

Uncovering promising management practices from national Centers for Independent Living

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Abstract. This paper summarizes the second in a series of two research studies completed by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Independent Living Management (ILM). The study identified management practices potentially effective for the organizational context of Centers for Independent Living (CILs) by “taking stock” of current practices across the national network of CILs. Executive directors from a random sample of 131 CILs were interviewed over telephone, in a participatory research approach and using a two-dimensional Kano survey. Findings included 246 practices relevant to CIL management, and their perceived quality was reported using a Kano classification as “expected”, “revealed”, “exciting” and “no-difference” practices. They were further distributed under the 9 management areas of the CIL organizational profile collectively identified by a national sample of CIL stakeholders during our first study. A direct application of this knowledge relates to improving organizational performance, by empowering CILs to plan, train, manage, evaluate and advance their organizations. The study conducted a pilot follow-up to illustrate the implemented practices as part of organizational snapshots, a planning tool used by the RRTC-ILM.

Keywords: Independent living, independent living center, inclusion, Kano survey, organizational structure, management practices

1. Introduction

Currently in final stages of funding from the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Independent Living Management (RRTC-ILM), has been conducting research and training relevant to the management of national Centers for Independent Living (CILs). As organizations that evolved over the past three decades drawing impetus from Independent Living Movement, CILs hold a distinct identity within the world of community based organizations. To accomplish their social missions, CILs require an effective organizational management model that is consistent with IL Philosophy. A major effort

of the RRTC-ILM has been to develop and replicate such a model [20]. This paper reports outcomes from the second of two research studies in this regard. In combination, these studies led to the identification of a management practices checklist considered important to CIL operational success. The first study [19] obtained a profile of CIL management and management categories as viewed by its diverse stakeholders (board members, executive directors, funders, volunteers, staff and consumers). CIL demographics such as size, age and location (urban, rural) were considered. Candidate management practices were then generated and assigned to these categories for subsequent validation. The current study worked with a national sample of CIL directors to determine which of these practices were most promising and important for effective CIL management.

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1.1. Background

CILs serve people with all types of disabilities within their service areas and are managed by people with disabilities. Starting out as grassroots organizations in the early 1970's, CILs gradually evolved into community-based, not-for-profit organizations run by and *for* persons with disabilities for self-help and advocacy [2]. CILs grew in number by the middle of the 1980's with funding support through Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act. This base funding assured the CILs of fiscal stability, but also set performance standards that CILs must achieve.

CILs are community change agents by mission, but are service providers and small businesses in practice. Disability rights legislation triggered a growing number of programs for individuals with disabilities (Medicaid waivers, the Workforce Investment Act, etc.). CILs typically have multiple service programs and work with a mix of federal, state and local government agencies. Each service program has distinct fiscal guidelines, administrative regulations and policies. CILs must understand each service program's requirements; train their staff to these requirements and to effectively administer each program.

The evolving disability environment presents both challenges and opportunities. In terms of challenges, CILs must proactively develop their funding and resource management capabilities, recruit and retain quality staff, and foster relationships with other agencies. To complicate matters, CILs may offer services beyond federal, state and local programs: to address the needs of underserved populations; to train people with disabilities in transition from school to community to employment, or to assist deinstitutionalization of people from nursing homes to the community. In order to manage these services, CIL staffs need frequent and up-to-date training. There is an urgent need for a management model against which CILs can assess their own management practices. Developing such a model is the purpose of these studies.

1.2. Literature review

As detailed in our first study, a literature search of non-profit organization management practices offered little that could be directly borrowed or adapted to CIL management. There was little consensus on criteria by which to evaluate organizational effectiveness [11]. It is likely that the selection of effectiveness criteria depends on how organizations are conceptualized and on

their context (frames of reference) [6]. Our first study, therefore, sought to conceptualize CILs as organizations, by drawing upon the perceptions and judgments of CIL stakeholders.

Guidance for this effort came from the works of Herman and Renz [8]. They applied a multidimensional construct model in which organizational effectiveness was determined by "stakeholder judgments formed in an ongoing process of sense making and implicit negotiation." They reported [8, p. 25] how stakeholders of nonprofit organizations judge organizational effectiveness. From a social constructionist perspective, they collected judgments of chief executives of nonprofit organizations, and identified what they considered objective effectiveness criteria, modified through the Delphi process. They reported their findings in nine groupings corresponding to elements of nonprofit organizational effectiveness, which they measured through an instrument developed for the purpose.

Based on our first study [19] we identified a large set of candidate management practices perceived to be relevant to CIL organizational effectiveness. Candidate management practices were then assigned to 9 management categories, which included a new category "Consumer Involvement" in addition to 8 categories similar to the Herman and Renz groupings. These 9 management categories included *Organizational Culture, Physical Plant, Human Resources, Fiscal management, Administrative Operations, Community Relations, Programs and Services, Consumer Involvement, Governance*. Management categories and assignment of management practices into these categories were then validated by CIL stakeholders.

Both studies employed a participatory action research strategy [22] particularly appropriate for use in qualitative studies of social settings [12]. CILs are a subset of not-for-profit organizations, with a unique conceptualization and context. CILs are consumer controlled and the new category "Consumer Involvement" reflects this. CIL structures, dynamics and goals reflect deeply held values and beliefs about how individuals with disabilities can acquire and maintain their personal independence, as opposed to receiving professional services to 'sick or impaired' individuals [20]. Their self-advocacy response "Nothing about Us without Us" characterizes them as stakeholders of all decisions and actions that involve them.

A concurrent challenge in embracing a "constructive" approach relates to the rigor with which we handle the threat to data validity stemming from the inherent "subjectivity" of perceptions or judgmental data. Issues

of validity and reliability of subjective measures has long been the focus of psychometric literature. In our study, stakeholder perceptions and judgments of which management practices are ideal (i.e., important for organizational effectiveness) are essentially stakeholder-defined indicators of *quality*.

It is common for instruments (generally surveys) to capture subjective perceptions of product (service, etc) quality by focusing on levels of satisfaction given the presence (or absence) of some feature (function, etc) of this product. Survey instruments that probe the level of satisfaction given either the *presence* (positively stated item) or the *absence* (negatively stated item) of a feature are in some sense “one-dimensional.” Consider the example in Fig. 1.

Dr. Noriaki Kano [9] developed an alternative and improved method to establish perceived quality. He demonstrated that traditional one-dimensional surveys often give partial and sometimes misleading understandings of *subjective* quality. Kano proposed a two-dimensional survey and a novel way to analyze survey responses. Each feature is represented by a question pair; one question probes satisfaction in the *presence* (positively stated item) of a feature and the second question probes satisfaction in the *absence* (negatively stated item) of a feature. Figure 2 gives an example of a Kano question pair [21].

Kano’s method has been used globally by companies in their Continuous Quality Management (CQM) efforts [21]. Kano’s method is readily applied to product design, service delivery and diverse other contexts. In our study, CIL management is the context and management practices are the features to be evaluated in terms of organizational effectiveness.

CIL organization dynamics also fits an open-systems model [11]. Lundgren et al. [13] used a systems model to describe a CIL organization and dynamics. Their work provided valuable insights for the current studies.

2. The problem

Our studies identified and consolidated a set of management practices that can be used by CILs to achieve organizational effectiveness. We relied on research and evaluation perspectives that endorse participation of the “researcher” and the “subject” on equal footing in the research process. The *inclusive* view of evaluation proposed by Mertens [14] defends including “community members likely to be affected by the methodological decisions governing the conduct of an evaluation” [4,

p. 9]. CIL management teams are the “community members” subsequently affected by the management model (set of effective management practices).

Inclusive evaluation contrasts with typical needs assessment in which theoretical or pre-existing models serve as “ideals” (what should be) against which “actualities” (what is) are compared. Given that management models for non-profit organizations are heterogeneous (and theoretical models lacking) comparison to any particular model would be problematic. The *inclusive* approach seeks to construct a management model *with* CILs by “taking stock of” management practices found important in the rich and collective experiences of CIL managers. Collective construction recognizes the value of *direct experience* [7] of CIL stakeholders and helps to ensure model authenticity to the CIL organizations. Further, the inclusive approach is consistent with the principle of empowerment, upheld by IL philosophy. Finally, taking stock for planning and organizational growth is consistent with the initial steps of *empowerment evaluation* proposed by Fetterman [5].

2.1. Research questions

In the judgment of IL management personnel across the national network of CIL organizations:

1. Which management practices are of acceptable quality in terms of CIL organizational effectiveness (likely to produce a desirable outcome)?
2. What is the potential utility of each practice within its management category?

3. Method

3.1. Data collection design and instruments

Based on our first study, a large set of candidate management practices were identified and placed into management categories by CIL stakeholders [19]. In our current study, CIL executive directors refine the set of management practices and identify those practices most important to CIL organizational effectiveness. The set of important management practices and their category assignment can then serve as a stakeholder-defined “ideal” (what should be) against which “actual” CIL management practices (what is) can be compared. This process involved three steps:

1. Draft a refined set of management practices with input from the executive directors of a small sample of top-performing CILs;

<p>The car should have good gas mileage.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strongly disagree 2. Moderately disagree 3. Neutral 4. Moderately agree 5. Strongly agree

Fig. 1. Traditional "One-Dimensional" Survey Question.

<u>Question in Functional form:</u>	<u>Question in Dysfunctional form:</u>
If the gas mileage is good, how do you feel?	If the gas mileage is poor, how do you feel?
1. I like it that way.	1. I like it that way.
2. It must be that way.	2. It must be that way.
3. I am neutral.	3. I am neutral.
4. I can live with it that way.	4. I can live with it that way.
5. I dislike it that way	5. I dislike it that way

Fig. 2. Example of a Question in Kano Format.

2. Transform the set of refined management practices into a Kano survey and administer the Kano survey to a national sample of CIL executive directors.
3. Apply Kano analysis methods to organize and prioritize management practices within each management category.

The resultant set of management practices and the organization and prioritization of these practices within management categories provides a fine-grained model for CIL management to achieve organizational effectiveness.

Step One: A methodological challenge was to identify "top performing" CILs given the lack of performance indicators on which to judge organizational effectiveness [6,11]. Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Section 725 Standards and Assurances established performance guidelines for all CILs. However, CILs are strongly shaped by the particular needs of the communities they serve. In consequence, there is a great diversity amongst CILs' outcomes while complying with Section 725 requirements. The only unified and comprehensive measure of expected and specific CIL outcomes of which we are aware is the Section 704 Annual Performance Report.

We based our identification of "top performing" CILs on the 704 Report for 2001. We analytically examined CIL reported data on "Goals Set" vs. "Goals Met", in

relevant areas (communication, community educational, informational access, mobility, personal resource, self-advocacy and vocational goals), by disability types (cognitive, hearing, vision, mental emotional, multiple disability, etc.), age and ethnic background. We also looked at CILs' performance in preventing people from entering institutions as well as in relocating individuals from institutions.

We worked through 38 different data sets that resulted from the above analysis. First we compared CILs' averages with corresponding national averages (from US Census Bureau 2000 data) [18], and identified 183 CILs who were performing well (at least 20% above the national average) across all data sets. Among these CILs, we identified the top ten centers (one in each of 10 federal regions) based on the frequency of their appearance across sets.

In parallel we drafted our initial survey of management practices to be judged or modified by the executive directors from these 10 centers. We organized the survey items under the nine management categories from our initial study, and structured the survey for telephone administration. The executive directors judged each management practice for inclusion/exclusion or modification. All telephone interviews were recorded on hard copies of the questionnaire and most were tape recorded for later analysis and reference. The response frequency to include [or not] each practice and suggest-

ed modifications produced a refined set of candidate management practices.

Step Two: The candidate management practices were then put into a Kano format and suitable for telephone administration to obtain a maximal rate of return. The resulting Kano survey consisted of 181 item pairs (362 total questions). Each item employed a scale of 1 to 5, as illustrated in Fig. 3.

The Kano survey was administered to the executive directors of 131 CILs. It was planned to break interviews into two sessions, with each session taking approximately 75 minutes to complete. However, many executive directors preferred to combine the two interview sessions. Possibly as a result of fatigue, our preliminary analysis revealed one or more “no-sense” response patterns (described below) on 111 of the 131 completed surveys. The number of no-sense responses was typically small ranging from 0 to 18 question pairs compared to the total of 181 question-pairs. To minimize possible measurement error, we re-surveyed executive directors and asked them to confirm or modify their “no-sense” responses.

3.2. Sample

In Step 1, a purposive sample of experts was selected. This sample was composed of the executive directors of 10 top-performing CILs with one CIL drawn from each of the 10 federal administrative regions. In Step two, a national sample of 131 executive directors responded to the Kano survey. They represented 131 CILs randomly drawn (random number generator table) from a total of 390 CIL covering the 10 federal regions. The sample drawn from each region was proportionate to its size. We called the first 131 CILs to confirm their participation in the study. We proceeded to replace declining participants based on continuing random numbers until the full sample of 131 CILs was complete. Once in the sample, all the participants were in compliance.

The sample was stratified by the center’s age (young, mid-age and old), its size (small, mid-size and large) and geographical category (urban and rural). Our criteria for classifying CILs in these strata were as follows.

- *Age:* Old = Centers established before 1979, mostly on their own initiative; young = Centers established after 1992, formula funded; and mid-aged = Centers established between 1980 and 1992, in transition.

- *Size:* Small = Centers with 2–14 employees; mid-sized = Centers with 15–50 employees; big = Centers with 50 employees or more
- *Geographic location:* We used Census Bureau data for 2000 [18] and criteria developed by the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) for classifying centers as *rural* or *urban*. A Rural center is “a center located in city of less than 50,000 persons.” [1] Urban centers are those located in city of more than 50,000 persons.

Table 1 shows the distribution of CILs by age and size both in the target population and in the sample. Our sample constituted roughly 30% of the total number of CILs. The proportion between the sample cell numbers fairly mirrors the corresponding proportion in the target population, thus indicating sample representativeness.

Our data source for CIL *age* and *size* (number of employees at the center) was our RRTC-ILM database, supplemented by follow up telephone contact. Of the 131 centers, 72 (55%) were urban and 59 (45%) were rural. Table 2 shows their distribution separately by CIL size and age of CIL.

3.3. Data analysis

Responses to Kano items are two-dimensional (e.g., “1, 1” or “3, 5”), as each individual answers to a pair of questions on the same content. A typical Kano analysis examines response patterns after organizing them in a matrix [3] such as in Fig. 4, based on Kano rationale [9].

The matrix in Fig. 4 shows how Kano response patterns infer respondent perceptions. For example, response patterns (4, 1) and (3, 1) individuals show extreme dissatisfaction (score 1) at an absent practice, but do not show high satisfaction (score <5) when the same practice is present. Individuals *expect* the practice to be always present. They miss the practice if absent but are not thrilled its presence (since it always is present). For *exciting* practices (see Fig. 4) individuals show high satisfaction (score 5) when the practice is present but do not miss this practice (score <4) when it is absent. Practices, which bring high satisfaction (score 5) when present and high dissatisfaction (score 1) when absent are one-dimensional and often *revealed* in discussion and targeted for continuous improvement. Response patterns marked *no (little) interest* in Fig. 4 “make no difference” to the respondents. *Minus* response pairs can be roughly interpreted as having “flipped” the positive and negative sense of an item pair. *No sense* response pairs suggest that one of the item pairs was an-

Table 1
Distribution of CIL Executive Directors in the Kano Survey Sample by Age, Staff Size and Geographic location of CILs

		Overall Distribution of CILs (Target Population)				Sample Distribution			
		Size of CIL				Size of CIL			
		Small [<14]	Mid-size [14-49]	Big [50+]	Totals	Small [<14]	Mid-size [14-49]	Big [50+]	Totals
Age of CIL	Young [1-10 yrs; Est. 1993 or after]; Formula-funded	101	15	1	117	34	5	1	40
	Mid-aged: (11-23 yrs); established between 1980 and 1992 [Transitioning]	147	60	7	214	49	20	2	71
	Old: (24 to 30+ yrs); Established before 1980 [Mostly Own Initiative]	23	31	5	59	8	10	2	20
	Totals	271	106	13	390	91	35	5	131

Table 2
Distribution of Urban and Rural CILs by CIL size and by Age of CIL

	CIL Size				Age of CIL			
	Small	Mid-size	Big	Total	Young	Mid-aged	Old	Total
Urban	45	25	2	72	21	34	17	72
Rural	46	10	3	59	19	37	3	59
Total	91	35	5	131	40	71	20	131

swered erroneously. For example, it makes no sense for someone to be very satisfied with both the *presence* and *absence* of a practice.

Using the rationale described above we classified the 181 CIL practices into expected, revealed, exciting or no difference categories. To do this, we first organized individuals' responses in pairs (example: "5, 1") under each practice, and then computed the frequency of each response pattern. Examining these frequencies under each practice and judging by the most frequent response pattern for the practice, we then placed it in the corresponding category. For example, if the pattern "5, 2" was predominant, it was categorized as an "exciting" practice. Findings from these analyses are shown in the next section.

At this point, a clarification is in order. As presented in the next section, we classified a total of 246 practices, although we included only 181 in the survey we administered to the CIL directors for their judgment. The additional 65 practices are those we knew *a priori* to be "expected," as CILs are federally mandated to carry out these practices. Not including these practices (an additional 65 question pairs) helped keep the survey of manageable length. On the other hand Kano results also identified "expected" practices that were not federally mandated. We have listed all of the 246 practices in Table A as an Appendix and our reported final findings (see next section) also include the "expected" (mandated) practices.

4. Results

The Kano survey was designed to be administered over two sessions to minimize the fatigue factor. Although some executive directors considered it "too long", others remarked that the survey was "thought provoking." Some acknowledged that they had not considered some of the management practices mentioned in the survey and that they would look into employing them at their centers. Others revealed their level of interest in the survey by suggesting that we include other practices for judgment. For example, one executive director commented that the survey lacked practices concerning "staff development or staff enrichment." Another suggested that we should have addressed practices concerning "environmental concerns" at centers. These practices may be good candidates for future surveys.

There are four predefined Kano categories that relate to: (1) expected practices, or those that were considered essential; (2) revealed practices, or those that were seen as important enough to examine and improve; (3) exciting practices, or the "nice to have" practices which CILs may not have thought about or may have considered infeasible; and (4) "no difference" practices that CILs are aware of but do not care about.

In our study, we classified each management practice both by its *primary* category (the most frequent Kano category under which it occurs); and its *secondary* category (the "next most" frequent Kano category under

Format	Item	Strong disliking			Strong liking	
<i>Positive ("functional")</i>	How would you feel if your center had a fund raising coordinator?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Negative ("dysfunctional")</i>	How would you feel if your center did not have a fund raising coordinator?	1	2	3	4	5

Fig. 3. Example of a Kano Question in the CIL Management Practices Survey.

		CIL LACKS Practice X How Do You Feel?				
		<i>Very Satisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>
		5	4	3	2	1
CIL has Practice X; How Do You Feel?	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	5,5 N/A	5,4 Wk Exciting	5,3 Exciting	5,2 Exciting	5,1 Revealed
	<i>Satisfied</i>	4,5 Minus	4,4 N/A	4,3 No Interest	4,2 No Interest	4,1 Expected
	<i>Neutral</i>	3,5 Minus	3,4 Minus	3,3 No Interest	3,2 No Interest	3,1 Expected
	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	2,5 Minus	2,4 Minus	2,3 Minus	2,2 N/A	2,1 Wk Expected
	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	1,5 Minus	1,4 Minus	1,3 Minus	1,2 Minus	1,1 N/A

Fig. 4. Response Matrix for Kano analysis.

which it occurs). Federally mandated practices were exceptional in having only a *primary* (expected) Kano category. All other practices had non-zero tallies for both their *primary* and *secondary* Kano categories. A complete listing of the individual practices both by their *primary* and *secondary* categories is presented in Table A in the Appendix, whereas Table 3 shows the distribution of CIL management practices only by their *primary* Kano categories.

The first column in Table 3 shows the management areas while subsequent columns show the four Kano categories. As explained earlier, a total of 246 practices were classified into Kano categories and these include the 181 management practices judged as part of the survey plus 65 management practices not included in the survey and pre-identified as “expected.” The cells in the table highlight the primary category (frequency and percent) for practices that occur under that management area. One can see that the primary category for most management practices was “revealed” according to the Kano analysis, except in the area of Community Relations (sixth row), where most (55%) practices were “expected”. In fact, a close examination of the totals (last row) shows that “revealed” (60%) and “expected” (29%) practices make up the bulk of this listing, in that order. Notably, only 11% of practices were judged of little interest to CIL executive directors. Also notably,

less than 1% (two of the 246 management practices surveyed) was judged to be exciting. This analysis, while useful does not tell the whole story.

Our Kano analysis as per Table A (Appendix) provides a more complete interpretation of the data. For example, CIL management practices may be time-dependent or segmented by sampling demographics. Consider a hypothetical time-dependent management practice. Over time, an innovative new practice (exciting) may become familiar and subject to continuous improvement (revealed) before becoming the standard way of doing things (expected). Ultimately, expected management practices that are not federally mandated may become obsolete and be replaced by a new innovation. The response distribution between primary and secondary categories may suggest where a management practice stands in a temporal life-cycle. Alternatively, some CIL demographic segments may have less access or exposure to certain management practices. CIL segments that are late adopters may perceive these practices to be innovative (exciting); whereas CIL segments that were early adopters may already be perfecting these practices (revealed). Correlation of the response distribution to demographic factors may suggest how management innovations diffuse through the CIL community. Teasing out the particular story for each management practice is beyond the scope of

Table 3
Distribution of CIL Practices in Kano Categories by Management Areas

	Expected		Revealed		Exciting		No difference		Total
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
Organizational Culture [IL Philosophy]	5	22%	16	70%	0	0%	2	9%	23
Physical Plant	3	14%	18	86%	0	0%	0	0%	21
Human Resources	9	39%	10	43%	0	0%	4	17%	23
Fiscal management	17	44%	21	54%	0	0%	1	3%	39
Administrative Operations	5	15%	21	62%	1	3%	7	21%	34
Community Relations	18	55%	12	36%	0	0%	3	9%	33
Programs and Services	5	17%	20	67%	0	0%	5	17%	30
Consumer Involvement	3	30%	6	60%	1	10%	0	0%	10
Governance	6	18%	23	70%	0	0%	4	12%	33
Total	71	29%	147	60%	2	1%	26	11%	246

this paper. However, the possibility of such analysis suggests the power of the Kano methodology and will be explored in a future paper.

When both *primary* and *secondary* categories were considered, the most common pattern in our study was “revealed, no difference” which accounted for 36% of all CILs management practices. It suggests that these practices have been widely adopted and are being refined at many CILs (revealed); but are of little interest to a smaller number of CIL (no difference). The second-most common pattern with 29% of CIL management practices was “expected only” including the 65 practices required by law. The third-most common pattern “revealed, exciting” includes 20% of CIL management practices, suggesting that these practices have been broadly adopted and are being refined at many CILs (revealed) but are novel ideas or recent innovations at a smaller number of CILs (exciting). The fourth-most common pattern “no difference, revealed” accounted for 9% of CIL management practices. The fifth-most common pattern was “revealed, expected” which includes 4% of CIL management practices, suggesting that these practices have been broadly adopted and are being refined at many CILs (revealed); but are well-established practices at fewer CILs (expected). No other pattern had as many as 1% of the CIL management practices; and as one might expect there were no instances of either “exciting, expected” or “expected, exciting”. As explained above, the underlying factors driving the response distributions were not identified explicitly.

5. Follow-up

The basic list or draft “model” of management practices generated by CILs and organized by Kano categories as described above has several potential ap-

plications for CIL management and improved performance. Ultimately, the model should empower and enable CILs to assess their needs, seek training and resources and focus their efforts. Further analyses are needed which should inform us if there is difference of practice preferences (and experiences) between centers based on size, age and type of communities served (urban/rural). Findings might enlighten CILs of mutual strengths that might be tapped and transferred between centers, help centers identify areas in which to seek fortification through training. Meanwhile, the following illustrates the use of the findings at an individual CIL level.

At RRTC-ILM, an immediate and direct application of the findings was to improve the organizational “snapshots” (or “status quo”) that we are currently offering to CILs as planning tools, and make these tools more meaningfully structured. Such planning tools have been part of the RRTC-ILM training sessions formatted as “Simulations” of problem solving situations. For purposes of improving the snapshots, we followed up on current findings and added another dimension to the list of practices. We matched them with management functions in an attempt to create a more meaningful and usable organizational snapshot. We then validated our proposed matching, administering our list to 20 CIL directors representing the 10 regions. This sample of experts included directors of 9 of the 10 top-performing CILs earlier identified in the study, 3 members of the RRTC-ILM Steering Council and 8 directors who took part in the earlier Kano survey. The sample CILs were distributed as follows:

- Urban (12) and rural (8) CILs;
- Small (11), mid-sized (8) and large (1) centers;
- Old (6), mid-aged (11) and young (3) centers.

The experts responded to a telephone survey, where they approved or disagreed as to the relevance of the

management function proposed for each of the practices presented. In all, 246 practices were judged including 65 that represent mandatory CIL practices and the 181 practices part of the Kano survey. There was fairly good consensus among the interviewed experts regarding the correspondence we proposed with at least 80% (16 or more) agreeing to all of the cases. Nineteen of them agreed on most of the cases. Where they disagreed, they also provided alternative suggestions, which are inputs for the final management model, particularly useful as a snapshot version. The final organization of the practices under their respective management functions and corresponding Kano categories is presented in the Appendix. All this information is expected to result in an overall document useful as a resource and management guide for CILs.

6. Discussion

This paper summarizes the second in a series of two research studies completed by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Independent Living Management (ILM). The study identified management practices potentially effective for the organizational context of Centers for Independent Living (CILs), by means of an effort of “taking stock” of current practices across the national network of CILs. Executive directors from a random sample of 131 CILs were interviewed over telephone, in a participatory research approach and using a two dimensional Kano survey. Findings included 246 practices relevant to CIL management, and their perceived quality was reported using a Kano classification under four distinct categories of “expected” (considered essential); “revealed” (seen as important enough to retain, examine and improve); “exciting” (practices considered “nice to have” but probably not thought about or may be seen as infeasible); and “*make-no-difference*” practices, that CILs didn’t care about. They were further distributed under the 9 management areas of the CIL organizational profile collectively identified by a national sample of CIL stakeholders during our first study. A direct application of this knowledge relates to improving organizational performance, as it guides both planning and the needed training. In general, it empowers CILs to plan, manage, evaluate and advance their organizations. The study conducted a pilot follow-up to illustrate the use of the practices as part of organizational snapshots, a planning tool used by the RRTC-ILM.

Our intention to generate results that have context-specific meaning and utility drove our preference for a participatory research design. The method honors the principle of empowerment, the core of IL philosophy. The CILs are stakeholders of the RRTC-ILM project, which is housed in the Western New York Independent Living Center, itself a CIL driven by IL Philosophy and directed by and staffed with persons with disabilities. It was more than natural for the research team to be *responsive* [16] to the CIL network by taking an *inclusive* [4,14] approach, just as the CILs are with their own consumers. It also made more sense to construct a management model using a process that involved the voice of those whom the model meant to serve, than borrowing an external model. Responsive approaches also tend to be effective in results utilization [15], as previous experience in international contexts [17] has demonstrated with special needs populations. Adopting *empowerment* as the principle not only guided the knowledge construction by the CILs, but it also helped build capacity of the team members in areas of expertise other than their own – research methods and IL organizational management.

Using the Kano survey as a component of the participatory research process proved of value in assuring rigor of method. Decisions about identifying appropriate customer requirements for products and services call for appropriate data in terms of quality and detail. The traditional means of obtaining such data through one-dimensional surveys does not sufficiently probe customer preferences and therefore limits their support for differential designing (e.g., basic vs. innovative) of products and services. The two-dimensional alternative proposed by Professor Noriaki Kano and colleagues (1983) queries customers about each feature using paired (positive-negative) questions in order to elicit the customer’s view of product quality. The analysis permits identification of expected, revealed, exciting and indifferent feature categories. Feature categories have meaning that is readily interpretable by decision makers. Feature importance within categories is also captured. Expected features help preclude customer rejection of a product or service. Revealed features are the focus of continuous improvement. Exciting features are the basis of radical innovation that markedly differentiates products and services from their competitors. Indifferent features dropped from products and services can simplify designs and achieve cost savings. Our analyses considered further breakdown of results into primary and secondary categories, and interpreted in the previous section. The authors are undertaking

further work on refining and applying Kano analyses in future studies.

In addition to organizing CIL management practices into four interpretable categories, the two-dimensional Kano analysis enhanced data accuracy. Unlike one-dimensional scores, it provides a way of checking and correcting for potential measurement error, because of being able to identify “no-sense” responses. The shaded cells along the diagonal of the matrix in Fig. 4 indicate “no-sense” response patterns, suggesting response errors due to extraneous conditions, such as fatigue, which in fact was a potential source of error in our study due to the lengthiness of the questionnaire administered over the telephone. As explained in the methods Section (3.1) this capability of the Kano method allowed us to re-survey 111 respondents using customized surveys and thus minimize possible measurement error.

Our attempt to assure rigor and relevance of process was not without challenges. We constantly monitored our process, making due corrections without sacrificing rigor. This consumed time. Accomplishing random sampling was yet another challenge, which was also time-consuming. We drew our sample from the national target population of CIL directors using the database previously compiled by the RRTC-ILM but had to individually call CILs for needed updates. Our preferred method of data collection by telephone added to the challenge. It assured a high rate of return, but we took care to record all responses on hard questionnaire copies and also on tapes for later analysis and reference. This doubly ensured the accuracy of data collected by the interviewing researcher who used assistive software for blindness, and was responsibly aware of possible errors due to software constraints.

In summary, rigor of method was a priority but monitoring the process took time. It is hoped that the study procedures and lessons prove useful for similar study contexts.

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Appendix

Table A: Independent Living Management Functions, Practices and Kano Categories

Management Function	Practice: [A CIL organization has/does the following. . .]	Kano Category		
		Primary	Secondary	
<i>Area 1: Administrative Operations Management</i>				
Administrative Staff	systems advocate [expert in public policy, law, etc]	Revealed	Exciting	
	fund raising coordinator	Exciting	Revealed	
	administrative assistant	Revealed	No diff	
	assistant to the executive director	Revealed	No diff	
	Comptroller	Revealed	No diff	
	department heads or program supervisors	Revealed	No diff	
	human resource person	Revealed	No diff	
	operations coordinator [e.g. oversee action plans, timesheets, performance reports]	No diff	Revealed	
	public relations staff	No diff	Revealed	
	volunteer coordinator	No diff	Exciting	
Departmental Operations	information technology [computer and network support] staff	Revealed	No diff	
	intake coordinator	No diff	Revealed	
	janitorial staff	No diff	Revealed	
	website developer	No diff	Exciting	
Executive Director Responsibility	executive director carries out the directions of the board	Expected		
	executive director represents center's interests at community, state and national meetings	Expected		
	executive director represents staff needs and concerns to the board	Expected		
	executive director hires the management team	Revealed	No diff	
	executive director monitors the center's budget	Revealed	Expected	
	executive director negotiates and enters into contracts with other entities	Revealed	Exciting	
	executive director supervises the management team	Revealed	Expected	
	regular departmental [program] meetings	Revealed	No diff	
	management team [executive director, program supervisors and department heads]	Revealed	No diff	
	organizational structure	Revealed	No diff	
	Health and Safety	Keeps incident statistics [safety, emergency, suicide, etc]	Expected	
		worksite incident reporting policy	Revealed	No diff
		suicide incident investigation policy	No diff	Revealed
Performance Standards	Tracks the number of consumers served by each program	Expected		
	frequent monitoring [e.g. monthly] of program performance	Revealed	No diff	
Technology/Equipment Policy	staff update consumer service records daily [e.g. after a visit]	Revealed	Exciting	
	weekly supervisory meetings with staff [i.e. to review work performance goals]	Revealed	No diff	
	Computer use policy [confidential data, email, downloads, etc]	Revealed	No diff	
Work Schedule Policy	Utilizes time sheets	Revealed	No diff	
	Emergency closure notification policy [consumers, staff, others]	Revealed	No diff	
<i>Area 2: Community Relations Management</i>				
Community Awareness	advertises information in community publications [local news] about services and programs	Expected		
	holds community presentations to disseminate information about its services and programs	Expected		
	Holds town meetings to disseminate information about its services and programs	Expected		
	Makes presentations on the ADA and its community impact	Expected		
	publishes annual reports as a way to disseminate information about its services and programs	Expected		
	uses a website [the internet] to disseminate information about its services and programs	Expected		
	Uses brochures to disseminate information about its services and programs	Expected		
	Uses newsletters to disseminate information	Expected		
	Uses phone recordings about its services and programs	Expected		
	uses radio presentations to disseminate information about its services and programs	Expected		
	Uses television presentations to disseminate information about its services and programs	Expected		
	active dissemination program about services, issues and programs	Revealed	Expected	

Table A, continued

Management Function	Practice: Practice: [A CIL organization has/does the following. . .]	Kano Category	
		Primary	Secondary
Community Change	holds community rallies to educate the local community on independent living issues	Revealed	Exciting
	Holds press conferences on independent living issues	Revealed	No diff
	Writes "letters-to-the-editors" to publicize independent living issues	Revealed	No diff
	Conducts "street-theatre" to dramatize independent living issues	No diff	Exciting
	collaborates with other community centers and programs to foster consumer involvement	Revealed	Expected
	Participates in letter writing campaigns	Revealed	No diff
	partners with consumer advocacy groups [UCPA] to disseminate information about programs & services	Revealed	No diff
Community Education	Holds a Legislative day for consumers	Revealed	Exciting
	Holds town meetings to get consumers involved in their community	Revealed	Exciting
	Holds ADA awareness days to educate the local community on independent living issues	Expected	
	Holds disability simulation workshops for the community	Expected	
	Holds equipment demonstrations workshops for the community	Expected	
	holds legislative breakfast to meet public representatives and discuss independent living issues	Expected	
Community Outreach	legislative visits to educate government representatives about independent living issues	Expected	
	community relations program on disability awareness	Revealed	No diff
	Holds "meet-the-candidates day" prior to public elections	No diff	Revealed
	actively identifies underserved and un-served disability groups	Expected	
	actively identifies underserved and un-served race and ethnic populations	Expected	
	Encourages staff to be on [external] community committees	Revealed	No diff
	Holds fund raising events	Revealed	No diff
research service [e.g. to identify consumer needs for products and services]	No difference	Revealed	
<i>Area 3: Consumer Involvement Management</i>			
Consumer Empowerment	consumer advisory committee overall agency	Expected	
	representation on its board	Expected	
Consumer Input	alert teams [consumer advocacy]	Revealed	No diff
	consumer volunteers	Revealed	Exciting
	consumer advisory committees for individual programs	Exciting	No diff
	Uses systematic surveys to assess consumer satisfaction	Expected	—
	Conducts consumer surveys to determine the need for new programs	Revealed	No diff
	focus groups to involve consumers in issues related to the center and community (Comm. Relations?)	Revealed	No diff
	staff identifying unmet consumer needs and recommending new programs	Revealed	Exciting
Holds town meetings to determine the need for new programs	Revealed	No diff	
<i>Area 4: Fiscal Management</i>			
Asset and Liability	general liability insurance	Expected	
	property insurance	Expected	
	executive director and officers liability insurance	Revealed	No diff
	professional liability insurance	Revealed	Exciting
	umbrella insurance	Revealed	No diff
	bonding	Revealed	No diff
	automobile insurance	Revealed	No diff
Benefits Administration	computer insurance [lost, stolen, damaged, etc]	Revealed	No diff
	disability insurance	Expected	
Cash Management	unemployment insurance	Expected	
	workman compensation insurance	Expected	
	Health insurance	Revealed	No diff
	Dental insurance	Revealed	No diff
	life insurance	Revealed	Exciting
	retirement insurance	Revealed	Exciting
	Tracks monthly payables	Expected	

Table A, continued

Management Function	Practice: Practice: [A CIL organization has/does the following. . .]	Kano Category	
		Primary	Secondary
Reporting – Contractual	Tracks monthly receivables	Expected	
	Receives revenue from contracts	Revealed	No diff
	Receives revenue from donations	Revealed	Exciting
	Receives revenue from fund raising	Revealed	Exciting
	Tracks monthly cash receipts	Revealed	Expected
	revenue from endowments	Revealed	Exciting
	Receives revenue from membership fees	No diff	Revealed
	Does an OMB-133 single audit annually	Expected	
Reporting – Internal	periodic federal independent living audit	Expected	
	periodic state or federal fiscal audit	Expected	
	independent audit annually	Expected	
	Compiles an annual operational budget report for the board	Revealed	Exciting
	Compiles a monthly cash flow report for the board	Revealed	No diff
Reporting – Regulatory	Tracks monthly and year to date budget projections	Revealed	No diff
	Compiles a monthly cash flow report for dept. head or program supervisor	Revealed	No diff
	writes and files a federal, state, and local tax reports	Expected	
	writes and files charitable funding source reports	Expected	
	Writes and files manpower [employment] reports	Expected	
Revenues/Expense Tracking	writes and files workers compensation reports	Expected	
	Tracks monthly payroll	Expected	
	Tracks monthly credit card usage	Revealed	No diff
	revenue from fee for service activities	Revealed	Exciting
<i>Area 5: Governance Management</i>			
Board Development	Provides orientation training to new board members	Revealed	No diff
	Provides a program manual to new board members	Revealed	Exciting
	Provides training on duties and responsibilities to new board members	Revealed	Exciting
	Provides training on independent living philosophy to new board members	Revealed	No diff
Board Operations	board sets center policy	Expected	
	bylaws include election protocols	Expected	
	bylaws include meeting protocols [e.g. dates, attendance, cancellation, etc]	Expected	
	bylaws include voting procedures on issues brought to the board	Expected	
	board conducts a strategic planning process every 3–5 years	Revealed	Exciting
	board monitors center performance	Revealed	Expected
	bylaws include procedures for changing bylaws	Revealed	No diff
Board policy	bylaws include a vision statement	Revealed	Exciting
	bylaws include membership categories	Expected	
	bylaws include conflict of interest criteria	Revealed	No diff
	bylaws include member responsibilities	Revealed	No diff
Board structure	bylaws include an absentee policy	Revealed	No diff
	bylaws include responsibilities of the executive director	Revealed	No diff
	board has an executive committee	Expected	
	board has a finance committee	Revealed	Exciting
	job description for board members	Revealed	Exciting
	job description for board president or Chair	Revealed	No diff
	board has a fund raising committee	Revealed	Exciting
	job description for board secretary	Revealed	No diff
	job description for board standing committees	Revealed	No diff
	job description for board treasurer	Revealed	No diff
	board has a by-laws committee	Revealed	No diff
	board has a facility [physical plant] committee	No diff	Revealed
	board has a membership committee	Revealed	No diff
	board has a personnel committee	Revealed	No diff
	board has a program committee	No diff	Revealed
board has a public policy committee	No diff	Revealed	
board has an annual meeting committee	No diff	Revealed	
job description for board vice-president or Vice- Chair	Revealed	No diff	

Table A, continued

Management Function	Practice: Practice: [A CIL organization has/does the following. . .]	Kano Category		
		Primary	Secondary	
<i>Area 6: Human Resources Management</i>				
Benefits Policy	policy for staff benefits [e.g. insurances, retirement]	Expected		
	policy for staff travel	Revealed	No diff	
Health and Safety	policy regarding firearms in the workplace	Expected		
	policy regarding drug use in the workplace	Expected		
	workplace safety policy	Revealed	No diff	
Performance Standards	policy for sexual harassment and misconduct in the workplace	Revealed	Exciting	
	policy for staff conduct in the office	Revealed	No diff	
	policy for staff grievances	Revealed	No diff	
	policy for staff performance evaluations	Revealed	No diff	
	policy for staff probation	Revealed	No diff	
	policy for staff termination	Revealed	No diff	
	Recruitment Retention	EEO recruitment	Expected	
		equal employment policy (org culture- Expected?)	Expected	
	Staff Support	policy for staff hiring	Revealed	Exciting
		policy for reasonable accommodations for staff	Expected	
HIPPA policy		Expected		
Work Schedule Policies	crisis policy [death, divorce, illness] for staff	No diff	Revealed	
	Recognizes staff anniversaries [hiring, service]	No diff	Revealed	
	support committee to assist staff during crisis	No diff	Revealed	
	policy for Family Medical leave Act	Expected		
	policy for staff time off and leave	Expected		
	policy for staff flex-time and comp-time	Revealed	No diff	
	Timesheets to track volunteer activities	No diff	Revealed	
<i>Area 7: Organizational Culture Management</i>				
Communication Access	communication aids for center activities	Expected		
	Documents in alternative formats for center activities	Expected		
	sign language interpreters for center activities	Expected		
	the majority of board members are persons with disabilities	Expected		
	Consumer rights policy statement	Revealed	No diff	
	equal access policy	Revealed	No diff	
	policy for self-advocacy [i.e. consumers speak for themselves]	Revealed	Expected	
	policy for self-direction [i.e. consumers make their own decisions]	Revealed	No diff	
	peer relationship policy	Revealed	No diff	
	IL Philosophy	majority of staff are persons with disabilities	Revealed	Exciting
majority of supervisors are persons with disabilities		Revealed	Exciting	
Organizational Development	mission statement	Expected		
	vision statement	Revealed	Exciting	
Staff Development	recruits volunteers with disabilities	Revealed	Exciting	
	regular in-service staff training [including policy changes and updates]	Revealed	Exciting	
	regular training on independent living philosophy	Revealed	No diff	
	regular in-service talks to staff and volunteers	Revealed	Exciting	
	periodic staff retreats	No diff	Revealed	
Staff Development Orientation	regular independent living activities with staff [e.g. picnics, staff socials]	No diff	Revealed	
	introduces new hires to center programs	Revealed	No diff	
	new staff training on independent living philosophy	Revealed	No diff	
	program manual to new staff	Revealed	Expected	
	introduces new hires to current staff	Revealed	Expected	
<i>Area 8: Physical Plant</i>				
Assistive Technology	several TTY for center activities	Revealed	Expected	
	conference rooms all had assistive listening systems	Revealed	Exciting	
Instructional Resources	resource library [laws, regulations, magazines, journals, catalogs, etc]	Revealed	No diff	
	Independent living skills instruction area [cabinets, appliances, sink etc]	Revealed	No diff	
Physical Access	raised numbers and Braille lettering on all office doors	Revealed	Exciting	
	Is physically accessible to persons with mobility impairments	Expected		

Table A, continued

Management Function	Practice: Practice: [A CIL organization has/does the following. . .]	Kano Category	
		Primary	Secondary
Technology/Equipment	doors that will open with less than 5 lbs pressure (or automatic doors)	Expected	
	entrances that are ramped or on level ground	Expected	
	Is located on an accessible bus route	Revealed	Exciting
	reserved parking areas for persons with disabilities	Revealed	Exciting
	restrooms are all wheelchair accessible	Revealed	Exciting
	high speed internet access [digital service line, cable]	Revealed	Exciting
	access to computers [e.g. screen readers and magnifiers, voice recognition]	Revealed	Exciting
	fax machine	Revealed	No diff
	internal email capabilities [email within center]	Revealed	Exciting
	internet email capabilities [email across country]	Revealed	Exciting
	main phone answering system has TTY messaging	Revealed	Exciting
	everyone on staff has their own computer terminal	Revealed	Exciting
	audiovisual capabilities [e.g. LCD, VCR, DVD, overhead projectors]	Revealed	Exciting
	local area network (LAN)	Revealed	No diff
telephone voice mail system	Revealed	No diff	
<i>Area 9: Programs and Services Management</i>			
Community services	information and referral program	Expected	
	self-advocacy program	Revealed	Exciting
	ADA (Architectural barrier) consultation service	Revealed	Exciting
	community education outreach program	Revealed	Exciting
	architectural barrier consultation service [e.g. for builders, local government]	Revealed	Exciting
	program to locate or provide sign language interpreters	Revealed	No diff
Individual Service	provides Braille services to consumers, their families and the community	Revealed	No diff
	provides audio tape duplication services to consumers, their families and the community	No diff	Revealed
	video teleconferencing center that can be rented by members of the community	No diff	Exciting
	independent living skills program	Expected	
	individual advocacy program	Expected	
	peer counseling program	Expected	
	peer support groups for consumers	Expected	
	program to find housing for consumers	Revealed	No diff
	AT equipment loan program	Revealed	Exciting
	benefits program for consumers [e.g. explaining Medicare, Medicaid, insurance]	Revealed	No diff
	consumer-directed personal assistant program	Revealed	No diff
	Deaf services	Revealed	No diff
	program for children with disabilities	Revealed	No diff
	program for school to work transition	Revealed	No diff
	client assistance program	Revealed	No diff
legal services program	No diff	Revealed	
personal assistant consultation service program for consumers	Revealed	No diff	
program for individuals receiving mental health services	Revealed	No diff	
program for individuals with traumatic brain injury	Revealed	No diff	
program for mobility and orientation	Revealed	No diff	
program to make transportation arrangements for consumers and their families	No diff	Revealed	
provides wheelchair accessible van service to the office	Revealed	No diff	
service coordination program for developmentally disabled consumers	No diff	Revealed	
vocational program for consumers	Revealed	No diff	