewed and this is supported by statistical summary at the end of the section. 5.3 discusses choice of methods of data collection and analysis employed by different impact studies reviewed and how this relates to the main discussions presented by those studies. The findings chapter then concludes with summary and recommendations generated as per different impact studies analysed.

5.1. The main debate about microfinance impacts in Uganda.

The discussion about how microfinance has helped its’ clients meet their basic daily needs put into consideration two positions argued about microfinance as a tool to reduce extreme poverty and help the poor move out of their lacking situations, and the financial sustainability position, that look at microfinance as an investment to increase access to financial services and high turnover rate (De Haan L. and Lakwo A, 2010 p.357).

The first finding from this study is that microcredit has helped to bridge financial service gap that had existed among Uganda microcredit market. A number of evidence from different documents reviewed shows that formal institutions like banks and other registered microfinance institutions had for long denied rural and poor population financial services. This contributed to limited access to financial and microcredit services by the poor and rural population at large. The development of microfinance industry in Uganda therefore led to wide access and provision of affordable credit to the poor and rural population. This development has been witnessed through both formal and informal actors involved in microcredit service provision in Uganda (Muhumuza W, 2005 pp.405; Seibel et al., 2002).

Information from different studies reviewed shows that some microcredit institutions have taken their offices to local community while others whose offices were not yet in rural communities has embarked on recruiting mobile agents to provide different required microcredit services to the rural population. ACORD was reported to have employed rural development workers (RDWs) in different sub-counties where it was working based in. This facilitated community mobilization and enhanced facilitation of close supervision of credit beneficiaries. World Vision was also said to have recruited credit officers to monitor the running of community committees benefiting from its microcredit services (ibid). Increased accessibility and emergence of many choices for not only the rural but also
the poor population at large is a fundamental development that cannot be under looked both in this study and in microfinance market development in Uganda.

Next to the above, the main argument from different documents systematically reviewed showed that microcredit has reduced the rural poor vulnerability from different economic risks and has increased their opportunities (Wright and Rippey, 2003 p.68). Access to investable loans was shown to have increased development of small scale income generating activities among the rural poor and microcredit clients at large. The growth of IGAs was believed to have supported increase in households’ incomes, facilitated clients saving potentials and skills development, to enable them repay their loans and also to support their business development. Provision for daily family needs, social interaction among clients and business community and purchase of different assets was reported to have risen among clients accessing microcredit (ibid).

An initiative by Centenary bank to provide large microfinance service to its clients more especially to the rice scheme and other non-farm activities in Tororo district, Uganda is a reflection of how both farmers’ and non-farmers income and employment possibilities increased when larger loans were provided to them. Farther evidence from the data analysed shows that the number of rice mills in Nabiganda village-Tororo district witnessed a fast growth from two to six; this was reported as a great step registered in rescuing the rural population from trekking long distance from Tororo to Mbale district to mill their rice. This did not just boost business among the microcredit clients but has also provided many alternatives for the community as both cassava and rice could be bought from the same village and milled thus value addition was done. The trickledown effects of the above was believed to have impacted on market growth and increased food stuffs for the local population thus risk from hunger and severe famine was highly reduced (Seibel, Hans Dieter; Almeyda, Gloria, 2002).

As a result of access to investable loans provided by Centenary Bank to its clients, it was shown that the value of assets of the firm tremendously increased within two year from “2.2 million to 6.0 million with 4.5 million in machinery and 1.5 million in the building” respectively. The mill employed five workers and was reported to have been providing a daily income of Ush.70,000. The ability to invest and earn daily, employ and provide food for the local population are credited pieces of evidence from different data analysed demonstrating the effectiveness of microfinance in supporting daily household income generation and business development among its clients more preferably the poor (ibid).

Evidences from different set of data analysed further showed that employment rate rouse with the increase in the number of microcredit institutions both formal and informal, yet this has not been
given due attention when we assess microfinance impacts on the population. Many microfinance institutions like banks, legally registered financial institutions, NGOs and other money lenders have been seen to employ high number of persons who earn their sources of livelihood from such employments. This section of population could not be treated in isolation as study examined microfinance impacts in Uganda. Increase in microfinance enterprises, provision of immediate sources of living, development of different households’ economic portfolios and social empowerment of its’ clients are some of the evidences derived when an analysis on microcredit impact on the rural poor in Uganda was done.

Evidence from different analysed impact studies showed that social empowerment, recognition and ability of microcredit clients to meet and discuss among themselves and to participate in the community events increased as compared to such kind of interactions among microcredit non-clients. This information was derived through a pipeline approach in which microfinance beneficiaries was studied against non-clients and observed for the entire period of the impact study. Active microcredit female clients were reported to have increased their domestic/households bargaining power and engagement in decision making as family bread winners and key sources of living for their families. Collective planning between husbands and wives were reported in families as husbands softened and gave some power in exchange of their wives’ offer for the family and their ability to run families with less of their husbands’ inputs or provision for the family.

Different microcredit beneficiaries running small scale IGAs were believed to be meeting with different people on daily basis and this is believed to have facilitated skills, knowledge and experience sharing and as well as building their social capital in long run. The meeting has been seen as a step of building and widening social capital that has enabled those women be recognized and consulted for business guidance by their counterparts in the community. The development of social capital among microcredit clients have also been applauded for supporting interdependence among these people thus leading to a community network that has not only been active at family but also at community levels.

Development of saving skills, business management knowledge and the overall increase in savings abilities of microcredit clients was reported to have risen among different rural borrowers as compared to non-borrowers. Clients were consistently expected and demanded to save for their loan repayments and as well as for their business and household consumptions. This facilitated the development of saving culture among many borrowers. Different elementary trainings and peer education provided to these clients before receiving and during the loan repayment periods provided them with lifelong financial management skills.
Beside loans being used by its’ clients as start-up capitals to run businesses of food stuffs and retail shops, consumption loans have been reported to have increased rural households consumption capacity and consumption expenditures. Consumption loans have been seen as income sources by different rural population who have been struck by hunger during poor harvest or bad weather. Loans directed to agriculture were reported to have increased the amount of tilted pieces of land; this was thought to have increased food production among its clients. Accumulation of assets like radios, bicycles, mattress and other domestic facilities have been reported to have increased among many of the clients of microcredit.

With all these congregated pieces of evidence from different impact studies carried out in Uganda, the study therefore adduce that microcredit impact debate fits well within the different development perspective as complementing initiative to improve the lives of the Uganda population.

Microcredit could be more effective and efficient in improving the lives of it beneficiaries if some of these under listed challenges were put into consideration. First to capture about the microcredit impact debate on livelihood transformation in Uganda were misfits between service providers’ objectives and the actual practices on ground. Most microfinance institutions operating in rural, peri-urban and urban areas demonstrated curiosity and objective to fight extreme poverty through improving the social welfare of the poor and providing affordable financial services to them, something that was commonly violated as many of MFIs became so profit driven and had a lot of freedom in the market.

Despite the introduction of MDI in Uganda allowing different financial institutions to receive savings of their clients, evidence from different impact studies reviewed showed a great number of microfinance institutions, NGOs providing credit services to the rural poor and other informal originations refusing voluntary savings from their clients except a few like Centenary banks have been able to receive voluntary savings from their clients. The highest conditional savings received from the population has been to enable them get loans and as well be used as security to ensure that the received loans were not defaulted. These conditional savings were non-investable as they could not be withdrawn during different loans repayment course.

Information from different data processed showed that, the highest numbers of IGAs started by rural Ugandans were as results of small and long time savings. This contradicted the pro-microfinance philosophy of fighting extreme poverty among rural poor without supporting voluntarily savings that could have boosted small scales business development among low income earners. Coupled with this conditional savings, it was primary requirement to demand for collaterals from the poor as collaterals for the loans applied for. This was reported as limiting factor to access financial services by the
majority as few economically active poor were favoured against a large population of extreme poor. These were very strong arguments backed with factual findings discrediting the effectiveness of microfinance as a program to improve the conditions of the rural poor in Uganda.

As much fascination seemed high with the amount of loans always received by clients, it was worth examining possible level of turnover from investable loans, and unlike thought, the development of informal and NGO based microcredit financial service providers have not reduced the overall costs of loans and financial services provided to the poor. Different NGOs, informal and formal money lenders offering financial services to their clients provided loans with a lot of hidden cost to their clients. Annual subscription, application fees, hidden loans administrative costs and other overall organizational administrative cost were reported to have been intentionally charged over the clients. Charges like loan processing and security fees, loans insurance and high interest rate with some charging as high as 40% to 70% and 120% per week were common practice by many MFIs as there is no price legislation in the Uganda microfinance market.

This is believed to have led to high level of exploitation of clients, increase loss of their physical and other assets portfolios. A number of most rural borrowers were reported to be illiterate and do not know their rights thus in many cases there was need for additional trainings by financial service providers.

Data from different impact assessments reviewed showed that most loans were given in a discriminative ways, as many of them were conditioned to activities that were expected to yield immediate turn over. Activities whose main sources of livelihood were based on like agriculture were ignored by different microcredit institutions although only Centenary Rural Development Bank provided agricultural loans. This was because most of the loans’ had short repayment period of up to twelve months yet agricultural loans would require more repayment timeframe. Unfavourable or too short grace period of one to two weeks before clients could start repaying their loans was very unfriendly and supportive for any investment to have made good turnover, this necessitated clients to use part of the loans for the instalment repayment.

As per the data reviewed, many clients showed this as a hindering factor that kept their loans less efficient as majority in most cases ended up receiving fewer percentages of loans applied. Many business plans and different activities were distorted by this kind of operation, as many clients could not start up initials businesses they had applied planned at the beginning simple because the loans were either provided in very small instalments or some parts of it were used for repayment in the first cycle.
The reported short loans repayment time also led to high level of dependence as many clients had to take multiple loans from different service providers to enable them service different pending loans. A number of loans farther proved more expensive for their poor beneficiaries as it required bank accounts, payment for subscription and membership fees. Some MFIs required 20% deposit before being given the first cycle of the loans applied for. Discriminative awarding of loans to the active poor and to certain business activities at the expense of agriculture which were prioritised by many clients because they considered it a back born of their economy and main source of livelihood for the population were seen as some of the hindering factors to financial services effectiveness.

Access to assets and opportunities that helped to change the livelihood of the rural population was a fundamental step toward attaining development although it’s not a comprehensive initiative to sustainably change people’s life as shown in the cases of microfinance in Uganda.

Short grace period was reflected as a great challenge hindering credit effectiveness for many microcredit beneficiaries. The effectiveness of microcredit in serving Uganda’s population and its impact could be improved by loosening tough conditions attached to acquiring loans and reduction of high lending costs attached to different loans.

5.2. Set of data reviewed and researchers background

A total of is sixteen (16) documents reviewed during the study process were mainly published articles searched with the help of Linnaeus university library engine. Different reports by microfinance institutions and other document from government of Uganda were as well used in the study. Scientific documents reviewed made 81.25% (13) of the data category.

Reports from financial originations, government of Uganda and international agencies working as umbrella originations of Sida and GTZ and other consultants affiliated to higher institutions of learning made 18.75 % (3) of the other data set used in this study. As earlier on desired, the study mainly used data from the recent years of 2000 because they were expected to give recent information, matching different changes in microfinance market in Uganda. Two documents of Barnes, C., Morris, G. & Gaile, G. (1998); and Okurut Francis Nathan, Banga M., Mukungu Ashie (1999) were the only set of reviewed documents that fall within the timeframe of 1998 and 1999 respectively.

37.5% (6) of different documents reviewed, both articles and other reports were single male written, this statistic is a reflection of number documents written both singly and jointly by males. No set of reviewed data was singly written by female although 62.5% (10) of the data reviewed were jointly written by males and female.
Critical attempts were as well made to examine professional backgrounds of different researchers and their affiliations to different organization. Many of the researchers were found as PhD holders, consultants working with different institutions of higher learning and research firms. This information was key in understanding quality of work reviewed vis-à-vis researchers competence, qualification and ability to carry out impact studies. Researcher qualification and expertise in carrying out highly credible research has been a key interest of this study.

81.25% (13) of data reviewed were scientific articles whose authors’ were either affiliated to different universities or were attached to different consultancy firms. 18.75% (3) of the data had their authors attached to MFI's in Uganda and Bank of Uganda.

Prominence of academic institutions in carrying out impact studies could be an insightful area of consideration while asking if it has been due to lack of professionals services offered outside academic community or more trust given toward them because of the desired quality outcome their impact studies. This is an interesting area to consider since the study process was faced with a challenge of few impact studies done in Uganda more especially those done by different actors other than academic scholars. As the number of microfinance institutions and its’ market develop in Uganda, a series of impact studies to measure what has been attained as remained sluggish.

Below is statistical recap of the above discussion, the study presents the table summarizing sources of data used and researchers’ background information broken as per their sex, frequency of scientific documents against organizational reports.

**Table 1: Data sources and distribution per sex of their authors:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Documents</td>
<td>81.25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Reports</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mixed (box sexes)</td>
<td></td>
<td>62.5 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3. **Choices of methods used in the impact studies**

Regarding methods of data collection and analysis, evidence from different impact studies analysed show that most studies were field based; this necessitated the use of methods of data collection that could enforce interaction between researchers and different category of participants met during the study. Methods of data collection like interviews, focus group discussions, direct observation and use of questionnaires were highly reported among field based studies.

Out of the sixteen documents reviewed, 62.5% (10) based their findings on primary data collected through a number of methods like FGDs, interviews, observations and use of questionnaires. A number of impact studies reviewed did not state how long their studies took but a few like Leo de Haana and Alfred Lakwo (2010), had their data collection time running from 2003-2006; Graham A.N. Wright and Paul Rippey (2013) study was done in between 2007 to 2009; Okurut, A. Schoombee, S. Van Der Berg (2005) data collection was based on 1999/2000 UNHS; Richard L.Meyer, Richard Roberts and Adam Mugume (2004) study was done from February 2013 to November 2013 while Carolyn Barnes, Gayle Morris and Gary Gaile (1998) data collection lasted for about 24 to 36 months. All the studies reviewed were qualitative in nature hence they presented qualitative findings. Impact studies that used secondary data alone made only 12.5% (2) of the impact studies reviewed while study which employed both primary and secondary data made 31.25% (5) of the data category.

Data collection process and analysis provided a great match of different content reviewed with exception of few studies that had no evidence of methods used during data collection and analysis. Based on the above, it is therefore worth noting that different methods of data collection used in the different impact studies reviewed facilitated meetings of credit officers, microfinance organizations and microcredit clients who shared their experiences, and the methods allowed tracing of life story and observation of silent or nonverbal responses during the study process.

A greater number of documents reviewed were searched with the help of different Linnaeus university library engine; majority of these were scientific articles written and published about microcredit in Uganda. A number of other reputable databases of NGOs, government of Uganda agencies and other international organizations were searched to provide more set of data used in this study. The selection of these data was carefully done to avoid use of weak and low quality data that could have compromised on quality of this work.

It deserves to be said that there was overlapping use of data types by different studies, secondary data was used by different studies more especially in background, introductions, literature reviews and in analysis sections as studies deduce comparison of different outcomes of the program initiated.
Below is a quantitative summary of primary, secondary and mixed data set used in the study as explained in the above section.

**Table 2: statistical summary of types of data used in the impact studies reviewed.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary data</td>
<td>56.25%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed (both primary and secondary)</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In conclusion, it is worth acknowledging that choices of methods of data collections, analysis and sources of documents reviewed has not only been the necessary requirement to be met while carrying out scientific research but they also benefited this study with evidences required to serve its’ purpose. A more analytical discussion about methods of data collection, analysis and sources of data used in microfinance impact assessment in Uganda and how it relate to different studies content and structure are discussed in the analysis section.

**5.4. Summary of the finding and recommendations:**

This study presents us with evidence based arguments about microfinance impact on rural livelihood transformation in Uganda and how those different evidences are mirrored within different development perspectives. Detailed and more interlinked discussions about this and how it conforms to the scientific process of carrying research is presented in the analytical section of this study. High use of primary data by different impact studies reviewed has been enormously registered. Focus group discussions, interviews, use of questionnaires and direct observation were commonly used during the field studies and surveys as tools of data collection. Document reviews, text and content analysis formed method of data collection by studies that used secondary data basically or studies that did not involve in field data collection.

Field data were highly used by different impact studies reviewed as compared to secondary data. The data set critically analysed were mainly of mid-year 2000 to the current time. Scientific data set made the highest sources of data as compared to information from other organisations databases. A
number of impact studies reviewed were confirmed to have been carried out with highly qualified professionals who had PhDs while others provided consultancy services to different firms.

A number of challenges affecting microcredit service delivery and impacts in Uganda are believed to be resulting from weak monitoring and limited attention directed toward clients’ protection. Microfinance market practices was highly determined by market factors; this was believed to have affected clients tremendously in various ways from losing their assets in unlawful ways to being lured into signing loans agreements that put them at risk rather than bailing them out of poverty. It is therefore upon the above findings that a thoughtful interlinked working relation (policy) needs to be considered. This could connect the government as the regulator or market monitor of MFI; which are both formal and informal financial service providers to clients. The policy framework would help to streamline practices and relations among government, MFIs and MF clients as minimum practices agreed in the market. Designing a watch dog policy would help categories and streamline micro-financial service providers’ objectives against their field practices.

Findings show that majority of microfinance institutions including NGOs who in most cases registered their initiative to complement and improve the rural livelihood have been so much profit driven instead of working to fulfil their goals. Effective monitoring of microfinance institutions in this case would be a determining factor to improve their services to the rural poor and as well the trickledown effects would tremendous impact on the poor.

Beside the above recommendation, there is need to explore how this would impact on both MFIs and its clients.
6.0. Analytical discussion of the study findings

This chapter is presented in line with the theoretical framework discussed in chapter two of this study; it presents analytical discussion of the study findings. Validity, used as a procedure to ensure high quality in scientific research provides the analytical lens to understand the credibility of different impact studies carried out in Uganda.

6.1. Main argument within a scientific discourse and development perspectives:

A total of sixteen impact studies systematically reviewed provide strong debate about the impacts of microfinance to population of Uganda. Microcredit impact debate is informed by factual pieces of evidence that cut across different development perspectives.

A number of impact studies reviewed assert that microcredit has provided small scale start-up capitals for IGAs to the rural population that had previously been ignored by other formal microfinance service providers like commercial banks. This is believed to have increased the number of small businesses ran by microfinance clients. The loans directed to small businesses have been fundamental in reducing vulnerability of the rural poor as it served to respond to emergencies and widen income sources of their households. Both direct and trickledown impacts of microcredit falls within Todaro and Smith (2011, p15) assessment of development that look at economic wellbeing of national population through gross national income (GNI) per capita. Investments in IGAs impacted on population’s consumption and income accumulation. Savings and investments therefore became tools to fight poverty and unemployment thus economic perspective and development proposed by Todaro and Smith is demonstrated through the impact of microfinance impact studies reviewed.

Consumption loans have increased household consumption level hence liberating microcredit clients at the times of low harvests and calamities. Rural households, community groups and different individuals have been considered as units of assessments by impact studies reviewed. The number of participants who provided their experiences and views of microfinance impacts varied from one study to the next as discussed under methodology section; these were crucial elements in understanding how this debate provide a detailed account of participants’ views and experiences.

The unit of assessment considered by different impact studies is a required yardstick of measuring external validity and deriving general conclusions in studies. According to Cook and Campbell (1979) as cited by Burke Johnson (1997), variables of studies are important elements to consider when making generalization of an investigation. It’s with the above reflection of participants’
involvement in different impact studies reviewed that I attribute the main debate here as highly informed and generated from participants’ contributions in different studies analysed.

A wider examination of the term development provided this study with opportunity to understand microfinance impacts from a broader perspective, for example, reduction of clients’ vulnerability from different shocks through increased access to consumption and investable loans is applauded step toward poverty reduction. Examining microfinance in a broader sense as one of the complementing programs among many initiatives to reduce poverty is a realistic way of assessment that reduce pressure and impractical expectations of the program. The microfinance debate here adheres to internal validity that is more focused on investigating causes and effects of the phenomena being studied. This enables the conclusion of causal relations between variables being studied (R. Burke Johnson, 1997 pp287).

Key to understand when we assess microfinance impact on poverty reduction is our understanding of poverty visa vie program implementers’ understanding and expectations. Many impact studies reviewed, explored microfinance impacts in relation to poverty reduction yet none of them provided any understanding of the term poverty and what determine poverty reduction. This is an important point to consider rather than just having objectives stated as to reduce “extreme poverty reduction.” Defining a consenting point between researchers and program implementers of what poverty is and what defines poverty reduction is a fundamental step as we measure what works.

To widen and improve the impact of microfinance on Uganda’s population, it’s worth thinking of a more inclusive approach that enable the inclusion of extreme poor who do not have securities or collaterals to access loans. This is important in addressing selective dealings with clients and awarding of loans to only economically active clients, who are perceived to be able to repay. In other words, those who need more financial services are the extreme rural poor who are in most cases exposed to high vulnerability and are in-dire basic needs and lacking situations.

Microcredit possibly, would have more holding impacts if its measurement has not narrowed to looking at poverty reduction in term of few variables. This is because there are many cross cutting factors affecting development or poverty reduction. Evidence shows that microfinance is a supporting initiative of attaining social inclusion, this aligns to Sen’s idea of capability approach that look at people’s wish to be accepted and participate in community events. This broadens our understanding of microfinance impacts and development beyond economic school of thought.

It is worth noting that different impact studies reviewed and presenting strong debate about microfinance impacts on livelihood transformation were found to be highly credible. The
coordination between different methods used to collect clients’ experiences, views and ideas, the use of text analysis to analyse and describe these outcomes are pillars upon which this study concludes that there has been high level of both internal and external validity of impact studies carried out in Uganda. The use of qualitative approach by all impacts studies reviewed and use of life tracking history, guides the procedural discussion presented in this study.

Detail description of different impact studies carried out in Uganda provided this study with the most required data that form the main impact debate. Observation of clients IGAs, engaging a number of participants in different impact studies analysed form strong narrative section of impact studies that were systematically reviewed. Different impact studies presented factual evidence that guided the above debate. With the above informed and balanced arguments, the study therefore asserts that, a number of cross cutting factors that include but are not limited to comprehensive coverage of different literature required for the study, choices of methods of data collection and analysis used by different impact studies and clear use of languages benefited both impact and this study in many ways.

6.2. Choices of methods and validity of impact studies
This section of the study is geared toward understanding and answering research question; of how choices of data collection and analysis methodologies employed by different impact studies had on the processes and quality of studies systematically reviewed. Key to note is that the choices of methods of data collection and analysis used in different impact studies systematically reviewed were highly determined by the type of studies carried and researchers as instruments of those studies.

Field based studies called for use of methods of data collection that facilitated interactions between researchers and participants; whose views and experiences were very fundamental in the study process. 100% (16) of the impact studies systematically reviewed were qualitative in nature and this had tremendous influence on the choices of methods of data collection and analysis to be used by those studies.

According to Robert C. Bogdan and Sari Knopp Bilqkd (2006), it’s in the interest of qualitative research and researchers to know “where, when, how and under what circumstances” certain things came in to existence. What historical circumstances and movements are they a part of, qualitative research therefore is interested in each and every words and the narrative that makes evidence of what is being studied (ibid).

56.25% (9) of the impact studies analysed were field based and this therefore necessitated the use of methods that could allow primary or field data collection. The method of data collection, types of
data collected, narratives derived from such data and the overall conclusions, are integrated parts of qualitative research whose consistent observation is not only eminent in ensuring quality study but also guarantee credibility and validity of such studies. There has been such a ridding consistency in most of the impact studies systematically reviewed.

31.25% (5) studies employed both field and secondary data collection approaches in their studies. The use of field surveys in which interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires and direct observation benefited the study by apprehending first-hand information from different primary actors in the microfinance market in Uganda. Use of exploratory approach was very eminent in getting clients oral life history and through observation, through this, researchers were able follow silent experiences or what has been referred as non-verbal part of communication during the interviews with different players in microfinance market in Uganda, more specifically microfinance clients.

Observation of clients standards of living visa vie their narrative of experiences, and following of different IGAs against their loan portfolios was imperatively possible because of some of the above highlighted field methods of data collection employed by different impact studies reviewed. The use of pipeline comparison approach that facilitated comparison of microfinance clients against non-clients was only possible with researchers’ engagement of different microfinance stakeholders instead of documents review. This was important to avoid potential bias that could have impeded effective measurement of impact among microfinance beneficiaries.

As seen in the different selection criteria by microfinance institutions, results of impacts studies in some instances could be misleading as a tool to fight poverty as there has been selective awarding of loans to economically active persons but not to the extreme poor. This therefore called for a critical and a thorough study to be able to come up with findings that embraces different participants’ experiences and views.

These were some of the benefits of methods of data collection used by different impact studies that allowed critically assessment and evaluation of what kind of clients have been targeted and have benefited from microfinance services in Uganda. Getting clients’ experiences, progress and ideas can be challenging if the method of data collection employed do not support information sharing between researchers and study participants.

Focus group discussions, interviews and use of questionnaires facilitated constant interactions between researchers and microfinance credit officers, branch managers and clients. These were some of the important factors that enabled information comparison and measurement of consistency among different participants interviewed. Internal validity is more concerned with studies being able
to present factual evidences, accurate information of participants views and it encourages a deeper understanding of research participants world (R. Burke Johnson, 1997), it can be said that the choices of different methods of data collection and analysis benefited most of the impact studies reviewed in that sense.

12.5% (2) of the critically reviewed study employed secondary method of data collection where documents review and text analysis were done. The selection of documents was an important step in ensuring validity of those impact studies reviewed. UBOS report form category of document reviewed by some of the impact studies. Information gathered during UNHS of 1999-2000 with the technical help of World Bank in which a large set of data was used helped in the impact study facilitation.

Out of the sixteen documents systematically reviewed, 56.25% (9) of the total data used in the impact studies were field based or primary data carried out through field interviews, surveys, focus group discussions and use of questionnaires. 12.5% (2) of the data set analysis were solely based on secondary data and 31.25% (5) studies reviewed used both primary and secondary data.

Different impact studies that used primary data as their sources for the study employed interviews, focus group discussions, use of questionnaires and direct observation. The study collected primary data from different households although some individuals and groups were as well included as units of measurement. As reported by most impact studies, loans were either taken by groups or individuals, this prompted their impacts to be assessed at household levels because majority of microcredit clients were reported as married women. Households was still identified as a common unit of assessment because many loans received were either directed to family enterprises or used for households’ consumption. Unmarried clients were less targeted by the loans and very few were reported to have benefited from microcredit schemes.

Women were reported as the highest beneficiaries of microfinance in Uganda as compared to men, assessing impact at household level and among different groups was fundamental in providing a more representative and realistic conclusion by different impact studies. It is an important element while assessing external validity of any study to consider how generalizability or study conclusion puts into account the numbers or units of assessment and as well as how representative is that to the overall units of assessment. Exploring evidence among these beneficiaries required methodological approaches that supported participants’ engagement in the study, share of their experiences and views.
Data collection timeframe among many impact studies that were field based has been used as a tool to measure credibility of impact studies reviewed. This is important in knowing if the study had enough time to collect a wide variety of data or if it was just a simple survey. 37.5% (6) of the impact study reviewed are categorized as highly credible because they provided necessary information about the data collection and study duration. The timeframe for data collection and study duration felt within the average time frame of 12months, which is such a moderate time to carryout meaningful impact studies. 62.5% (10) of the study did not specify their data collection and study duration; this made it hard for the study to follow how extensive these studies were thus these studies has been considered as less credible as compared to the first set.

The number of participants interviewed and the method of engagement used is also another important element used in looking at different impact studies carried out in Uganda. 25% (4) of the impact studies showed and specified number of clients interviewed as microfinance beneficiaries (clients) and service providers, this included mainly different microfinance institutions both formal and informal and government agencies.

Muhumuza W. (2007) impact study was done in two districts of Mbarara and Mpigi where four NGOs providing microcredit services and 40 clients were interviewed per districts respectively although this study did not specify its’ data collection and the overall study timeframe, its’ overall methodological information provided by the study enabled it classification as highly valid and credible.

De Haana L. and Lakwo A. (2010) study was done in between 2003 to 2006, the study used field survey, and interviewed 6 women groups with 180 microcredit clients selected and put against 130 non clients through pipeline comparison approach. This was done in order to determine how microfinance impacted on these rural clients of Nebbi district. This study was clear in its study timeframe, category of study participants interacted with, methods of data collection and type of data used in the study hence making it a highly credible and quality work.

Okurut, A. Schoombee, S. Van Der Berg (2005) used data of UNHS data of 1999-2000, the document had comprehensive information about different participants interviewed and methods used to generate different data thus making the study highly credible as well. And last but not least is Carolyn Barnes, Gayle Morris and Gary Gaile (2001) study that interviewed 1,332 clients in ratio of 1,242 women to 90 men respectively in period of 36 months of data collection.

The above studies are seen as those that met high external validity as their generalizations were based and matched the number and views of participants interviewed during the study. This is a
necessary procedure to understand while examining how different impact studies met the scientific method of carrying out research. 62.5% (10) percent of impact studies analysed did not mention the number of participants interviewed during their studies although they mentioned what categories and methods of data collection used in their studies, this guaranteed that they at least met with different category of study participants.

No much quality gap could be established between the use of primary and secondary data as much of the impact studies reviewed highly relied on primary data shown as 56.25% (9) against 12.5% (2) of those that used secondary data and 31.25% (5) of studies employed mixed method of data collection, that is, both field and document review in their studies.

It can be deduced that strong relations between field based study narratives, their methods of data collection and analysis has been extensively examined and found to be matching in many impact studies. Efficient representation of participants’ experiences and views are more clearly shown in field based studies as different quotes and specific life progress raised has been clearly brought out in the text. It is still worth to note there has been overlapping use of primary and secondary data in almost all studies more especially in the analysis section where different findings have been linked to wider impacts of microfinance and the theoretical ideas that guided such analysis. The use of secondary data was also eminent and commonly used by other studies in the background, introduction and literature review sections. This therefore leads to the conclusion that both field and document review methodologies should be considered as reinforcing approaches rather than examining against each other.

The table below present summary of methodological discussions that look at the types of studies assessed that is qualitative verses quantitative, types of data used by different impact studies reviewed, study timeframes and numbers of participant interviewed and interacted with during those impact studies.
Table 3: Statistical summary of methodological discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Qualitative studies analysed</td>
<td>16/16</td>
<td>100/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Quantitative studies analysed</td>
<td>Non</td>
<td>Non</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Studies that used primary data mainly</td>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>56.25/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Studies that mainly relied on secondary data</td>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>12.5/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Studies that used mixed data (primary &amp; secondary data)</td>
<td>5/16</td>
<td>31.25/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Study with data collection timeframe said</td>
<td>6/16</td>
<td>37.5/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Study with no data collection timeframe said</td>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>62.5/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Study with interviewed participants number said</td>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>25/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Study with no information about number of participants interviewed</td>
<td>12/16</td>
<td>75/100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3. Researchers background and impact studies validity

As a procedure of measuring quality and validity in scientific practices, the study looked at different background of researchers, their organizational affiliation, level of professional qualifications and their sexes vis-à-vis the content of different impact studies reviewed. 81.25% (13) of the systematically reviewed impact studies were scientific journals written by authors affiliated to different universities like Makerere University of Uganda, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, University of Cologne, Columbia University, New York, University of California, San Francisco, California and Norwegian universities respectively.

Some of the authors provided consultancy services to different organizations while others were attached to reputable development and research firms.

According to Nahid Golfshani (2003), a researcher is an important facilitator in scientific study, in other words, he/she is looked at as an instrument through which what is being done rely. Researchers’ ability to coordinate, carry out data collection and form narratives of quality, which is audience friendly or usable, is an important element in scientific research practice. His/her ability to examine causal effects and make an outstanding causal conclusion is highly recommended and applauded to ensure quality of scientific studies (Burke Johnson 1997 p.287).

A number of impact studies systematically assessed had many of their researchers as PhD holders attached to different universities and research institutions with some providing consultancy services.
to different firms. There was no impact study reviewed that was solely written by a female. Impact studies written by both sexes (mixed) made 62.5% (10) and those solely carried out by male were 37.5% (6) of the documents reviewed. As a posed research question, understanding the background of researchers is such a necessary procedure in assessing validity in qualitative research. It deserve to be stated that different impact studies reviewed were well structured, a number of researchers were able to clearly state study duration and the roles they played in making their studies successful.

Detailed information about their preparation for the study, field engagements/activities and clear reporting of clients’ experiences through quotes and use of paraphrases distinguished researchers’ roles and the content of their studies thus making it possible to understand impact studies visa vie the roles of researchers.

A number of studies stated their duration of data collection and the entire study period while some did not. For example Leo de Haana and Alfred Lakwo (2010) study was done in between 2003 to 2006, Graham A.N. Wright and Paul Rippey (2013) collected its data between 2007 to 2009, Okurut, A. Schoombee, S. Van Der Berg (2005) used the UNHS data collected between 1999 to 2000, Richard L.Meyer and Richard Roberts and Adam Mugume (2006) data collection was done in 2013. These pieces of information provided by different impact studies reviewed made it easy to trace the roles of different researchers in their studies and assess the credibility of impact studies done in Uganda. Researchers’ background information also enabled categorization of studies depending on the in-depth level of information given about the study process.

Experience and professional competent of researchers were reflected in the preparation and research implementation as most studies stated how they organized and carried out the entire studies. Creswell and Miller (2000, p125) points out the need for time in qualitative studies and this cannot be assessed outside the roles of researchers. The choices of methods of data collection, analysis and the report or studies narrative quality of different impact studies reviewed cannot be understood outside the roles and capacities of different researchers.

Evidence also reflects on the strategic and needful use of methods like history tracing, interviews, focus group discussions and direct observation. The use of this according to different categories, educational background, and ability to understand and participate in the study, beneficiaries interviewed are all accredited to researchers’ ability to plan, coordinate and implement different impacts studies.

Creswell and Miller (2000 p.127) assert that researchers’ abilities to disclose their assumptions, beliefs, and biases from their studies and their ability to declare their roles and positions is
fundamental in tracing credibility and validity of any study. This was attainable in a study like this by finding out the roles and positions of different researchers. Researchers’ use of epilogues, interpretive commentaries throughout the discussion of the findings is easier to assess when researchers clearly bring themselves out by describing personal experiences (ibid).

In a final assessment it can be established that microfinance impact studies carried out in Uganda had very high validity although some studies that lacked information about the period of the study and as well failed to show the role of researchers during the study.

Appendix 1 provide a detailed table of researchers level of education or professional qualifications, their affiliations to different organisations, sex, methods of data collections employed in their studies, study timeframe and main evidence backing up impact debate in the study. The appendix used as the main statistical summary of methodological discussion in the analysis section is important to this study because the table allows easy consultations.

6.4. Study conclusion.

High level of validity among different field based impact studies have been observed among those studies that clearly stated their data collection timeframe and methods of data collection. These studies are termed as more credible and valid as compared to those that did not reflect timeframe and methods used. As it has been followed through the main debate about microfinance impact in Uganda, factors affecting microfinance effectiveness in Uganda has been closely linked to administrative and loans monitoring mechanisms that are unconducive for different microcredit service beneficiaries.

Leize faire market system, where demand for the services dictates the market practice is an insightful area for future study. Suggestion to monitor or develop watch dog policies could be asserted to have positive impacts on microfinance practices although there is need to investigate if this has possibility of impacting on clients’ livelihood transformation.

A number of impact studies reviewed recommended increased and subsidized access to financial services to the poor although less attention has been given to factor that determine the poor’s eligibility to these financial services. This therefore provokes a serious question of how extreme poverty could be reduced through microfinance amidst selective provision of services to only the active poor.

Key to note is that high level of validity registered by different impact studies done in Uganda could be attributed to the different sources of data selected. Scientific studies, mainly articles published made the highest number of documents reviewed. Despite the growth of microfinance industry in
Uganda, the study was faced with a challenge of limited data published by different sources yet this could have facilitated comparison of data to measure validity. It would therefore be important to examine if its’ lack of interests or technical challenges related to ability to carry out impact studies that has affected the growth of impact studies in Uganda amidst the development microfinance market in the country.

It was the primary purpose of this study to carry out a validity assessment of microfinance impact studies in Uganda, find out the main argument of microfinance impact within a broad concept of development and validity. The study considered microfinance main argument to determine the epistemological use of knowledge about the topic studied, choices of methods of data collection, analysis, sources of the data and how this impacted on different impact studies. Researchers’ background in terms of academic qualification, sex and ability to carry out researches examined as per their affiliation to different universities and research organizations provided good understanding of different studies systematically assessed.

High level of credibility was registered among field based impact studies that stated their methods of data collection, analysis, study timeframe, category and numbers of participants interviewed. Few studies that had no information about their data collection timeframe and methods employed were referred as lowly credible as compared to those that provided such information although validity among all the studies analysed has been found to high. Many studies almost had most required information needed to understand their studies processes, goals and participants involvement in those processes.

Different studies analysed derived their conclusion based on the different set of information used in the study, methods of data collection and authors’ ability to provide good information or narrative of the study. For example, studies whose researchers were attached to higher institutions of learning and consultancy firms were termed as highly valid compared to those that did not have any detailed information about their researchers.

In a nutshell therefore, this study was able to meet its purpose as it was able to clearly and fully answer different research questions posed. All the three research questions have been fully answered by this study hence facilitating a greater understanding to program evaluation processes and quality in broad.
References:


Johnson R. Burke (1997): Examining the validity structure of qualitative research, Education; winter 1997; 118, 2; Research Library


## Appendix 1: Statistical summary of methodological discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study name</th>
<th>Set of data used by the study</th>
<th>Some of the main evidence of microfinance impacts from different impact studies.</th>
<th>Category of the document reviewed</th>
<th>Methods of data collection used and their benefits to the study</th>
<th>Author s sex</th>
<th>Researchers’ institutional affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lakwo 2006</td>
<td>Both field and secondary data were used by the study</td>
<td>MFIs were reflected to be more concerned with profit maximization than delivering services to improve people’s welfare. High interest rate attached to loans were commonly reported among MFIs operating in Uganda</td>
<td>MFI report</td>
<td>The study was done in February 2002 where different methods of interviews and questionnaires were used. These methods were important in avoiding selection bias and reaching different participants. Observation and exploratory approach were very eminent in getting participants’ oral life histories and capture of silent experience during the study</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>The researcher was attached to MAK university and has high academic qualification (PhD). The study was published in 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carlton A. et al., (2001)</td>
<td>Both field and secondary set of data were used in the study</td>
<td>Low income earners were able to access both MFIs and their services although extreme poor were discriminated and had no access to credit services. Loans facilitated purchase of assets, provided capital for IGAs, helped to diversify sources of income, led to social capital development, promoted gender empowerment and enriched business skills development of its clients</td>
<td>MFI report</td>
<td>Interviews were used to gather data from microcredit clients and this enabled meeting of wide section of study participants and listening to their experiences</td>
<td>1Female &amp; 4Males</td>
<td>Researchers were attached to Institute of Social Research, Vienna and are asserted to have high level of qualification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Authors</td>
<td>Data Collection Method</td>
<td>Data Source</td>
<td>Researchers</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carolyn Barnes, Gary Gaile and Richard Kibombo (2001)</td>
<td>Field data was collected for the study purpose</td>
<td>Fraud cases were highlighted as MFIs were more interested in profit making than considering borrowers concerns; unlawful confiscations of borrowers assets and luring borrowers to unclear sign agreements with hidden cost were commonly reported by participants through the reviewed study</td>
<td>USAID report</td>
<td>Credit officers, branch managers and clients who were interviewed during the study process provided complete information for the study. FGDs and direct observations were as well used in the study process</td>
<td>1 Female and 2 Males</td>
<td>Researchers were found to be attached to different institutions of learning including MAK Uganda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gayle Morris and Gary Gaile (2005)</td>
<td>Field data was collected and used in the study</td>
<td>Microcredit services were less accessible in rural areas and few people earning loans and other incomes spent high proportions of it on basic needs such as food and daily domestic needs. Thus loans boosted households consumption level</td>
<td>Organisation report</td>
<td>The study carried out different interviews during data collection and this took 24-36 months. A total of 1,332 participants were interviewed in a ratio of 1,242 women to and 90 men respectively.</td>
<td>1 Female and 2 Males</td>
<td>Researchers were found to be attached to Management Systems International (MSI), Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR), WorldWID Fellow, USAID/Uganda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Okurut F.N, A. Schoombee, S. Van Der Berg (2005)</td>
<td>Document review was the main source of data used in the study</td>
<td>The loans helped to reduce vulnerability, provided investment and consumption credits thus improving number of IGAs run by clients. This was believed to have impacted on clients’ welfare as well</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>The data source for subsequent analysis was the UNHS of 1999/2000, undertaken by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) with technical support of the World Bank.</td>
<td>1 Female and 2 Males</td>
<td>This document was published in 2005 by South African Journal of Economics although other information about the researchers were found missing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ssewamala F.M, Torsten B.N., Jane</td>
<td>Field data was used in the study</td>
<td>Reduction of depression among children with HIV-AIDS was reported</td>
<td>Organisation report</td>
<td>This was mainly a field surveys in which interviews were used as method</td>
<td>2 Males and 2 Females</td>
<td>Researchers were attached to Columbia University, New</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Study Details</td>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>Data Collection Method</td>
<td>Affiliation</td>
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<td>Waldfogel and Leyla Ismayilova (2012)</td>
<td>as they access basic needs. This facilities rejuvenation of their hope as they were certain of education. Thus conforming to asset theory posits that access to economic opportunities have important psychological and socioeconomic benefits for individuals and families.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Field engagement in a number of phases allowed comparison of different information got during the study time.</td>
<td>York, University of California and San Francisco and were asserted to be highly qualified</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gayle Morris and Carolyn Barnes (2005)</td>
<td>Different data set was collected during the field study MF services were reported to have benefited different households by providing capital required for new enterprises start up, increased amount spent on durable assets and Agricultural inputs, increased amount of cultivated land. The amount of household income from crops also increased although limited grace period was seen as a challenge to program effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Female and Male Researchers were found to be affiliated to Edinboro University of Pennsylvania and were termed as highly qualified since some provided consultancy services at different level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graham A.N. Wright and Rippey Paul (2003)</td>
<td>The study collected and used field data Microcredit provided capital for small scale business start-up, increased households income as many of them received investable loans. Increased saving skills, business</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organisation report Pilot survey, questionnaires, interviews and direct observations were used; this facilitated the capture of specific data and allowed comparison of different livelihood strategies. This study was done</td>
<td>2Males DFID 2013, international organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Data Collection Method</td>
<td>Data Source</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nannyonjo J. &amp; Nsubuga J. (2004)</td>
<td>Both data collected from the field and different documents reviewed</td>
<td>Organisation report</td>
<td>Field survey in which interviews and observation were employed as tools of data collection during the study.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leif Atle Beisland and Roy Mersland (2012)</td>
<td>Field data</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>A total of 841 respondents were reached with the help of questionnaires during the study.</td>
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<tr>
<td>De Haana L. and Lakwo A. (2010)</td>
<td>Field data</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Field surveys were done in Uganda where 6 women groups of 180 members benefiting from microcredit services were put against 130 non clients in order to find out the impact of microfinance among its clients. Pipeline comparison method of data collection used was very important to eliminate possible sample biases. It also enabled access to first-hand information.</td>
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Growth and assets accumulation also grew among microcredit clients in different phases and it lasted between 2007 to 2009.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Study Location</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Okurut, Francis Nathan, Banga M., Mukungu Ashie (1999)</td>
<td>Secondar y data mainly from UNHS formed the data set used in this study</td>
<td>Microfinance provided both financial and non-financial services to its client, it has been source of capital for IGAs and other enterprises, employment and supported saving skills development</td>
<td>Organisation al report</td>
<td>UNHS of 1999/2000 data was used in this study</td>
<td>2 Males and 1 Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyer R and Mugume A.R.R. (2004)</td>
<td>The study collected and used field data</td>
<td>High microfinance administrative cost was in most cases carried over to clients. High expectation of fast turn over by MFIs led discriminative awarding of loans that ignored agricultural sector.</td>
<td>Organisation al report</td>
<td>Field study done in November 2003</td>
<td>2 Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seibel, Hans Dieter; Almeyda, Gloria (2002)</td>
<td>Mixed data, that is both primary and secondary were used in the study</td>
<td>Provision of capital for business start-up Employment of many people, increased access to loans at subsidized rates</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Field study was carried out; interviews and observation were used to collect clients’ experiences. Clients’ background and economic activities, their progress against loans received were captured because of the methods of data collection used.</td>
<td>2 male : 2female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muhumuza W. (2005)</td>
<td>Field data was used</td>
<td>There was misfit between the MFIs objectives of poverty reduction and the actual practices on ground.</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Article</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Primary data was collected from respondents through interviews. 40 clients were interviewed per districts of study. Two districts were covered during the study period. The used methods supported capture of evidence, observation and verification of facts. It also allowed observation standard of clients’ standard of living and IGAs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Zeija, Flavian (2013)</td>
<td>Mixed data, that is both primary and secondary were used</td>
<td>Lack of consumer protection was the main argument captured. High interest rate of 10% per week and unlawful confiscations of clients’ property without courts order was commonly reported. Clients suffered from hidden cost of different loans received, with some affected by double payment as a result of embezzlement by loans officer.</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Article</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A number of interviews, use of questionnaires and observations were some of the tools of data collection used by the study</td>
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<td>1Female : 1male</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Scientific journal, 2013</td>
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