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# Strategy Implementation Practices and Performance of Humanitarian and **Development Organisations**

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### Abstract

Purpose: The field of humanitarian and development groups has grown more significant in recent years in tackling crucial socioeconomic concerns in regions afflicted by crises, catastrophes, and conflicts. This study is a systematic literature review of strategy implementation practices and performance of humanitarian and development organizations (HDOs). The general objective of this study is to examine the effect of strategy implementation practices on performance of HDOs, followed by specific objectives, which are to investigate the effect of organizational culture, structure, leadership and resource allocation on performance of HDOs; to evaluate the moderating effect of donor funding conditions on the relationship between strategic implementation practices on performance of HDOs. The stakeholder theory, resource-based theory, and agency theory all serve as foundations for this research.

Methodology: A total of 108 articles were identified and systematically reviewed. The research method was customized for three databases: Emerald, google scholar, and EBSCO. The keywords used were: "Strategy implementation practices" AND, "performance "AND "Humanitarian organization" OR "development organization" These researches were conducted between 2017 and 2023. Only scientific journals and research reports published in English and French were admitted. The study was focused on African, Asian and American countries. At this level, 38 records had been excluded, and 70 articles had been extracted. All duplication was extensively scrutinized, the abstracts of the papers were thoroughly verified for deeper analysis in order to ensure the quality and relevance of academic paper. The exclusion criterion was that papers must be publishable in English and must be from the above cited databases and countries. Following the removal of duplicate records, 29 more articles were eliminated. Finally, we chose 41 relevant articles and the below features were extracted: original journal articles, research reports published, articles related to the relevant field in strategy implementation and performance of humanitarian organizations, published within 2017 and 2023.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The study recommends, techniques for collecting and analyzing data, both qualitative and quantitative, should be used. This provides a more detailed and conclusive study finding.

Key Words: Organizational Culture, Organizational Structure, Organizational Leadership, Resource Allocation, Donor Funding Conditions, and Humanitarian Organizations



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#### Background of the Study

Organizational performance entails the use of available resources by an organization, in order to achieve set goals. Performance of an organization is measured by comparison between the actual results and the set objectives or goals (Costa, 2020). These can either be positive or negative. Good performance is when the actual results have exceeded the set goals. On the other hand, under performance occurs when the actual results are below the set goals. This would necessitate the variance analysis. It would help unravel the reasons for the negative performance. Then, management should take corrective action to remedy the situation (Carayannis et al., 2021). In the setup of a humanitarian and development organization, performance would entail achievement of set programs and projects in time and within due. Additionally, the quality of the said projects and programs should be good enough to assure sustainability. In the recent past, the humanitarian and development organizations have adopted various performance measurement tools and techniques, for example the balanced scorecard (Costa, 2020). Today's business environment is highly competitive. Organizations must remain efficient in order for their operations to be sustainable. Organizations that have better strategies that are aligned to stakeholder expectations achieve better organizational performance. Humanitarian and development organizations should assess the economic factors that affect the goods and services produced and sold in a country. Despite directly affecting businesses, economic factors affect the financial state of the economy (Amiri & Beiranvand, 2020).

Strategy implementation refers to the strategy realization stage of strategic management. This is where the strategy is converted into actions to enable the organization achieve its set goals (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021). Thus, strategy implementation is action oriented. While this is the most challenging step in strategic management, it requires the cooperation of all stakeholders. The top management may come up with an excellent strategy but it breaks down at implementation. Stakeholder participation is therefore important. Strategy implementation entails organisational leadership, inclusiveness, participation, organizational culture, employee empowerment, communication, accountability and transparency (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021; Pella, Sumarwan, Daryanto & Kirbrandoko, 2018; Mubarak, Fauziah & Yusoff, 2019). According to Wahira (2015), strategy implementation entails putting strategies into action in order to transform performance from the present position to a desired future one (Wahira, 2015). According to Adams (2019), strategy execution entails converting the results of planning into a practical undertaking. This requires operationalizing the normal processes for a company to be competitive. If a company wants to stay competitive, it must adapt to the changing business environment (Huralska & Skrypnyk, 2021).

Depending on how the stakeholders approach it, the strategic implementation process influences whether a company succeeds, endures, or fails (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021). The capacity to quickly and successfully execute new strategies can make the difference between an organization's success and failure in challenging conditions. The prior academic research and practical experiences have shown that strategy implementation significantly affects organizational performance (Jaoua, 2018). Therefore, it follows that a company will always have a considerable competitive advantage if its plans are successfully implemented and carried out (Montshiwa, 2018), especially in industries where implementing strong and robust strategies is challenging. Building a strong organization is the top priority of strategy implementation because the efficacy of implementation determines a strategy's success. It entails creating an adaptable internal organizational structure, fostering the development of skills and abilities, and choosing individuals for important jobs (Wei & Nguyen, 2020).

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Organizations must reevaluate their tactics if they want to boost performance to a desirable position in the future (Mahdjoub et al., 2019).

Humanitarian and development organisations are those organisations that exist to alleviate the humanitarian situations. These organisations are spread all over the world. They mostly work with local communities and marginalized persons. In most cases, they are nongovernmental though they may work with the government to alleviate suffering from the people. These organisations usually play a critical role in the social and economic welfare of the members of the public (Saddique et al., 2020). They are able to meet the lowly in society and help them deal with basic needs, for example food, shelter and clothing. The humanitarian and development organizations get their funding from donations. Some of the areas in which these humanitarian and development organizations mostly work include: education, health, economic enhancement, social welfare and food security. Recently, they have been involved in such areas as: human rights, peace, democracy, gender inclusivity and environmental conservation.

## Statement of the Problem

Humanitarian and development organizations are designed to solve problem facing communities. Humanitarian and development organizations operate within budgets (Nagurney, Salarpour & Daniele, 2019). They must thus ensure that the funds at their disposal are utilized optimally. Lack of appropriate knowledge of the process of strategy implementation has caused many organizations to experience organizational performance setbacks. The current identified literature review in strategy implementation practices, show that, implementation process determines whether an organization excels, survives or dies depending on the manner in which it is undertaken by the stakeholders. In turbulent environments, the ability to implement new strategies quickly and effectively may well mean the difference between success and failure for an organization. the study carried by Odhiambo and Njuguna (2021) on the effect of strategy implementation practices focused on health NGOs. Their findings indicated that strategy implementation is positively associated with organizational performance. Kinuthia and Katuse (2017) examined strategic response to the business environment on non-governmental organizations projects. Latif and Williams (2017), included managers of organisations, without considering strategic implementation practices on the whole organization. Manani and Ngui (2019) did not clearly state the variables in their study on strategic implementation on organizational performance. This study, therefore, examines the effect of strategic implementation practices and performance of humanitarian and development organizations. Ha (2018) also carried a quantitative study on disaster management on non-governmental organizations. Cazenave and Morales (2021) carried out a qualitative study on non-governmental organizations' responses to financial evaluation. Alnatsheh and Cavusoglu (2020) study was on the role of knowledge management in performance of humanitarian organizations. The study indicated a positive and significant association between knowledge management and the performance of organizations. Therefore, the current study, states the problem, in terms of evolution of strategy implementation practices and performance of humanitarian and development organizations in the last remaining period. New knowledge on strategy implementation practices, and performance of humanitarian organizations will be created. Thus, this knowledge will be useful for future Scholars and researchers, who will be able to use new knowledge as a frame of reference for studies focusing on strategy implementation practices and performance of humanitarian organizations.

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### **Research Objectives**

- i. To investigate the effect of organisational culture on performance of humanitarian and development organisations.
- ii. To assess the effect of organisational structure on performance of humanitarian and development organisations.
- iii. To investigate the effect of organisational leadership on performance of humanitarian and development organisations.
- iv. To investigate the effect of resources allocation on performance of humanitarian and development organisations.
- v. To evaluate the moderating effect of donor funding conditions on the relationship between strategic implementation practices on performance of humanitarian and development organisations.

### **Theoretical Review**

### **Stakeholder Theory**

The stakeholder theory was developed by Freeman (1984), who argued for the inclusion of corporate accountability for the various stakeholders in an institution. The relationship is crucial in affecting financial results and, ultimately, a company's value. The theory views the organization as an input-output model with a number of stakeholders, including suppliers, administrative bodies, the audit committee, and the community, playing an input role and the company's financial results acting as the output. The theory's central premise is that effective management of relationships with business stakeholders is essential to the organization's capacity to meet accountability criteria. When seen in this light, the conventional viewpoint that success depends solely on maximizing shareholder wealth is rendered inadequate. Baric (2017) defines a stakeholder as a person whose actions either positively or negatively affect the achievement of corporate goals and objectives. Organizations must expand their financial planning through the usage of audit committees as a result of greater awareness in order to meet shifting needs. The same is true for corporate disclosure, which ought to be included in yearly or monthly reports. Other proponents of the stakeholder theory contend that management in the company has relationships with the workers, vendors, and business partners and is in charge of directing interactions between the groups both inside and externally. Managers of humanitarian and development organizations must develop relationships and inspire their stakeholders, who are mainly the shareholders. To do this, top management in humanitarian and development organizations must be capable of delivering the goals they have been given. The process of implementing the strategy must engage all stakeholders. This theory is particularly applicable to the objective of investigating the effect of resources allocation on performance of humanitarian and development organizations. The resources at the disposal of the humanitarian and development organizations are key in the strategy implementation process. They should be optimally used in every step of the strategy implementation process. This will enhance the overall performance of these organizations.

## **Resource Based Theory**

This study will be based on Barneys (1991) Resources Based Theory. This theory explains how strategic management gives an organization a competitive advantage over the others and how to sustain the advantage (Kenton, 2019; Onyango, 2014). The theory suggests that at an organization is a collection of assets or capabilities. According to Onyango (2014), the basic

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tenet of resource-based theory is that it emphasizes the need for a fit between an organization's external market context and its internal capabilities. In the present study, strategy implementation practices exhibited by the humanitarian and development organisations should enhance performance. Organisations must develop relevant competencies and skills among their employees to ensure that the organisation attains set goals. Resources of the organisation play a critical role in the strategy implementation. This theory is relevant in this study as it explains the role of resources allocation in improving the performance of humanitarian and development organisations. These organisations must work with the available resources to enhance organisational performance. This would enhance their performance and attainment of set goals.

## **Agency Theory**

In 1976, Jensen and Meckling developed the Agency Theory. The theory holds that there is a relationship between the shareholders (principals) and managers and executives (agents) of the company. According to Jensen and Meckling's (1976) agency perspective on the idea, modern organizations may experience agency problems as a result of the separation between possession and management. The costs resulting from the conflict between the interests of shareholders and those of the firm's executives are covered by the principal who grants the agent the ability to make policy. Losses theoretically emerge when management responds in a manner that is not intended to help the organization owner (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). The agency cost is determined by adding the fees for monitoring, residual damages, and bonding. The cost incurred by the principal in limiting the unfavorable activities of the agent is referred to as monitoring charges. The cost incurred by the agent to persuade the principal of their commitment is referred to as the bonding cost. The difference between ownership input and agent output is known as the residual loss. Because managers' and stockholders' interests are not entirely aligned, residual loss will still occur despite monitoring and bonding costs being incurred. According to Jensen and Meckling (1976), alignment of interests occurs when the goals of individuals working within a firm are in line with the goals of the entire firm. Since these are inextricably linked to how well the administration's conclusions help the shareholders, incentives like stock options, gratuities, and profits-related payments could be used as a technique to align the agents' interests with the principal interests. As a result, agents must perform their duties while upholding the interests of the principal. The theory has been criticized for leaning so much on the agent, as opposed to the principal. The principal in the relationship may be the source of problems for the organization. The theory links to the current study because humanitarian and development organizations have the obligation to enact structures to improve organisational culture and organisational leadership for realization of their goals. To achieve this, the top management must be up to the task of guiding the humanitarian and development organisations to achieve their objectives.

### **Empirical Review**

# Organizational Culture and Performance of Humanitarian and Development Organizations

Milosevic, Mii, and Mati (2021) examined how crucial corporate culture is to humanitarian efforts. It is crucial to respond appropriately to the humanitarian setting's many obstacles for organizations. Humanitarian organizations require a suitable and strong organizational culture in order to operate as efficiently as possible and to effectively implement the strategy (Milosevic et al.,2021). Sheraz (2017) investigated how to improve organizational culture.

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The author makes the case that both man-made and natural calamities have significantly extended the scope of nongovernmental organizations' operations in Pakistan. These catastrophes have brought a lot of money into Pakistan for the government, the UN, the population welfare department, international, and local nongovernmental organizations to use in emergency, relief, and rehabilitation initiatives. Without transformational leaders who could encourage ethical ideals within firms and contribute to boosting employee performance through their supportive roles, effective execution of these projects would not have been possible. Sheraz (2017) concentrated on the ways in which an organization's culture and leadership style support its performance. Structural equation modeling was employed in the study to assess the research hypotheses. The study's conclusions were crucial for nongovernmental groups in fostering moral behavior in businesses that improve organizational performance. However, some studies found that organizational cultural has an insignificant effect on organizational performance. The mixed findings can be due to the fact that the studies on organizational cultural and performance have been undertaken in different contexts. There are various approaches that have been proposed in the literature on how to organizational culture deals with performance. Shea et al. (2021), study suggests that managers use Knowledge Management practices, which are all-pervasive and very important for improving organizational performance. Tran (2020), suggests that, the research findings may support leaders and superiors to choose a proper organizational culture that will reduce employee dissatisfaction.

# Organizational Structure and Performance of Humanitarian and Development Organizations

Nhon, Quang, and Trung (2020) investigated how organizational structure affected the effectiveness of organizations focused on development and humanitarian aid. One of the most important facets of strategic management is the effect of corporate structure on corporate performance. The development of outstanding performance depends on the human, organizational, and social capital elements of intellectual capital (Nhon et al., 2020). Latif and Williams (2017) assessed the efficiency of organizational structure in the projects of nongovernmental organizations. The study used a methodical approach to produce the necessary elements by using both focus group talks and literature. The systematically reviewed literature suggests various contributions on how the implementation of organizational structure affects the organizational performance. Ahmed et al (2021), suggests that knowledge management capabilities (firm capability) enable organizations to develop organizational agility (firm capacity) which in turn enhances performance. While, Zighan et al. (2021), contributes to the body of knowledge and proposes a structural alteration process in Project Based Organizations to help align project operations and service provision activities. Further, Shafique et al. (2022), suggest that, organizations should strive to develop sustained Knowledge Management capabilities because these are seminal for enabling the challenging task of exploiting existing resources for innovation while also tapping on new opportunities for explorative breakthroughs. In addition, Sun et al. (2021), explain that, decentralization degree has a higher impact on Job Satisfaction than on Job Performance. Employees' Job Performance is positively correlated with their Job Satisfaction, and a higher decentralization degree leads to a more significant positive impact that Job Satisfaction puts on Job Performance. Ahmetoglu et al. (2019), propose that, fostering entrepreneurial tendencies in employees may facilitate corporate entrepreneurship and performance within organizations. Hameed et al. (2021), propose that, managers of the firms in the Malaysian electronics manufacturing industry by highlighting the dimensions of business process reengineering that can have a positive and significant impact on the organizational

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performance and by advising them to incorporate strategic thinking. Therefore, the study contributes to the managers of firms in the industrial sector by analyzing how the characteristics of organizational structure impact dynamic capability and project team innovative performance. (Gonsalez 2021).

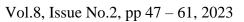
### Organizational Leadership on Performance of Humanitarian and Development Organizations

Amir and Muathe (2018) evaluated organisational leadership and performance of humanitarian and development organisations in Mandera county. The findings reveal that, in Mandera County, there is a strong correlation between effective leadership and the performance of non-governmental organizations. Performance of non-governmental organizations in Mandera County showed a positive correlation coefficient with organizational structure. Kabetu and Iravo (2018) looked into how strategic leadership affected the functioning of foreign aid organizations in Kenya. According to the authors, donors who have pledged millions of dollars in help and goods have put enormous pressure on humanitarian groups in recent years to demonstrate that they are accomplishing their goals in the most effective and efficient manner. As a result, leadership issues hinder humanitarian efforts, causing a great deal of uncertainty at UN Habitat. The performance of UN-Habitat in Kenya is significantly impacted by developing human capital. Maintaining a strong corporate culture has an impact on UNHabitat's performance in Kenya. The studies reviewed have come up with various suggestions and approaches in terms of strategy implementation which can be adopted by humanitarian and development organizations. Hilton et al. (2021), propose that the dimensions of transformational leadership should be continuously improved alongside strategically motivating employees to increase their satisfaction level to enhance organizational performance. Mahmood et al. (2020), suggest that, Consistent with the national cultural syndrome, and as preferred by employees, managers could focus on developing a clan or group culture to strengthen their influencing power on employees. Further, Pio (2020), propose that, if the nurse's job satisfaction increases because of the wellpaying salary, promotion, work team, supervisor and job it will contribute to the improved performance of the nurse. Villaluz and Hechavona (2018), study shows that the culturebuilding model, can be used as a framework for building an innovation culture in organizations. Therefore, the study literature, provides evidence for enhancing organizational performance with transformational leadership through innovative climate. (Puni et al. 2022).

## **Resources** Allocation and Performance of Humanitarian and Development Organizations

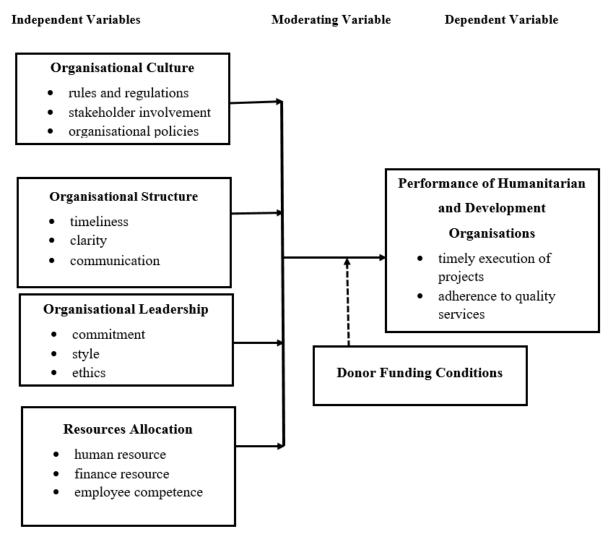
Ahmed et al. (2019), propose that, sharing timely and correct information among logistics partners and workers is a key to drive rapid response logistics effectively. Meduri (2021), In addition to contributing to humanitarian logistics literature, the competency model developed will also help forecast the future requirements and help the organization choose "the right person for the right job." Adem et al. (2018), propose that, Compromise and consideration for partner's drivers and cultural views are essential for effective joint humanitarian relief initiatives. While, Namagembe (2020), Suggest that, the mediating role and moderating role of inter-cluster coordination on the relationship between relational capital and service in humanitarian relief chains are aspects that have not been given significant attention empirically. Nesheim (2021), further posits that, networking, relation maintenance and system knowledge and sociable and creative mindsets are key success factors for resource managers in large matrix-like project-based organizations. Therefore, organizations need to embrace, proper resource allocation and established that efficiency revolves around making

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the possible use of a given set of resources and as such firms allocate resources through the use of budget (Kwarteng 2017).

# **Conceptual Framework**



# Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

# Summary of Literature Gaps

The literature reviewed has evident gaps on strategy implementation practices on performance of humanitarian and development organizations. These gaps need to be filled. Some of the studies reviewed present a methodology gap, for example Kwizera and Munene (2021) conducted a quantitative study in non-governmental organization project implementation in Rwanda. Their findings indicate that key tactics for guaranteeing project success include community empowerment, capacity building, and community involvement in humanitarian organization project performance. Additionally, the study's findings of Mwangi and Kihara (2021), Karimi et al. (2019), Duke and Edet (2017), revealed a statically significant positive relationship between the culture of an organization and performance. The review literature on organizational structure and organizational culture, showed that organizational structure has a direct bearing on business performance Nhon et al. (2020), Latif and Williams (2017), Ahmed et al (2021). Analyses revealed that the effective design of



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internal manuals and process guidelines, together with formal efforts to build stakeholder discussion in organizations and boost the perceived success of humanitarian initiatives, had a positive impact on these perceptions Villa and Ondog (2017). Studies carried by Karami et al. (2019), Sherez (2017), Amir and Muathe (2018), Kabetu and Ivaro (2018), Do Tung et al. (2022), Alkhadra et al. (2022), Villaluz and Hechavona (2018), Hilton et al. (2021) and Pio (2020), sought out a quatintitative study and revealed that transformational leadership have a positive effect on organizational performance and statistically significant relationship between organizational Leadership and performance. Simon and Ronoh (2017), Owako and Nyagara (2021), Manini and Ngui (2019), Omolo and Mose (2019), these studies are focused on quatitative methodology to investigate how resources abilities affected the performance of humanitarian and development organizations. some findings analyzed and described several mechanisms as the main task of resource allocation, competence development and performance appraisals. Further, some results did not clearly state the variables in their study on strategic implementation on organizational performance, hence creating a gap in the study.

## Conclusions

The study sought to establish the effect of strategy implementation practices on performance of humanitarian and development organizations. Significant literature reviewed employed descriptive design to guide their research methodology. Descriptive statistics emphasizes on generalization of study findings to the whole population. Further, some of the reviewed studies used correlational analysis. This has the limitation of not explaining the reason for the correlation. It would be important to explore other research designs that may be more conclusive on giving more information on strategic management implementation on performance of humanitarian and development organizations. This paper notes that the most commonly used theories are the resource-based theory, the stakeholder theory and the agency theory. Although the theories have been widely used by moist authors, it is important to note that they lean on the commercial organizations. In the case of humanitarian and development organizations, the theories may not be the best to contextualize strategy implementation practices on performance of humanitarian and development organizations. The Stakeholder Theory perceives the organization as an input-output model that contains many stakeholders. On the other hand, the resource-based theory suggests that an organization is a collection of assets or capabilities. Additionally, the agency theory suggests that an association exists amongst the firm's shareholders and the managers. All these theories have a commercial aspect in them. Humanitarian and development organizations are not for profit organizations. Therefore, these theories may need a review to be contextualized to the mission and vision of humanitarian and development organizations. Previous studies indicate that there may be limited knowledge on strategy implementation practices on performance of humanitarian and development organizations. This is thus an area that would interest many scholars. The knowledge gap that is to be filled will be useful for future scholars. New knowledge on the organizational culture, organizational structure, organizational leadership, resource allocation on performance of humanitarian and development organizations will be created. Researchers and academics will be able to utilize the new information as a frame of reference for studies concentrating on the performance and strategic implementation of humanitarian and development organizations.

## Recommendations

Owing to the weaknesses and gaps in existing literature on strategy implementation in performance of humanitarian and development organizations, this paper recommends that scholars should contextualize the effect of strategy implementation on humanitarian and

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development organizations. While many scholars have focused on strategic implementation on firm performance in general, it would be important for a more focus on humanitarian and development organizations. In the same breadth, relevant theories that are applicable to the humanitarian set up should be used to explain the study's theoretical basis. This would add to and improve the existing body of knowledge. It would also be important for scholars to incorporate other stakeholders, apart from company employees, in their examination of strategy implementation practices and performance of humanitarian and development organizations. This would help explain the relationship between strategy implementation practices and performance of humanitarian and development.

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