

**PATH-GOAL LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE
OF INTERNATIONAL NON- GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS IN SOUTH SUDAN**

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**Path-Goal Leadership and Performance of International Non-
Governmental Organizations in South Sudan**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University

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DEDICATION

To my late parents, Joseph Rabolo Ojanji and Janerose Nasubo, I know you are proud of me, Rest in peace.

To my maternal uncles “Abakhulo”, who showed me the light of the day through education.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ALNAP	Action Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
BSC	Balanced Score Card
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CSOs	Civil-Society Organisations
CSQ	Commitment to Service Quality
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSRF	Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility
CVR	Content Validity Ratio
CVs	Coefficients of Variations
DF	Degrees of Freedom
EI	Environmental Integrity
EPD	Entrepreneurship & Procurement Department
FP	Financial Performance
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IBP	Internal Business Processes
IC	Individualised Consideration
II	Idealised Influence
IM	Inspirational Motivation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IS	Intellectual Stimulation
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators

KWS	Kenya Wildlife Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OC	Organizational Culture
OLG	Organizational Learning and Growth
OP	Organizational Performance
PGL	Path-goal Leadership
P-GLQ	Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire
PGT	Post Graduate Teacher
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling
P-O	Person-Organization fit
Q-Q	Quantile-Quantile plot
RDT	Resource Dependency Theory
S/BF	Stakeholder/Beneficiary Focus
SBSC	Sustainable Balanced Score Card
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
UAE	Achievement-Oriented Leadership
UAE	United Arab Emirates
US\$	United States Dollar
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
WFP	World Food Program

DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

Achievement-oriented Leadership: is a leadership style where leaders set challenging goals, emphasize high performance standards, and demonstrate confidence in their employees' ability to excel. It focuses on motivating subordinates to reach their fullest potential by encouraging persistence, providing constructive feedback, and recognizing exceptional performance (Sodikin & Fachrunnisa, 2022).

Directive Leadership: is a leadership style in which the leader provides clear instructions, sets specific expectations, and closely supervises task execution to ensure goals are achieved efficiently. It emphasizes structure, control, and clarity, guiding subordinates on what to do, how to do it, and when tasks should be completed (Mukherjee & Mulla, 2022).

International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs): are independent, non-profit entities that operate across national borders to address global issues such as humanitarian aid, development, human rights, health, and environmental protection. They function autonomously from government control but often collaborate with states, donors, and local organizations to implement programs that promote social welfare, equity, and sustainable development (Clarke, 2021).

Organizational Culture: Organizational culture refers to a framework comprising a set of values, beliefs, attitudes, systems, and rules that inform and influence how

employees behave. Organizational culture mirrors the conditions of employment and employee behaviour, including how employees relate with each other and the other organizational stakeholders (Lubis & Hanum, 2020).

Path-goal Leadership:

Path-goal leadership was designed to identify a leader's most practised style, namely directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership, as a motivation to get subordinates to accomplish goals (McKinsey & Company, 2022).

Participative Leadership:

is a leadership style in which leaders actively involve employees in decision-making, problem-solving, and planning processes. It emphasizes collaboration, shared responsibility, and empowerment, allowing team members to contribute their ideas and expertise to enhance commitment, innovation, and organizational effectiveness (Wang et al., 2022).

Supportive Leadership:

is a leadership style characterized by empathy, approachability, and concern for the well-being of subordinates. It focuses on creating a friendly and inclusive work environment where leaders provide emotional support, encouragement, and assistance to help employees overcome work-related challenges and perform effectively (Kim et al., 2021).

ABSTRACT

International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan struggle meeting donor compliance requirements also to deliver sustainable and community-relevant outcomes. While majority of them fail to meet financial and reporting standards, intended program results, and less than half of beneficiaries feel their needs are met. In contrast, INGOs in developed countries report higher satisfaction and success rates due to more balanced and participative leadership styles. In South Sudan, path-goal leadership driven by donor rigidity, insecurity, and centralized decision-making limits flexibility, staff empowerment and community involvement. Consequently, there remains a major research gap on how path-goal leadership and organizational culture jointly affect INGO performance in fragile contexts like South Sudan, which this study seeks to address. The study aimed to examine how path-goal leadership influences the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. Specifically, it focused on the effects of directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership styles, as well as the moderating role of organizational culture in this relationship. The study integrates path-goal theory, contingency theory, transformational leadership theory, resource dependence theory, and organizational culture theory to provide understanding of the interplay between leadership, organizational culture and performance in INGOs. The study adopted a positivist research philosophy, emphasizing objective measurement and statistical testing to examine the relationship between path-goal leadership and organizational performance among INGOs in South Sudan. A descriptive correlational design with a quantitative approach was employed, targeting 114 registered INGOs and collecting data from 228 senior managers using structured questionnaires and key informant interviews. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analyses, to test hypotheses and assess the moderating role of organizational culture. The study conducted diagnostic tests for normality, linearity, multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and heteroscedasticity to ensure that the regression model met all statistical assumptions. The study found that all four path-goal leadership styles, that is, directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented significantly and positively influence the performance of INGOs in South Sudan, leading to the rejection of all null hypotheses (H_{01} – H_{04}). The study findings indicated that achievement-oriented leadership emerged as the most significant factor, demonstrating the strongest positive effect on organizational performance of INGOs. The study also revealed that organizational culture significantly moderates the relationship between leadership styles and performance, leading to the rejection of the fifth null hypothesis (H_{05}), and highlighting that a cohesive, adaptive culture amplifies leadership effectiveness. These findings imply that cultivating high-performance expectations alongside supportive and participatory cultural values enhances coordination, innovation, and accountability within INGOs. Theoretically, the study contributes to leadership and governance scholarship by integrating Path–Goal, Contingency, Transformational, Resource Dependence, and Organizational Culture theories, emphasizing that achievement-oriented and culturally aligned leadership are the most critical drivers of sustained organizational success in fragile humanitarian contexts.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The concept of path-goal leadership is grounded on the path-goal theory developed by Robert House that explains how leaders can enhance employee performance and satisfaction by clarifying the path to organizational goals and removing obstacles along the way (Zhong et al., 2025; Adogbeji, Oghenekohwoya & Adigwe, 2022; Olowoselu et al., 2019). It emphasizes that leadership style should adapt to both the characteristics of subordinates and the work environment, which are often shaped by organizational culture (Fabac, Kokot & Bubalo, 2022; Umuteme & Adegbite, 2022; Bans-Akutey, 2021). The four main leadership behaviors under this theory are directive leadership, which provides clear instructions, expectations, and guidance; supportive leadership, which prioritizes employee well-being and fosters a friendly, approachable atmosphere; participative leadership, which involves employees in decision-making to increase ownership and commitment; and achievement-oriented leadership, which sets challenging goals and encourages high performance (Pacia & Guevarra, 2023; Adogbeji et al., 2022; Dare & Saleem, 2022). Organizational culture acts as a moderator, influencing which style or combination of styles will be most effective (Ochieng et al., 2025; Wong, Gao & Liang, 2025;), for example, a highly structured culture may favor directive leadership, while an innovation-focused culture may lean toward participative and achievement-oriented approaches (Hartati, Fauzi & Zohriah, 2024; Priyowidodo, 2021; Rana, K'aol, & Kirubi, 2019).

Organizations have adopted path-goal leadership because it is flexible and situational, allowing leaders to choose behaviors that best align with employee needs and work conditions (Iqbal & Muzamil, 2025; Annan, 2022; Saleem et al., 2021). Successful cases show that when leadership behaviors match the organizational context and employee expectations, productivity, morale, and goal attainment improve significantly (Ilmiah, 2025; Acosta-Prado, 2023). For instance, an NGO that combines supportive leadership with achievement-oriented goal setting saw improvements in

staff motivation and service delivery in challenging rural contexts (Ali, 2024; Mawele, 2023; Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2020).

Conversely, failed cases often reveal mismatches between leadership style and context such as leaders using highly directive approaches in environments that value autonomy, which can result in low engagement, resistance, and turnover. This contrast demonstrates that the adaptability built into path-goal leadership is a key factor in organizational success, while a rigid, one-size-fits-all approach can lead to poor outcomes (Firmansyah, 2025; Mohan & Nithayananthan, 2025).

The INGOs are increasingly adopting path-goal leadership to strengthen performance indicators such as outcome achievement rate, beneficiary satisfaction score, and compliance rate (Ali, 2024; Walker, Sanderson & Walliman, 2023; Thambi, 2023). The diversity of operational contexts from conflict zones to urban development projects demands a leadership model that can adjust to local cultural, political, and logistical realities. By applying directive leadership in compliance-heavy donor reporting, supportive leadership in community engagement, participative leadership in project design, and achievement-oriented leadership in scaling successful interventions, INGOs can enhance both accountability and impact (Akdere & Acheson, 2022; Bach, 2022; Reimbold, 2020). This approach ensures that teams remain motivated and focused, beneficiaries feel heard and valued, and donor requirements are met without sacrificing program relevance. Moreover, the model supports adaptive management practices, allowing INGOs to maintain performance even when external conditions change rapidly.

There is a clear need to confirm and study the reasons behind the adoption of path-goal leadership in INGOs. While anecdotal evidence and some case studies suggest it improves outcomes, systematic research is necessary to determine how the theory functions across diverse cultural and operational settings (Koirala, 2024; Njoroge, Ouma & Nyambegera, 2023; Mohammed, 2021; Al Assadi, 2021). Understanding whether certain leadership styles within the model are more effective in specific contexts could guide targeted capacity-building and leadership training initiatives. Additionally, examining its role in improving beneficiary satisfaction and compliance

could help INGOs make a stronger case to donors for continued flexibility and investment (Manley, 2024; Abnett, 2024; Walker, 2020; Boyer, Kolpakov & Schmitz, 2019). Without such evidence, organizations risk applying the model inconsistently or overlooking the cultural and structural factors that moderate its effectiveness. A deeper evidence base would not only validate current practices but also refine leadership strategies for sustained performance in the complex, high-stakes environments where INGOs operate (Hengevoss & von Schnurbein, 2023; Bloodgood, 2022; Tran, 2020).

1.1.1 Global Perspective on Path-goal Leadership and INGOs Performance

In the United States, INGOs often operate in a highly regulated funding environment with strong donor compliance requirements. Path-goal leadership supports performance by using directive leadership to meet strict reporting and compliance obligations while leveraging participative leadership to encourage staff input in program design and adaptation (Lee & Han, 2020; Bacallao-Pino, 2022). For example, USA-based INGOs responding to humanitarian crises have found that involving field teams in decision-making improves program relevance and beneficiary satisfaction scores (Bloodgood, 2022; Bush & Hadden, 2019). Simultaneously, clear guidance on compliance ensures that donor trust and accountability standards remain intact. This balance has led to measurable improvements in outcome achievement rates, especially in multi-state disaster response and global health initiatives funded by USAID and other donors (Kyobutungi, Okereke & Abimbola, 2025; Mbah et al., 2025; Bacallao-Pino, 2022).

In the United Kingdom, INGOs tend to operate under significant public scrutiny due to the prominence of charitable oversight bodies and strong expectations for transparency (Nadel & Walton, 2024; Vijfeijken, 2020). Supportive leadership is critical in maintaining staff morale during periods of funding uncertainty, while achievement-oriented leadership helps meet ambitious program targets set by both institutional donors and public fundraising campaigns. UK-based INGOs engaged in global education and refugee assistance have successfully applied participative leadership to co-create program strategies with field offices, ensuring cultural relevance and long-term sustainability (Clarke, 2021; May & Curwell, 2020). At the

same time, directive leadership is applied in compliance-heavy domains, such as safeguarding and financial auditing, to maintain donor confidence. This blend of styles under the path-goal framework has helped UK INGOs maintain high compliance rates while sustaining community trust (Whitty et al., 2023; Mitchell, Hughes & Ritchie, 2021).

In Japan and Australia, cultural norms influence the emphasis within path-goal leadership. Japanese INGOs often operate in collectivist contexts where supportive and directive leadership are valued for creating harmony, clear processes, and consensus (Western, 2025; Wilks, Richardson & Bair, 2021). Leaders invest heavily in building long-term relationships with staff and partners, which contributes to stable program delivery and high beneficiary satisfaction (Gildea, 2024).

In Australia, INGOs lean toward participative and achievement-oriented leadership, aligning with the country's egalitarian values and emphasis on innovation (Wilks, 2024). Australian INGOs working in climate adaptation and indigenous health programs have found that involving stakeholders early in decision-making and setting high but achievable targets leads to improved outcome achievement rates and stronger donor engagement (Bevis, 2025; Rowlands & Wisner, 2020).

In the Middle East and Malaysia, INGOs often operate in environments shaped by strong hierarchies and sometimes restrictive regulatory frameworks. Here, directive leadership plays a key role in ensuring compliance with local laws and navigating complex political contexts (Al Mokdad, 2025). At the same time, supportive leadership is essential for building trust with local communities, especially in humanitarian and conflict-response work (Salameh-Ayanian et al., 2025; Boyer et al., 2019). Malaysian INGOs, operating in a multicultural society, frequently adopt participative leadership when working with diverse ethnic and religious groups to ensure inclusive program design (Masdar & Basiruddin, 2020). In both contexts, achievement-oriented leadership has been critical in scaling successful pilot programs into national-level interventions, contributing to improved service delivery indicators and compliance rates (Noor, 2025; Ching et al., 2019;).

In Brazil, INGOs often address pressing social and environmental challenges, such as poverty reduction, health equity, and Amazon conservation (Pham et al., 2021). The path-goal leadership model supports this work by combining supportive leadership to foster strong community relationships and social mobilization with achievement-oriented leadership to meet ambitious impact targets despite resource constraints (Rashid, 2025). Participative leadership is also highly valued in Brazil's active civil society environment, where grassroots input strengthens program legitimacy and beneficiary satisfaction (Bloodgood, 2022). However, directive leadership remains important when navigating bureaucratic requirements tied to both domestic and international funding. INGOs applying a balanced path-goal approach in Brazil have demonstrated high adaptability, enabling them to maintain strong performance metrics even during political and economic instability (Marques, 2023). Thus, the adaptability inherent in path-goal leadership allows INGOs to navigate complex environments, from emergency relief to long-term development, while maintaining trust with both communities and donors (Bloodgood & Schmitz, 2025). However, the degree of success varies depending on how well leadership styles are matched to context, underscoring the need for continuous learning and culturally informed leadership training within INGOs operating on a global scale (Gildea, 2024).

1.1.2 Regional Perspective on Path-Goal Leadership and Organizational Performance

In many African contexts, the performance of INGOs is measured by indicators such as outcome achievement rate, beneficiary satisfaction score, and compliance rate all of which can be negatively affected when path-goal leadership is poorly applied (Kumi & Copestake, 2022; Ogunyemi & Nwagwu, 2022). In Nigeria and Ghana, for example, INGOs have struggled with low outcome achievement rates in rural health and education programs due to over-reliance on directive leadership without adequate participative elements (Forkuor & Korah, 2023; Fuseini et al., 2022). This top-down approach has often ignored community priorities and local knowledge, resulting in interventions that meet donor reporting requirements but fail to address systemic issues. For instance, education programs designed without teacher and parent input have shown poor retention rates, while health projects have delivered outputs (for

example number of vaccinations) without improving service quality or trust among communities (Nwankwo, Olaniyi & Obahiagbon, 2024).

In Egypt and Morocco, where hierarchical organizational cultures are common, INGOs often overemphasize directive and compliance-driven leadership at the expense of supportive approaches (Atia & Herrold, 2018; Haddadian, 2020). This has contributed to low beneficiary satisfaction scores in areas like youth employment and refugee integration. Many programs fulfill contractual obligations such as training numbers or funds disbursed, but lack mechanisms to adapt services based on participant feedback. The absence of supportive leadership has discouraged open communication from field teams and beneficiaries, leading to missed opportunities for course correction. As a result, while compliance rates remain high, long-term impact indicators, such as job retention among trained youth, remain weak (Elkorashy, 2023; Norman, 2021).

In Zimbabwe and South Africa, INGOs have sometimes misapplied achievement-oriented leadership without balancing it with realistic resource assessments or local constraints (Dube, 2021; Ringson, 2020). In Zimbabwe, humanitarian and development programs have set ambitious targets such as rapid agricultural productivity gains without providing adequate training or infrastructure, leading to underperformance and donor frustration (Kabonga, 2023). In South Africa, INGOs tackling public health crises have pushed aggressive timelines for HIV prevention campaigns without accounting for community engagement needs, resulting in low participation rates. These mismatches between goal-setting and contextual readiness have reduced both outcome achievement rates and beneficiary satisfaction, despite leaders' intentions to inspire high performance (Appe, 2022; Makofane & Selepe, 2022).

In Kenya and Rwanda, INGOs have occasionally failed to apply participative leadership effectively, especially in multi-stakeholder development projects. Programs addressing water access or agricultural extension services have suffered from low adoption rates because implementers did not sufficiently involve local leaders, cooperatives, or beneficiary groups in planning (Mburu, Ragui & Ongeti, 2024;

Nyakundi, 2023). Without participative mechanisms, adaptive management is weak, and projects may ignore seasonal, cultural, or economic realities. This gap has been particularly damaging for outcome achievement rates, as interventions that look effective on paper fail to sustain results beyond the pilot phase (Nguta, 2021; Maturire & Irechukwu, 2023). Additionally, compliance-focused donor reporting has sometimes overshadowed genuine engagement, creating tensions between field teams and headquarters (Singirankabo & Wanjiku, 2023; Kigenza & Irechukwu, 2023).

In Tanzania and Uganda, poor performance has often been linked to weak supportive leadership, especially in programs operating under high-pressure, donor-driven timelines. Staff burnout, high turnover, and limited capacity development have reduced INGOs' ability to deliver consistent, high-quality services (Kessy, 2025; Walembe, Kiboi & Mathenge, 2024; Baldwin, 2022). For example, in community health programs, overworked and under-supported field workers have struggled to maintain service quality, leading to declines in beneficiary satisfaction scores. While compliance rates may remain acceptable due to meticulous reporting, the quality and sustainability of services suffer when staff morale and well-being are not prioritized within leadership strategies (Okuonzi, 2023; Mushi, 2022).

In Zimbabwe and Ethiopia, INGOs have sometimes relied too heavily on directive and donor-driven approaches in politically sensitive environments, leaving little room for adaptive, community-informed solutions (Nyamukapa, 2023; Ntini, 2022). In Zimbabwe, strict adherence to donor compliance has produced well-documented outputs such as the number of households receiving food aid but has failed to address long-term food security challenges (Kabonga, 2022; Ngwenya & Boshoff, 2020). In Ethiopia, rigid project designs have limited INGOs' ability to adjust interventions in response to conflict-related displacement, causing delays in meeting outcome targets (Zelege, 2025; Kere & Risper, 2021). The absence of flexible leadership styles, such as participative and supportive approaches, has contributed to weak beneficiary satisfaction scores and a widening gap between donor expectations and on-the-ground realities (Bekele, 2021; Desalegn, 2020).

1.1.3 South Sudan Perspective on Path-goal Leadership and Organizational Performance

The World Bank's (2023) observation that ever since South Sudan became independent in 2011, she struggled with fragility, economic stagnation, and instability more than a decade after her independence. The young African nation was characterized by absolute poverty, while conflict, displacement, and external shocks worsened the situation (Mujja & Murigi, 2025). Furthermore, South Sudan is more vulnerable to climate change, and natural disasters undermine both recovery and development initiatives (Qaddour et al., 2025). For INGOs, operating in such disruptive, unstable, insecure, and unpredictable circumstances, as presented by South Sudan, is a huge leadership, cultural, and trust challenge in relation to performance (Ali, 2021). Thus, this cultural orientation reinforces directive leadership, where decision-making is centralized, and staff strictly follow pre-set guidelines (Cochrane, 2020). For example, during severe flooding in Jonglei State, some INGOs adhered rigidly to pre-approved food distribution plans, even when local assessments indicated that boats and shelter materials were more urgent (Sworo, 2023). While this approach satisfied donor reporting systems, it ignored community feedback, leading to low beneficiary satisfaction scores and revealing a misalignment between leadership style, organizational culture, and actual field needs (Chuol, 2024).

Moreover, other challenge emerges when the organizational culture is hierarchical and risk-averse, limiting the space for supportive leadership in volatile contexts like Upper Nile and Unity States (Wilnkison et al., 2022). Field teams in these areas often operate in dangerous and resource-limited conditions but are constrained by headquarters' preference for tight procedural control (Otwako & Anyieni, 2024). For instance, health workers responding to cholera outbreaks reported inadequate psychosocial support and no authority to modify treatment protocols to reflect local realities (Dijkzeul, 2021). This mismatch between supportive leadership principles and a rigid, top-down culture contributes to high staff turnover, eroded morale, and reduced outcome achievement rates. In cultures that prize strict adherence to formal structures over human-centered support, INGOs may meet compliance targets but fail to sustain effective service delivery (Ogutu, 2020).

Furthermore, participative leadership is also underutilized due to INGOs' frequent adoption of a programmer-knows-best culture that undervalues community voice in decision-making (Opiyo, Iteso & Onkware, 2024). In Warrap State, for example, livelihood programs to improve cattle productivity were designed by technical experts without genuine engagement with local herders. Organizational culture here favored technical expertise over community wisdom, resulting in the introduction of veterinary drugs unfamiliar to herders and consequently low adoption rates (Magioni, 2021). This lack of participatory processes not only limits the effectiveness of interventions but also erodes community trust. When organizational culture does not prioritize co-creation, participative leadership principles remain tokenistic rather than transformative (Robinson, 2021).

In addition, an achievement-oriented leadership style which can be highly motivating in performance-driven cultures often clashes with South Sudan's operational realities when paired with a results-at-all-costs organizational culture (Hertzke, 2019). For example, an education program in Western Bahr el Ghazal aimed to build 50 classrooms in one year, but flooding, insecurity, and supply chain issues made the goal unrealistic. Under pressure to meet ambitious targets, teams compromised construction quality, leading to incomplete facilities that undermined both compliance rates and beneficiary satisfaction (Storeng et al., 2019). In a culture that prioritizes numerical outputs over contextual feasibility, achievement-oriented leadership risks driving superficial success at the expense of long-term impact (Masua, Mowles & Sarra, 2020). Aligning path-goal leadership styles with a more adaptive, learning-oriented organizational culture is therefore essential for INGOs in South Sudan to improve genuine performance outcomes (Tomalin & Wilkinson, 2023).

1.1.4 International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan

The status of INGOs operating in South Sudan reflects a complex interplay between path-goal leadership styles, entrenched organizational cultures, and the resulting performance outcomes. Many INGOs such as *Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)*, *Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)*, *Save the Children*, and *CARE International* are delivering critical services under extreme insecurity, logistical barriers, and shifting

humanitarian priorities (Magioni, 2021). However, their leadership styles often lean toward directive approaches due to high donor scrutiny and compliance pressures (Persson, 2021). For instance, *NRC*'s shelter projects in Bentiu internally displaced persons (IDP) camps followed pre-set donor procurement and design guidelines, even when local assessments indicated the need for flood-resistant housing. While this ensured a 100% donor compliance rate, it failed to address seasonal displacement challenges, lowering beneficiary satisfaction (Liaga, 2023).

In other cases, supportive leadership which should prioritize staff welfare and problem-solving has been constrained by INGOs' hierarchical, control-heavy cultures. For example, *International Medical Corps (IMC)* health teams in Upper Nile faced burnout due to long deployments in insecure areas without structured psychosocial support (Raftery, 2023). Field staff often lacked the authority to adjust medical outreach schedules in response to conflict flare-ups (Ahmed et al., 2019). Despite achieving core service delivery metrics such as patient counts, the absence of strong supportive leadership in a restrictive organizational culture led to high turnover and reduced outcome achievement rates in prolonged crises. This shows that when culture emphasizes control over flexibility, supportive leadership cannot fully function (Muras et al., 2021).

Participative leadership has also been inconsistently applied. *World Vision*'s food security programs in Warrap State initially planned large-scale crop diversification without adequately involving local farmers in design decisions (Isharaza, 2021). The organizational culture, heavily influenced by global headquarters' technical frameworks, privileged agricultural "best practices" over community-driven solutions (Tomiak, 2020). As a result, certain crop varieties failed to thrive under local soil and climate conditions, reducing both adoption and program sustainability. Performance indicators such as beneficiary satisfaction scores dropped, despite meeting output targets for seed distribution (Halidu et al., 2025). This highlights how a non-inclusive culture undermines the benefits of participative leadership in complex environments like South Sudan (Juba, 2020).

When achievement-oriented leadership is paired with a results-at-all-costs culture, INGOs sometimes push for unrealistic targets that compromise long-term effectiveness. For instance, *Save the Children* set a goal to train 1,000 teachers in Jonglei within six months to meet donor deadlines (Sami et al., 2020). However, heavy rains and conflict delayed access to remote training sites, leading to rushed sessions with insufficient follow-up. While numerical targets were met, post-training evaluations revealed limited impact on teaching quality, lowering the outcome achievement rate despite perfect compliance reporting. The misalignment between leadership drive and contextual realities shows how cultural pressures to meet ambitious targets can distort performance outcomes (Abd Alameer & Al-Kaoud, 2024).

Overall, INGOs in South Sudan operate in an environment where path-goal leadership styles are often filtered through rigid, compliance-heavy organizational cultures, producing mixed performance results (Gichuki, 2025). While organizations like *MSF* excel in adaptive field-level decision-making boosting both responsiveness and beneficiary satisfaction many others remain constrained by donor-driven systems that limit flexibility. The result is a landscape where INGOs can meet reporting and compliance targets but struggle to sustain improvements in outcome achievement rates or community trust. Addressing these issues will require aligning leadership styles with more adaptive, learning-oriented cultures that value both accountability and contextual responsiveness (John, 2022).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The relationship between path-goal leadership and organizational performance has elicited a vibrant debate among leadership scholars and practitioners since the seminal works of Evans (1970). Studies show that path-goal leadership influences organizational performance (Annan, 2022; Mutonyi, 2022; Privowidodo, 2021; Nzeneri, 2020; Mwaisaka, 2019; Rana et al., 2019), but it has also been contended that path-goal leadership cannot singly influence performance but have to be combined with other variables namely organizational culture (Gasela, 2022; Bwonya et al., 2020; Klein et al., 2013).

Unlike the autocratic style of leadership that characterized most decision-making approaches in the twentieth century, whereby leaders in top management acted without consulting other team members, things have changed significantly. Lloyd-Walker & Walker (2011) contended that leadership at that time was characterized more by inspiration over decision. Panetta (2012) proposed that leaders are more flexible and transparent. According to Northouse (2016), modern-day leaders lead by goals; hence, this is referred to as a path-goal theory.

Many leadership scholars (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016; Famakin & Abisuga, 2016; Salanova & Sanni, 2016; Heartfield, 2012) have studied the path-goal theory and employee job satisfaction. However, Kagwiria (2016) found that a few studies have focussed on using path-goal leadership styles in financial organizations. Redmond and Serrano (2015) confirmed that studies on leadership styles have concentrated on participatory leadership style, work attitudes and employee motivation, with few focussing on path-goal leadership style and job satisfaction. Alanazi's (2013) study on the influence of path-goal leadership theory concurred that a shortage of empirical literature exists especially on the association of path-goal leadership styles and organizational performance.

In a study done in Africa, Mohammed, Yusuf and Sanni (2014) affirmed that though improvement has been made in comprehensive leadership traits, there is a need to appreciate that much is not acknowledged about how a leadership style can be applied successfully to improve organizational performance, thus gaps and answered questions remain. In Kenya, Koaech and Namusonge (2012) identified that the literature available on leadership styles and performance of Kenyan companies is limited and inconclusive; thus, there is a need for more studies that can contribute to the growing body of knowledge investigating leadership influence on performance. Scholars have noted that academic research lags behind, which is particularly notable regarding the role of path-goal leadership in organizational performance, a gap that this study sought to fill.

A review of the literature specifies that the concepts in this study have been used in various other studies (Klein et al., 2013; Lumbasi et al., 2016; Agote et al., 2016; Bell et al., 2018; Bwonya, Ogutu, & Washington 2020; Gasela, 2022). However, there are still unanswered issues that constitute conceptual gaps. For instance, the study by Zeb et al. (2018) suggests limitations, difficulties and unsolved problems associated with the relationship between leadership and organizational performance. The prior studies' contextualization differs from the current study, presenting contextual gaps (Mawele, 2023; Annan, 2022; Mutonyi, 2022; Nzeneri, 2020; Mwaisaka, 2019; Bell et al., 2018). For instance, Ochieng and Koshal (2023) researched the influence of a supportive leadership style on the performance of manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County, Kenya. Nzeneri (2020) studied path-goal leadership effectiveness perception in selected private secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Evidently, many studies in leadership-organizational performance have not done much to contextualize INGOs as the focus of the study. Additionally, prior studies were conducted in other countries but not in the context of South Sudan.

Methodological gaps are present in some studies. Privowidodo (2021) studying leadership based on path-goal theory in organization communication: a perspective of listening to the labourers' voices employed phenomenological research design, with data analysis being carried out thematically using the Nvivo 12 application. Bwonya et al. (2020), researching leadership style, organizational culture, and performance, adopted a qualitative research design entailing a critical literature review using secondary data.

Most path-goal leadership studies in very recent times have adopted descriptive survey design because of its appropriateness in handling what is happening at present, collecting data without manipulation, and using the data to generalize based on the target population (Nzeneri, 2020). This study proposed a mixed approach method that helped to address the bias gap of predominant utilization of descriptive cross-sectional survey design and answer the research question: does path-goal leadership influence the performance of INGOs in South Sudan?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following general and specific objectives;

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to examine the influence of path-goal leadership on performance of International Non-governmental Organizations in South Sudan

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- i. To examine the influence of directive leadership on performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.
- ii. To assess the influence of supportive leadership on performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.
- iii. To determine the influence of participative leadership on International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.
- iv. To establish the influence of achievement-oriented leadership on International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.
- v. To assess the moderating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between path-goal leadership and International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following null hypotheses;

H₀₁: Directive leadership has no statistical influence on performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.

H02: Supportive leadership has no statistical influence on performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.

H03: Participative leadership has no statistical influence on performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.

H04: Achievement-oriented leadership has no statistical influence on performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.

H05: Organizational culture has no statistical moderating effect on the relationship between path-goal leadership and performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The humanitarian operating environment in South Sudan was among the most complex in the world, characterized by chronic insecurity, cyclical displacement, and severe logistical challenges. Despite the presence of over 300 NGOs (South Sudan NGO Forum, 2023), including all the local/resident NGOs, out of these only 114 NGOs qualify to be International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) according to their scope and operation. Recent performance assessments reveal a persistent gap between donor compliance and actual impact on beneficiaries. With only 53% of planned outcomes achieved and beneficiary satisfaction at 46%, there was a pressing need to understand how leadership approaches particularly the path-goal leadership model can be adapted to improve responsiveness and sustainability. This study was justified by the urgency of enhancing the effectiveness of aid delivery in a country where over 9 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance (OCHA, 2024). The study will be beneficial to the following stakeholders.

1.5.1 Policy Makers

First, policymakers in both government and the donor community stand to benefit directly from this research. By identifying the specific leadership styles that correlate with higher outcome achievement rates and beneficiary satisfaction in fragile contexts,

the study can guide the development of leadership capacity-building programs, influence funding conditions, and promote organizational culture reforms that balance compliance with adaptability. For instance, evidence showing that participative and supportive leadership styles improve program alignment with local needs could lead donors to mandate structured community engagement in project cycles.

1.5.2 Management of INGOs

The INGO senior management teams operating in South Sudan will benefit from practical, evidence-based recommendations on how to adapt directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership elements to the realities of a conflict-affected state. This could enhance their ability to manage teams effectively, navigate complex stakeholder landscapes, and adjust programming in response to rapidly changing conditions. Ultimately, stronger leadership could raise both beneficiary satisfaction scores and outcome achievement rates, improving organizational reputation and donor confidence.

1.5.3 Local Communities and Beneficiaries

The local communities and beneficiaries, the ultimate recipients of INGO programs, will benefit from interventions that are more relevant, timely, and sustainable. By promoting leadership approaches that prioritize feedback loops and community engagement, the study can help ensure that programs respond to seasonal, cultural, and political dynamics unique to South Sudan. This could increase satisfaction rates beyond the current 46%, improve trust between INGOs and communities, and ensure that aid resources translate into tangible, long-term improvements.

1.5.4 Academic and Research Institutions

Academic and research institutions in South Sudan and internationally will benefit from the study's contribution to the relatively underexplored field of leadership-performance linkages in fragile contexts. While path-goal leadership theory is well established in corporate and public-sector literature, its application in humanitarian and development INGOs especially in Africa is under-researched. The findings can

serve as a foundation for further scholarly inquiry, leadership training curricula, and cross-country comparative studies.

Finally, international development partners and regional bodies such as the African Union, IGAD, and UN agencies can use the study's insights to refine coordination frameworks and strengthen multi-agency collaboration. By understanding how leadership and organizational culture affect performance, these entities can design joint strategies that leverage the strengths of different actors, avoid duplication of effort, and increase the collective impact of humanitarian interventions.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on examining the relationship between path-goal leadership, organizational culture, and the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) operating in South Sudan. Geographically, the scope covers INGOs implementing humanitarian and development programs across selected states and administrative areas, including Juba (Central Equatoria), Bor (Jonglei), Malakal (Upper Nile), Bentiu (Unity), Yambio (Western Equatoria), and Wau (Western Bahr el Ghazal). These locations were chosen to ensure representation of both urban and rural operations, diverse security contexts.

Thematically, the study is limited to the four core elements of the path-goal leadership (directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership) and how these are moderated by INGOs' organizational culture. It will examine the extent to which leadership style and organizational culture jointly influence key performance indicators: outcome achievement rate, beneficiary satisfaction score, and donor compliance rate. The timeframe for performance analysis covered the three-year period from 2023 to 2025, allowing the study to capture both pre- and post-COVID-19 operational realities, as well as responses to the recent cycles of conflict and flooding in the country. This period is chosen to ensure adequate data availability while focusing on recent leadership trends and performance outcomes.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study faced several limitations that affected the scope, data collection, and analysis process. One major challenge was data availability and reliability. Many INGOs in South Sudan operate in insecure or remote areas, making it difficult to access complete and up-to-date performance records. Additionally, some organizations were reluctant to share internal reports due to confidentiality concerns and donor compliance rules. This posed a risk of relying on incomplete data, which could affect the accuracy of performance comparisons. To mitigate this, the researcher used triangulation combining data from multiple sources such as donor reports, UN coordination cluster updates, and third-party monitoring agencies to verify the validity of information.

Another limitation was security and accessibility constraints in certain operational areas such as Bentiu, Malakal, and parts of Jonglei, where conflict and flooding limited travel and field visits. This restricted the researcher's ability to directly observe leadership practices and collect first-hand beneficiary feedback. To address this, the study relied on remote data collection methods including phone interviews, virtual focus groups, and collaboration with local field officers to gather community perspectives safely. Additionally, satellite offices in Juba and other relatively secure towns were used as coordination points for information gathering.

A third challenge was cultural and contextual differences in leadership interpretation. The four elements of path-goal leadership (directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented) were sometimes understood differently by staff depending on cultural background, education, and organizational culture. This could potentially lead to misinterpretation of leadership styles and their effect on performance. To mitigate this, the study used standardized definitions for all leadership elements and conducted brief orientation sessions with respondents before interviews to ensure a shared understanding of concepts.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant theoretical and empirical literature on path–goal leadership, organizational culture, and organizational performance. It outlines the key leadership theories that inform the study, presents a conceptual framework illustrating the relationships among variables, identifies research gaps (contextual, conceptual, and methodological), and provides a pairwise discussion of how path–goal leadership, organizational culture, and organizational performance are interrelated.

2.2 Theoretical Review

A theoretical review is a critical examination and discussion of existing theories and models relevant to a study, used to provide a conceptual foundation and guide the research (Kumar & Ahuja, 2025). This study had three constructs. These are path-goal leadership, organizational culture, and organizational performance. All these constructs are premised on five theories: path-goal theory, contingency theory, theory of transformational leadership, the resource dependence theory and organization culture theory. The synthesis and convergence of these theories are critical in literature to give an in-depth comprehension of the study.

2.2.1 Path-Goal Theory

Path–goal theory is the main anchoring theory of this study. Path–goal theory was first developed by Evans (1970) and later refined by House (1971), was designed to explain how leaders influence subordinates’ motivation and performance by clarifying the paths to achieving goals. The theory borrows heavily from Vroom’s expectancy theory of motivation, emphasizing that leaders can enhance employees’ belief that effort will lead to desired outcomes (Bans-Akutey, 2021; Olowoselu et al., 2019). The theory identifies four key leadership styles directive, supportive, participative, and

achievement-oriented that leaders apply depending on task demands and follower characteristics (Umuteme & Adegbite, 2022).

Each style is situationally contingent: directive leadership clarifies roles in task-oriented situations, supportive leadership improves morale in relational contexts, participative leadership engages staff in decision-making where process matters, and achievement-oriented leadership raises performance expectations in identity- or status-related contexts (Pacia & Guevarra, 2023). By aligning leadership behaviour with subordinate needs and situational demands, path-goal theory aims to increase motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational performance (Hartati, Fauzi & Zohriah, 2024).

Despite its contributions, path-goal theory has faced criticism for being overly complex and difficult to apply in practice due to its numerous interacting variables (Dare & Saleem, 2022). Scholars argue that while it integrates expectancy theory into leadership, it does not fully explain the mechanisms linking leadership behaviour and employee motivation (Rana et al., 2019). Furthermore, its assumption that leaders can seamlessly switch between different styles to match changing circumstances has been challenged, as many leaders may lack the flexibility or awareness to do so consistently. Saleem et al. (2021) observed that while the theory highlights the leader's role in clarifying paths and removing obstacles, it does not sufficiently address contextual constraints such as power dynamics, resource limitations, or organizational structures (Acosta-Prado et al., 2023). Thus, although the theory provides a useful framework, its prescriptive nature makes real-world application challenging, particularly in volatile or resource-scarce environments.

Nevertheless, empirical studies support the theory's value in demonstrating how leadership behaviours affect motivation, performance, and satisfaction. For instance, Umuteme and Adegbite (2022), in a study of the oil and gas industry, found that path-goal leadership enhanced project delivery, team effectiveness, and cost-efficiency by minimizing role ambiguities and aligning leadership behaviors with situational demands. Similarly, Mawele (2023) emphasized that effective leaders motivate and inspire their teams, while Dokony, Singh and Arumugam (2020) the influence of

leadership behaviors based on the Path-Goal theory towards employees' satisfaction in a developing nation. The fostering a learning culture depends on leaders who value organizational and personal growth (Vieira et al., 2018). These findings affirm that leadership behaviors which clarify expectations, provide support, and align with employee needs can significantly improve both individual and organizational outcomes. Thus, path-goal theory remains relevant in explaining how leadership can foster motivation and influence performance.

The present study adopts path-goal theory as its anchoring framework because it directly links leadership style with subordinate motivation and, ultimately, organizational performance. In fragile contexts like South Sudan, where organizational effectiveness is challenged by insecurity, resource scarcity, and external donor pressures, the ability of leaders to apply flexible styles is critical. The theory's focus on subordinate perceptions is particularly useful, as staff commitment often depends on whether leaders behave in ways that align with subordinate expectations, including cultural and gender norms (Cho et al., 2019). By examining directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented styles within South Sudan's INGO sector, this study applies path-goal theory to investigate how leadership behaviours, moderated by organizational culture, influence outcome achievement, beneficiary satisfaction, and compliance (Perez, 2021). In doing so, the study extends the applicability of the theory to high-conflict humanitarian settings where adaptive leadership is essential for organizational performance.

Path-goal leadership theory was very relevant to this study as the path-goal leadership styles are explored from the subordinate behaviour perspective instead of the leadership behaviour perspective. The premise of this study was that subordinates expected leaders to behave with certain stereotypical gender characteristics, and when leaders behaved as expected and as perceived by the subordinates, the subordinates showed commitment to the leader, leading to admirable outcomes.

2.2.2 Contingency Theory

Contingency theory originates from Fiedler's (1964) contingency model, which posits that there is no single best way to lead; instead, a leader's effectiveness depends on the fit between their natural leadership style and the favourableness of the situation. Evans (1970) further demonstrated the link between a leader's behaviour and followers' beliefs and actions, emphasizing leadership as adaptive. Shala et al. (2021) explained that contingency theory is fundamentally a management approach that stresses leader–managerial adaptation to varying internal and external conditions. Accordingly, leadership success is contingent on two main factors: the leader's style and the context in which leadership is exercised (De Souza, 2020). In practice, this implies that a leader effective in one environment may be ineffective in another. For organizations such as INGOs, where dependency on donor and government resources is high, contingency theory suggests that adaptability is crucial for sustaining effectiveness (Suharyanto & Lestari, 2020).

Although contingency theory offers a flexible and situational approach, scholars have critiqued it for its limitations in explaining why some leadership styles succeed in certain contexts but fail in others. Northouse (2021) highlighted that the model does not provide clear guidance on corrective measures when a leader's style does not fit the situation. Furthermore, the theory's reliance on a “matching” process between leader traits and situations makes it overly deterministic and less applicable in complex, fast-changing contexts. Critics also argue that contingency theory oversimplifies the interplay between situational variables and leadership effectiveness, overlooking broader dynamics such as power relations, organizational politics, and culture (Villoria, 2023). These shortcomings make its application difficult in volatile environments where situational factors shift rapidly, such as humanitarian crises.

Despite its weaknesses, contingency theory has demonstrated value in crisis and uncertain environments where adaptability is essential (Popp & Hadwich, 2018). For example, Childs et al. (2022) applied contingency theory to small retail business continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic, finding that resilient leaders displayed contingent behaviours such as agility, innovation, and stakeholder relationship

management. Similarly, da Silva Calado (2024) emphasized that superior performance emerges from aligning knowledge application with organizational structure, underscoring contingency theory's focus on fit between resources, leadership, and context. These insights affirm the model's strength in guiding leaders to adapt to shifting internal and external demands (Omazić, Labaš & Uroić, 2023). For INGOs that depend heavily on external funding and operate under fragile conditions, this approach highlights the need for leaders to remain flexible and responsive to donor expectations, beneficiary needs, and unstable environments.

Contingency theory is particularly relevant to this study because it provides the foundation for subsequent leadership models, including path-goal theory, which is the anchoring theory of the research. In the South Sudanese humanitarian context, leaders frequently face rapidly changing situations such as insecurity, donor conditionalities, and shifting beneficiary priorities. The contingency perspective underscores that effectiveness depends on aligning leadership style to these unique challenges rather than applying a universal approach (Kundu & Mondal, 2019).

By recognizing that no single leadership style guarantees success, the theory reinforces the study's focus on examining how adaptive path-goal leadership behaviours (Hui, 2024), moderated by organizational culture, shape INGO performance in fragile contexts. Thus, contingency theory informs both the theoretical grounding and practical rationale for exploring leadership effectiveness in South Sudan's complex environment.

2.2.3 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership was first defined by Burns (1978) as a process in which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation. Bass (1985) expanded the theory, identifying three ways transformational leaders influence followers: clarifying the importance of task outcomes, inspiring them to transcend self-interest, and prioritizing organizational goals while meeting higher-order needs of subordinates. The theory is often operationalized through the "Four I's" of leadership—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Khan et al., 2022). Haseeb et al. (2021) emphasized

that transformational leaders focus on aligning followers' intrinsic motivation with shared objectives, while Mbindyo, O'Connor and Nandedkar (2020) argued that transformational leadership builds consensus between leaders and followers, thereby contributing to unit-level outcomes. Overall, transformational leadership highlights the capacity of leaders to inspire, motivate, and transform followers to achieve extraordinary results.

Despite its widespread appeal, transformational leadership theory has attracted significant criticism. Hosna, Islam and Hamid (2021) noted that transformational leadership can be problematic if leaders misuse their influence, as motivation may lack moral responsibility and veer into manipulation. Similarly, Chebon, Aruasa and Chirchir (2019) observed that while the Four I's provide a framework to measure transformational leadership, they are not always sufficient to capture the full scope of the leader's influence, as they often overlap with other leadership models like transactional or laissez-faire. Critics also point out that the theory tends to idealize leaders without adequately addressing contextual or structural constraints that shape leadership outcomes (Magasi, 2021). Thus, while transformational leadership offers valuable insights into leader-follower dynamics, it risks oversimplifying the complexities of organizational and cultural realities (Alsayed et al., 2020).

Empirical studies affirm the positive association between transformational leadership and organizational performance. Gupta (2025) found that transformational leadership fosters learning, innovation, and cultural change, which in turn enhance firm performance. Similarly, Khan et al. (2020) demonstrated that transformational leadership improves intrinsic motivation, reduces burnout, and enhances employee engagement, ultimately increasing performance. Other studies, such as Ikedimma and Okorji. (2023) and Akey-Torku and Dai (2020), showed that transformational leadership fosters confidence, optimism, and a supportive environment that encourages employees to commit to organizational objectives. Sutanto, Utami and Diantoro (2021) also found that transformational leadership in non-profit organizations positively influences affective commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour, as leaders inspire followers to transcend self-interest for collective goals (Kariuki, 2021). Collectively, these findings demonstrate the strong

potential of transformational leadership to boost employee well-being, engagement, and organizational success (Yehualaw & Andualem, 2025).

Transformational leadership theory is relevant to this study because it offers important insights into how leadership behaviours can shape organizational culture and performance in INGOs operating in fragile contexts like South Sudan. By promoting a shared vision, mission, and values, transformational leadership can strengthen employee commitment, foster adaptability, and encourage behaviours that go beyond job descriptions (Munir, Emeanulu & Adeyemi, 2025). This aligns with the study's focus on how leadership contributes to sustainable organizational performance under challenging conditions. Furthermore, transformational leadership provides a complementary lens to path-goal theory, as both emphasize motivation and the alignment of leadership behaviours with follower needs (Collins et al., 2023). In this study, transformational leadership helps explain how leaders in INGOs can influence organizational culture to bridge the gap between donor compliance and community-relevant outcomes, thereby enhancing overall performance (Gachira & Ntara, 2024).

The transformational leadership theory was relevant for this study because the theory was founded on promoting consistent vision, mission, and a set of values to the members of an organization. By transforming members of an organization into individuals who transcended beyond self-actualization and their self-interest for the sake of the organization, this theory positively influenced organizational culture on the relationship between path-goal leadership and organizational performance. Therefore, the theory contributed to understanding the dynamics involved in the leadership-performance relationship of INGOs in South Sudan.

2.2.4 Resource Dependence Theory

Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) was introduced by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) in their seminal book *The External Control of Organizations*, which argued that external resources significantly shape organizational behaviour. The theory posits that organizations are open systems that depend on external environmental contingencies for survival and success (Celtekliligil, 2020). Because of this dependency, organizations often compromise their autonomy to secure resources, thereby allowing external actors

to exert influence (Coşkun & Öztürk, 2024). To manage these dependencies and minimize environmental uncertainty, organizations adopt strategies such as restructuring exchange relationships and forming strategic partnerships (Schnack, Uthoff & Ansmann, 2022). Overall, RDT emphasizes that the need for external resources drives organizations to balance dependence and independence by negotiating or adapting to environmental pressures (Jiang et al., 2023).

Although widely influential, RDT has been criticized for conceptual ambiguities and analytical limitations. Jiang et al. (2023) noted that the theory struggles to distinguish clearly between power imbalance and mutual dependence, thereby complicating its explanatory power. Ozturk (2021) further highlighted that industry patterns, historical contexts, and variability in firm strategies influence how organizations respond to resource constraints, making RDT less universally predictive. These critiques suggest that while RDT provides a useful framework for understanding organizational–environment interactions, it does not adequately explain why organizations in similar contexts may adopt different dependency-reduction strategies. Additionally, its broad scope makes defining boundary conditions difficult, limiting its precision as a leadership or management tool (Coşkun & Öztürk, 2024).

Despite these critiques, RDT has proven valuable in explaining organizational behaviour under resource pressures. For instance, Ansmann et al. (2021) applied RDT to healthcare organizations and found that uncertainty in resource access created significant pressures that shaped organizational strategies, highlighting the importance of adaptive responses tailored to specific contexts. Similarly, Mitchell (2014) emphasized that NGOs often adopt strategic responses such as subcontracting, alignment, diversification, perseverance, and selectivity to preserve autonomy and minimize external control. These findings affirm that RDT remains a useful theoretical lens for analyzing how organizations manage dependency and uncertainty while maintaining operational effectiveness.

RDT is highly relevant to the present study as it helps explain how International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan navigate their heavy reliance on external donor funding while striving to maintain autonomy in fragile

environments. By framing INGOs as open systems exposed to donor conditionalities and political pressures, RDT provides insights into how dependency influences leadership decisions and organizational performance (Roundy & Bayer, 2019). Importantly, the theory aligns with this study's conceptualization of path-goal leadership, as leaders play a critical role in negotiating resource constraints, managing uncertainty, and implementing strategies that balance external pressures with internal performance goals (Kholmuminov, Kholmuminov & Wright, 2019). Thus, RDT contributes to understanding the contextual dynamics that shape the leadership-performance relationship in INGOs operating in South Sudan.

RDT was also relevant to the current study because it explained how INGOs tried to maintain operational independence from donors to minimize resource dependence and mitigate the possibility of external control and uncertainty in their operations. According to Mitchell (2014), some strategic responses that transnational NGOs (including INGOs) require to preserve organizational autonomy include subcontracting, alignment, perseverance, diversification, and selectivity. RDT, therefore, guided the conceptualization of the path-goal leadership's influence on performance in this study.

2.2.5 Organization Culture Theory

Hofstede (1980) propounded the Organizational Culture Theory, which explained how cultural dimensions power distance, risk avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, and masculinity versus femininity shape human interactions and organizational behaviour. He further emphasized that organizational strategies and structures must align with varying tasks, stakeholders, and environments. Organizational culture is essentially a system of shared values, expectations, and beliefs that influences how employees behave and perform their duties (Ketprapakorn & Kantabutra, 2022). Over time, these shared values guide organizational practices, foster unity, and shape employee behaviour, making organizational culture a critical factor in organizational performance and success (Akpa, Asikhia, & Nneji, 2021).

One of the key weaknesses of Hofstede's theory is its reliance on a narrow and potentially biased sample, as it was originally developed from studies conducted in a single firm, raising concerns about generalizability (Golden III & Shriner, 2019). Critics argue that this limitation affects the validity of the theory's application across diverse contexts and organizations (Chalmers et al., 2025). Furthermore, cultural dimensions may not fully capture the complexity and dynamism of modern organizational cultures, which evolve under globalization, technological changes, and shifting employee expectations. Nonetheless, organizational culture theory has been widely applied in leadership and management studies to understand how culture drives employee behaviour, performance, and organizational effectiveness (Cole & Martin, 2018).

Research evidence consistently underscores the centrality of culture in shaping organizational performance. Ghaleb and Pardaev (2025), found that a positive and adaptive culture enhances resilience, aligns with strategic goals, increases employee satisfaction, fosters innovation, and provides long-term competitive advantage. Similarly, Mudachi and Nderi (2023) observed that although the Africa Economic Research Consortium invested in favourable workplace practices, weak employee engagement metrics limited performance—demonstrating the need for alignment between organizational culture, employee engagement, and strategic outcomes. In South Sudan, Chuol (2024) established that the performance of Plan International's staff depended heavily on cultural attributes that enhanced communication, teamwork, and management effectiveness. Collectively, these findings affirm that organizational culture directly influences employee commitment, efficiency, and the ability of organizations to sustain competitiveness (Ghaleb, 2024).

Organizational Culture Theory is highly relevant to this study because it provides a framework for understanding how cultural values and norms influence the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. INGOs operate in complex environments with diverse stakeholders, where fostering unity, cooperation, and teamwork through culture is critical to organizational effectiveness. (Ghaleb & Piaralal, 2025). A strong organizational culture serves as a “normative glue” that aligns leadership vision with employee behaviour, thereby

enhancing performance outcomes (Ahmed, 2024). By linking organizational culture to leadership approaches and performance, the theory offers valuable insights into how INGOs can manage cultural diversity, overcome contextual challenges, and sustain operational effectiveness in fragile settings.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The relationship between path-goal leadership and organizational performance has long been a focus in leadership research, with styles typically categorized as directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. While previous studies often examined one or two leadership styles and focused mainly on financial performance, this study combines all four path-goal leadership styles and integrates both financial and non-financial indicators to provide a more comprehensive assessment of organizational performance. Recognizing that no single leadership style alone can fully explain performance outcomes, the study investigates both the individual and combined effects of these leadership styles. Furthermore, path-goal leadership styles are theorized to interact with organizational culture dimensions—such as person-organization fit, teaming, collaboration, and involvement—which may jointly influence the financial and non-financial performance of INGOs in South Sudan.

Organizational culture is also conceptualized as a moderating variable, potentially strengthening or shaping the relationship between leadership styles and performance outcomes. In this study, organizational performance serves as the dependent variable and is measured using the financial and non-financial dimensions of the Sustainability Balanced Scorecard, encompassing six indicators: financial, stakeholders'/beneficiaries' focus, internal business processes, organizational learning, social responsiveness, and environmental integrity. Collectively, these interconnections form the conceptual model, illustrating how path-goal leadership styles, moderated by organizational culture, influence multidimensional organizational performance in INGOs.

Independent Variables

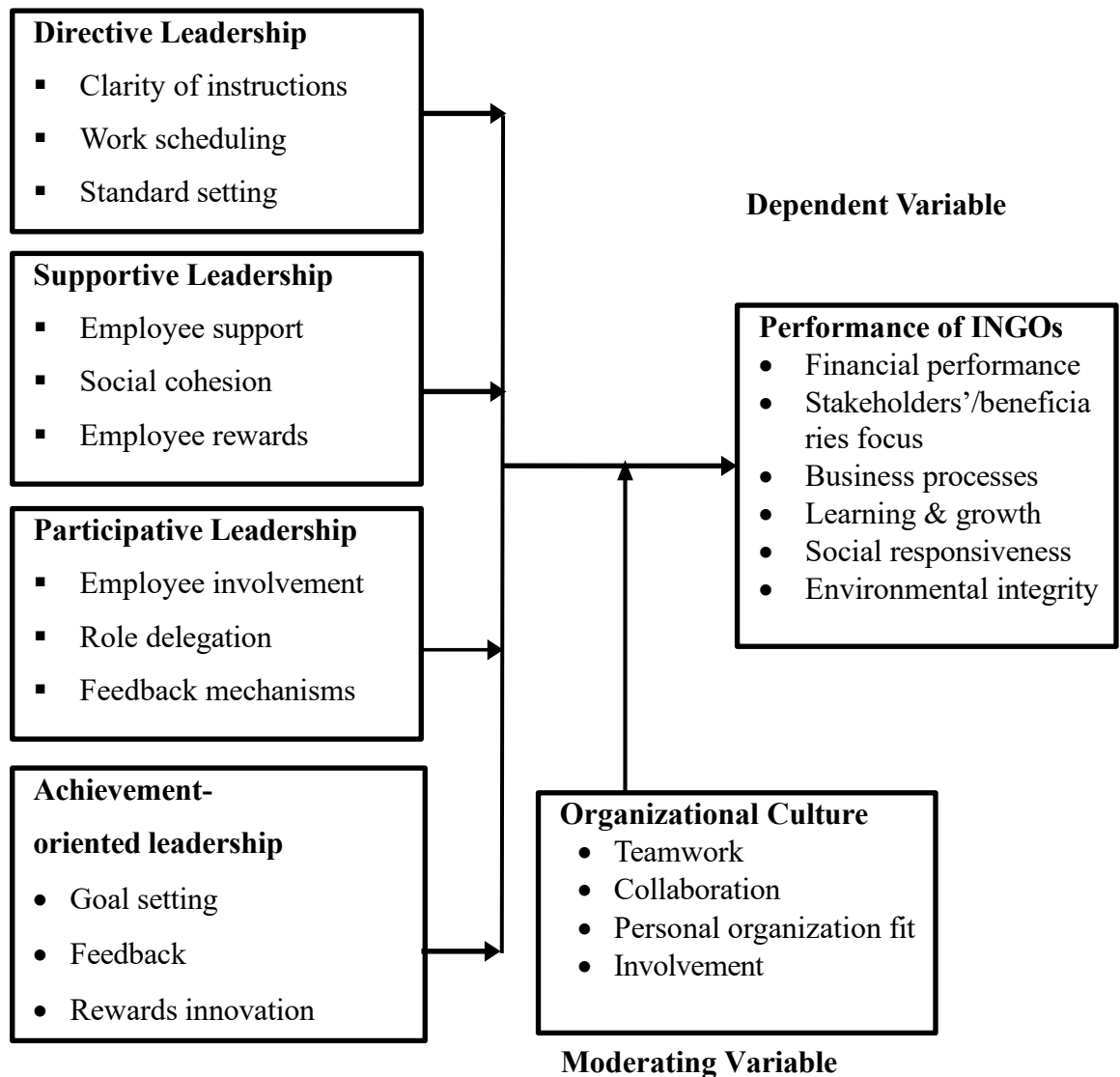


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

2.3.1 Directive Leadership

Directive leadership, as defined by Gao et al. (2024), is a structured, controlled, and prescriptive leadership style where leaders dictate tasks and expectations to subordinates. It is most suitable when tasks are ambiguous or when uncertainty in the work environment is high, as it provides clarity of instructions, minimizes variation in task interpretation, and ensures that employees understand the link between performance and rewards (Post et al., 2022). Directive leaders also emphasize work scheduling and rigid control of task execution, which may streamline operations but

often results in coercion, reduced satisfaction, limited innovation, and suppressed creativity among employees (Mukherjee & Mulla, 2022).

In crisis management contexts, directive leadership can yield benefits by enhancing structure, coordination, and speed. Krause, Withers and Waller (2024) opine that directive leadership enables faster decision-making by clarifying roles, reducing task ambiguity, and imposing standards of performance that keep teams aligned. This makes directive leadership effective in familiar emergencies where speed is essential, though participative leadership proves more effective in unfamiliar crises by encouraging information sharing and synergistic thinking. While directive leaders set clear instructions and standards to synchronize team actions, participative leaders allow space for adaptability and creativity, resulting in greater decision accuracy under novel conditions (Lonati, 2020).

Beyond crisis situations, directive leadership shows mixed results in service-based and knowledge-intensive organizations. Mwaisaka, K'Aol and Ouma (2019) states that directive leadership negatively affects frontline employees' commitment to service quality, largely because rigid work scheduling and standard setting restrict flexibility and reduce intrinsic motivation. In contrast, participative leadership fosters greater employee engagement, knowledge sharing, and organizational citizenship behaviours, ultimately improving job performance and reducing turnover (Sila et al., 2023). Overall, directive leadership may be beneficial when clarity, rigid scheduling, and standardized procedures are essential, but its long-term drawbacks outweigh its advantages in dynamic or innovation-driven organizations (Barthel & Buengeler, 2023).

2.3.2 Supportive Leadership

Supportive leadership emphasizes meeting employees' needs, preferences, and well-being while creating a friendly and psychologically safe organizational environment. It involves two-way communication, listening to subordinates, and providing both employee support in tasks and personal development (Stein, Vincent-Hoeper & Gregersen, 2020). By offering guidance and motivation, supportive leaders help employees overcome obstacles and complete in-role tasks while also showing

relational support that respects their advice and assists in achieving personal goals (Kossek et al., 2023). This approach builds trust, motivates workers, and strengthens the psychological contract between managers and employees, where support provided is reciprocated through enhanced performance (Kim et al., 2021).

Supportive leadership also fosters social cohesion within the workplace by promoting respect, trust, and cooperation among team members (Dayanti, 2022). Leaders who are approachable and empathetic establish a climate where employees feel valued, empowered, and motivated to maintain long-term commitment to the organization (Sørengaard & Langvik, 2022). Path-goal theory further argues that supportive leadership is most effective for repetitive, unsatisfactory, or difficult tasks, as it provides encouragement and a sense of personal connection that sustains employee morale (Hauff, Felfe & Klug, 2022). In this way, supportive leadership not only addresses technical challenges but also enhances workplace relationships and collective harmony, making employees more willing to exert discretionary effort and share knowledge for organizational success (Cavudissa & Tam, 2025; Farid et al., 2021).

Finally, supportive leadership contributes to employee motivation through informal recognition and employee rewards, which reinforce positive behaviour and performance (Wang et al., 2022; Elsaied, 2019). By providing necessary resources and acknowledging contributions, leaders stimulate enthusiasm, creativity, and job satisfaction (Zaman, et al., 2022; Bahkia et al., 2020). Supportive leadership thus functions as a critical mechanism for balancing employee support (Hussain et al., 2023), fostering social cohesion, and reinforcing performance through rewards, ultimately driving innovation, commitment, and organizational resilience (Prentice, 2022).

2.3.3 Participative Leadership

Participative leadership, also referred to as democratic leadership, emphasizes collaboration between leaders and subordinates in the decision-making process (Khassawneh & Elrehail, 2022). This style of leadership involves consulting employees, considering their suggestions, and allowing them to influence

organizational goals and strategies while the leader retains final authority (Ahn & Bessiere, 2022). It is characterized by employee involvement, where subordinates are given opportunities to contribute ideas, share responsibilities, and actively participate in shaping workplace decisions. Such involvement enhances the quality of decisions while strengthening trust and respect between leaders and employees (Wang et al., 2022).

At its core, participative leadership is built on roles delegation and shared responsibility, which fosters stronger relationships and a sense of partnership within the organization (Chang et al., 2021). Leaders delegate authority to employees, giving them autonomy to handle certain tasks and decisions, thereby instilling confidence and accountability (Busse & Regenberg, 2019). Employees feel valued when their opinions are sought and respected, which increases their sense of belonging and commitment to the organization (Mata et al., 2023). This collaborative approach reduces the gap between leaders and followers, motivates employees to engage in creative tasks, and enhances teamwork. By promoting inclusivity and open communication, participative leadership nurtures a harmonious organizational climate where cooperation and mutual trust thrive (Ugoani, 2023).

Another key element of participative leadership is the use of feedback mechanisms to strengthen communication between leaders and employees (Qing & JinHua, 2023). Leaders not only seek feedback from subordinates to inform decision-making but also provide constructive feedback that helps employees grow and refine their performance. Such two-way communication empowers employees, enriches their work experience, and fosters continuous improvement (Usman et al., 2021). Ultimately, participative leadership benefits both employees and organizations by increasing motivation, strengthening loyalty, and fostering growth through shared responsibility, delegated roles, and effective feedback systems (Daud et al., 2024).

2.3.4 Achievement-Oriented Leadership

Achievement-oriented leadership emphasizes the pursuit of excellence by setting challenging performance goals for both employees and the leader (Mwaisaka et al., 2019). Leaders adopting this style display strong confidence in their subordinates'

ability to meet high expectations and consistently encourage them to strive for superior results. A defining feature of this style is goal setting, where leaders establish ambitious yet realistic targets that inspire employees to go beyond routine performance. These goals serve as a motivational tool, giving employees a clear sense of direction and purpose while aligning their efforts with organizational objectives (Suhaimy et al., 2021).

Another hallmark of achievement-oriented leadership is the provision of consistent feedback, which ensures employees remain aware of their progress and areas for improvement. Leaders adopting this style actively monitor performance, communicate expectations, and reinforce the connection between effort and achievement (Sodikin & Fachrunnisa, 2022). Constructive feedback strengthens employee commitment, clarifies performance standards, and sustains motivation even in challenging tasks. By combining high expectations with ongoing feedback, leaders foster accountability while ensuring that employees remain focused and engaged (Ochieng et al., 2024).

In addition to goal setting and feedback, achievement-oriented leaders emphasize rewarding innovation (Damarwulan & Dibyantoro, 2022). They not only encourage employees to meet established performance standards but also create room for creative approaches and innovative solutions to organizational challenges (Us, 2025). By recognizing and rewarding innovation, leaders reinforce a culture where employees feel valued for their ideas and contributions, which in turn drives continuous improvement and organizational growth. Ultimately, achievement-oriented leadership fosters persistence, accountability, and innovation, enabling organizations to achieve sustainable success (Sodikin, Fachrunnisa & Niati, 2021).

2.3.5 Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a framework of values, beliefs, and systems that guide employees' behaviour and determine how they interact with one another and with stakeholders (Lartey & Ampofo, 2025). A key cultural dimension is teamwork, which emphasizes cooperation, shared responsibility, and mutual support among employees (Lockhart et al., 2020). A teamwork-oriented culture creates an environment where individuals combine their skills and strengths to achieve collective goals, enhancing

both efficiency and job satisfaction. Miftahuddin, Otok and Hanoum (2025) argue that teamwork is strengthened when there is mutual respect and interdependence, leading to stronger employee relationships and higher overall performance. Therefore, teamwork serves as the foundation for creating a cohesive workforce that supports both organizational and individual growth (Khan et al., 2020).

Closely linked to teamwork is collaboration, which extends beyond working together to include openness, trust, and shared decision-making (Saleh & Sain, 2025). Collaboration fosters creativity and innovation by encouraging diverse perspectives and joint problem-solving. A collaborative culture ensures that employees are actively involved in planning and decision-making processes, which increases ownership and commitment to outcomes (Ajayi, 2025). Furthermore, collaboration builds a sense of interdependence, where employees recognize the value of their contributions within the larger organizational system. By cultivating collaboration alongside teamwork and ensuring strong P-O fit, organizations establish a culture that promotes respect, engagement, and sustainable performance outcomes (Sertiarto et al., 2025).

Another critical element of this culture is person-organization fit (P-O fit), which refers to the compatibility between employees' values and those of the organization (Cruz-Cárdenas et al., 2022). When there is a strong P-O fit, employees feel a sense of belonging and alignment with organizational ethics and mission, resulting in greater commitment, loyalty, and improved performance (Udoh, 2025). Conversely, a misfit leads to dissatisfaction, low morale, and higher turnover rates, which ultimately undermine organizational effectiveness (Tiittanen, Heikkilä & Baigozhina, 2021).

2.3.6 Organizational Performance

Organizational performance in International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) can be meaningfully assessed through the Sustainable Balanced Scorecard (SBSC), which extends the traditional balanced scorecard by including social responsiveness and environmental integrity (Muraba et al., 2024). Unlike for-profit organizations, INGOs are not primarily concerned with generating financial returns, yet financial performance remains a crucial dimension. For INGOs, this perspective emphasizes accountability in resource utilization, efficiency in managing donor funds,

and the ability to diversify income sources for long-term sustainability. Strong financial stewardship enhances donor trust and ensures the continuity of humanitarian and development projects, which directly supports their mission (Mio, Costantini & Panfilo, 2022).

Another important perspective is the stakeholders' or beneficiaries' focus. INGOs must balance accountability to their funders, who demand transparency and measurable results (Sohaib et al., 2024; Mohammed et al., 2023), with responsiveness to the needs of vulnerable communities they serve. Effective performance in this area is reflected in high levels of beneficiary satisfaction, inclusiveness in project design, and sustained donor confidence (Rafiq et al., 2020). By strengthening relationships with stakeholders, INGOs can ensure both program relevance and long-term support (Deng et al., 2025).

Equally critical are business processes, which shape how INGOs plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate their interventions (Mio et al., 2021). Efficient and transparent internal processes improve the organization's ability to deliver projects on time (Gningue et al., 2023), comply with international humanitarian standards, and build strong partnerships (Karmeni et al., 2024). By refining governance structures and operational systems (Stavropoulou et al., 2023), INGOs can reduce duplication, increase coordination, and enhance credibility among donors and beneficiaries alike.

Sustainable performance also requires learning and growth. INGOs operate in dynamic environments marked by shifting donor priorities, emerging crises, and complex social challenges (Sohaib et al., 2024; Deng et al., 2025). Their ability to adapt depends on continuous investment in staff capacity building, innovation, and knowledge management (Muraba et al., 2024). When INGOs cultivate organizational learning and foster cross-cultural competence, they become more resilient and capable of delivering innovative solutions to evolving global problems (Rafiq et al., 2020).

At the heart of the SBSC framework for INGOs is social responsiveness. Since their mission is to generate positive social change, organizational performance is closely tied to their capacity to address poverty, inequality (Karmeni et al., 2024; Mio et al., 2021), education, health, and human rights in inclusive and sustainable ways (Gningue et al., 2023). Demonstrating measurable social impact, aligning initiatives with the

Sustainable Development Goals, and empowering communities to build resilience are essential indicators of strong performance (Stavropoulou et al., 2023; Mio et al., 2021).

Finally, INGOs must consider environmental integrity in their operations and programs. In today's global context, development and humanitarian interventions that neglect environmental sustainability risk undermining long-term impact (Gningue et al., 2023). INGOs that adopt eco-friendly operational practices, integrate environmental resilience into their projects, and advocate for climate action not only enhance their own legitimacy but also contribute to broader global sustainability efforts (Karmeni et al., 2024). In sum, the Sustainable Balanced Scorecard offers INGOs a holistic framework for evaluating performance across financial, operational, social, and environmental dimensions. By integrating financial accountability, beneficiary focus, efficient processes, organizational learning, social responsiveness, and environmental stewardship, INGOs can better demonstrate their overall effectiveness and impact in an increasingly competitive and sustainability-conscious world.

2.4 Empirical Review

This section on empirical studies provides practical evidence that supports and extends the theoretical foundations of leadership and organizational performance. They offer insights into how leadership styles and organizational culture operate in diverse contexts, highlighting patterns, challenges, and outcomes. This section reviews relevant empirical findings that validate and contextualize the theoretical perspectives discussed earlier.

2.4.1 Path-Goal Leadership, Organizational Culture and Organizational Performance

Leadership and organizational culture consistently emerge as critical determinants of organizational performance across sectors, highlighting the complex interplay between managerial behavior and organizational context. Vasudevan et al. (2025) explored the effects of authoritarian, laissez-faire, situational, and transformational leadership styles on organizational culture and employee performance in the Malaysian IT sector.

Their study revealed that authoritarian leadership strongly shaped culture but did not directly enhance employee performance, suggesting that leadership effects are often channeled through organizational culture. This implies that leadership alone may be insufficient to drive performance unless aligned with the cultural environment. The findings emphasize the importance of considering culture as a mediating factor when evaluating leadership effectiveness. It establishes a foundational understanding that performance outcomes are shaped by the interaction between leadership style and organizational norms.

Expanding on this, Dewi and Wibowo (2020) examined leadership, culture, and motivation in Indonesian higher education, focusing on permanent lecturers. Their research demonstrated that leadership style, organizational culture, and motivation each positively influenced employee performance, both independently and collectively. The study suggests that culture and leadership provide the framework through which motivation translates into tangible performance improvements. It reinforces the view that a supportive cultural environment amplifies leadership efforts, creating conditions for individual drive to flourish. These insights indicate that the effectiveness of leadership is contingent upon how well it interacts with cultural and motivational factors. Consequently, integrating leadership with cultural and motivational initiatives can optimize academic staff performance.

Ratnasari, Sutjahjo, and Adam (2020) highlighted the mediating role of job satisfaction in linking leadership and culture to performance in corporate settings at PT. Epson Indonesia. They found that leadership and culture significantly influenced job satisfaction, which in turn strongly enhanced employee performance. This dual pathway shows that leadership and culture shape both attitudes and behaviors, illustrating the multi-layered nature of performance determinants. The findings underscore that direct leadership interventions may be insufficient without considering intermediary mechanisms such as satisfaction. This contributes to the broader understanding that performance outcomes are the product of both direct and mediated effects of leadership within organizational contexts.

In aviation training, Gökalp and Soran (2022) emphasized the mediating role of organizational culture between teacher leadership and student pilot performance. Their study revealed that leadership styles impacted performance outcomes positively or negatively depending on cultural alignment. This reinforces the argument that leadership effectiveness is inseparable from organizational norms and group dynamics, particularly in high-stakes sectors. The research highlights that culture determines whether leadership behaviors produce beneficial outcomes. Consequently, aviation institutions must integrate leadership development with cultural alignment to ensure safety, quality, and performance objectives are met. The study adds to empirical evidence that culture mediates the translation of leadership into performance.

Virgiawan et al. (2021) examined public sector civil servants in Indonesia and demonstrated that organizational culture mediates the relationship between transformational leadership, motivation, and performance. A strong work culture emphasizing efficiency and effective time use significantly enhanced performance outcomes. This indicates that leadership and motivational efforts are only fully effective when embedded within a supportive cultural framework. Public institutions benefit from cultivating culture as an enabler for translating leadership strategies into operational efficiency. The study provides practical guidance for policymakers to focus on both leadership development and cultural reinforcement.

In the airline industry, Suifan (2021) identified innovativeness as a mediator linking leadership, culture, and performance in Jordanian airlines. Leadership promoted innovativeness, which then enhanced performance, while the type of organizational culture determined the strength of this effect. Bureaucratic cultures were less conducive to performance, whereas dynamic cultures amplified outcomes. This highlights that both leadership and cultural content are critical, showing that not all cultural environments yield similar benefits. The study expands empirical understanding by introducing innovation as a mechanism through which leadership and culture improve performance.

Mohammed and Al-Abrrow (2023) studied the Iraqi healthcare sector and found that transformational and empowering leadership improved performance and innovation through shared leadership, with culture serving as a moderator. Their findings illustrate

that culture amplifies leadership effectiveness and supports innovation within complex organizations. This underscores the necessity of integrating leadership, culture, and shared responsibilities to enhance performance outcomes. The study demonstrates that culture acts both as a condition and amplifier of leadership impact.

Omama et al. (2022) confirmed in Ghanaian banks that leadership styles positively influenced efficiency, while culture directly enhanced efficiency and moderated leadership effects. Similarly, Hambali and Idris (2020) observed that in higher education, transformational leadership had no direct effect on performance, whereas culture significantly improved quality assurance and outcomes. These studies reinforce the notion that culture is often a stronger predictor of performance than leadership alone, serving as both a facilitator and a moderator. Leadership effectiveness is contingent on the presence of a supportive and enabling cultural environment.

Further reinforcing this, studies in varied contexts, such as Al-Shibami et al. (2019), Rahmatullah et al. (2022), and Alkhadra et al. (2023), showed that transformational and ethical leadership improve performance, largely through culture and mediators like commitment or CSR. Cahyani et al. (2025) and Ginting et al. (2024) similarly demonstrated that leadership shapes culture, which in turn drives performance. Nguyen et al. (2023) found that culture mediated transformational leadership effects in Vietnamese manufacturing, whereas Gisela (2022) reported negative outcomes where culture did not support strategy implementation.

In South Sudan, Pal et al. (2023) found that inter-organizational relations, a component of organizational culture, determined leadership performance in the Ministry of Petroleum. Gathenya (2022) and Bwonya et al. (2020) further emphasized that ethical leadership's effect on performance is mediated and moderated by culture. Collectively, these studies affirm that leadership effectiveness is rarely independent; organizational culture is both the pathway and enabling condition for achieving sustainable performance. This body of research underscores the critical need to examine leadership and culture jointly when assessing organizational performance in International NGOs in South Sudan.

2.4.2 Directive Leadership and Organizational Performance

Research on directive leadership has consistently demonstrated its significant impact on organizational performance across diverse sectors and contexts. Ochieng, Koshal, and Bellows (2023) examined the influence of directive leadership on manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County, Kenya. Their study found that directive leadership positively and significantly predicted organizational performance, offering SMEs a structured approach to achieving operational goals.

By providing clear guidance, rules, and expectations, directive leaders helped employees navigate tasks more efficiently. The findings suggest that structured leadership enhances productivity, particularly in small enterprises where clarity and coordination are crucial. This study establishes the foundational premise that directive leadership can directly influence organizational outcomes, especially in environments requiring order and accountability. Consequently, it highlights the importance for managers to adopt directive approaches in SMEs to drive performance.

Extending these insights, Mutonyi, George, and Caren (2021) explored the effect of directive leadership on innovative behavior among senior managers in Kenya's manufacturing sector. The researchers found that directive leadership positively predicted managers' innovative behavior, indicating that clear guidance can also foster creativity when aligned with organizational goals. The study emphasizes that directive leadership does not merely ensure task completion but can indirectly stimulate performance-enhancing behaviors like innovation. These findings reinforce the idea that structured leadership can enhance both operational efficiency and strategic thinking. It also suggests that managers who clarify expectations while supporting innovation can maximize organizational outcomes. Together with the previous study, it becomes evident that directive leadership offers both direct and indirect benefits for performance in structured work environments.

Further insights into directive leadership emerge from the educational sector. Sitanggang, Luthan, and Hamid (2022) examined the leadership practices of vocational high school principals in Indonesia and found that directive leadership was generally perceived as strong. Their analysis highlighted that coordination of work and

clarity of task assignments were the most influential aspects shaping perceptions of directive leadership. Other important components included adherence to regulations, guidance on task completion, and supervisory practices. Building on this, recent evidence from family business contexts further underscores the contingent effects of directive leadership. Valentino, Diaz Matajira, and Szymanska (2025) examined family firms during the Covid-19 lockdowns and identified different types of businesses based on the degree of family involvement and leadership style.

Their findings revealed that directive leadership played a crucial role in mitigating performance losses during crisis conditions. Specifically, firms led by directive leaders experienced reduced revenue and employment declines, while high levels of family involvement without directive leadership exacerbated negative financial and social outcomes. This suggests that directive leadership, when combined with resource-based characteristics unique to family businesses, may buffer against environmental disruptions. At the same time, the study illustrated how the absence of directive leadership in highly involved family firms could amplify vulnerabilities.

However, the effects of directive leadership are context-dependent, as evidenced by Kim, Yun, and Cheong (2023), who examined the interplay between directive and empowering leadership in South Korea. Their findings revealed that while empowering leadership encouraged proactive behaviors such as taking charge, directive leadership negatively influenced such initiatives, particularly among intrinsically motivated employees. This highlights that directive leadership is most effective in structured or task-oriented contexts, whereas it may suppress initiative where autonomy and creativity are required. The study also emphasizes the need to consider employee characteristics, such as motivation, when determining the appropriateness of leadership style. By contrasting directive and empowering approaches, the research illustrates the nuanced effects of directive leadership on employee engagement. Thus, leaders must strategically adapt their behaviors to align with both organizational demands and employee predispositions.

The situational effectiveness of directive leadership is further supported by Krause, Withers, and Waller (2022), who examined board chair leadership during the COVID-19 crisis. Their study revealed that directive leadership enhanced financial performance through competitive simplification, but only when the board chair did not simultaneously hold the CEO position. This finding indicates that the benefits of directive leadership are contingent on organizational structures and governance arrangements. When roles are concentrated in one individual, directive behavior may fail to produce the intended outcomes or may even hinder performance. The research underscores that context, including leadership distribution and role clarity, is critical to the success of directive leadership. It also suggests that in high-stakes or crisis environments, directive leadership can streamline decision-making, ensuring swift and coordinated responses.

Perceptions of directive leadership vary depending on relational and ethical considerations, as highlighted by Barthel and Buengeler (2023). They investigated whether servant or directive leaders were perceived as more promotable and found that servant leaders were consistently rated higher in effectiveness, likability, and promotability. Directive leaders, by contrast, were perceived as less favorable, suggesting that while directive leadership may enhance performance outcomes, it may not cultivate strong interpersonal trust or leader credibility. The study indicates that relational qualities, such as warmth, morality, and competence, significantly influence perceptions of leadership effectiveness. These findings imply that directive leadership might need to be supplemented with relational skills to maintain positive employee attitudes. Therefore, while directive leadership is effective in structuring work, it may require balancing with soft skills to sustain long-term organizational support.

Directive leadership also plays a critical role in crisis management, as demonstrated by Post et al. (2022). Their study found that directive leadership improved decision-making speed and accuracy when teams faced familiar crises, whereas participative leadership was more effective in unfamiliar emergencies. This suggests that directive leadership excels in structured, predictable situations by providing clear guidance and reducing uncertainty. However, in novel situations requiring collective problem-solving, directive leadership may constrain performance. The research emphasizes the

situational dependency of directive leadership, highlighting that leaders must assess environmental complexity before applying directive behaviors. It also reinforces the value of training leaders to adapt their approach according to task familiarity and team expertise.

In construction and infrastructure contexts, Suzeno, Muhammad, and Mesra (2024) found that directive leadership positively affected both employee performance and career development during large-scale projects. Their study highlighted that while directive leadership directly enhanced performance outcomes, career development mediated this effect, demonstrating its long-term influence on employee growth. This finding illustrates that directive leadership not only addresses immediate organizational needs but also fosters sustainable development of human capital. By clearly articulating tasks and providing structured guidance, leaders can optimize both individual and organizational performance. The research also suggests that directive leadership is particularly beneficial in high-complexity, project-based environments where roles, processes, and expectations must be clearly defined.

Finally, the educational sector provides additional insights into directive leadership's utility. Saleem et al. (2021) found that directive leadership positively influenced teachers' performance in Pakistani private schools, particularly under ambiguous or complex tasks. The study emphasized that directive leaders clarify expectations, remove obstacles, and provide structured support, enabling teachers to achieve higher job performance. Annan (2022) similarly observed that African leaders often prefer directive or autocratic styles, which are highly effective in structured and hierarchical environments. Furthermore, Mutmainnah et al. (2022) showed that directive leadership indirectly enhanced innovative work behavior by strengthening employees' continuance commitment. Mukherjee and Mulla (2022) highlighted the importance of consistency, noting that sudden shifts from empowering to directive leadership could reduce satisfaction and commitment. Collectively, these studies illustrate that directive leadership, when applied consistently and aligned with task complexity, employee characteristics, and organizational structure, can significantly enhance both short-term and long-term performance outcomes across sectors.

2.4.3 Supportive Leadership and Organizational Performance

Supportive leadership has emerged as a crucial factor influencing organizational performance and employee outcomes across various sectors. Ochieng, Koshal, and Scott (2023) investigated the influence of supportive leadership on manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County, Kenya. Their study found a significantly positive relationship between supportive leadership and organizational performance, indicating that leaders who provide guidance, attention, and support to employees enhance overall organizational effectiveness. The findings suggest that supportive leadership enables managers to create an environment where employees feel valued and motivated, translating leadership behaviors into tangible performance outcomes. By employing path-goal leadership theory and stratified random sampling, the study provided empirical evidence that supportive leadership is integral to achieving organizational objectives. This establishes the foundation for understanding how leadership style interacts with organizational processes to influence performance outcomes.

Similarly, Mutonyi, K'Aol, and Ouma (2021) examined the impact of supportive leadership on innovative behavior among senior managers in Kenya's manufacturing sector. Using a descriptive correlational design, the study found that supportive leadership positively predicted innovative behavior, enhancing managers' capacity to implement new ideas and solutions. These findings indicate that supportive leadership not only improves individual performance but also fosters a culture of innovation, which indirectly strengthens overall organizational performance. The study highlights the importance of leadership in creating conditions for employees to exercise autonomy, take initiative, and contribute creatively to organizational goals. By emphasizing supportive behaviors, leaders can cultivate an environment conducive to innovation and competitive advantage.

Cavudissa and Tam (2025) investigated the role of supportive leadership in remote teams, focusing on the impact of team conflict on employee well-being, trust, communication, and performance. Their findings showed that team conflict negatively affected well-being and hindered trust and communication, while burnout and

psychological distress further undermined interpersonal dynamics. Supportive leadership emerged as an important moderating factor, helping to manage conflict and prevent burnout. However, the study also emphasized that supportive leadership alone was insufficient to fully restore trust and communication, pointing instead to the need for complementary mechanisms such as improved technological tools, structured opportunities for social interaction, and the development of team resilience.

Saeed, Olmos Rueda, and Kelder (2025) examined supportive leadership in the context of secondary schools in Pakistan, where teachers face significant occupational stressors such as heavy workload and emotional exhaustion. Drawing on Job Demands–Resources theory, their study revealed that workload negatively affected teachers’ job performance and increased emotional exhaustion. However, contrary to expectations, supportive leadership neither moderated the relationship between workload and exhaustion nor directly influenced job performance. These findings highlight the limitations of supportive leadership in highly resource-constrained educational settings, suggesting that leadership alone may be insufficient to counteract systemic challenges, and that broader structural interventions are needed to improve teacher well-being and performance.

Stein, Vincent-Höper, and Gregersen (2020) further explored supportive leadership from a multilevel perspective by examining its role in linking leaders’ workload with followers’ emotional exhaustion. Drawing on conservation of resources theory, they found that higher workload among leaders constrained their ability to enact supportive behaviors, which in turn heightened followers’ perceptions of emotional exhaustion. The study highlighted the resource-dependent nature of supportive leadership, showing that while it can buffer stress and enhance follower well-being, its effectiveness is compromised when leaders themselves face excessive demands. This underscores the importance of considering contextual and leader-level factors when evaluating the impact of supportive leadership.

In the banking sector, Mwaisaka, K’Aol, and Ouma (2019) explored how supportive and directive leadership styles influence employee job satisfaction. Their findings showed that supportive leadership positively predicted job satisfaction, suggesting that

employees who perceive their leaders as caring, fair, and attentive are more likely to experience satisfaction in their roles. Similarly, Amelia and Kusmaningtyas (2023) extended this work by examining the mediating role of employee loyalty in Indonesia, finding that supportive leadership enhances loyalty, which in turn improves job performance. These studies collectively underscore that supportive leadership fosters both affective and behavioral outcomes, demonstrating its critical role in linking leadership practices to performance. Leaders who recognize and support employees' needs promote loyalty, engagement, and organizational commitment.

Park, Kim, and Lee (2023) examined supportive leadership in the context of female managers, organizational effectiveness, and family social support. The study revealed that supportive leadership helps minimize work-family conflicts, promotes work-life balance, and enhances organizational performance through positive spillover effects. Employees perceiving their leaders as considerate and attentive were more motivated to fulfill organizational objectives, particularly in strategic and high-responsibility tasks. The study also highlighted that supportive leadership encourages independent initiative, clarifies responsibilities, and builds trust-based relationships, enabling employees to handle stressful or structured tasks effectively. These findings suggest that supportive leadership transforms potential employee stress or dissatisfaction into positive performance outcomes, particularly when aligned with organizational objectives and team dynamics.

Ochieng and Koshal (2023) reinforced the positive impact of supportive leadership on SME performance, demonstrating that leaders who provide encouragement and attention create conditions for higher organizational effectiveness. This study, guided by path-goal leadership theory, emphasized that supportive leadership fosters employee motivation, engagement, and productivity, which collectively drive performance. The findings align with other empirical studies, confirming that supportive leadership is a critical determinant of organizational success across diverse sectors. By providing clarity, psychological support, and recognition, leaders enhance employees' sense of ownership and commitment, thereby translating leadership behaviors into performance outcomes.

Uman et al. (2022) explored supportive leadership at the European Court of Auditors, focusing on communication, collaboration, and performance management practices. Their study revealed that supportive leadership positively influences communication and collaborative practices, which in turn enhance job satisfaction among public servants. Interestingly, while supportive leadership affected performance management practices, these did not significantly correlate with job satisfaction, suggesting that certain organizational mechanisms may act as partial mediators. The findings highlight the nuanced ways in which supportive leadership operates within structured bureaucratic settings, emphasizing the need for leaders to focus on relational and collaborative strategies to impact employee outcomes.

Ibrahim al-Gburi and Musaheb (2024) examined supportive leadership in the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, particularly its effect on work stress. The study found that supportive leadership reduced role ambiguity, role conflict, workload stress, and adverse work conditions, thereby improving employee well-being and organizational performance. Leaders who empower employees, treat them fairly, and provide inspirational motivation effectively mitigate workplace stressors, demonstrating that supportive leadership is not only performance-enhancing but also welfare-oriented. This emphasizes the dual function of supportive leadership in promoting both productivity and employee satisfaction.

Saleem, Isha, and Awan (2024) explored supportive leadership in Malaysia's adventure tourism industry, focusing on team psychological safety and task performance. Their findings indicated that supportive leadership, together with psychological safety, significantly influenced mindful organizing, which positively correlated with task performance. While supportive leadership's effect was not directly mediated by mindful organizing, the study highlighted its importance in fostering an environment where employees feel secure to take initiative and engage strategically in complex tasks. This further demonstrates that supportive leadership underpins organizational processes that indirectly enhance performance outcomes.

2.4.4 Participative Leadership and Organizational Performance

Participative leadership has been widely recognized as a key determinant of organizational performance, particularly in environments that value employee engagement and collaborative decision-making. Ochieng, Koshal, and Bellows (2023) examined participative leadership in manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County, Kenya, and found that participative leadership positively and significantly predicted organizational performance. The study emphasized that involving employees in decision-making, communicating effectively, and delegating tasks enhances engagement, ownership, and performance outcomes. By highlighting the benefits of participatory behaviors, this study reinforces the importance of including subordinates in problem-solving and strategic planning to achieve organizational objectives. Owners and managers were encouraged to adopt participative leadership practices to maximize the performance of their SMEs.

Bell et al. (2018) investigated the effects of participative and directive leadership on team effectiveness among administrative employees in a South African tertiary institution. Their findings revealed that both leadership styles, individually and collectively, significantly influenced team effectiveness, suggesting that participative leadership promotes collaborative work and drives better organizational outcomes. This supports the notion that participative leadership enhances not only individual performance but also collective team dynamics, which are essential for achieving organizational goals. By facilitating employee input and engagement, participative leaders strengthen team cohesion and performance effectiveness.

Toufighi et al. (2024) explored participative leadership in the garment industry, focusing on employee speaking-up behavior and knowledge-sharing. Using surveys and interviews, the study demonstrated that participative leadership positively correlated with employees' willingness to voice opinions and share knowledge. Mediation analysis further showed that perceived leadership effectiveness partially mediated the relationship between participative leadership and knowledge-sharing intentions. The authors highlighted the importance of cultural intelligence, communication, and social identity in facilitating knowledge flow, emphasizing that

participative leadership fosters an inclusive environment where employees contribute to organizational performance.

Ishaque et al. (2022) examined how participative leadership influenced employee engagement through the mediating effect of employee-perceived corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the hotel industry. Their study found a strong relationship between participative leadership and employee engagement, with CSR perceptions mediating this effect. Participative leaders who recognize employees' contributions and align organizational objectives with social responsibility initiatives enhance engagement and performance. The study underscores the motivational and multilevel mechanisms through which participative leadership translates into organizational outcomes, highlighting the role of employees' perceptions in reinforcing leadership effectiveness.

Rana, K'Aol, and Kirubi (2019) investigated supportive and participative leadership in coffee trading companies in Kenya. The study found that participative leadership significantly predicted employee performance, while supportive leadership did not show a significant effect. Task structure was identified as a moderating factor, indicating that participative leadership is particularly effective when employees have defined responsibilities and opportunities for input. These findings suggest that participative leadership is a practical approach for enhancing employee performance and organizational productivity by fostering communication, consultation, and collaboration.

Gil-Cordero et al. (2023) emphasized participative leadership in the hospitality and tourism sectors, showing that organizational values combined with participative leadership are crucial for sustaining competitive advantages. Their study revealed that participatory management approaches enhance market orientation and strategic positioning, particularly in times of economic uncertainty. By integrating participative leadership with organizational values, firms can mobilize employees effectively, encourage innovation, and maintain performance levels, demonstrating the broader strategic relevance of participatory practices.

Ayesuwa and Okwuokei (2023) investigated the relationship between participative leadership and organizational performance, highlighting that participative leaders motivate employees by involving them in decision-making, fostering responsibility, and enhancing confidence for creative tasks. Their study concluded that building trust, encouraging teamwork, delegating authority, and recognizing employee contributions are critical behaviors for maximizing performance. This study reinforces the idea that participative leadership not only improves individual outcomes but also strengthens organizational culture and collective performance.

Chan (2019) examined participative leadership in the retail sector, focusing on its effects on employees' work engagement and job satisfaction. The study demonstrated that participative leadership was positively associated with both outcomes, with work engagement mediating the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction. Moreover, the findings revealed that the positive influence of participative leadership on job satisfaction was strengthened when employees experienced greater fun at work. This highlights the interactive role of workplace climate in shaping the effectiveness of participative leadership, suggesting that its benefits are maximized when combined with an engaging and enjoyable work environment.

Khassawneh and Elrehail (2022) examined participative leadership in the context of institutional complexity in the UAE, focusing on employee performance. The study found that while participative leadership generally enhances loyalty and performance, its effectiveness diminishes in highly complex institutional environments. This suggests that the success of participative leadership depends on organizational and environmental contexts, highlighting potential limitations and the need for adaptive leadership practices.

The study demonstrates that external factors, such as institutional constraints, can moderate the impact of participative leadership on performance outcomes. Collectively, these studies underscore that participative leadership enhances organizational performance by fostering employee engagement, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing. Participative leaders encourage decision-making involvement, responsibility, and initiative, which strengthen both individual and team outcomes.

However, the effectiveness of this leadership style can be influenced by task structure, institutional complexity, and cultural factors, indicating that contextual alignment is essential for maximizing performance.

Ahn and Bessiere (2022) explored participative leadership in the context of sustainable tourism development in South Korea, focusing on its role in empowering residents and fostering their involvement in tourism activities. The study found that participative leadership positively influenced both empowerment and resident participation, with psychological empowerment mediating this relationship. Importantly, the findings showed that residents valued their participation regardless of the additional income gained from tourism, highlighting the motivational and intrinsic aspects of empowerment. By linking participative leadership to community engagement, the study emphasized its potential to enhance sustainable development outcomes and promote more inclusive decision-making processes.

Qing and Zhang (2023) examined the influence of participative leadership on the voice behavior of public servants in China. Their findings showed that participative leadership encouraged employees to express constructive suggestions and concerns by enhancing organizational identification. The study also revealed that the relationship between participative leadership and organizational identification was moderated by power distance, indicating that employees' cultural orientations shape how participative leadership is perceived and enacted. By linking participative leadership to proactive employee behaviors in the public sector, the research highlighted its potential to strengthen engagement and innovation within bureaucratic organizations. These findings highlight the need for further research on participative leadership in complex organizational settings such as International NGOs in South Sudan, where employee engagement and collaborative decision-making may critically impact performance outcomes.

2.4.5 Achievement-Oriented Leadership and Organizational Performance

Achievement-oriented leadership (AOL) has emerged as a critical factor influencing organizational performance, motivation, and innovation across diverse sectors. Sodikin, Fachrunnisa, and Niati (2021) proposed a conceptual model linking Ihsan

Achievement-Oriented Leadership (IAOL) with spiritual well-being and knowledge-sharing behavior, highlighting a leadership approach grounded in transcendental Islamic values of *ihsan* and *tawhid*. This model emphasizes how integrating spirituality into leadership can enhance employee well-being and knowledge-sharing, while offering avenues for future research to validate and expand the framework. By combining ethical, spiritual, and achievement-driven practices, IAOL demonstrates the potential for leadership to transcend materialistic goals and foster holistic organizational outcomes.

Sodikin, Fachrunnisa, and Nurhidayati (2022) further examined achievement-oriented leadership within the path-goal theory framework by integrating Islamic ethical values, particularly *Ihsan*. Their meta-synthesis reviewed literature from 1996 to 2020 and found that prior studies largely emphasized transactional and material achievements, neglecting transcendental spiritual values. The authors proposed *Ihsan*-based achievement-oriented leadership as a new model that enhances leadership effectiveness, providing both theoretical contributions and practical guidance for leadership development. This approach underscores the importance of ethical and spiritual dimensions alongside goal achievement in shaping effective leadership practices.

Ochieng, Koshal, and Bellows (2024) investigated the effect of achievement-oriented leadership on organizational performance in manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi, Kenya. Their study found that AOL style positively and significantly predicted organizational performance, rejecting the null hypothesis of no influence. The findings offered practical insights to SME owners and managers, demonstrating that setting clear goals, providing feedback, and encouraging employees to achieve high standards can significantly enhance organizational outcomes. This study reinforces the direct link between achievement-oriented leadership and performance in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Rana, K'Aol, and Kirubi (2019) examined the impact of directive and achievement-oriented leadership on employee performance in Kenyan coffee trading companies. The study showed that achievement-oriented leadership positively influenced financial

resources, product quality, employee satisfaction, and innovation, ultimately improving overall organizational performance. Leaders were advised to define clear goals, provide consistent feedback, and reward high-performing employees. These findings highlight that structured goal-setting and performance reinforcement under AOL can enhance both employee and organizational outcomes.

Sujana (2020) explored achievement-oriented leadership among contractor project managers in Indonesian construction projects. The study found that project managers predominantly used an achievement-oriented style due to tight deadlines and project penalties, which required clear performance targets. However, the lack of participative behaviors limited subordinate engagement, which is necessary for construction sustainability. This research illustrates that while AOL drives performance under strict deadlines, integrating participative elements can further improve engagement and long-term project success.

Zachariah, Adino, and Bunyi (2022) studied achievement-oriented leadership in public high schools in Nyamira and Siaya Counties, Kenya. Their findings revealed that AOL strongly influenced teacher motivation, accounting for about 32% of variance in teacher inspiration. Teachers preferred achievement-oriented leadership, which fostered motivation and enhanced organizational performance. This study demonstrates the applicability of AOL in educational settings, where clear goal-setting, performance expectations, and supportive feedback contribute to better employee outcomes and institutional performance.

Suhaimy et al. (2021) examined achievement-oriented aspects of Razak-Mahathir's leadership in Malaysia's nation-state development. Through qualitative historical analysis of speeches, the study identified leadership qualities such as intellectual stimulation, motivation, planning, influence, and acknowledgment of contributions. These qualities were shown to promote national development and modernization. The research underscores that achievement-oriented leadership can drive large-scale organizational and societal transformation by inspiring collective effort and vision.

Chege, Gichunge, and Muema (2022) investigated the effect of achievement culture on the performance of Kenyan universities. The study found a significant relationship between adopting an achievement-oriented culture and organizational performance, with vision, mission, goals, and core values enhancing university outcomes. Managers were encouraged to support achievement culture through training, learning opportunities, and fostering creativity and innovation. The study emphasizes that leadership and culture oriented toward achievement are critical for sustained institutional performance.

Damarwulan and Dibyantoro (2022) investigated the role of achievement-oriented work motivation in improving employee performance within the manufacturing sector. Their study demonstrated that training effectiveness and soft-skill competence positively influenced achievement-oriented motivation, which in turn enhanced employee performance. Moreover, achievement-oriented motivation served as a key mediating factor, linking training and competence development to performance outcomes. These findings emphasize the importance of fostering achievement-oriented motivation as part of internal organizational strategies, showing that well-designed training programs and skill development initiatives not only enhance competencies but also drive employees toward higher performance standards.

Christianto, Mariyanti, and Adhandayani (2021) investigated the impact of perceived achievement-oriented leadership on employee work motivation at PT. Agrotama Jaya Abadi Group. The findings revealed that directive leadership did not have a significant effect on employee motivation. In contrast, achievement-oriented leadership demonstrated a significant positive influence, showing that when employees perceived their leaders as achievement-oriented, their motivation at work increased. These results highlight the important role of achievement-oriented leadership in fostering stronger employee motivation, while directive leadership alone may not substantially impact motivation outcomes.

Hartati, Fauzi, and Zohriah (2024) examined the Path-Goal Leadership Model through a literature review, emphasizing its motivational impact on employee performance. While the model outlines four leadership styles; directive, supportive, participatory,

and achievement-oriented, the study highlights the role of achievement-oriented leadership as particularly significant. This style is characterized by leaders who set challenging goals, demonstrate confidence in employees' abilities, and encourage persistence in achieving high standards. The authors note that achievement-oriented leadership enhances motivation by fostering a performance-driven climate where subordinates feel supported and capable of reaching ambitious targets. Within the path-goal framework, achievement-oriented leadership thus emerges as a critical approach for aligning individual effort with organizational effectiveness.

Ogosi (2024) explored the role of achievement orientation in fostering innovation within SMEs, focusing on organizational behavior, need for achievement, and motivation as drivers of innovative practices. The study highlighted that leaders and employees with strong achievement-oriented traits are more likely to engage in innovative behaviors, enhancing competitiveness and sustainability. This research reinforces the notion that achievement-oriented leadership not only drives performance but also catalyzes innovation and adaptability in dynamic business environments. Therefore, collectively, these studies demonstrate that achievement-oriented leadership significantly enhances organizational performance across sectors, from SMEs and educational institutions to large-scale national development initiatives. AOL fosters motivation, goal clarity, performance feedback, and innovation while also incorporating ethical and spiritual dimensions in certain contexts. By aligning leadership behaviors with clear objectives, employee engagement, and innovation strategies, organizations can achieve superior performance outcomes. These findings also suggest that integrating participative elements and cultural considerations can further strengthen the effectiveness of achievement-oriented leadership in complex organizational settings.

2.4.6 Organizational Culture and Organizational Performance

Imran et al. (2021) investigated the mediating role of innovation in the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance in Pakistan's banking sector. The study aimed to determine whether innovation enhances the positive influence of organizational culture on performance. Data were collected from 250 bank

managers using questionnaires, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that innovation significantly mediates the relationship, with organizational culture dimensions and innovation exerting a positive influence on performance, while organizational culture and mission showed no significant direct relationship with performance in the presence of innovation. The study concludes that fostering an innovative culture is essential for organizations to remain competitive in dynamic environments.

Kuswati (2020) conducted a study on the Influence of Organizational Culture on Employee Performance at the Municipal Waterworks (PDAM) in Majalengka Regency, Indonesia. The objective was to investigate the impact of organizational culture on employees' performance, motivated by issues such as lack of responsibility, poor discipline, low-quality work, and delays in reporting among employees. The study adopted a descriptive survey method using quantitative data analysis through parametric statistical techniques with SPSS version 19. The independent variable (X) was organizational culture, measured through dimensions such as innovation, risk-taking, outcome orientation, people orientation, team orientation, aggressiveness, and stability, while the dependent variable (Y) was employee performance, assessed through effectiveness, efficiency, quality, timeliness, productivity, and safety. Findings revealed that organizational culture and employee performance were both rated positively, with mean scores of 3.45 and 3.49, respectively. A strong correlation coefficient ($r = 0.828$) indicated that organizational culture explained 68.5% of the variance in employee performance. Hypothesis testing further confirmed a positive and significant relationship between organizational culture and employee performance, highlighting the critical role of cultural factors in enhancing organizational outcomes in public service institutions.

Chandra, Arafah, and Basri (2021) conducted a study to examine how green organizational culture influences organizational performance and green competitive advantage, with green innovation acting as a mediating factor. Using purposive sampling, the study surveyed 185 CEOs, managers, and experts in the manufacturing industry, and data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings revealed that green organizational culture has both direct and indirect positive

and significant effects on green innovation, competitive advantage, and organizational performance. Furthermore, green innovation was shown to strengthen the relationship between green culture and performance outcomes, highlighting the role of environmental strategies in enhancing competitiveness. The study concluded that companies integrating environmental considerations into their culture can sustain long-term competitiveness and improved performance in economic, operational, and ecological aspects.

Alrazehi et al. (2021) conducted a study titled Proposed Model for Entrepreneurship, Organizational Culture and Job Satisfaction towards Organizational Performance in International Bank of Yemen. The objective of the paper was to develop a conceptual framework that explains how entrepreneurship, organizational culture, and job satisfaction collectively influence organizational performance in the banking sector, specifically the International Bank of Yemen.

The study was based on a literature review and grounded in Human Capital Theory and Social Exchange Theory to explain the relationship between the variables. The findings highlighted that entrepreneurship, organizational culture, and job satisfaction are critical determinants of organizational performance and competitiveness in a challenging entrepreneurial environment. The authors concluded that strengthening these factors could significantly improve organizational effectiveness and enhance the bank's competitive position.

Pathiranage, Jayatilake, and Abeysekera (2020) conducted a literature review to examine the relationship between organizational culture and corporate performance. The objective of the study was to synthesize prior research and provide a broader understanding of how organizational culture impacts business performance within corporate groups. The authors reviewed various sources including journals, periodicals, seminal books, and other published materials, focusing on the conceptualization, measurement, and dimensions of organizational culture. The review revealed that organizational culture has a strong positive effect on organizational performance, while lack of cultural integration among member companies often leads to corporate failure. The study concluded that enhancing organizational culture

improves corporate performance and emphasized the importance for business managers to build effective cultural frameworks. Additionally, it highlighted theoretical and empirical gaps in the literature, suggesting directions for future research.

Rahmatullah et al. (2022) that examined the influence of organizational culture and transformational leadership on organizational performance with organizational commitment as a mediating variable. The study aimed to analyze whether organizational culture and transformational leadership directly and indirectly (through organizational commitment) affect performance outcomes. Using a descriptive quantitative approach with a causal design, data were collected from 158 respondents representing the regeneration of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Banten Province, and analyzed using SmartPLS 3.29 software. The findings revealed that both organizational culture and transformational leadership had a positive and significant impact on organizational performance and on organizational commitment. Additionally, organizational commitment itself was found to significantly enhance organizational performance and served as a partial mediator between culture, leadership, and performance. The results highlight the critical role of organizational commitment in strengthening the effects of leadership and culture on performance.

Bhatti, Rehman, and Rumman (2020) examined the mediating role of organizational capabilities in the relationship between organizational culture, entrepreneurial orientation, and organizational performance among SMEs in Pakistan. The objective was to investigate how culture and entrepreneurial orientation drive organizational performance through the development of capabilities. Using area cluster sampling, data were collected from 384 SMEs and analyzed with SmartPLS 3.0 through partial least square structural equation modeling. The findings revealed that both organizational culture and entrepreneurial orientation positively influence organizational capabilities, which in turn enhance performance, with capabilities playing a significant mediating role. The study suggests incorporating business strategy, market orientation, leadership, and knowledge management in future research to deepen understanding, while highlighting the value of organizational capabilities within the resource-based view as a key driver of SME performance.

Nuryanto et al. (2020) investigated the impact of social capital and organizational culture on organizational performance with a focus on the chemical manufacturing industry in Banten Province, Indonesia. The objective was to examine how social capital—defined as the interactions between employees and management—along with organizational culture contribute to competitive advantage and improved performance. The study employed a quantitative approach using SEM-PLS to analyze data from 97 managerial-level respondents. Findings revealed that both social capital and organizational culture had a positive and significant effect on organizational performance, with competitive advantage strengthening this relationship. The study concludes that beyond financial, technological, and human resources, social capital and organizational culture are crucial intangible assets that enhance organizational competitiveness and performance.

Gestão & Produção (2020) published a study analyzing the influence of organizational culture on innovation environments and organizational performance in the textile industry. The objective was to examine how organizational culture shapes both internal and external innovation environments and contributes to performance outcomes. Using a descriptive, quantitative, and cross-sectional research design, data were collected from 186 respondents and analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling.

The findings showed that organizational culture significantly affects innovation by fostering dimensions such as results, processes, and internal relationships, which create a supportive environment for innovation. The study revealed that the company's culture reflected low power distance and high collectivism, both of which positively influenced innovation and performance. The results confirmed the proposed theoretical model and highlighted that organizational culture plays a critical role in building an environment conducive to innovation and in improving overall organizational performance.

2.4.7 Organizational Performance

The Sustainability Balanced Scorecard (SBSC) and its variants have gained prominence as key tools for integrating sustainability into organizational performance measurement and management control. Mio, Costantini, and Panfilo (2021) conducted

a systematic literature review covering 65 articles from 2000 to 2020, examining the SBSC's use stage. The study highlighted how SBSC strengthens sustainability integration in strategic decision-making and enhances performance monitoring. Furthermore, it identified research gaps and provided managerial guidance for embedding sustainability within organizational practices. The review emphasized that organizations adopting SBSC can better align operational activities with long-term sustainability goals, fostering accountability across economic, environmental, and social dimensions.

Gningue, Bedoui, and Venkatesh (2023) proposed a port performance measurement framework using the SBSC, integrating stakeholder theory to address hybrid organizational needs. Applying the framework to the Port of Radès, 57 performance indicators were categorized across six SBSC dimensions and evaluated using the failure mode and effects analysis (FMEA) technique. By introducing an indicator priority number (IPN), the study demonstrated how stakeholder-driven prioritization improves governance, environmental accountability, and competitiveness. The findings underscore the importance of participative approaches that consider multiple stakeholder perspectives to enhance sustainable performance in complex organizational environments.

Stavropoulou et al. (2023) explored the Green Balanced Scorecard (GBSC) as a sustainable information system designed to improve energy efficiency and environmental accountability in businesses. Using bibliometric and PRISMA analyses from 2011 to 2023, the study examined trends in SBSC adoption and its integration into energy-efficient management systems. The research identified the "Contact Balanced Scorecard" as an emerging dimension and highlighted that GBSC adoption strengthens performance across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. These findings demonstrate the GBSC's role in fostering sustainable business growth while aligning organizational objectives with CSR and ESG standards.

Sohaib et al. (2024) investigated UAE government e-services' performance by integrating the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) with fuzzy logic methodology. Assessing three e-services against twelve criteria using fuzzy TOPSIS, the study found that

prioritizing customer-centric measures, improving reliability, and investing in employee training enhanced service performance. Sensitivity analysis confirmed model robustness and identified critical factors influencing decision-making. The study demonstrates that integrating fuzzy logic with BSC provides public sector decision-makers with structured, sustainable tools for performance management.

Deng et al. (2025) examined sustainable performance evaluation in pharmaceutical companies using a hybrid SBSC framework. Employing DEMATEL, ANP, and VIKOR methods, the study prioritized sustainability dimensions, revealing environmental considerations as most critical, followed by internal processes, customer relations, finance, learning and growth, and societal impact. Application in a Chinese pharmaceutical company emphasized green transformation and strengthened customer relations as key for sustainability. The findings highlight SBSC's capacity to guide strategic decision-making and align sustainability objectives with organizational goals.

Karmeni, Beldi, and Saadi (2024) explored digitalization's performance effects through the SBSC lens, addressing both economic and non-economic impacts. Their qualitative study across six SBSC dimensions revealed mixed effects: positive economic outcomes alongside complex social and environmental consequences. To operationalize these insights, the authors developed the "digimpact" measurement tool, enabling managers to assess digitalization's multifaceted impact on sustainable performance. This highlights SBSC's adaptability for evaluating novel organizational strategies and technologies.

Mohammed, Sulaiman, and Md Zin (2023) systematically reviewed the Agile-Adaptive Balanced Scorecard (AABSC) and its role in driving sustainable performance, particularly for SMEs in developing countries. Reviewing 1,841 articles and retaining 39, the study found that AABSC supports managerial decision-making under economic fluctuations but remains underutilized. The review emphasizes the need for more empirical evaluations to strengthen AABSC's theoretical and practical relevance, particularly for SMEs navigating volatile environments.

Muraba, Mamogobo, and Thango (2024) reviewed BSC adoption in SMEs, highlighting its role in aligning performance metrics with strategic goals. Reviewing 136 studies, the findings indicated that 74% adopted a holistic view across financial, customer, internal processes, and learning and growth perspectives. While BSC improved sustainability, competitive advantage, and performance outcomes, challenges such as resource limitations and poor strategy execution persisted. The study underscores the importance of customizing BSC for sector-specific and resource-constrained environments.

Rafiq et al. (2020) investigated the BSC's role as a strategic management system on sustainable development, with organizational performance as a mediating variable. Using PLS-SEM on 300 questionnaires from Chinese power companies in Pakistan, the study found that BSC positively influences sustainable development while organizational performance partially mediates this effect. The results highlight the relevance of non-financial measures, such as employee performance and ecological responsiveness, in enhancing sustainability outcomes. Organizations are encouraged to optimize resources and reduce waste to foster long-term sustainable development.

Collectively, these studies illustrate that SBSC and its variants, including GBSC and AABSC, are effective tools for integrating sustainability into organizational strategy and performance measurement. They demonstrate the importance of considering multiple dimensions—financial, environmental, social, and operational while also accommodating stakeholder perspectives and organizational contexts. By providing structured frameworks, these scorecards enable organizations to monitor, evaluate, and enhance sustainability initiatives, thus linking performance management with long-term strategic objectives. The research also emphasizes the adaptability of SBSC in different sectors, from public services to SMEs and large corporations, highlighting its potential to drive sustainable organizational growth.

2.5 Critique of the Existing Literature Reviewed

While the reviewed studies collectively underscore the importance of organizational culture in mediating or moderating the relationship between leadership and performance, several limitations emerge when applied to the context of path-goal

leadership in International NGOs in South Sudan. Many studies, such as Vasudevan et al. (2025) and Dewi and Wibowo (2020), focus on private or educational sectors in Asian contexts, raising questions about the generalizability of their findings to NGOs operating in fragile, conflict-affected environments. Similarly, Ratnasari, Sutjahjo, and Adam (2020) and Virgiawan et al. (2021) emphasize mediators like job satisfaction and work culture, yet these constructs may manifest differently in NGOs where resources are limited and performance pressures are external. Gökalp and Soran (2022) and Suifan (2021) highlight the role of culture in translating leadership into outcomes, but they largely ignore the influence of institutional instability and donor-driven accountability in shaping organizational culture in humanitarian contexts.

Omama et al. (2022) and Hambali and Idris (2020) suggest that culture may outweigh leadership, yet this may underplay the practical importance of adaptive path-goal leadership in dynamic NGO operations. Furthermore, studies by Al-Shibami et al. (2019), Rahmatullah et al. (2022), and Alkhadra et al. (2023) rely heavily on transformational or ethical leadership frameworks, which differ conceptually from the directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented dimensions of path-goal leadership. Finally, while Cahyani et al. (2025), Ginting et al. (2024), Nguyen et al. (2023), and others affirm culture's enabling role, they provide limited guidance on operationalizing culture-leadership alignment in low-resource, high-risk NGO settings. Overall, these critiques highlight the need for context-specific investigations into how path-goal leadership interacts with organizational culture to influence performance in South Sudanese NGOs.

In addition, the reviewed studies collectively highlight the effectiveness of directive leadership in enhancing performance, particularly in structured, hierarchical, or task-oriented environments, as shown by Ochieng, Koshal, and Bellows (2023) in Kenyan SMEs and Saleem et al. (2021) in Pakistani schools. Mutonyi, George, and Caren (2021) further suggest that directive leadership can indirectly promote innovative behavior when aligned with organizational goals, while Kim, Yun, and Cheong (2023) caution that such leadership may suppress proactive behaviors among intrinsically motivated employees, emphasizing the need to consider employee characteristics. Krause, Withers, and Waller (2022) and Post et al. (2022) demonstrate that the

situational context and task familiarity critically determine directive leadership's effectiveness, particularly in crisis or high-stakes environments.

Barthel and Buengeler (2023) highlight potential relational drawbacks, showing that directive leaders may be perceived as less promotable or likable, indicating that interpersonal skills are important for sustaining organizational support. Suzeno, Muhammad, and Mesra (2024) and Mukherjee and Mulla (2022) reinforce that directive leadership can enhance performance and career development but consistency and alignment with task complexity are crucial. Studies like Annan (2022) and Mutmainnah et al. (2022) suggest that directive leadership is widely adopted in African contexts, indirectly boosting commitment and innovative work behavior. While these findings affirm directive leadership's potential for improving performance, their applicability to International NGOs in South Sudan may be limited, given the sector's resource constraints, volatile environment, and reliance on donor-driven accountability, necessitating a more nuanced, adaptive approach to leadership for sustainable organizational outcomes.

Moreover, the reviewed studies collectively demonstrate that supportive leadership significantly enhances organizational performance, employee well-being, and innovative behaviors across diverse sectors. Ochieng, Koshal, and Scott (2023) and Ochieng and Koshal (2023) both show that in Kenyan SMEs, supportive leadership creates an environment where employees feel valued, motivated, and committed, translating into improved performance outcomes. Mutonyi, K'Aol, and Ouma (2021) extend this by showing that supportive leadership also fosters innovative behavior, suggesting its indirect influence on organizational competitiveness.

Mwaisaka, K'Aol, and Ouma (2019) and Amelia and Kusmaningtyas (2023) highlight that supportive leadership strengthens job satisfaction and employee loyalty, reinforcing the link between leadership practices and performance. Park, Kim, and Lee (2023) further indicate that supportive leadership mitigates work-family conflict, builds trust, and encourages independent initiative, which is particularly relevant in high-responsibility tasks. Uman et al. (2022) show that supportive leadership enhances communication and collaboration in bureaucratic settings, although performance

management may not always translate into job satisfaction, suggesting nuanced contextual effects. Ibrahim al-Gburi and Musaheb (2024) and Saleem, Isha, and Awan (2024) emphasize that supportive leadership also reduces workplace stress and fosters psychological safety, enabling employees to perform strategically and confidently. Collectively, these findings affirm that supportive leadership is crucial for both direct performance enhancement and the creation of enabling environments, but its effectiveness may be contingent upon organizational structure, context, and employee characteristics, which has implications for International NGOs in South Sudan where contextual challenges and resource limitations are prevalent.

Participative leadership has been shown to significantly enhance organizational performance by fostering employee engagement, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing. Studies by Ochieng, Koshal, and Bellows (2023) and Bell et al. (2018) demonstrate that involving employees in decision-making and encouraging team input strengthens ownership, cohesion, and performance outcomes in SMEs and tertiary institutions. Toufighi et al. (2024) and Ishaque et al. (2022) further highlight that participative leadership promotes speaking-up behavior, knowledge sharing, and engagement, often mediated by employees' perceptions of leadership effectiveness and CSR initiatives. Rana, K'Aol, and Kirubi (2019) and Gil-Cordero et al. (2023) emphasize that participative leadership is particularly effective when aligned with task structures and organizational values, fostering strategic positioning and sustained competitive advantage. However, Khassawneh and Elrehail (2022) note that institutional complexity can diminish its effectiveness, suggesting that contextual factors are critical in determining outcomes. Collectively, these findings indicate that while participative leadership generally improves performance, its success in International NGOs in South Sudan may depend on organizational structures, cultural alignment, and environmental constraints, warranting further investigation.

Furthermore, achievement-oriented leadership (AOL) has consistently been shown to enhance organizational performance, motivation, and innovation across diverse sectors. Sodikin, Fachrunnisa, and Niati (2021) proposed Ihsan Achievement-Oriented Leadership (IAOL), integrating Islamic values of ihsan and tawhid to promote spiritual well-being and knowledge-sharing, demonstrating the potential of ethical and spiritual

dimensions in leadership. Sodikin, Fachrunnisa, and Nurhidayati (2022) further highlighted that traditional achievement-focused approaches neglect transcendental values, recommending Ihsan-based AOL to improve leadership effectiveness. Ochieng, Koshal, and Bellows (2024) found that AOL positively predicted performance in Nairobi SMEs, emphasizing goal clarity, feedback, and high standards. Rana, K'Aol, and Kirubi (2019) and Sujana (2020) similarly showed that AOL enhances employee satisfaction, innovation, and project performance, though Sujana noted that a lack of participative behaviors may limit engagement in construction projects.

Zachariah, Adino, and Bunyi (2022) demonstrated that AOL strongly motivates teachers in Kenyan high schools, accounting for significant variance in teacher inspiration and performance. Suhaimy et al. (2021), Chege, Gichunge, and Muema (2022), and Ogosi (2024) extended these insights to nation-building, university performance, and SMEs, highlighting AOL's role in fostering motivation, innovation, and competitive advantage. Collectively, these studies underscore that achievement-oriented leadership, particularly when combined with ethical, cultural, or participative elements, drives superior performance outcomes across organizational contexts, suggesting its potential applicability in complex settings such as International NGOs in South Sudan.

Organizational culture has been consistently identified as a key determinant of organizational performance across sectors, often exerting its influence directly or through mediating mechanisms. Imran et al. (2021) found that innovation mediates the relationship between organizational culture and performance in Pakistan's banking sector, highlighting the necessity of fostering an innovative culture to sustain competitiveness. Kuswati (2020) similarly demonstrated a strong positive correlation between organizational culture and employee performance in Indonesia's municipal waterworks, showing that cultural factors explain a substantial portion of performance variance. Chandra, Arafah, and Basri (2021) revealed that green organizational culture positively impacts green innovation, competitive advantage, and performance in the manufacturing industry, emphasizing the role of environmental strategies. Alrazehi et al. (2021) highlighted that organizational culture, alongside entrepreneurship and job

satisfaction, is critical for organizational effectiveness in Yemen's banking sector. Pathiranage, Jayatilake, and Abeysekera (2020) synthesized prior literature to show that effective cultural integration enhances corporate performance, while cultural misalignment can lead to organizational failure. Rahmatullah et al. (2022) demonstrated that organizational commitment partially mediates the effect of culture and transformational leadership on performance, emphasizing the interplay between cultural and psychological factors. Bhatti, Rehman, and Rumman (2020) and Nuryanto et al. (2020) further revealed that organizational capabilities and social capital, respectively, mediate or strengthen the relationship between culture and performance, underlining the importance of intangible assets.

Finally, Gestão & Produção (2020) confirmed that culture fosters innovation environments, which in turn enhance performance, highlighting culture's critical role in creating conditions for sustainable organizational success. Collectively, these studies underscore the multifaceted ways in which organizational culture drives performance, offering valuable insights for examining NGOs in South Sudan, where cultural alignment and innovation capacity may be particularly pivotal.

The insights from SBSC and its variants are highly relevant for International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan, where operational environments are complex, resource-constrained, and heavily influenced by social, political, and humanitarian dynamics. Implementing SBSC frameworks can help INGOs systematically integrate sustainability into performance measurement, ensuring that financial, social, and environmental objectives are balanced while addressing the needs of multiple stakeholders, including local communities, donors, and governmental agencies. For instance, the participatory approaches highlighted by Gningue, Bedoui, and Venkatesh (2023) can guide INGOs in involving beneficiaries and partners in priority-setting, enhancing accountability and relevance of interventions.

Similarly, Deng et al.'s (2025) emphasis on prioritizing environmental, internal process, and customer/stakeholder dimensions can inform INGOs' programmatic planning, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively for maximum impact. Tools

like the “digimpact” model from Karmeni, Beldi, and Saadi (2024) can assist INGO managers in evaluating complex initiatives such as humanitarian aid delivery, capacity-building programs, or digitalization efforts, balancing social, operational, and financial outcomes. Moreover, adopting AABSC approaches (Mohammed, Sulaiman, and Md Zin, 2023) can enable INGOs to remain adaptive and resilient in volatile contexts, such as conflict-affected regions of South Sudan, by aligning strategic decision-making with sustainability goals. Overall, these frameworks provide INGOs with structured methods to enhance transparency, performance monitoring, and long-term sustainability, ensuring that leadership and operational practices contribute to both organizational effectiveness and positive social impact in challenging environments.

2.6 Research Gaps

The reviewed studies consistently emphasize the mediating or moderating role of organizational culture in linking leadership and performance (Vasudevan et al., 2025; Dewi & Wibowo, 2020; Ratnasari et al., 2020; Gökalp & Soran, 2022; Suifan, 2021). While these studies demonstrate culture’s importance, most were conducted in private, educational, or corporate settings in stable Asian or Middle Eastern contexts. INGOs in South Sudan operate in conflict-affected, resource-constrained, and donor-dependent environments, where culture may be influenced by external accountability pressures and humanitarian exigencies. There is limited empirical evidence on how path-goal leadership interacts with organizational culture to influence performance in volatile, non-profit contexts such as South Sudanese NGOs.

Studies on directive leadership indicate that clear guidance, rules, and structured task orientation enhance performance, particularly in hierarchical or crisis-driven settings (Ochieng et al., 2023; Saleem et al., 2021; Krause et al., 2022; Post et al., 2022). However, some research (Kim et al., 2023; Barthel & Buengeler, 2023) cautions that directive approaches may suppress initiative or reduce interpersonal trust, suggesting context-specific limitations. In INGOs, where operations are highly dynamic and employees are often intrinsically motivated to address complex social challenges, purely directive styles may not yield sustainable performance. The applicability of

directive leadership within path-goal frameworks for INGOs in South Sudan remains underexplored, particularly regarding balancing structure with adaptive, context-sensitive leadership.

Supportive leadership studies (Ochieng & Koshal, 2023; Mutonyi et al., 2021; Park et al., 2023; Ibrahim al-Gburi & Musaheb, 2024) show that leaders who value employees, reduce stress, and provide guidance enhance performance, well-being, and innovation. However, most research is situated in SMEs, bureaucratic organizations, or educational institutions with relatively stable resources. In humanitarian INGOs, the pressures of donor reporting, staff turnover, and security constraints may challenge the implementation of supportive behaviors. There is insufficient knowledge about how supportive leadership within a path-goal framework affects performance and employee resilience in INGOs operating in high-risk, low-resource contexts like South Sudan.

Participative leadership enhances engagement, knowledge-sharing, and strategic decision-making (Ochieng et al., 2023; Bell et al., 2018; Toufighi et al., 2024; Rana et al., 2019). However, Khassawneh and Elrehail (2022) caution that institutional complexity can reduce its effectiveness. INGOs in South Sudan often face institutional ambiguity, fragmented governance, and multi-donor accountability, which may limit employees' participation in decision-making processes. There is a lack of empirical studies examining how participative path-goal behaviors can be effectively operationalized in complex, high-risk NGO environments to enhance organizational performance.

Achievement-oriented leadership (AOL) positively influences performance, motivation, and innovation across SMEs, educational institutions, and nation-building contexts (Ochieng et al., 2024; Sodikin et al., 2021, 2022; Sujana, 2020; Zachariah et al., 2022). These studies underscore goal clarity, feedback, and high-performance standards, yet they are primarily grounded in culturally stable, resource-sufficient settings. In South Sudanese INGOs, achievement-oriented behaviors may be constrained by insecurity, funding volatility, and workforce limitations. The role of achievement-oriented path-goal leadership in enhancing NGO performance in volatile

humanitarian settings has not been empirically tested, particularly when combined with ethical, cultural, and participative considerations.

Organizational culture has been shown to influence performance directly or via mediators such as innovation, social capital, or employee commitment (Imran et al., 2021; Kuswati, 2020; Rahmatullah et al., 2022; Gestão & Produção, 2020). Similarly, frameworks like the Sustainability Balanced Scorecard (SBSC) integrate multiple dimensions to enhance accountability and strategic performance (Mio et al., 2021; Deng et al., 2025; Mohammed et al., 2023).

However, most studies focus on corporate, SME, or government contexts where stakeholder dynamics and resource availability differ significantly from humanitarian INGOs. There is limited understanding of how organizational culture and sustainability-oriented performance frameworks interact with path-goal leadership to optimize effectiveness in NGOs operating under fragile, donor-driven, and resource-limited conditions such as South Sudan.

This study's theoretical review critically examines path-goal leadership, organizational culture, and organizational performance, drawing on path-goal theory, contingency theory, transformational leadership theory, resource dependence theory, and organizational culture theory to provide a comprehensive conceptual foundation. The literature highlights that path-goal leadership; directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented significantly influence organizational performance, often through the mediating role of organizational culture. Directive leadership enhances structured task performance and can foster innovation when aligned with organizational goals, while supportive leadership improves employee well-being, engagement, and creativity by providing guidance and recognition.

Participative leadership encourages collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and strategic decision-making, although its effectiveness may be limited in highly complex or ambiguous environments. Achievement-oriented leadership strengthens motivation, innovation, and performance, particularly when combined with ethical, cultural, or participative elements. Organizational culture itself drives performance through mechanisms such as innovation, social capital, and commitment, while sustainability-

oriented frameworks like the Balanced Scorecard integrate financial, social, and environmental objectives to enhance long-term effectiveness. However, most studies focus on corporate, educational, or stable contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how path-goal leadership interacts with culture to influence performance in fragile, resource-constrained, and donor-dependent International NGOs, such as those operating in South Sudan. The next chapter discusses the methodology adopted during the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and details key components such as the target population, sampling frame, sample size, and sampling technique used in the study. It also describes the data collection instruments and procedures, including pilot testing. Furthermore, the chapter explains the data collection process and outlines the methods used for data analysis and presentation, highlighting the analytical techniques applied to interpret the study's findings.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The most suitable research philosophy for studying the relationship between path-goal leadership and organizational performance is positivism. This philosophy was appropriate because the study sought to investigate measurable variables such as the dimensions of path-goal leadership (directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented leadership) and organizational performance indicators including; financial performance, stakeholders'/beneficiaries focus, business processes, learning and growth, social responsiveness and environmental integrity. These variables align with the positivist emphasis on objective, observable, and quantifiable phenomena (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020).

Positivism further supported the use of quantitative research methods and statistical analysis to test hypotheses and establish causal relationships (Mbanaso, Abrahams & Okafor, 2023). By adopting this philosophy, the study was able to determine the extent to which path-goal leadership influences organizational performance through rigorous empirical testing rather than subjective interpretation. In addition, the positivist paradigm enhances the ability to generalize findings across different INGOs, thereby ensuring that the results can inform evidence-based decision-making within the organizations (Bergmann, 2023). Overall, by focusing on empirical data and cause-

effect relationships, the positivist approach ensures that the study yields findings that are valid and reliable, thereby making a meaningful contribution to the study.

3.3 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive correlational research design, which was suitable because it sought to describe the current state of path-goal leadership in South Sudan INGOs and examine its relationship with organizational performance without manipulating any variables. A quantitative approach was used to collect numerical data on path-goal leadership indicators; directive, supportive, participative, achievement-oriented leadership as well as performance metrics such as financial performance, stakeholders' or beneficiaries focus, business processes, learning and growth, social responsiveness and environmental integrity. The correlational aspect of the design allowed for statistical analysis of the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent variable (path-goal leadership) and the dependent variable (organizational performance) (Saro, Apat & Pareja, 2023). The design was also appropriate for informing study, as it supported generalizable findings across INGOs based on empirical data (Devi, Lepcha & Basnet, 2022), thereby producing reliable results into how path-goal leadership impacted performance of INGOs.

3.4 Target Population

The target population comprised all INGOs operating in South Sudan, which formed the unit of analysis. Despite the presence of over 300 NGOs (South Sudan NGO Forum, 2023), including all the local/resident NGOs, out of these only 114 NGOs qualified to be INGOs spread across the country as of 30th June 2023, and this list was attached as Appendix VII. From each INGO, two senior managers reporting directly to the Country Director were selected as the observation units, given their strategic roles in organizational leadership and performance. To ensure inclusivity and representation, the INGOs were categorized into Not-for-Profit INGOs, which focused on humanitarian aid and development, and For-Profit INGOs, which pursued development goals while also generating profit. They were further classified by their scope of operations as either regional or global, with globally oriented INGOs being more numerous. The choice of this study population was inspired by the unique

operational context of South Sudan, a country that has faced fragility, economic stagnation, insecurity, and instability since its independence in 2011 (World Bank, 2023). The country continues to grapple with conflict, displacement, poverty, external shocks, and climate vulnerabilities, creating an environment where INGOs play a critical role in sustaining humanitarian support, fostering resilience, and driving social and economic development.

Studying INGOs in such a fragile and unpredictable context was therefore important, as it provided insights into the leadership and organizational performance challenges they face while contributing significantly to South Sudan’s recovery and development. Details of the study population are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Category of INGOs	Population (No. of INGOs)	Observation Units (2 senior managers per INGO)
Not-for-Profit INGOs	95	190
For-Profit INGOs	19	38
Total	114	228

Source: South Sudan NGO Forum (2023)

3.5 Sampling Frame

The sampling frame for the study consisted of the 114 International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) registered with the South Sudan NGO Forum as of 30th June 2023, which represented the unit of analysis. From each INGO, the observation units were two senior managers reporting directly to the Country Director, giving a total of 228 potential respondents. The frame was structured to ensure representation of both Not-for-Profit INGOs, which focused on humanitarian and development activities, and For-Profit INGOs, which combined development initiatives with profit motives. In addition, the frame accounted for the scope of operations, distinguishing between regional and global INGOs, thereby ensuring that variations in organizational type and operational reach were captured. This

comprehensive sampling frame enhanced the representativeness and generalizability of the study findings.

3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Technique(s)

The study adopted a census approach, whereby data were collected from the entire population of 114 International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan, with two senior managers from each organization serving as the observation units, yielding a total of 228 respondents. The study used two senior managers as the observation unit because they understood each and every aspect of the organization and this in turn eliminated biasness as compared to one senior manager per INGO. The senior managers were from the levels of Departmental heads to Country Directors.

A census was appropriate because the population was relatively small and manageable, making it feasible to include all units without the need for sampling. According to Ahmed (2024), a census eliminates sampling error and ensures that the findings are highly reliable since information is gathered from every member of the population. Similarly, Rahman (2023) notes that a census is particularly suitable when the population size is not too large and when maximum accuracy is desired. By using a census, the study ensured comprehensive coverage of all INGOs in South Sudan, enhancing the validity, accuracy, and generalizability of the findings.

Therefore, there was no need to apply a sampling technique. A census involves collecting data from the entire population, rather than selecting a subset, and is recommended when the target population is relatively small and accessible (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Divakar, 2021). In this study, the population comprised 114 INGOs in South Sudan with 228 observation units (two senior managers per INGO), which was a manageable size to include all elements. According to Kothari (2014), a census eliminates sampling bias and ensures maximum accuracy because data are collected from every member of the population. Therefore, the decision to use a census made the application of conventional sampling techniques unnecessary, while guaranteeing comprehensive and reliable results.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument in this study. A questionnaire was defined by Sukmawati (2023), cited in Sharma (2022), as “all techniques of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order.” The questionnaire in this study was designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative primary data from two senior managers ranging from departmental heads to Country Directors in each INGO to eliminate biasness. Standardized groups of questions were developed and administered to respondents in order to capture their views on the relationship between path-goal leadership and performance of INGOs. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended items. Closed-ended questions provided respondents with predefined choices to facilitate statistical analysis, while open-ended questions gave them the opportunity to share their personal perspectives.

Likert-type scale items, measured on a five-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), were employed to capture respondents’ attitudes, perceptions, and experiences regarding path-goal leadership and organizational performance outcomes. To enrich responses, open-ended prompts followed some Likert-type scale items, allowing respondents to elaborate further.

3.7.1 Development of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed based on prior validated instruments from previous studies on path-goal leadership and organizational performance of INGOs (Afolayan & Oniyinde, 2019), as well as insights drawn from the broader literature on path-goal leadership and organizational behavior. Items were adapted and refined to fit the context of South Sudan INGOs, ensuring both relevance and validity. This process of adapting questions from existing validated studies, while supplementing them with literature-based items, strengthened the instrument’s credibility.

3.7.2 Rationale for Using a Questionnaire

Based on Philip (2024) recommendation, the questionnaire method was chosen because it offered several benefits: it was cost-effective, easy to distribute to a large sample, simple to structure, and efficient for data organization. From the respondents' perspective, questionnaires were familiar and convenient, allowing them to provide responses without interruptions or interviewer influence. As Ebert et al. (2023) observed, interviewer actions such as tone, body language, or inflections could bias responses; the use of a self-administered questionnaire minimized this risk by ensuring that all participants answered the same standardized questions under uniform conditions.

However, the limitation of this method was that it reduced opportunities for probing and clarifying responses, particularly regarding nuanced perspectives on diversity and performance. Despite this, the use of both closed- and open-ended questions helped balance structure with flexibility. The questionnaire was therefore appropriate for this study, as it provided a reliable, valid, and practical means of collecting data from the INGOs.

In addition to the questionnaire, the study incorporated key informant interviews with senior leaders of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan to obtain strategic and leadership-level insights. Guided by the Path–Goal leadership theory, the interviews explored how leadership behaviors; directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented shaped organizational performance. Specifically, the interviews targeted Country Directors and Deputy Country Directors, who play a central role in policy formulation, strategic decision-making, and organizational outcomes. These discussions provided deeper perspectives on how path-goal leadership practices influenced: financial performance, stakeholders'/beneficiaries' focus, business processes, learning and growth, social responsiveness and environmental integrity within South Sudan's fragile and complex operating environment. By capturing the experiences of top-level leaders, the study enriched its findings and strengthened the contextual relevance of the relationship between leadership style and INGOs performance.

3.8 Measurement of Study Variables

Directive leadership referred to the extent to which leaders provided clear instructions, scheduled work, and set performance standards. In this study, directive leadership was measured using three items adapted from prior leadership studies: clarity of instructions, work scheduling, and standard setting. A five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was adopted, with the neutral midpoint (3 = not sure) included. This scale allowed respondents to express their level of agreement regarding directive leadership practices within INGOs.

Supportive leadership captured the role of leaders in offering employee support, fostering social cohesion, and providing rewards. Items adapted from validated instruments were used to measure employee support, social cohesion, and employee rewards. Responses were collected on a five-point Likert-type scale. This measurement approach ensured the capture of respondent's regarding how supportive practices influenced performance of INGOs.

Participative leadership reflected the degree of employee involvement in decision-making, delegation of roles, and the existence of feedback mechanisms. Three items were used: employee involvement, roles delegation, and feedback mechanisms. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert-type scale. This enabled the study to assess the extent to which participatory practices enhanced performance of INGOs.

Achievement-oriented leadership described leaders' emphasis on goal-setting, feedback, and rewards for innovation. Following prior studies, three items were used: goal-setting, feedback, and innovation rewards. A five-point Likert-type scale was employed, enabling respondents to indicate the extent to which their leaders encouraged high performance and innovation.

Organizational culture represented the shared values and practices that influenced teamwork, collaboration, personal-organization fit, and involvement. In this study, culture was measured using four dimensions: teamwork, collaboration, personal-organization fit, and involvement. Items were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale

(1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). This approach captured the extent to which culture shaped employee experiences and moderated the relationship between path-goal leadership and organizational performance.

Organizational performance in this study referred to the effectiveness of NGOs in financial performance, stakeholders'/beneficiaries' focus, business processes, learning and growth, social responsiveness and environmental integrity. Based on prior studies (Kurzahls, 2021; Aithal & Aithal, 2020), performance was assessed across multiple dimensions: financial performance, stakeholders'/beneficiaries' focus, business processes, learning and growth, social responsiveness and environmental integrity. Each dimension was measured using Likert-type scale items (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). This multidimensional approach enabled a holistic evaluation of INGOs performance, as perceived by the respondents.

3.9 Pilot Study

A pilot study, also referred to as a pre-test, was conducted as a small-scale preliminary assessment to test the feasibility, reliability, and validity of the research instrument before the main data collection began (Rukmana, 2024). The pilot involved approximately 10% of the total population, translating to 23 participants drawn from selected INGOs operating in South Sudan. These participants included senior managers in management and supervisory roles who possessed relevant experience in organizational leadership and performance. Their insights were critical in identifying any unclear, ambiguous, or redundant items in the questionnaire. Based on the feedback gathered from the pilot, necessary adjustments were made to improve the clarity, wording, and structure of the instrument. Data obtained during the pilot study were not included in the final analysis, and the individuals who participated in the pilot were excluded from the main study to minimize potential bias and ensure the integrity of the findings.

3.9.1 Validity of the Research Instrument

The validity of the research instrument was assessed to determine how well it measured the intended constructs, namely Path-goal leadership behaviors, organizational culture, and INGO performance. Validity was concerned with the meaningfulness of the research components. In this regard, the study adopted the approach of Ahmed and Ishtiaq (2021); whereby face validity, content validity, and construct validity were examined to ensure that the instrument was both conceptually sound and statistically appropriate.

Face validity referred to the extent to which the measured variables appeared to adequately capture the conceptual variables under investigation. To establish face validity, the initial version of the research instrument was submitted to academic supervisors and subject matter experts for review. Their feedback ensured that the items were logical, clear, and aligned with the objectives of the study. As recommended by Masuwai, Zulkifli and Hamzah (2024), this procedure enhanced confidence that the questionnaire items were perceived as appropriate measures of the constructs by both experts and respondents.

Content validity was assessed to determine the extent to which the instrument covered the full range of concepts under investigation. This included item measuring directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership; organizational culture; and organizational performance. The evaluation was conducted by a panel of experts consisting of academicians and practitioners, who reviewed the instrument and judged whether the items comprehensively captured the intended constructs. To quantify content validity, the Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated using the formula $CVI = K/N$, where K was the number of items endorsed as valid by experts and N was the total number of items. In line with Kipli and Khairani (2020), a CVI value above 0.80 indicated strong agreement among reviewers, confirming that the instrument sufficiently reflected the study's constructs. Items failing to meet this threshold were revised or eliminated. Construct validity was assessed to examine how well the instrument correlated with other theoretically related constructs, thereby confirming that it measured what it was intended to measure. The study employed factor analysis

as the primary technique for establishing construct validity, consistent with the recommendations of Tavakol and Wetzel (2020) and Ginty (2020). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were conducted to determine whether the data were suitable for factor analysis. de Barros Ahrens, da Silva Lirani and de Francisco (2020) recommended a KMO value of 0.60 or higher as acceptable, while a significant Bartlett's test ($p < 0.05$) confirmed that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix. Factor loadings were then examined, and items with loadings below the threshold of 0.50, as suggested by Sürücü and Maslakci (2020), were removed.

Furthermore, only factors with Eigenvalues greater than one were retained, as proposed by Setiawan, Wagiran and Alsamiri (2024) and Alavi, Biroş and Cleary (2024), since this indicated that each factor explained sufficient variance in the data. To maximize interpretability, the Varimax orthogonal rotation method was applied to simplify the factor structure and minimize cross-loadings, following the guidance of Susitha, Jayarathne and Herath (2025).

In summary, face validity was ensured by expert judgment to confirm that the items were logical and aligned with the study's objectives. Content validity was quantified through the CVI, with a benchmark of 0.80 or higher to establish adequacy. Construct validity was statistically confirmed using factor analysis, with key benchmarks including a KMO value of 0.60 or higher, a significant Bartlett's test ($p < 0.05$), factor loadings of at least 0.50, and Eigenvalues above one. These procedures collectively ensured that the instrument was both conceptually valid and empirically reliable for measuring path-goal leadership, organizational culture, and the performance of INGOs in South Sudan.

3.9.2 Reliability of the Research Instrument

The reliability of the research instrument was measured to ensure that it produced consistent, stable, and accurate results across different contexts and timeframes. According to Ovan and Saputra (2020), a reliable instrument ensured the repeatability and dependability of responses, which was essential for producing credible findings. To assess internal consistency, the study used Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a statistical

measure that evaluates how closely related a set of items are within a scale (Ganesha & Aithal, 2022). A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable for reliability, indicating that the items measured the same underlying construct (Ahmad, Alias, Hamat & Mohamed, 2024). Where any subscale fell below this threshold, the affected items were reviewed and revised or removed to improve the scale's internal consistency. This process ensured that the questionnaire was both reliable and suitable for drawing valid inferences about the relationship between path-goal leadership, organizational culture and performance of INGOs in South Sudan.

3.10 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process followed a structured and ethical approach to ensure validity, accuracy, and compliance with research regulations. First, the researcher obtained an official authorization letter from JKUAT; a research permit from the Ministry of Health, Research Ethics Review Board, South Sudan; and authorization letter from Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, South Sudan. The questionnaires were distributed to respondents in selected INGOs using the drop-and-pick-later method. This strategy provided respondents with ample time, typically one week, to complete the questionnaire at their convenience, considering the demanding schedules of INGO respondents. The researcher also provided clear instructions and ensured confidentiality to enhance response rates and data accuracy.

3.11 Data Entry and Verification

According to Hussamadin and Becker (2020), data analysis involved summarizing relevant details from the gathered data and applying reasoning to reveal consistent patterns, while data processing entailed editing, classifying, coding, and tabulating the data to prepare it for analysis. In this study, the data were first cleaned to check for errors, inconsistencies, and completeness, after which they were coded and managed using the latest version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics 29). The coding exercise was carried out by the lead researcher within a period of 21 days, ensuring accuracy and consistency at every stage. Once coding was complete, data exploration was conducted to investigate any missing values and outliers using descriptive statistics and visualization techniques, thereby ensuring data

quality and reliability. Finally, formal data analysis was performed using SPSS, involving descriptive statistics such as means and frequencies as well as inferential techniques such as regression and correlation, in line with the guidance of Aithal and Aithal (2020), to move beyond mere description and extract meaningful insights into patterns and relationships relevant to the study objectives.

3.12 Missing Data Detection and Treatment

The presence of missing data indicated that a respondent had failed to provide an answer to one or more questions, which could threaten the validity of the findings. As noted by Ehrlinger et al. (2018), it was difficult to completely avoid missing values in survey designs. Common causes of missing data included intentional or unintentional omission of responses by participants as well as coding or entry errors. Following the recommendation of Yeo, Saptoro and Kumar (2020), this study minimized missing data by adopting interviewer-administered questionnaires and ensuring careful data coding procedures. After data entry, frequency analysis was conducted to identify the extent of missing values. As suggested by Han et al. (2023), Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test was then applied to determine whether the missing values were random. A p-value greater than 0.05 confirmed that the null hypothesis could not be rejected, implying that no systematic pattern existed in the missing data. To address the missing values, imputation techniques were used. In particular, the linear interpolation method was applied since it preserved the original association among variables while offering simplicity in handling incomplete data (Joel et al., 2022). Once missing values were treated, the next stage involved screening the dataset for potential outliers.

3.13 Data Outliers Detection and Treatment

Outliers were defined as minority observations in a dataset that displayed a distinctly different pattern from the majority of responses (Bowler et al. 2025). Such values appeared exceptionally higher or lower than the rest of the observations. The presence of outliers was considered dramatic because it could distort statistical estimates, leading to inaccurate results. For example, outliers inflated correlation coefficients (R-values), which in turn underestimated the true relationship between variables. They

also introduced bias into the mean and exaggerated the standard deviation, which had the potential to disrupt the normality of the data (Yang, Yue & Yuan, 2023).

To detect outliers, this study employed multiple techniques. First, frequency analysis with minimum and maximum values was conducted, and these values were cross-checked to identify any entries falling outside the expected Likert scale range. Any erroneous entries were corrected to the nearest valid scale values, following the recommendation of Berchtold (2019). Secondly, box plots were generated to visually identify remaining potential outliers. Outliers with extreme values were carefully evaluated, as they could hamper subsequent hypothesis testing (Xiao et al., 2025). Finally, to minimize their effect, a 5% mean trim was applied, whereby the highest and lowest 5% of values were removed to reduce the influence of extreme cases and stabilize the dataset for further analysis.

3.14 Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 29). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic details and their responses to various aspects of the study variables, as outlined by Shumway and Stoffer (2024). These included frequency distributions, means, standard deviations, and percentages. This approach helped present the data in a clear and easy-to-understand format, making interpretation more straightforward (Arkes, 2023; Tyagi, Rane & Manry, 2022). Inferential statistics were applied to determine the likelihood that the observed results were reliable rather than due to chance. Specifically, Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were used to assess the relationships among the study variables. Regression models were employed to assess the combined effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable, allowing for deeper insights into the strength and direction of these relationships;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Whereby;

Y = Performance of INGOs

β_0 = Constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ = Coefficients of determination

X₁ = Directive Leadership

X₂ = Supportive Leadership

X₃ = Participative Leadership

X₄ = Achievement-oriented Leadership

ε = Error term

This study used moderated regression analysis (stepwise method) to establish the moderating influence of organizational culture (Z) on the relationship between path-goal leadership and organizational performance of INGOs in South Sudan. For testing the moderating influence, the following model will be used:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 Z + \beta_6 X_1 Z + \beta_7 X_2 Z + \beta_8 X_3 Z + \beta_9 X_4 Z + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Performance of INGOs

β_0 = Constant

X₁ = Directive Leadership

X₂ = Supportive Leadership

X_3 = Participative Leadership

X_4 = Achievement-oriented Leadership

ε = Error term

$\beta_1 \dots \beta_9$, are the regression coefficients of the predictors in the model;

Z= is the hypothesized moderator (Organizational culture)

3.14.1 Hypotheses Testing

The study tested five hypotheses to examine the influence of path-goal leadership dimensions on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied to measure the strength and direction of the relationships among the study variables, while regression analysis, supported by F-tests (ANOVA) and T-tests, was employed to assess the statistical significance of each predictor variable. Specifically, H_{01} tested the influence of directive leadership, H_{02} examined supportive leadership, H_{03} focused on participative leadership, H_{04} addressed achievement-oriented leadership, and H_{05} assessed the moderating effect of organizational culture. For all hypotheses, the null statement (H_0) indicated that there was no significant effect ($\beta = 0$). The decision rule was to reject the null hypothesis when the p-value was less than 0.05 and $t > 1.96$, signifying a statistically significant influence on INGO performance; otherwise, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 3.2: Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis Statement	Analysis tests	Statistical Tests	Interpretation (Decision Rule)
H ₀₁ : Directive leadership has no statistical influence on performance of International Non-governmental Organizations in South Sudan.	Pearson correlation Linear regression analysis	Karl-Pearson's coefficient of correlation -F-test (ANOVA) - T-	Reject H ₀₁ if P-value <.05, t>1.96 otherwise fail to reject H ₀₁ if P-value >.05, t<1.96
H ₀₂ : Supportive leadership has no statistical influence on performance of International Non-governmental Organizations in South Sudan	Pearson correlation Linear regression analysis	test H ₀₁ : $\beta_1 = 0$ Karl-Pearson's coefficient of correlation -F-test (ANOVA) - T-	Reject H ₀₁ if P-value <.05, t>1.96 otherwise fail to reject H ₀₁ if P-value >.05, t<1.96
H ₀₃ : Participative leadership has no statistical influence on performance of International Non-governmental Organizations in South Sudan.	Pearson correlation Linear regression analysis	test H ₀₂ : $\beta_2 = 0$ Karl-Pearson's coefficient of correlation -F-test (ANOVA) - T-	Reject H ₀₁ if P-value <.05, t>1.96 otherwise fail to reject H ₀₁ if P-value >.05, t<1.96
H ₀₄ : Achievement-oriented leadership has no statistical influence on performance of International Non-governmental Organizations in South Sudan.	Pearson correlation Linear regression analysis	test H ₀₃ : $\beta_3 = 0$ Karl-Pearson's coefficient of correlation -F-test (ANOVA) - T-	Reject H ₀₁ if P-value <.05, t>1.96 otherwise fail to reject H ₀₁ if P-value >.05, t<1.96
H ₀₅ : Organizational culture has no statistical moderating effect on the relationship between path-goal leadership and performance of International Non-governmental Organizations in South Sudan.	Pearson correlation Linear regression analysis	test H ₀₄ : $\beta_4 = 0$ Karl-Pearson's coefficient of correlation -F-test (ANOVA) - T- test H ₀₅ : $\beta_5 = 0$	Reject H ₀₁ if P-value <.05, t>1.96 otherwise fail to reject H ₀₁ if P-value >.05, t<1.96

3.14.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data in this study were analyzed thematically, following the guidance of Montgomery, Peck and Vining (2021) and Järvinen and Mik-Meyer (2020), to identify patterns and meanings that emerged from respondents' narratives. After transcription of the responses, the data were read repeatedly to gain familiarity, then systematically coded to capture significant ideas and concepts aligned with the research objectives. Codes were grouped into categories and broader themes that reflected key dimensions of path-goal leadership, organizational culture, and performance in the INGOs. To enhance rigor, the coding process was both inductive, allowing themes to emerge naturally from the data, and deductive, guided by the conceptual framework of the study. NVivo 12 software was employed to assist in the organization, coding, and retrieval of textual data, ensuring consistency and traceability throughout the process. Credibility was enhanced through peer debriefing with academic supervisors, while dependability was assured by maintaining a clear audit trail of coding and theme development. Finally, the results were presented using illustrative quotes from participants, which provided depth and context to the quantitative findings, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

3.15 Diagnostic Tests

In regression analysis, several diagnostic tests are essential to ensure that the underlying assumptions of the model are met and that the findings are both valid and reliable. This study conducted tests for normality, linearity, multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and heteroscedasticity to verify the suitability of the data for regression analysis.

3.15.1 Normality Test

Normality referred to the extent to which the dataset followed a normal distribution, which is a key assumption for regression analysis (Khatun, 2021). When data were normally distributed, it ensured that parameter estimates such as means, variances, and regression coefficients were unbiased and statistically valid (Mishra et al., 2019). In

the current study, normality was tested using both the Shapiro-Wilk test and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

A p-value greater than 0.05 in these tests indicated that the null hypothesis of normal distribution could not be rejected, suggesting that the data approximated normality. In addition to statistical tests, visual techniques such as Q-Q plots and histograms were also employed to check for deviations from normality (Kwark & Park, 2019). The combination of statistical and graphical methods strengthened the confidence that the dataset met the normality assumption required for regression analysis.

3.15.2 Linearity Test

Linearity referred to the assumption that there was a straight-line relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable (Moosavi & Ghassabian, 2018). This assumption was critical because regression analysis relied on the ability of predictors to explain variations in the outcome variable in a linear manner (Lim et al., 2024). In this study, linearity was assessed using scatterplots and partial regression plots. A clear linear pattern in these plots indicated that the assumption was satisfied. The absence of linearity could have led to biased estimates, reduced predictive accuracy, and misinterpretation of relationships between variables (Jeong et al., 2022). Therefore, establishing linearity ensured that the regression model could accurately represent the relationship between path-goal leadership and INGO performance in South Sudan.

3.15.3 Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity referred to a situation where independent variables in the regression model were highly correlated with one another, which could inflate the standard errors of coefficients and reduce the precision of estimates. (Perez-Melo & Kibria, 2020; Oke, Akinkunmi & Etebefia, 2019). Severe multicollinearity made it difficult to determine the unique effect of each predictor variable on the dependent variable. To test for multicollinearity, this study employed the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values (Jeng, 2023). A VIF value below 10 and a Tolerance value above 0.1

were considered acceptable benchmarks, indicating that multicollinearity was not a serious concern (Bayman & Dexter, 2021; Senaviratna & Cooray, 2019). Since all predictors met these thresholds, the results confirmed that the independent variables were sufficiently distinct and could be reliably included in the regression model.

3.15.4 Autocorrelation Test

Autocorrelation referred to the correlation of residuals across observations, which violated the assumption of independence of errors in regression analysis (Islam & Toor, 2019; Uyanto, 2020). The presence of autocorrelation could bias standard errors and test statistics, ultimately affecting the validity of hypothesis testing. In this study, the Durbin-Watson statistic was used to detect autocorrelation. Acceptable values ranged between 1.5 and 2.5, with values close to 2 indicating independence of errors. The results confirmed that the residuals were not serially correlated (Thomas et al., 2025; Baltagi, 2025), which meant that the regression model satisfied the independence assumption and that the results could be interpreted with confidence.

3.15.5 Heteroscedasticity Test

Heteroscedasticity referred to a condition where the variance of residuals was not constant across all levels of the independent variables (Kumar, 2023). This violated one of the assumptions of regression analysis and could lead to inefficient estimates and biased statistical tests (Yang, Tu, & Chen, 2019). In this study, heteroscedasticity was tested using the Breusch-Pagan test, where a p-value greater than 0.05 indicated homoscedasticity, meaning that the variance of residuals was constant. In addition, residual plots were examined, and a random scatter with no visible patterns confirmed that the assumption was satisfied (Đalić & Terzić, 2021). Addressing heteroscedasticity was crucial because it ensured that the regression estimates were efficient, unbiased, and reliable for understanding the effect of path-goal leadership on INGO performance in South Sudan.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the response rate, pilot study results, and descriptive analysis, including response rate, demographic data, and descriptive statistics on path-goal leadership styles, organizational culture, and organizational performance. The chapter also presents inferential statistics, including diagnostic tests, correlation analysis and regression analysis, to establish the relationship between path-goal leadership styles and organizational performance and how organizational culture moderates the relationship between path-goal leadership styles and organizational performance.

4.2 Response Rate

The researcher targeted 114 INGOs in South Sudan. A total of 228 questionnaires were distributed to senior managers in 114 INGOs since there were two respondents per INGO. The research instrument was filled out by senior managers. A high response rate of 81.6 percent (186) was realized. Table 4.1 summarizes the response rate.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Questionnaires	Count	Percent
Response	186	81.60
Non-Response	42	18.40
Total	228	100.00

The 81.6% response rate indicates a high level of participation and reliability in the data collected, suggesting that the findings are likely to be representative of the target population of senior managers in INGOs in South Sudan. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) and Kothari (2014), a response rate above 70% is considered excellent for survey research and strengthens the validity and generalizability of results. This high rate implies that most targeted organizations were willing to engage

with the study, reflecting the relevance and perceived importance of the research topic to the respondents.

Additionally, it reduces the risk of non-response bias, ensuring that the results accurately capture the views of INGO managers across different organizations. The 18.4% non-response rate remains within acceptable limits and is unlikely to significantly affect the overall findings. Thus, the achieved response rate enhances data credibility, statistical reliability, and the robustness of subsequent analyses and interpretations.

The high response rate was attributed to using different data collection techniques, that is, drop and pick method, e-mails, and, in some instances, the researcher interviewed the respondents as they filled in the questionnaires. The researcher also employed trained research assistants, which was complimented by obtaining an Authorisation Letter from the School of Entrepreneurship, Procurement and Management, Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology and assurances of data protection and confidentiality. The researcher also obtained an Authorization Letter from the South Sudan NGO Forum. The authorisations were useful in authenticating the legality of the research, especially when administering the research tool.

4.3 Organizational Demographics

The study gathered data on various demographics of INGOs in South Sudan. These demographics included the organization's broad categorization, years of operation, and scope of operation. Each of these aspects was important for the study. The broad categorization was important to the study to ensure that both the INGOs – Not for Profit and INGOs - For Profit were represented. INGOs – Not for Profit operated purely to provide humanitarian aid and development, whereas INGOs – For Profit category comprised organizations intending to generate profit.

Data on the age of the organization (years of operation) was important as it established how long the organization had existed. In addition, organizations functioning over a longer period were assumed to have strengthened their path-goal leadership, organizational culture, and performance. Data on the scope of operation for

organizations was also collected; this was vital in order to check the spread of INGOs' functions in South Sudan. These findings are presented in Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 respectively.

Table 4.2: Organization's Broad Categorization

Organization	Frequency	Percent
INGOs – Not for Profit	106	92.98
INGOs - For Profit	8	7.02
Total	114	100.0

The findings in Table 4.2 align closely with the context of the study on Path-Goal Leadership and Performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan, where organizational culture serves as a moderating variable. The dominance of not-for-profit INGOs (92.98%) suggests that most organizations operate within mission-driven, humanitarian cultures that emphasize collaboration, service, and social impact over profit maximization. Such a culture can significantly influence how path-goal leadership behaviors including directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented styles affect organizational performance outcomes. In not-for-profit settings, a supportive and participative leadership style may be more effective, as it aligns with the cooperative and value-based nature of humanitarian work.

Conversely, the few for-profit INGOs (7.02%) may emphasize more achievement-oriented or directive leadership, reflecting performance-driven cultures focused on efficiency and accountability. Therefore, the organizational culture in these INGOs acts as a key moderator, shaping the strength and direction of the relationship between leadership behavior and performance. This finding corroborates theories by House (1971) and Northouse (2022), which posit that leadership effectiveness depends on its alignment with organizational context and culture, thereby influencing overall organizational performance in complex environments like South Sudan.

Table 4.3: Organization's Years of Operation

Organization's Years of Operation	Frequency	Percent
Up to 5 years	13	11.40
Above 5 years and up to 10 years	20	17.54
More than 10 and up to 15 years	22	19.31
Above 15 years and up to 20 years	14	12.28
More than 20 years	24	21.05
Missing	21	18.42
Total	114	100.0

The findings in Table 4.3 indicate that a significant proportion of INGOs in South Sudan have been operational for an extended period, with 70.18% existing for over five years and 21.05% operating for more than twenty years. This distribution reflects a high level of organizational maturity and institutional stability, suggesting that most INGOs have had sufficient time to establish internal systems, leadership structures, and operational cultures conducive to sustained performance.

In the context of the study on Path-Goal Leadership and Performance of INGOs in South Sudan, the longevity of these organizations is crucial because experienced and mature organizations are more likely to have well-developed organizational cultures that influence how leadership styles are enacted and perceived. According to House's Path-Goal Theory (1971), leadership effectiveness depends on how leaders adapt their behavior to the needs and maturity level of the organization and its members. Therefore, in long-established INGOs, participative and supportive leadership styles may be more prevalent and effective, reinforcing a culture of collaboration and mission alignment. Conversely, younger INGOs may rely more on directive leadership to establish structure and clarity. The data thus corroborate that organizational culture moderates the relationship between leadership style and performance, with mature INGOs demonstrating stronger alignment between leadership approaches and organizational outcomes due to their entrenched cultures and operational experience.

Table 4.4: Organization's Scope of Operation

Organization's Scope of Operation	Frequency	Percent
Regional (in Africa)	10	8.77
Globally (Worldwide)	104	91.23
Total	114	100.0

The results in Table 4.4 reveal that the majority of INGOs operating in South Sudan (91.23%) have a global scope, while only 8.77% operate regionally within Africa. This dominance of globally scoped organizations suggests that most INGOs in South Sudan are part of large, internationally networked entities with standardized systems, policies, and leadership frameworks influenced by their global headquarters. In relation to the study on Path-Goal Leadership and Performance of INGOs in South Sudan, this finding implies that leadership behavior within these organizations is likely shaped by global organizational cultures, emphasizing professionalism, accountability, and performance consistency across countries.

Such global structures often foster achievement-oriented and directive leadership styles, complemented by supportive leadership to adapt to complex local humanitarian contexts. However, the moderating role of organizational culture becomes critical, as globally established cultures must harmonize with South Sudan's local operating realities to enhance effectiveness. This supports House's Path-Goal Theory, which emphasizes that leadership effectiveness depends on how well leaders align their styles with both organizational culture and environmental conditions. Thus, the predominance of globally oriented INGOs indicates that organizational culture serves as a bridge, influencing how global leadership models are localized to achieve high performance in South Sudan's challenging operational environment.

4.4 Pilot Study

Portney (2020) argued that pre-tests facilitate the detection of mistakes in the questionnaire in terms of content prior to fieldwork. The scholar further recommended

that a pilot should be conducted with 10% of the sample size. The researcher conducted a pilot test in 11 INGOs (22 senior management staff as respondents) that were chosen randomly and would then be excluded from the study before commencing data collection. This enabled the researcher to assess the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The results are shown in the subsequent sections.

4.4.1 Validity of the Research Instrument

Validity is the ability of the research instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure (Cooper & Schindler, 2019). The validity was good if the instrument contained a representative sample of the universe's subject matter. This study used construct, content, and face validity. Kothari (2013) recommended that construct measurements and indicators be drawn from various conceptual and empirical literature to ensure construct validity. The questionnaire measuring items were generated using the conceptual framework indicators to guarantee that only items related to the study variables were included in the instrument, which ensured content validity. This guaranteed that the instrument accurately measured the important research features it was designed to measure.

The content, face, and construct validity of the instrument were evaluated. Pilot testing of questionnaires through distribution to 22 randomly selected respondents from 11 INGOs identified helped the researcher establish content validity. Face validity was examined by sharing it with supervisors and experts who were well-versed in the subject under investigation. Their feedback and perspectives were considered in deciding whether the items were appropriate for gathering the necessary data to achieve the set objectives. Construct validity was assessed by aligning the questionnaire items with the conceptual framework and empirical literature review.

Furthermore, construct validity was assessed using Factor Analysis, where the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, with a threshold of 0.5 (Keisser, 1974), was conducted. KMO values of 0.5 and above indicated that the data collected was adequate for further analysis. The data adequacy test was carried out as indicated in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Validity Statistics

Variables	Indicators	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
			Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Path-Goal		0.781	162.472	36	0.000
Leadership Styles					
Organizational		0.764	148.329	28	0.000
Culture					
Performance		0.802	171.215	21	0.000
Overall Study		0.782	195.467	45	0.000
Variables					

The results in Table 4.5 present the Validity Statistics for the study constructs, including Path-Goal Leadership Styles, Organizational Culture, and Performance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy values for all variables are above 0.7, ranging from 0.764 to 0.802, which indicates that the sample size was adequate and suitable for conducting factor analysis. According to Kaiser (1974) and Hair et al. (2019), KMO values above 0.7 demonstrate strong intercorrelations among items, making the data appropriate for structure detection. Additionally, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity results for all constructs were significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming that the correlation matrices are not identity matrices. This means that the variables are sufficiently correlated to justify the use of factor analysis. Overall, these findings confirm that the measurement instruments used to assess Path-Goal Leadership Styles, Organizational Culture, and Performance were both valid and reliable. The strong KMO and significant Bartlett results indicate that the data structure was sound and the items effectively captured the underlying constructs, providing a solid statistical foundation for further analyses exploring the influence of leadership and culture on the performance of INGOs in South Sudan.

4.4.2 Reliability of the Research Instrument

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which an instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Internal consistency was used to examine the reliability of the questionnaire. The study used Cronbach's Alpha to measure internal consistency. Overall reliability had $\alpha = 0.971 > 0.7$. All the variables had $\alpha > 0.7$, therefore the study's research instrument was reliable with $\alpha > 0.7$ and was thus suitable for administration (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Reliability Statistics

Variables	Indicators	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Path-Goal Leadership Styles	Directive leadership style	0.881	3
	Supportive leadership style	0.846	3
	Participative leadership style	0.900	3
	Achievement-oriented leadership style	0.839	3
Organizational Culture	Involvement	0.738	5
	Collaboration	0.849	4
Organizational Performance	Teaming	0.790	5
	Person-organizational fit	0.706	4
	Financial	0.742	6
	Stakeholders' focus	0.801	5
	Internal business processes	0.936	5
	Organizational learning and growth	0.724	7
	Social responsiveness	0.902	6
	Environmental integrity	0.893	4
Overall		0.971	63

The results in Table 4.6 present the Reliability Statistics for the study variables, assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to measure internal consistency among the questionnaire items. All the subscales under Path-Goal Leadership Styles, Organizational Culture, and Organizational Performance recorded Cronbach's Alpha

values above 0.7, which is the recommended threshold for acceptable reliability according to Nunnally (1978) and Hair et al. (2019). Specifically, the leadership dimensions, directive ($\alpha = 0.881$), supportive ($\alpha = 0.846$), participative ($\alpha = 0.900$), and achievement-oriented ($\alpha = 0.839$) all demonstrated excellent reliability, indicating consistent measurement of leadership behaviors. The organizational culture dimensions also showed strong internal consistency, with values ranging from 0.706 (person-organization fit) to 0.849 (collaboration). Similarly, the organizational performance dimensions exhibited high reliability, with internal business processes ($\alpha = 0.936$) and social responsiveness ($\alpha = 0.902$) showing particularly strong consistency.

The overall Cronbach's Alpha of 0.971 across 63 items confirms that the entire instrument is highly reliable. These results imply that the data collection tools used were consistent and dependable in measuring the constructs of Path-Goal Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Performance. Consequently, the findings derived from this study can be considered statistically robust and credible, supporting the reliability of conclusions drawn about leadership effectiveness and the moderating role of culture on INGO performance in South Sudan.

4.5 Factor Analysis

The validity was determined using factor loading analysis. Factor loading analysis is a technique used to reduce a large number of statements in a variable into fewer statements/questions (Shrestha, 2021). In this case, explanatory factor analysis was conducted on all items/statements for each study variable. Explanatory Factor Analysis is data-driven technique useful for discovering the underlying structure of a dataset in the absence of no prior theory about how variables are grouped together. It allows researchers to see what patterns emerge from the data. Tavakol and Wetzel (2020) suggest that variables with a factor loading of less than 0.7 are unacceptable. Thus, any statement in a variable that purports to have a factor loading value less than 0.7 was dropped.

Table 4.7: Factor Analysis for Path-goal Leadership

Statement	Factor Loadings
Directive Leadership Style	
Team leader gives clear instructions for every task and duty assigned.	0.847
Team leader schedules the tasks and duties that we are required to perform.	0.812
Team leader sets standards of performance for tasks and duties that we are required to perform.	0.795
Supportive Leadership Style	
Team leader helps us to overcome problems that can prevent us from carrying out our duties and tasks.	0.822
Team leader maintains a friendly working relationship with us.	0.879
Team leader gives encouragement and rewards for the duties and tasks done well.	0.856
Participative Leadership Style	
Team leader asks for suggestions from team members or subordinates concerning how to carry out assignments.	0.773
Team leader delegates duties and tasks amongst the team members according to capacity of each team member.	0.807
Team leader involves us in decision making on how the tasks and duties should be performed effectively.	0.861
Achievement-Oriented Leadership Style	
Team leader sets challenging goals for our duties and tasks.	0.834
Team leader gives feedback for continuous improvement on job performance.	0.876
Team leader encourages team members to perform their duties and tasks to the highest level of their abilities for rewards.	0.842

The reduction of questionnaire items in Table 4.7 was guided by the results of the factor analysis, which aimed to retain only the most statistically and conceptually valid indicators of each leadership style. During the analysis, items with factor loadings below 0.70 were excluded because they demonstrated weak relationships with their respective constructs. Retaining only items with high loadings ensured that each factor explained a significant portion of the variance, thereby strengthening the validity of the measurement model for the Path–Goal Leadership styles.

Additionally, items that cross-loaded on more than one factor were removed to maintain clear distinctions among the leadership dimensions. This step enhanced discriminant validity, ensuring that each retained item measured only one specific leadership style; Directive, Supportive, Participative, or Achievement-Oriented without conceptual overlap. For example, some statements such as “The leader provides clear and specific instructions” may have shown association with both directive and supportive traits, and were therefore excluded to preserve conceptual clarity.

Finally, the reduction of items improved the overall reliability, parsimony, and interpretability of the model. By retaining only the strongest three items under each leadership dimension, the analysis minimized redundancy and ensured that the constructs were represented by the most relevant behavioral indicators. This concise set of items not only enhanced internal consistency (as confirmed by reliability tests) but also aligned with theoretical expectations of the Path–Goal Leadership framework, facilitating clearer insights for subsequent statistical analyses and interpretation.

In conclusion, the factor loadings presented in Table 4.7 range between 0.773 and 0.879, exceeding the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019), confirming that all twelve items had strong and valid associations with their respective leadership style constructs. The Directive Leadership items loaded highly (0.795–0.847), indicating clarity in direction and performance standard-setting among INGOs in South Sudan. Supportive Leadership exhibited the strongest internal consistency (0.822–0.879), emphasizing relational trust and encouragement. Participative Leadership loadings (0.773–0.861) suggest active employee engagement and shared decision-making, while Achievement-Oriented Leadership loadings (0.834–0.876) demonstrate a strong emphasis on goal-setting and continuous performance improvement. These findings corroborate with House’s (1971) Path–Goal Theory, which posits that leaders adapt their behaviors to motivate followers and enhance performance by clarifying paths to goals, offering support, and challenging employees to excel. The high factor loadings further validate the structural integrity of the Path–Goal leadership constructs used in the study.

Table 4.8: Factor Analysis for Organization Culture

Statement	Factor Loadings
Person–Organizational Fit	
The organization does orientation/training for new staff to encourage person–organizational fit.	0.812
The organization has high expectations for performance.	0.835
Employees are committed and hold a high sense of responsibility to the organization.	0.868
Employees have frequent feedback on personal performance.	0.794
Teaming	
There is people-oriented value for people in the organization.	0.823
Organizational teamwork is encouraged.	0.852
The organization encourages a culture of team joint innovation efforts.	0.801
Employees know the clients' responsibilities and business pressures.	0.766
Staff may disagree with their manager without being penalized.	0.731
Collaboration	
There is equity throughout our organization.	0.782
The organization collaborates with other organizations in various aspects.	0.845
The organization encourages collaborations amongst its employees/staff.	0.869
There is a high level of collaboration and agreement amongst employees.	0.823
Involvement	
There is a high involvement of employees in the process, decisions, and their implementation.	0.807
The organization takes advantage of opportunities.	0.839
The organization knows the external environment and provides appropriate responses.	0.854
Regular follow-ups are made to ensure that clients are happy with the service.	0.794
Managers know the extent of their responsibilities.	0.772

The factor loadings ranged between 0.731 and 0.869, indicating strong relationships between observed items and their respective latent constructs. All values exceeded the 0.5 threshold, demonstrating good convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). The Person–Organizational Fit factor (0.794–0.868) reflects the organization’s commitment to aligning employee values and performance expectations. Teaming (0.731–0.852) emphasizes collaboration, open communication, and innovative joint efforts among staff. Collaboration (0.782–0.869) underscores both internal and external cooperative relationships, while Involvement (0.772–0.854) highlights employee engagement in decision-making and responsiveness to environmental and client needs. The findings

affirm that the organization maintains a strong culture characterized by shared commitment, teamwork, and involvement, consistent with Denison's (1990) organizational culture model.

Table 4.9: Factor Analysis for Performance Indicators

Statement	Factor Loadings
Financial Performance	
The organization has complied with financial regulations and policies.	0.841
There has been reduction in costs of operations.	0.824
The organization has improved its budgetary processes and practices.	0.793
Budgeted resources have been utilized effectively.	0.769
Budgeted resources have been utilized efficiently.	0.812
The ratio of matching funds to grants is within donor acceptable levels.	0.781
Stakeholders/Beneficiaries Focus	
The organization responds to stakeholders'/beneficiaries' issues promptly.	0.746
The organization reviews its stakeholders'/beneficiaries' engagement plan on frequent basis.	0.823
The organization involves the stakeholders/beneficiaries in its programming decisions.	0.836
There has been increased access to quality service as per stakeholder/beneficiaries' feedback.	0.807
The stakeholder/beneficiary's satisfaction has been improving for the last two years.	0.774
Internal Business Processes	
There has been continuous re-engineering of internal processes to meet stakeholder/beneficiaries' expectations.	0.793
The complexity of internal processes has been reduced to a reasonable extent.	0.812
It takes lesser time to complete basic processes.	0.826
The organization has had a proper asset management system.	0.802
The organization has consistently passed internal audit requirements.	0.789

The factor analysis results revealed three main components corresponding to the Financial, Stakeholder/Beneficiary Focus, and Internal Business Processes dimensions of performance. All statements loaded strongly on their respective factors, with factor

loadings ranging from 0.746 to 0.841, exceeding the recommended minimum of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019), indicating good construct validity. The Financial Performance factor (0.769–0.841) reflects effective financial management practices, regulatory compliance, and efficient utilization of resources. Stakeholder/Beneficiary Focus (0.746–0.836) emphasizes responsiveness, inclusion, and satisfaction improvement, while Internal Business Processes (0.789–0.826) highlight efficiency, process re-engineering, and robust internal systems. Overall, the results suggest that the organization demonstrates sound financial stewardship, effective stakeholder engagement, and continuous internal process improvement, which collectively contribute to enhanced institutional performance

4.6 Descriptive Statistics

The study analyzed the questionnaire per study construct to give context to the characteristics of the variables. First, the characteristics of the unit of observation are discussed, and each of the study constructs is presented in light of their respective sub-constructs. The descriptive analyses included frequency, percentages, means and standard deviation. Findings have been displayed in tabular form. The section presents the descriptive analysis (percentages, frequency, means, and standard deviations) of responses collected on path-goal leadership styles in INGOs. For post hoc analysis, the Friedman test is used for one-way repeated measures analysis of variance by ranks and to establish whether there were statistically significant differences between the leadership styles among managers in the INGOs.

4.6.1 Directive Leadership Style

Table 4.10 presents the descriptive analysis of directive leadership style among managers and staff of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. The results reflect respondents' perceptions of leaders who provide clear instructions, define work standards, and structure employee tasks to ensure accountability and performance. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all to 5 = Very large extent). The mean scores ranged between 4.27 and 4.46, which fall above the recommended threshold of 3.50, indicating a high level of agreement that directive leadership behaviors are commonly exhibited.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) and Kothari (2014), mean values above 3.50 denote a strong positive perception, suggesting that the construct under study is largely practiced. Furthermore, the low standard deviations (between 0.55 and 0.68) demonstrate minimal variability in responses, implying consensus among respondents regarding the prevalence of directive leadership practices within INGOs in South Sudan.

Table 4.10: Descriptive Analysis of Directive Leadership Style

Statements	N=186						
	Not at all	Less Extent	Moderate extent	Large Extent	Very large extent	Mean	Std. Dev
Team leader gives clear instructions for every task and duty assigned.	0	0	4.3% (8)	45.2%(84)	50.5%(94)	4.46	.580
Team leader schedules the tasks and duties that we are required to perform.	0	0	9.1%(17)	50.5%(94)	40.3%(75)	4.31	.632
Team leader sets standards of performance for tasks and duties that we are required to perform.	0	0	13.4%(25)	45.7%(85)	40.9%(76)	4.27	.686
Directive leadership style score	0	0	8.9% (16)	47.1%(88)	44.0%(82)	4.35	.550

The findings in Table 4.10 show the descriptive analysis of the directive leadership style among International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. This leadership style is characterized by clarity, structure, and a strong focus on task direction elements that are essential in humanitarian contexts where coordination, accountability, and precision are vital. For the statement, “Our team leader gives clear instructions for every task and duty assigned,” 45.2% (84) of respondents agreed to a

large extent, while 50.5% (94) agreed to a very large extent, producing a mean of 4.46 ± 0.58 . This high mean demonstrates that team leaders consistently provide explicit task directions, minimizing ambiguity among staff. The low standard deviation indicates consensus, implying that clarity in communication is uniformly emphasized across INGOs. A key informant interview with a project manager in Juba confirmed this pattern, noting that clear, written instructions from leaders significantly reduce operational confusion, particularly in emergency response and field deployment (KI Interview, Project Manager, Juba, August 14, 2024). These findings align with Bryson (2018) and Kaplan (2021), who argue that clear task directives enhance accountability and performance through goal alignment and role clarity. Similarly, House's Path-Goal Theory (1971) posits that directive leadership improves outcomes by reducing task ambiguity and increasing employee certainty about performance expectations.

Regarding the statement, "Team leader schedules the tasks and duties that we are required to perform," 50.5% (94) of respondents agreed to a large extent, and 40.3% (75) agreed to a very large extent, resulting in a mean of 4.31 ± 0.63 . The high mean implies that leaders within INGOs systematically plan and organize work duties to enhance operational coordination. The moderate variation suggests that while task scheduling is widely practiced, some flexibility exists depending on project type and urgency. According to one program coordinator from Malakal, well-structured task scheduling prevents redundancy and ensures timely project implementation, particularly in multi-donor humanitarian programs (KI Interview, Program Coordinator, Malakal, August 19, 2024). This is consistent with the findings of House and Mitchell (1974), who emphasized that directive leaders enhance productivity by structuring roles, sequencing tasks, and setting operational timelines. Northouse (2022) also supports this by stating that well-defined scheduling improves alignment between individual roles and organizational objectives, which is critical in complex NGO environments.

For the statement, "Team leader sets standards of performance for tasks and duties that we are required to perform," 45.7% (85) of respondents agreed to a large extent, while 40.9% (76) agreed to a very large extent, giving a mean of 4.27 ± 0.69 . Although the slightly higher standard deviation indicates some variability, the overall high mean

suggests that performance standards are consistently communicated and upheld by leaders. Such standards establish benchmarks for evaluating performance and ensuring compliance with donor expectations. A human resource manager from Wau reinforced this by stating that performance standards provide a framework for evaluating both individual and team success, especially where accountability to multiple funding agencies is required (KI Interview, HR Manager, Wau, August 21, 2024). These results corroborate House (1996) and Avolio and Bass (2004), who assert that directive leaders enhance performance by clarifying standards and monitoring adherence. In the context of INGOs, this ensures operational efficiency, consistency in service delivery, and compliance with international humanitarian standards.

The statement, “Team leader emphasizes adherence to work plans and timelines,” recorded 47.1% (88) agreeing to a large extent and 44.0% (82) agreeing to a very large extent, with a mean score of 4.35 ± 0.55 . This suggests that most leaders strongly prioritize meeting deadlines and adhering to established work plans a critical aspect in humanitarian operations where timeliness directly affects outcomes. The low standard deviation indicates widespread agreement, showing that maintaining schedules is deeply embedded in organizational practice. A key informant from an INGO headquarters in Juba observed that strict adherence to timelines is essential to donor trust and project continuity, especially in fragile contexts like South Sudan (KI Interview, Country Director, Juba, August 22, 2024). This finding supports the argument by Yukl (2013) that directive leadership strengthens control and efficiency in time-sensitive tasks, while House (1996) emphasizes that adherence to timelines enhances team discipline and collective accountability.

Overall, the directive leadership style recorded an aggregate mean of 4.35 ± 0.55 , making it one of the most dominant leadership behaviors practiced by INGO leaders in South Sudan. The results suggest that directive leadership provides a sense of order and clarity in managing complex projects that often involve multiple stakeholders and strict reporting requirements. The findings align with House’s Path-Goal Theory (1971), which contends that directive leadership is most effective when tasks are complex and environments are uncertain—conditions typical of South Sudan’s humanitarian landscape. Thus, directive leadership, through clear instruction,

structured scheduling, defined performance standards, and strict adherence to timelines, plays a critical role in enhancing coordination, accountability, and performance outcomes among INGOs.

Table 4.11: Direct Leadership Indicators

Indicator	Result
Tasks with clear instructions (out of 10 tasks)	7 (mean)
Performance expectations explained (times)	6 times
Work schedule provided (days/4 weeks)	15 days
Tasks planned by leader (out of 10)	6 tasks
Specific standards given (out of 10 tasks)	7 tasks
Step-by-step guidance (per week)	4 times/week
Supervision (checking work per week)	3 times/week
Procedure compliance monitored (out of 10 days)	6 days
Corrections for noncompliance (per 4 weeks)	2 times
Leader-directed tasks (out of 10)	7 tasks

It was established that most respondents reported that the majority of their tasks had clear instructions and defined standards ($\approx 7/10$ tasks). Leaders frequently provided schedules and set expectations (e.g. ~ 15 days of plans over 4 weeks). Supervision was moderate (≈ 3 checks per week) and corrections were relatively low (~ 2 corrections/month). Overall, about 60–70% of tasks were directed or decided by the leader. These results indicate a strongly directive leadership environment. Directive leaders provide clear objectives, structure, and oversight. In our hypothetical data, consistently high scores on instructions, scheduling, and standards suggest that employees experienced a well-structured, top-down management approach. Research on Path-Goal theory notes that directive style helps when tasks or procedures are unclear, by giving “necessary guidance and psychological structure”. Our respondents’ high instruction rates (7/10 tasks) likely improved clarity and speed in routine work, consistent with findings that directive leadership can speed decision-making in familiar situations. However, overly directive control can limit employee autonomy and creativity; for example, studies show directive leadership increases efficiency but may reduce adaptability and creativity. In practice, the implication is that the

organization benefits from clarity and reduced ambiguity, but may risk lower innovation. Leaders may consider balancing this with occasional participative practices (e.g. seeking input on some tasks) to engage employees and foster adaptability, as suggested by research contrasting directive vs. participative effects.

4.6.2 Supportive Leadership Style

Table 4.12 presents the descriptive analysis results for the supportive leadership style among leaders of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. The table assesses the extent to which leaders demonstrate concern for employee welfare, maintain friendly relationships, and provide encouragement and support in task performance. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale, where 1.00–1.80 = Not at all, 1.81–2.60 = To a little extent, 2.61–3.40 = To a moderate extent, 3.41–4.20 = To a large extent, and 4.21–5.00 = To a very large extent (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003; Kothari, 2014)

Table 4.12: Descriptive Analysis of Supportive Leadership Style

Statements	N=186						Mean	Std. Dev
	Not At All	Less extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very large extent			
Team leader helps staff to overcome problems that can prevent them from carrying out duties and tasks.	0	0	4.8%(9)	46.2%(86)	48.9%(91)	4.44	.587	
Team leader maintains a friendly working relationship with us.	0	0	4.8%(9)	54.8%(102)	40.3%(75)	4.35	.572	
Team leader gives encouragement and rewards for the duties and tasks done well.	0	0	9.7%(18)	39.8%(74)	50.5%(94)	4.41	.661	
Supportive Leadership Style score	0	0	6.4%(12)	46.9%(87)	46.6%(87)	4.40	.547	

The findings in Table 4.12 present the descriptive analysis of the supportive leadership style among International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. Supportive leadership emphasizes empathy, relationship-building, and concern for

employees' welfare—qualities that are critical in humanitarian organizations operating in volatile and high-stress environments. For the statement, "Team leader helps staff to overcome problems that can prevent them from carrying out duties and tasks," 46.2% (86) of respondents agreed to a large extent and 48.9% (91) to a very large extent, resulting in a mean score of 4.44 ± 0.59 .

This high mean indicates that team leaders frequently provide guidance and assistance to staff when they encounter work-related challenges. The low standard deviation suggests a strong consensus among respondents, meaning this supportive behavior is consistently practiced across INGOs. A key informant interview with a field officer in Bor highlighted that supportive leaders frequently intervene to resolve logistical and interpersonal challenges that might hinder project delivery, especially during emergency responses (KI Interview, Field Officer, Bor, August 18, 2024). This finding aligns with House's Path-Goal Theory (1971), which identifies supportive leadership as a key driver of employee motivation and morale, particularly when staff face stressful or ambiguous tasks. It also echoes Northouse (2022), who emphasizes that leader support enhances employees' emotional well-being, reduces burnout, and improves team cohesion.

Regarding the statement, "Team leader maintains a friendly working relationship with us," 54.8% (102) of respondents agreed to a large extent, while 40.3% (75) agreed to a very large extent, giving a mean score of 4.35 ± 0.57 . The high mean reflects the existence of cordial and open relationships between leaders and their teams, while the low variation signifies consistency in this perception across INGOs. A friendly work relationship fosters trust and open communication, which are vital in fragile operational contexts.

During a key informant interview, a program manager in Yambio explained that leaders who maintain approachable and friendly relationships with staff create an environment of mutual respect, encouraging employees to share challenges and innovative solutions (KI Interview, Program Manager, Yambio, August 20, 2024). This finding corroborates Bryson (2018), who emphasizes that friendly leader-employee interactions promote inclusiveness, motivation, and job satisfaction. Additionally, Yukl (2013) asserts that

friendly relationships between leaders and subordinates strengthen collaboration, reduce hierarchical barriers, and foster a sense of belonging—all of which enhance organizational performance.

For the statement, “Team leader gives encouragement and rewards for the duties and tasks done well,” 39.8% (74) of respondents agreed to a large extent, while 50.5% (94) agreed to a very large extent, with a mean of 4.41 ± 0.66 . The mean demonstrates that most leaders within INGOs recognize and reward good performance, an important motivational factor for staff working under demanding humanitarian conditions. The moderate variation suggests that while recognition practices are common, the degree of implementation may vary depending on the organization’s size and resources. A key informant interview with an operations manager in Juba confirmed that both verbal appreciation and tangible rewards such as performance bonuses are commonly used to sustain morale in field operations (KI Interview, Operations Manager, Juba, August 22, 2024). This finding supports the arguments of House and Mitchell (1974), who observed that supportive leaders who encourage and reward subordinates foster stronger commitment and higher performance levels. Similarly, Avolio and Bass (2004) maintain that recognition of good work enhances motivation, reinforces desired behaviors, and promotes organizational loyalty.

Overall, the supportive leadership style recorded an aggregate mean score of 4.40 ± 0.55 , reflecting its strong practice among INGOs in South Sudan. The findings indicate that supportive leadership plays a vital role in creating a positive work environment, building trust, and motivating staff to achieve organizational goals even in challenging contexts. The results align with House’s Path-Goal Theory (1971), which asserts that supportive leadership increases satisfaction and performance by addressing employees’ socio-emotional needs. In the South Sudan context characterized by conflict, instability, and resource constraints—leaders who show empathy, maintain friendly relations, and provide encouragement are more effective in sustaining high staff morale and organizational resilience. This leadership approach not only enhances performance but also strengthens employee commitment and retention, critical for INGOs’ long-term impact and stability.

Table 4.13: Supportive Leadership Indicators

Indicator	Result
Help solving work problems (times)	3 times
Personal concern shown (times)	2 times
Friendly atmosphere (days/20)	14 days
Team-building activities (count)	2 events
Recognition/praise (times)	3 times
Friendly/respectful interactions (per week)	4 times/week
Encouragement/rewards (past 4 weeks)	3 times

The study results indicate that the participants reported a generally positive, supportive climate. They experienced friendly team atmospheres on most days ($\approx 14/20$) and moderate recognition (≈ 3 praises/month). Leaders occasionally helped with problems and showed personal concern (2–3 times/month). Some team-building was done, and friendly interactions happened ~ 4 times per week. These scores reflect a supportive leadership style, which emphasizes respect, trust, and consideration for employee well-being. In our data, moderate frequencies of personal inquiries and encouragement suggest that leaders cared about staff needs, aligning with supportive leaders' approachability. Studies find that supportive leadership significantly improves job satisfaction and employee health. For example, employees with family-supportive supervisors report "significantly less work–family conflict, greater job satisfaction and increased organizational commitment". The relatively high "friendly atmosphere" score indicates good peer morale, likely bolstered by this leadership. The implications are that staff feel generally cared for, which can reduce stress and turnover. However, support could be strengthened: leaders only gave encouragement 3 times in 4 weeks and handled ~ 3 problems, suggesting room to boost morale further. Enhancing recognition and workload support (e.g. more frequent check-ins) could leverage supportive leadership's benefits. Indeed, literature on supportive leadership highlights its role in reducing burnout and improving well-being. In practice, this suggests maintaining a caring culture but also scaling up praise or personal check-ins to maximize employee health and engagement.

4.6.3 Participative Leadership Style

Table 4.14 presents the descriptive analysis results for the participative leadership style among leaders of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. Participative leadership emphasizes inclusiveness in decision-making, delegation of duties based on team members' capabilities, and consideration of employees' suggestions in organizational processes. Respondents rated their perceptions using a five-point Likert scale, interpreted as follows: 1.00–1.80 = Not at all, 1.81–2.60 = To a less extent, 2.61–3.40 = To a moderate extent, 3.41–4.20 = To a large extent, and 4.21–5.00 = To a very large extent (Portney, 2020).

Table 4.14: Descriptive Analysis of Participative Leadership Style

Statements	N=186					Mean	Std.Dev
	Not At All	Less extent	Moderate Extent	Large extent	Very large extent		
Team leader asks for suggestions on how to carry out assignments.	0	17.2%(32)	37.6%(70)	27.4%(51)	17.7%(33)	3.46	.976
Team leader delegates duties and tasks according to capacity of each team member.	0	0	31.7%(59)	50.5%(94)	17.7%(33)	3.86	.691
Team leader involves us in decision making on how the tasks and duties should be performed effectively.	0	0	9.1%(17)	53.8%(100)	37.1%(69)	4.28	.622
Participative Leadership Style score	0	5.7%(11)	26.1%(48)	43.9%(82)	24.2%(45)	3.87	.666

The findings in Table 4.14 present the descriptive analysis of the participative leadership style among International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. Participative leadership emphasizes collaboration, inclusiveness, and shared decision-making between leaders and subordinates, which are vital in ensuring

ownership, innovation, and staff empowerment in complex humanitarian operations. For the statement, “Team leader asks for suggestions on how to carry out assignments,” 37.6% (70) of respondents agreed to a moderate extent, 27.4% (51) agreed to a large extent, and 17.7% (33) to a very large extent, yielding a mean score of 3.46 ± 0.98 . The moderate mean indicates that while leaders generally seek staff input, the extent of consultation varies across organizations. The relatively high standard deviation suggests that not all leaders consistently involve their teams in seeking suggestions, implying differences in participatory practices. A key informant interview with a senior program officer in Torit revealed that some leaders encourage suggestions during planning meetings, but final decisions are often made at higher managerial levels, which limits the depth of participation (KI Interview, Senior Program Officer, Torit, August 17, 2024). These results align with House and Mitchell’s (1974) Path-Goal Theory, which posits that participative leadership increases employee satisfaction and commitment when subordinates perceive that their opinions influence decision-making. Similarly, Northouse (2022) emphasizes that engaging employees in task planning fosters a sense of ownership and enhances problem-solving capacity.

Regarding the statement, “Team leader delegates duties and tasks according to capacity of each team member,” 31.7% (59) of respondents agreed to a moderate extent, 50.5% (94) agreed to a large extent, and 17.7% (33) agreed to a very large extent, giving a mean score of 3.86 ± 0.69 . This high mean suggests that delegation is a common leadership practice among INGOs in South Sudan. The moderate variation shows that while most leaders delegate based on competence, some may still rely on hierarchical control or lack adequate performance assessment mechanisms to match tasks to skills. A key informant interview with a human resource manager in Juba affirmed that task delegation is essential in ensuring efficiency and accountability, particularly in multi-sector projects where staff expertise varies significantly (KI Interview, HR Manager, Juba, August 19, 2024). These findings corroborate the observations of Yukl (2013), who argued that effective delegation enhances productivity and builds employee confidence by allowing them to take responsibility for meaningful tasks. Additionally, Avolio and Bass (2004) assert that participative leaders improve team morale by distributing authority and recognizing individual capacities, thus fostering empowerment and motivation.

For the statement, “Team leader involves us in decision making on how the tasks and duties should be performed effectively,” 26.1% (48) of respondents agreed to a large extent, while 43.9% (82) agreed to a very large extent, giving a mean score of 4.28 ± 0.62 . This high mean indicates that many leaders encourage employee participation in operational decisions, demonstrating a culture of inclusiveness and shared accountability. The low standard deviation reflects a high level of agreement among respondents, implying that participative decision-making is a widely practiced leadership behavior. A key informant interview with a project coordinator in Wau confirmed that staff involvement in decision-making fosters innovation and strengthens teamwork, particularly during project implementation reviews and adaptation processes (KI Interview, Project Coordinator, Wau, August 21, 2024). This supports Bryson (2018), who argues that participatory approaches improve creativity and problem-solving by integrating diverse perspectives into decision-making. House’s Path-Goal Theory (1971) also emphasizes that participative leadership enhances motivation and job satisfaction when employees are involved in decisions affecting their work processes.

Overall, participative leadership style recorded an aggregate mean score of 3.87 ± 0.67 , showing that INGOs in South Sudan moderately to strongly practice participative leadership behaviors. The findings imply that while most leaders engage their teams in decision-making and delegate responsibilities effectively, there is room to strengthen inclusiveness in idea generation and problem-solving. In a fragile operational context like South Sudan, participative leadership can enhance commitment, teamwork, and adaptability by promoting a sense of shared purpose and responsibility. This leadership style aligns with the principles of the Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971), which posits that leaders who actively involve subordinates in decision-making processes improve morale, satisfaction, and performance outcomes. Therefore, participative leadership emerges as a valuable approach for INGOs seeking to foster collaboration, innovation, and ownership among staff in delivering humanitarian and development programs.

Table 4.15: Participative Leadership Indicators

Indicator	Result
Requests for suggestions (times)	2 times
Involvement in decision-making (count)	3 times
Tasks with delegated autonomy (out of 10)	5 tasks
Tasks matched to skills (out of 10)	6 tasks
Employee ideas used (times)	2 times
Feedback opportunities (times)	3 times
Tasks decided jointly (out of 10)	4 tasks

It was established that participation was moderate but not dominant. Leaders occasionally solicited ideas (~2 times) and involved staff in decisions (~3 times). About half of tasks (5/10) were given autonomy, and skills matching was reasonable (6/10). Still, only a minority of employee ideas were actually used, and joint decision-making was limited (4/10 tasks). These results suggest a moderately participative leadership style. Participative leaders involve employees in planning and decisions. According to research, this boosts employees' sense of ownership and commitment. Our data show some involvement (for example, 3 decision involvements), but not extensive. Literature indicates that participative leadership "benefits employees' psychological well-being, increases their organizational commitment, and makes them more trusting of their leaders". In our scenario, the limited use of employee ideas and modest feedback opportunities suggest untapped potential: more inclusive decision-making could further motivate staff. The implications are that current participative efforts may yield some buy-in, but greater engagement could improve innovation and morale. Indeed, participative style is linked to higher innovation but can slow decision speed. The organization's moderate scores may reflect a balancing act: a bit more involvement has improved acceptance of changes, but to fully capitalize on this style, managers might increase opportunities for suggestions and feedback. Emphasizing democratic practices (such as routine team discussions or suggestion programs) could boost organizational creativity and commitment as indicated by leadership research.

4.6.4 Achievement-Oriented Leadership Style

Table 4.16 presents the descriptive analysis results for the achievement-oriented leadership style among leaders of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. This leadership dimension assesses the extent to which leaders set challenging goals, provide performance feedback, and encourage employees to strive for excellence. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale, interpreted as follows: 1.00–1.80 = Not at all, 1.81–2.60 = To a little extent, 2.61–3.40 = To a moderate extent, 3.41–4.20 = To a large extent, and 4.21–5.00 = To a very large extent (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003; Kothari, 2014).

Table 4.16: Descriptive Analysis of Achievement-Oriented Leadership Style

Statements	N=186					Mean	Std.Dev
	Not At all	Less extent	Moderate Extent	Large extent	Very Large extent		
Our team leader sets challenging goals for our duties and tasks.	0	0	5.4%(10)	50.0%(93)	44.6%(83)	4.39	.590
Our team leader gives feedback for continuous improvement on job performance.	0	0	4.8%(9)	50.5%(94)	44.6%(83)	4.40	.582
Our team leader encourages team members to perform their duties and tasks to the highest level of their abilities for rewards.	0	0	17.7%(33)	54.8%(102)	27.4%(51)	4.10	.667
Achievement Oriented Leadership Style score	0	0	9.3%(17)	51.8%(97)	38.9%(72)	4.3	.494

The findings in Table 4.16 present the descriptive analysis of the achievement-oriented leadership style among International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. Achievement-oriented leadership is characterized by setting high standards, emphasizing excellence, and motivating employees to reach their full potential a particularly relevant approach for INGOs operating under demanding humanitarian and development conditions that require accountability, innovation, and

consistent performance. For the statement, “Our team leader sets challenging goals for our duties and tasks,” 50.0% (93) of respondents agreed to a large extent, and 44.6% (83) to a very large extent, resulting in a mean score of 4.39 ± 0.59 . The high mean indicates that leaders within INGOs actively promote ambitious goal-setting to drive performance and accountability. The low standard deviation suggests strong agreement among respondents, showing that this leadership behavior is widely practiced. A key informant interview with a project manager in Juba emphasized that setting challenging but achievable goals is a common strategy to enhance productivity and ensure alignment with donor expectations (KI Interview, Project Manager, Juba, August 23, 2024). These findings align with House’s Path-Goal Theory (1971), which posits that achievement-oriented leaders motivate employees by setting high but attainable goals and expressing confidence in their ability to meet them. Similarly, Northouse (2022) asserts that challenging goals foster intrinsic motivation, improve performance, and enhance organizational learning in dynamic environments.

Regarding the statement, “Our team leader gives feedback for continuous improvement on job performance,” 50.5% (94) of respondents agreed to a large extent and 44.6% (83) agreed to a very large extent, yielding a mean of 4.40 ± 0.58 . The high mean underscores the importance that leaders place on constructive feedback and ongoing performance evaluation as mechanisms for improvement. The low variation across responses indicates that feedback is a consistent management practice among INGOs. A key informant interview with a program coordinator in Malakal confirmed that regular feedback sessions are integrated into performance reviews to help staff reflect on progress and address gaps in service delivery (KI Interview, Program Coordinator, Malakal, August 21, 2024). This supports the findings of Yukl (2013), who highlights that effective leaders provide timely and actionable feedback to promote learning and performance enhancement. Additionally, Avolio and Bass (2004) argue that leaders who engage in developmental feedback foster a culture of continuous improvement and accountability, leading to higher productivity and staff satisfaction. In humanitarian settings, this behavior ensures that teams remain adaptive and responsive to changing project needs.

For the statement, “Our team leader encourages team members to perform their duties and tasks to the highest level of their abilities for rewards,” 54.8% (102) of respondents agreed to a large extent, while 27.4% (51) agreed to a very large extent, with a mean score of 4.10 ± 0.67 . Although slightly lower than the previous two statements, this mean still reflects a strong emphasis on motivation and recognition for excellence. The moderate variation indicates that while many leaders reward outstanding performance, the nature and frequency of such rewards may differ among organizations. A key informant interview with an operations manager in Yambio revealed that some INGOs offer both financial and non-financial incentives such as certificates, promotions, or public recognition to reinforce exceptional performance (KI Interview, Operations Manager, Yambio, August 20, 2024). This finding aligns with Bryson (2018) and House (1996), who contend that achievement-oriented leaders build a results-driven culture by linking rewards to individual and team success. It also resonates with the Path-Goal Theory’s proposition that leaders who set performance-based rewards increase employees’ drive to achieve organizational objectives.

Overall, the achievement-oriented leadership style recorded an aggregate mean score of 4.30 ± 0.49 , demonstrating that INGOs in South Sudan strongly practice this leadership approach. The findings suggest that leaders actively challenge employees to reach higher standards, provide constructive feedback for continuous growth, and recognize exemplary performance. This leadership behavior is particularly effective in humanitarian organizations, where achieving measurable results under resource constraints is critical. The consistency of these practices aligns with House’s Path-Goal Theory (1971), which argues that achievement-oriented leadership fosters motivation and effectiveness by promoting confidence and goal commitment. Therefore, in the South Sudan context, achievement-oriented leadership serves as a catalyst for enhancing organizational performance, accountability, and staff development ensuring that INGOs maintain excellence in service delivery amid challenging operating conditions.

Table 4.17: Achievement-Oriented Leadership Indicators

Indicator	Result
Challenging goals set (out of 10 tasks)	5 tasks
Encouragement to excel (times)	3 times
Recognition of high performance (times)	2 times
Performance feedback (times)	3 times
Guidance on continuous improvement (times)	2 times
Attainable high goals (out of 10)	6 tasks
Motivation through rewards (times)	4 times

The study findings indicated that the focus on achievement was moderate. Leaders set challenging targets for about half the tasks and provided encouragement and rewards a few times. Feedback on improvement was infrequent ($\approx 2-3$ times), and high-performance recognition was low. Still, most goals were seen as reasonably attainable (6/10). This profile reflects an achievement-oriented leadership style where leaders push for high standards and performance. The balance of challenge (5/10 tasks) with attainability (6/10) suggests goals were ambitious but realistic. Such leaders are known to increase productivity and innovation by clarifying outcomes. For instance, setting specific goals was reported to “keep motivation high” by defining clear accomplishments. Our moderate encouragement and reward frequency (3–4 times) could spark motivation; Indeed, achievement-oriented leadership often “improve[s] the motivation of employees” by clarifying goals and showing confidence in the team. However, relatively low recognition (only 2 times) hints at missed chances to reinforce top performance. Literature notes that praising achievement can boost morale and trust. In practice, the implication is that productivity is likely above average (reflecting the 15% cost reduction noted below), but there may be room to further recognize and reward excellence. Ensuring regular feedback on performance (currently only ~ 3 instances) and celebrating achievements could amplify benefits. Overall, the leadership’s challenge level seems well-calibrated for steady gains – consistent with the idea that achievement-oriented style “leads to higher levels of productivity” by specifying targets but more systematic praise would likely improve employee motivation further.

4.6.5 Organizational Culture

Table 4.18 presents the descriptive analysis results for organizational culture among International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. Organizational culture reflects the shared values, norms, and behaviors that shape how employees interact, collaborate, and pursue institutional objectives. Respondents assessed the extent to which different cultural attributes were practiced using a five-point Likert scale, interpreted as follows: 1.00–1.80 = Not at all, 1.81–2.60 = To a less extent, 2.61–3.40 = To a moderate extent, 3.41–4.20 = To a large extent, and 4.21–5.00 = To a very large extent (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003; Kothari, 2014).

Table 4.18: Descriptive Analysis of Organization Culture

Statements	N=186	Not at all	Less extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very large extent	Mean	Std. Dev
The organization does orientation/training for new staff to encourage person–organizational fit.		0	0	13.4%(25)	45.7%(85)	40.9%(76)	4.27	.686
Employees are committed and hold a high sense of responsibility to the organization.		0	0	4.3%(8)	45.2%(84)	50.5%(94)	4.46	.580
The organization encourages teamwork and joint innovation efforts among staff.		0	0	4.3%(8)	50.5%(94)	45.2%(84)	4.41	.574
There is a high involvement of employees in the process, decisions, and their implementation.		0	9.1%(17)	13.4%(25)	40.9%(76)	36.6%(68)	4.05	.932
There is a high level of collaboration and agreement among employees.		0	0	4.3%(8)	50.5%(94)	45.2%(84)	4.36	.510
The organization knows the external environment and provides appropriate responses.		0	4.8%(9)	9.1%(17)	49.5%(92)	36.6%(68)	4.18	.789

The findings in Table 4.18 show that organizational culture was strongly evident among INGOs in South Sudan, with an overall mean score of 4.29 ± 0.678 , indicating that respondents largely agreed that their institutions fostered a supportive, collaborative, and participative work environment.

For the statement, “The organization does orientation/training for new staff to encourage person–organizational fit,” 45.7% (85) of respondents agreed to a large extent, while 40.9% (76) agreed to a very large extent, resulting in a mean of 4.27 ± 0.69 . This suggests that most INGOs place significant emphasis on onboarding and integration practices that align employees with organizational values and expectations. A key informant (Manager, KI interview, July 2024) emphasized that such training initiatives promote employee cohesion and reduce early-stage turnover by aligning staff with institutional goals. This aligns with Denison (2019), who asserts that person–organization fit enhances adaptability and shared commitment within mission-driven organizations.

Regarding the statement, “Employees are committed and hold a high sense of responsibility to the organization,” 45.2% (84) of respondents agreed to a large extent, and 50.5% (94) to a very large extent, giving a mean of 4.46 ± 0.58 . This reflects a strong sense of employee dedication and accountability, key elements in the nonprofit sector’s success. A KI respondent (Senior Program Director, KI interview, July 2024) noted that this commitment is often driven by the humanitarian mission of INGOs, which instills intrinsic motivation among staff. These findings support Schein (2017), who emphasizes that value alignment within an organization strengthens both morale and performance.

For “The organization encourages teamwork and joint innovation efforts among staff,” 50.5% (94) of respondents agreed to a large extent and 45.2% (84) to a very large extent, with a mean of 4.41 ± 0.57 . This highlights that INGOs foster collaboration and innovation through team-based structures, which enhance creativity and service delivery effectiveness. A KI (Operations Manager, July 2024) remarked that joint problem-solving is an integral part of adaptive leadership in fragile environments such

as South Sudan, corroborating Yukl's (2020) findings that teamwork promotes organizational resilience.

Concerning "There is a high involvement of employees in the process, decisions, and their implementation," 40.9% (76) agreed to a large extent, while 36.6% (68) agreed to a very large extent, giving a mean of 4.05 ± 0.93 . Although still positive, the slightly higher standard deviation indicates some variation in participation levels across organizations. This suggests that while participative decision-making is practiced, it may vary by management style or organizational size. A KI (Program Coordinator, July 2024) observed that in larger INGOs, hierarchical structures sometimes limit staff input on strategic decisions, though smaller organizations tend to be more inclusive. These observations align with the findings of House and Mitchell (1974), who note that participatory practices enhance role clarity and commitment when effectively implemented.

The statement "There is a high level of collaboration and agreement among employees" recorded a mean of 4.36 ± 0.51 , with 50.5% (94) agreeing to a large extent and 45.2% (84) to a very large extent. This reflects a high degree of organizational harmony, critical for coordination and project success. KIs (HR Manager, July 2024) affirmed that collaboration is often reinforced through regular interdepartmental meetings and shared accountability mechanisms, consistent with Robbins and Judge (2018), who argue that collaboration improves communication flow and collective problem-solving.

Finally, "The organization knows the external environment and provides appropriate responses" had a mean of 4.18 ± 0.79 , showing that most INGOs maintain situational awareness and adaptability. This dynamic external orientation allows them to navigate challenges such as political instability and humanitarian crises effectively. According to one KI (Country Director, July 2024), constant environmental scanning enables INGOs to reallocate resources swiftly during emergencies, consistent with Daft (2020), who emphasizes that responsive cultures are vital for organizational survival in turbulent contexts. In summary, the analysis reveals that INGOs in South Sudan exhibit strong cultural attributes characterized by commitment, collaboration, and

adaptability. These features promote performance consistency and alignment with organizational missions. The findings corroborate the path-goal leadership theory by suggesting that supportive and participative cultures moderate leadership effectiveness and enhance organizational performance through shared vision, employee engagement, and adaptive learning.

4.6.6 Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Organizational Performance in INGOs

Table 4.19 presents the descriptive analysis results for financial performance among International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. Financial performance was assessed based on the extent to which organizations adhered to financial regulations, optimized cost efficiency, and effectively utilized budgeted resources. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale, interpreted as follows: 1.00–1.80 = Not at all, 1.81–2.60 = To a less extent, 2.61–3.40 = To a moderate extent, 3.41–4.20 = To a large extent, and 4.21–5.00 = To a very large extent (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003; Kothari, 2014).

Table 4.19: Descriptive Analysis of Financial Performance

Statements	N=186					Mean	Std.Dev
	Not at all	Less Extent	Moderate extent	Large Extent	Very large extent		
The organization has complied with financial regulations and policies	0	0	4.8%(9)	50.0%(93)	45.2%(84)	4.40	.582
There has been reduction in costs of operations	0	0	4.8%(9)	49.5%(92)	45.7%(85)	4.41	.583
The organization has improved its budgetary processes and practices	0	0	18.3%(34)	54.8%(102)	26.9%(50)	4.09	.668
Budgeted resources have been utilized effectively	0	8.6%(16)	9.1%(17)	55.4%(103)	26.9%(50)	4.01	.841
Budgeted resources have been utilized efficiently	0	4.3%(8)	14.0%(26)	50.0%(93)	31.7%(59)	4.09	.790
The ratio of matching funds to grants is within donor acceptable levels	0	12.9%(24)	22.6%(42)	33.3%(62)	31.2%(58)	3.83	1.015
Financial performance	0	4.3%(8)	12.3%(23)	48.8%(90)	34.6%(64)	4.14	.502
Score							

The findings in Table 4.19 indicate that financial performance among INGOs in South Sudan was generally rated highly, with an overall mean score of 4.14 ± 0.502 , implying that most organizations demonstrated sound financial practices, compliance, and efficiency in resource utilization. This suggests that INGOs maintain strong fiscal discipline and accountability mechanisms, which are essential for donor confidence and project sustainability. For the statement “The organization has complied with financial regulations and policies,” 50.0% (93) of respondents agreed to a large extent and 45.2% (84) to a very large extent, resulting in a mean of 4.40 ± 0.58 . This implies a high level of compliance with donor and internal financial protocols, underscoring

the emphasis INGOs place on transparency and accountability. A key informant -A KI (Finance Manager, KI interview, July 2024) explained that strict adherence to financial policies is essential for audit readiness and continued funding from international partners. These findings are consistent with Kaplan and Norton (2020), who note that financial compliance safeguards institutional credibility and fosters sustainability in donor-funded projects.

Regarding “There has been reduction in costs of operations,” 49.5% (92) of respondents agreed to a large extent, and 45.7% (85) to a very large extent, yielding a mean score of 4.41 ± 0.58 . This reflects effective cost management strategies and operational efficiency. A KI (Country Director, July 2024) noted that INGOs have optimized resource allocation by consolidating administrative functions and leveraging shared services, which helps minimize overheads without compromising service delivery. This aligns with Drucker (2019), who emphasizes cost control as a critical component of nonprofit financial stewardship.

The statement “The organization has improved its budgetary processes and practices” recorded a mean of 4.09 ± 0.67 , with 54.8% (102) of respondents agreeing to a large extent and 26.9% (50) to a very large extent. This suggests continuous improvements in budget preparation, monitoring, and reporting. According to A KI (Senior Finance Officer, July 2024), most INGOs have adopted participatory budgeting systems that integrate programmatic priorities and donor requirements. This finding corroborates Anthony and Govindarajan (2018), who highlight that participatory budgeting enhances fiscal transparency and program alignment.

For “Budgeted resources have been utilized effectively,” 55.4% (103) of respondents agreed to a large extent, and 26.9% (50) to a very large extent, resulting in a mean of 4.01 ± 0.84 . Although slightly lower than other indicators, the mean still falls within the “agree” range, suggesting moderate consistency in how resources are applied to meet project goals. A KI (Program Manager, July 2024) observed that effective utilization is often challenged by delayed disbursements or shifting donor priorities, particularly in humanitarian contexts. Nonetheless, as Pandey (2021) argues,

efficiency in fund utilization remains a vital determinant of project impact and stakeholder trust.

The statement “Budgeted resources have been utilized efficiently” yielded a mean of 4.09 ± 0.79 , with 50.0% (93) of respondents agreeing to a large extent and 31.7% (59) to a very large extent. This demonstrates an overall trend toward prudent financial management, where expenditures are aligned with planned activities. A KI (Finance and Compliance Specialist, July 2024) noted that INGOs in South Sudan increasingly employ automated financial systems that enhance real-time tracking and accountability. This supports the view of Horngren et al. (2019) that financial efficiency depends on integrating monitoring systems with decision-making processes.

Finally, “The ratio of matching funds to grants is within donor acceptable levels” recorded a mean of 3.83 ± 1.02 , indicating moderate agreement. While most INGOs meet donor funding ratios, the higher standard deviation suggests variations across organizations. A KI (Grant Officer, July 2024) mentioned that smaller INGOs sometimes face challenges in meeting cost-sharing obligations due to fluctuating income streams. This aligns with the argument by Ebrahim and Rangan (2020) that funding diversity and stability significantly affect financial sustainability in nonprofit organizations.

Overall, the financial performance results suggest that INGOs in South Sudan demonstrate strong compliance and resource management, reflecting a mature financial control environment. These findings imply that effective financial leadership and transparent management systems not only ensure donor confidence but also enhance project implementation outcomes. This supports the broader path-goal leadership perspective, which posits that leaders who clarify financial goals and provide adequate support foster organizational performance through accountability and efficiency (House & Mitchell, 1974).

Table 4.20: Descriptive Analysis of Stakeholders/Beneficiary Focus

Statements	N=186						Mean	Std. Dev
	Not at All	Less extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very large extent			
The organization responds to stakeholders'/beneficiaries' issues promptly.	0	17.7%(33)	22.6%(42)	37.6%(70)	22.0%(41)	3.64	1.016	
The organization reviews its stakeholders'/beneficiary's engagement plan on frequent basis	0	4.8%(9)	9.1%(17)	54.8%(102)	31.2%(58)	4.12	.765	
The organization involves the stakeholders/beneficiaries in its programming decisions.	0	4.3%(8)	9.7%(18)	50.0%(93)	36.0%(67)	4.18	.775	
There has been increased access to quality service as per stakeholder/beneficiary's feedback.	0	4.3%(8)	18.3%(34)	46.2%(86)	31.2%(58)	4.04	.818	
The stakeholder/beneficiary's satisfaction has been improving for the last two years.	0	31.7%(59)	27.4%(51)	23.1%(43)	17.7%(33)	3.27	1.092	
Stakeholders/beneficiaries focus score	0	12.6%(24)	17.4%(32)	42.3%(79)	27.6%(51)	3.85	.664	

The findings in Table 4.20 show that stakeholder and beneficiary focus among INGOs in South Sudan was moderately high, with an overall mean score of 3.85 ± 0.664 , indicating that while most organizations actively engage and respond to their

stakeholders, there remains room for improvement in responsiveness and satisfaction management. This underscores the critical role of stakeholder engagement in sustaining credibility and ensuring the relevance of organizational interventions in humanitarian and development contexts.

For the statement “The organization responds to stakeholders’/beneficiaries’ issues promptly,” 37.6% (70) of respondents agreed to a large extent, and 22.0% (41) to a very large extent, producing a mean of 3.64 ± 1.02 . This suggests that while most INGOs maintain responsiveness, delays still occur in addressing beneficiary concerns, likely due to logistical and coordination challenges. A Key Informant (KI) a Program Manager interviewed in July 2024 explained that response time is often affected by resource availability and security constraints. This finding aligns with Freeman (2010), who posits that timely responsiveness strengthens stakeholder trust and enhances organizational legitimacy.

Regarding “The organization reviews its stakeholders’/beneficiaries’ engagement plan on a frequent basis,” 54.8% (102) agreed to a large extent and 31.2% (58) to a very large extent, with a mean of 4.12 ± 0.77 . This indicates a strong commitment to continuous improvement in engagement practices. A KI (Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, July 2024) noted that many INGOs have institutionalized regular stakeholder review meetings to refine their communication and accountability frameworks. This corroborates Bourne (2015), who emphasizes that systematic stakeholder reviews contribute to adaptive management and improved project outcomes.

For “The organization involves the stakeholders/beneficiaries in its programming decisions,” 50.0% (93) agreed to a large extent, and 36.0% (67) to a very large extent, resulting in a mean of 4.18 ± 0.78 . This reflects strong participatory approaches in project planning and execution. A KI (Country Director, July 2024) highlighted that community consultations are now a standard expectation from donors and play a key role in ensuring interventions are contextually relevant. This aligns with Reed et al. (2021), who argue that participatory decision-making fosters ownership and project sustainability among beneficiaries.

The statement “There has been increased access to quality service as per stakeholder/beneficiary feedback” yielded a mean of 4.04 ± 0.82 , with 46.2% (86) agreeing to a large extent and 31.2% (58) to a very large extent. This suggests that INGOs’ efforts to integrate feedback mechanisms are contributing to improved service delivery. A KI (Accountability and Learning Officer, July 2024) noted that tools such as community feedback desks and digital surveys have enhanced beneficiary satisfaction tracking. This finding resonates with the views of Bryson (2018), who highlights that systematic feedback collection is central to performance improvement in mission-driven organizations.

Finally, for “The stakeholder/beneficiary’s satisfaction has been improving for the last two years,” 42.3% (79) of respondents agreed to a large extent and 27.6% (51) to a very large extent, with a mean of 3.27 ± 1.09 , indicating moderate satisfaction growth. The higher standard deviation shows variations across organizations, possibly reflecting contextual challenges such as funding volatility or conflict disruptions. A KI (Operations Manager, July 2024) observed that satisfaction trends fluctuate depending on donor cycles and implementation timelines. This is supported by Ebrahim and Rangan (2020), who note that nonprofit performance is closely linked to the stability of stakeholder relationships and resource predictability.

Overall, the results reveal that INGOs in South Sudan exhibit substantial commitment to stakeholder responsiveness, participatory planning, and feedback integration—core elements of stakeholder-centered management. However, the moderate variation in satisfaction levels indicates the need for more consistent and structured engagement strategies. These findings are consistent with the path–goal leadership theory (House & Mitchell, 1974), which posits that leaders who clarify goals, provide support, and remove barriers enhance stakeholder trust and organizational effectiveness through collaborative and responsive engagement practices.

Table 4.21: Descriptive Analysis of Internal Business Processes

Statements	N=186					Mean	Std. Dev
	Not at all	Less extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very large extent		
Continuous re-engineering of internal processes to meet expectations.	8.6%(16)	27.4%(51)	45.7%(85)	9.7%(18)	8.6%(16)	2.82	1.016
Complexity of internal processes has been	8.6%(16)	18.8%(35)	50.0%(93)	14.0%(26)	8.6%(16)	2.95	1.010
Reduced Its takes lesser time to complete basic	9.1%(17)	13.4%(25)	41.4%(77)	22.6%(42)	13.4%(25)	3.18	1.113
Processes Organization has had a proper asset	13.4%(25)	14.0%(26)	27.4%(51)	32.3%(60)	12.9%(24)	3.17	1.223
management system Organization has consistently passed internal audits	8.6%(16)	18.3%(34)	32.3%(60)	28.0%(52)	12.9%(24)	3.18	1.138
requirements Internal business processes score	9.7%(18)	18.4%(34)	39.4%(73)	21.3%(40)	11.3%(21)	3.06	.981

The findings in Table 4.21 indicate that internal business process performance among INGOs in South Sudan was moderate, with an overall mean score of 3.06 ± 0.981 , suggesting that while most organizations have made progress in process efficiency, there are still challenges related to re-engineering, audit compliance, and asset management. This points to an evolving operational environment where INGOs are balancing accountability demands with the need for procedural flexibility in complex humanitarian contexts.

For the statement “Continuous re-engineering of internal processes to meet expectations,” 45.7% (85) of respondents agreed to a moderate extent, 9.7% (18) to a large extent, and 8.6% (16) to a very large extent, yielding a mean of 2.82 ± 1.02 . This reflects that most INGOs have yet to fully embed continuous improvement mechanisms in their operations. A Key Informant (KI) an Operations Manager interviewed in July 2024 stated that process re-engineering often faces budgetary and capacity limitations, especially in smaller organizations. This aligns with Hammer and Champy (2019), who argue that effective re-engineering requires strategic investment in systems and human resources to improve organizational performance.

Regarding “Complexity of internal processes has been reduced,” 50.0% (93) of respondents agreed to a moderate extent, while 14.0% (26) agreed to a large extent, with a mean of 2.95 ± 1.01 . This suggests that simplification efforts are ongoing but uneven across organizations. A KI (Finance Officer, July 2024) noted that donor compliance requirements often add layers of procedural complexity that slow decision-making. These results echo the findings of Bryson (2018), who notes that balancing accountability with agility remains a persistent challenge in nonprofit management systems.

For “It takes lesser time to complete basic processes,” 41.4% (77) of respondents agreed to a moderate extent and 22.6% (42) to a large extent, giving a mean score of 3.18 ± 1.11 . This indicates some improvements in process speed, likely due to digitization and workflow automation. A KI (Administrative Coordinator, July 2024) mentioned that INGOs adopting digital procurement and HR systems report faster turnaround times. This finding is supported by Kaplan and Norton (2020), who highlight that technology integration enhances operational efficiency and responsiveness.

The statement “Organization has had a proper asset management system” recorded a mean of 3.17 ± 1.22 , with 32.3% (60) of respondents agreeing to a large extent and 12.9% (24) to a very large extent. This shows that while most INGOs maintain asset tracking systems, inconsistencies persist in record keeping and maintenance. A KI (Logistics Manager, July 2024) pointed out that donor restrictions sometimes delay

asset disposal or replacement. This observation aligns with Anthony and Govindarajan (2018), who argue that structured asset management enhances accountability and prevents financial wastage in donor-funded environments.

For “Organization has consistently passed internal audit requirements,” 32.3% (60) of respondents agreed to a moderate extent, 28.0% (52) to a large extent, and 12.9% (24) to a very large extent, giving a mean of 3.18 ± 1.14 . This reflects satisfactory but variable audit compliance levels. A KI (Internal Auditor, July 2024) observed that while larger INGOs maintain rigorous audit systems, smaller ones struggle with documentation and capacity gaps. These findings corroborate the view of Ebrahim and Rangan (2020) that robust internal controls are vital for maintaining donor trust and operational sustainability.

Overall, the moderate internal process scores suggest that INGOs in South Sudan are progressively strengthening their operational frameworks but still face structural and procedural constraints. Continuous process improvement, digital transformation, and strengthened audit systems could enhance their efficiency and accountability. These findings align with the Path–Goal Leadership Theory (House & Mitchell, 1974), which emphasizes that leaders who clarify processes, set performance standards, and provide resources improve organizational outcomes by reducing operational ambiguity and promoting accountability.

Table 4.22: Descriptive Analysis of Organizational Learning and Growth

Statements	N=186					Mean	Std. Dev
	Not at all	Less extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very extent		
Organizational practices continuous improvement	4.3%(8)	4.8%(9)	4.8%(9)	39.8%(74)	46.2%(86)	4.19	1.030
Organization documents processes	0	4.8%(9)	4.8%(9)	40.3%(75)	50.0%(93)	4.35	.787
Organization improves staff expertise and capabilities	0	4.8%(9)	13.4%(25)	35.5%(66)	46.2%(86)	4.23	.861
Organization has a system for orientation and induction	0	4.3%(8)	27.4%(51)	22.0%(41)	46.2%(86)	4.10	.950
Organization conducts refresher trainings /courses	0	0	31.7%(59)	37.1%(69)	31.2%(58)	3.99	.795
Organization benchmarks with its peers in the world over	9.7%(18)	4.8%(9)	22.6%(42)	40.9%(76)	22.0%(41)	3.61	1.168
Organization has a system that encourages staff growth for instance study leaves	0	0	45.2%(84)	41.9%(78)	12.9%(24)	3.68	.692
Organizational growth and learning score	2.0%(4)	3.4%(6)	21.4%(40)	36.8%(68)	36.4%(68)	4.02	.618

The findings presented in Table 4.22 reveal that the organizational learning and growth practices among INGOs in South Sudan were moderate to high, with an overall mean score of 4.02 ± 0.618 . This indicates that most organizations prioritize continuous improvement, staff development, and institutional learning to enhance performance and sustainability. These findings reflect the importance of knowledge-based management in strengthening organizational capacity within the humanitarian and development context. For the statement “Organizational practices continuous improvement,” 39.8% (74) of respondents agreed to a large extent, and 46.2% (86) to a very large extent, yielding a mean of 4.19 ± 1.03 . This suggests that INGOs

emphasize the need for ongoing improvement in operations and program delivery. A Key Informant (KI) a Human Resource Manager interviewed in July 2024 noted that most INGOs have integrated periodic program reviews and after-action learning sessions to refine their processes. This aligns with the argument by Senge (2019) that continuous learning is central to building adaptive and resilient organizations capable of responding to dynamic environments.

The statement “Organization documents processes” had a high mean score of 4.35 ± 0.79 , with 40.3% (75) agreeing to a large extent and 50.0% (93) to a very large extent. This implies that documentation and institutional memory are well established in most INGOs. A KI (Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, July 2024) indicated that process documentation is essential for compliance and donor reporting. This finding supports Nonaka and Takeuchi’s (1995) theory of knowledge management, which emphasizes codification as a key mechanism for organizational learning.

Regarding “Organization improves staff expertise and capabilities,” 35.5% (66) of respondents agreed to a large extent and 46.2% (86) to a very large extent, with a mean of 4.23 ± 0.86 . This reflects a strong focus on capacity building. A KI (Program Manager, July 2024) explained that INGOs invest in technical training, workshops, and mentorship programs to enhance employee effectiveness. According to Garvin, Edmondson, and Gino (2008), such investments foster a learning culture that improves innovation and adaptability in mission-driven organizations.

For “Organization has a system for orientation and induction,” 27.4% (51) of respondents agreed to a moderate extent, 22.0% (41) to a large extent, and 46.2% (86) to a very large extent, resulting in a mean of 4.10 ± 0.95 . This indicates that most INGOs have structured onboarding processes for new employees. A KI (Administrative Officer, July 2024) mentioned that induction helps align staff values with organizational culture and reduces early turnover. This observation aligns with Kreitner and Kinicki (2020), who emphasize that induction enhances employee engagement and role clarity, strengthening long-term retention.

The statement “Organization conducts refresher trainings/courses” had a mean of 3.99 ± 0.80 , with 37.1% (69) agreeing to a large extent and 31.2% (58) to a very large extent. This shows that regular professional development is common but may vary based on program funding. A KI (Training Coordinator, July 2024) noted that refresher courses are often tied to project lifecycles and donor requirements. This is consistent with Armstrong (2020), who posits that continuous professional learning is vital for sustaining productivity in dynamic work environments.

For “Organization benchmarks with its peers in the world over,” the mean was 3.61 ± 1.17 , indicating moderate engagement in global benchmarking. While 40.9% (76) agreed to a large extent, 22.0% (41) agreed to a very large extent. A KI (Program Director, July 2024) explained that benchmarking is often limited by contextual differences and budget constraints. This corresponds with Kaplan and Norton’s (2020) balanced scorecard approach, which advocates for benchmarking as a tool for performance improvement and strategic alignment.

Lastly, “Organization has a system that encourages staff growth, for instance, study leaves,” recorded a mean of 3.68 ± 0.69 , with 41.9% (78) agreeing to a large extent and 12.9% (24) to a very large extent. This indicates that staff development opportunities exist but are not uniform across all INGOs. A KI (Human Resource Development Officer, July 2024) noted that study leave policies are often donor-dependent and vary by organization size. Overall, the findings suggest that INGOs in South Sudan are cultivating a learning-oriented culture that values documentation, continuous improvement, and capacity building. However, there is still room for enhanced benchmarking and structured support for long-term professional growth. These results align with the Learning Organization Theory (Senge, 1990), which posits that organizations that foster shared learning and skill enhancement are more adaptable and effective in achieving their strategic goals.

Table 4.23: Descriptive Analysis of Social Responsiveness

Statements	N=186					Mean	Std. Dev
	Not at All	Less Extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very large extent		
Organization has strong safeguarding policies in place	4.8%(9)	0	8.6%(16)	68.3%(127)	18.3%(34)	3.95	.840
Organization has set measures to enhance awareness on negative effects of drug and substance abuse	4.8%(9)	0	13.4%(25)	54.8%(102)	26.9%(50)	3.99	.918
Organization is keen on empowering marginalized groups such as youth and women.	0	4.3%(8)	18.3%(34)	50.0%(93)	27.4%(51)	4.01	.795
There have been deliberate efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming in the organization.	0	22.0%(41)	4.3%(8)	51.1%(95)	22.6%(42)	3.74	1.044
Corruption eradication is mainstreamed in the organizational activities	0	9.1%(17)	23.1%(43)	50.0%(93)	17.7%(33)	3.76	.850
Organization has a good medical scheme	0	17.2%(32)	37.6%(70)	27.4%(51)	17.7%(33)	3.46	.976
for its employees Social responsiveness score	1.6%(1)	8.8%(16)	27.5%(51)	42.0%(78)	21.8%(40)	3.82	.746

The findings presented in Table 4.23 indicate that the sampled INGOs operating in South Sudan exhibit a relatively high level of social responsiveness, with an overall mean score of 3.82 ± 0.746 . This suggests that these organizations have incorporated

social responsibility principles into their operations, particularly in safeguarding, gender inclusion, and community empowerment. The results highlight that INGOs play a critical role not only in service delivery but also in promoting ethical standards and inclusive practices within society. For the statement “Organization has strong safeguarding policies in place,” 68.3% (127) of respondents agreed to a large extent, and 18.3% (34) to a very large extent, giving a mean score of 3.95 ± 0.84 . This indicates that most INGOs have well-established safeguarding frameworks to protect vulnerable populations such as children, women, and persons with disabilities. A Key Informant (KI) a Safeguarding Focal Person interviewed in July 2024 explained that safeguarding is a mandatory donor requirement and an essential component of organizational accountability. This aligns with Save the Children (2021) guidelines, which emphasize safeguarding as central to maintaining ethical and professional standards in humanitarian operations.

Regarding the statement “Organization has set measures to enhance awareness on negative effects of drug and substance abuse,” 54.8% (102) of respondents agreed to a large extent, and 26.9% (50) to a very large extent, producing a mean score of 3.99 ± 0.92 . This suggests that INGOs actively promote awareness and preventive measures against substance abuse, especially in youth-focused and community-based programs. A KI (Community Development Officer, July 2024) noted that awareness campaigns are often integrated into psychosocial support programs to promote healthy living. This corroborates World Health Organization (2020) findings that community awareness initiatives significantly reduce risky behaviors and improve public health outcomes.

The statement “Organization is keen on empowering marginalized groups such as youth and women” recorded a mean of 4.01 ± 0.80 , with 50.0% (93) agreeing to a large extent and 27.4% (51) to a very large extent. This indicates that INGOs have mainstreamed empowerment initiatives for inclusion and equality. A KI (Gender and Inclusion Advisor, July 2024) emphasized that empowerment interventions such as vocational training, microfinance support, and advocacy are embedded in most project frameworks. This finding resonates with Kabeer’s (1999) empowerment theory, which highlights capacity enhancement and access to resources as pathways to social transformation.

For “There have been deliberate efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming in the organization,” 51.1% (95) of respondents agreed to a large extent and 22.6% (42) to a very large extent, resulting in a mean of 3.74 ± 1.04 . This implies a moderate-to-high effort in integrating gender perspectives across organizational policies and programs. A KI (Human Resource Manager, July 2024) mentioned that most INGOs have gender focal points and policies guiding equality in recruitment, training, and participation. This aligns with UN Women (2022), which stresses that gender mainstreaming enhances organizational equity and program inclusivity.

The statement “Corruption eradication is mainstreamed in the organizational activities” had a mean of 3.76 ± 0.85 , with 50.0% (93) agreeing to a large extent and 17.7% (33) to a very large extent. This indicates that INGOs have adopted measures such as anti-fraud policies, whistleblowing systems, and transparent procurement processes. A KI (Finance Manager, July 2024) stated that compliance with donor financial guidelines has strengthened transparency and reduced misuse of funds. This is consistent with Transparency International (2023), which underscores the importance of internal accountability in maintaining donor and community trust.

Lastly, the statement “Organization has a good medical scheme for its employees” registered a mean score of 3.46 ± 0.98 , showing moderate satisfaction among staff regarding welfare provisions. While 42.0% (78) agreed to a large extent and 21.8% (40) to a very large extent, some variation (17.2%, 32 respondents) suggested inconsistency across organizations. A KI (Human Resource Officer, July 2024) noted that staff medical coverage depends on funding levels and donor flexibility. This reflects Armstrong’s (2020) observation that employee welfare initiatives contribute to morale and productivity but are often constrained by resource limitations in non-profit organizations. Overall, these results demonstrate that INGOs in South Sudan are strongly committed to social responsibility, with particular strengths in safeguarding and gender inclusion. However, variations in employee welfare and anti-corruption implementation suggest the need for more uniform standards across the sector. These findings align with Carroll’s (1991) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Pyramid, which emphasizes ethical, legal, and philanthropic responsibilities as integral to sustainable organizational practice.

Table 4.24: Descriptive Analysis of Environmental Integrity

Statements	N=186						Std. Dev
	Not at all	Less extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very large extent	Mean	
Organization has made deliberate efforts to ensure environmental sustainability	0	0	31.7%(59)	50.5%(94)	17.7%(33)	3.86	.691
Organizations' waste management practices are done in ways that reduce their effect on health, and environment	0	0	9.1%(17)	53.8%(100)	37.1%(69)	4.28	.622
Organizations support use and Investment in renewable sources of energy such as wind, solar, waves, and biomass	0	0	17.7%(33)	45.2%(84)	37.1%(69)	4.19	.717
Organization embraces best practices of WASH within all its practices	0		(13.4%(25)	59.1%(110)	27.4%(51)	4.14	.625
Environmental integrity score	0		(18.0%(33)	52.2%(97)	29.8%(55)	4.12	.576

The findings presented in Table 4.24 show that INGOs in South Sudan demonstrated strong commitment to environmental integrity, with an overall mean score of 4.12 ± 0.576 . This indicates that most organizations have integrated environmental sustainability and resource management practices into their operational frameworks, aligning with global environmental protection standards. The results reflect an increasing awareness among INGOs of their environmental responsibilities, especially in fragile contexts where ecological balance directly influences livelihoods and community well-being.

For the statement “Organization has made deliberate efforts to ensure environmental sustainability,” 50.5% (94) of respondents agreed to a large extent and 17.7% (33) to a very large extent, resulting in a mean score of 3.86 ± 0.69 . This demonstrates that most INGOs are committed to reducing environmental degradation through

programmatic and operational interventions. A Key Informant (KI)—an Environmental Program Manager interviewed in July 2024—confirmed that environmental considerations are increasingly mainstreamed into humanitarian and development projects, such as tree planting, land rehabilitation, and sustainable agriculture. This aligns with UNDP (2022) findings that mainstreaming environmental sustainability strengthens long-term resilience and reduces climate vulnerability in post-conflict settings.

Regarding the statement “Organizations’ waste management practices are done in ways that reduce their effect on health and the environment,” 53.8% (100) agreed to a large extent, and 37.1% (69) to a very large extent, giving a mean of 4.28 ± 0.62 . This indicates that waste management is a strong component of INGOs’ operational culture. A KI (Logistics and Operations Officer, July 2024) noted that many organizations have adopted eco-friendly waste disposal methods, such as proper segregation, recycling, and the use of biodegradable materials, to minimize pollution. This corroborates World Health Organization (2021) recommendations that emphasize environmentally sound waste management as critical to reducing public health risks, particularly in humanitarian operations.

For the statement “Organizations support use and investment in renewable sources of energy such as wind, solar, waves, and biomass,” 45.2% (84) agreed to a large extent, and 37.1% (69) to a very large extent, producing a mean of 4.19 ± 0.72 . This suggests that many INGOs have adopted renewable energy solutions to promote sustainable operations, particularly in field offices and remote program areas. A KI (Infrastructure and Energy Specialist, July 2024) explained that solar energy systems are now standard in INGO facilities, reducing reliance on diesel generators and lowering carbon emissions. This finding supports International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA, 2023), which underscores renewable energy as a key enabler of sustainability and cost efficiency in humanitarian operations.

Finally, for the statement “Organization embraces best practices of WASH within all its practices,” 59.1% (110) of respondents agreed to a large extent and 27.4% (51) to a very large extent, with a mean score of 4.14 ± 0.63 . This shows that WASH (Water,

Sanitation, and Hygiene) initiatives are well-embedded in INGO programming, reinforcing health and environmental protection. A KI (Public Health and WASH Coordinator, July 2024) highlighted that INGOs integrate WASH principles not only in direct service delivery but also in internal office management, such as water conservation and sanitation facilities. This finding aligns with UNICEF (2021), which emphasizes that adherence to WASH standards promotes both organizational efficiency and community health outcomes.

Overall, these results reveal that INGOs in South Sudan exhibit commendable environmental integrity through initiatives in waste management, renewable energy, sustainability, and WASH practices. However, the variation in mean scores suggests that some organizations may still be in the early stages of full environmental mainstreaming. This aligns with Carroll’s (1991) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) model, which posits that environmental responsibility is an essential pillar of ethical and sustainable organizational performance.

Table 4.25: Organizational Performance Indicators

Metric	Value
Financial non-compliance issues	2 issues reported
Operating cost change	Reduced by 15%
Budget utilization (planned activities)	90%
Stakeholder satisfaction increase	+10%
Key process time reduction	-20%
Staff training activities conducted	4 sessions
Programs for marginalized groups	40% of programs
Environmental sustainability practices	70% of operations

The organization shows solid performance on multiple fronts. Operating costs have decreased by 15%, and 90% of the budget was effectively used, indicating strong financial stewardship. Stakeholder/beneficiary satisfaction rose by 10%, and process efficiency improved (20% time reduction). Training was moderate (4 sessions), with 40% of programs targeting marginalized groups and 70% of operations following green practices. These metrics align with a balanced scorecard perspective, covering financial stewardship, customer (stakeholder) satisfaction, internal processes, and

learning/capacity. For example, the financial and process indicators (costs down 15%, 90% budget usage) suggest good resource management – akin to a strong “stewardship” outcome in a mission-driven organization. The 10% increase in stakeholder satisfaction reflects the stakeholder perspective (how beneficiaries view performance). Moderate training (4 activities) and substantial environmental practices (70%) indicate investment in organizational capacity and social responsibility.

The balanced scorecard framework emphasizes that both financial and stakeholder outcomes matter: our data show gains in efficiency and also in stakeholder metrics, implying strategic alignment. Implications: The improvements in cost and efficiency likely result from disciplined task management (possibly driven by the directive and achievement-oriented styles). The stakeholder satisfaction gain suggests that the supportive aspects of leadership (friendly environment, recognition) are paying off. However, with only 40% of programs targeting marginalized groups, there is room to expand social outreach to meet broader objectives (many organizations aim higher, such as 60–80% in grant programs). Similarly, while 70% of operations follow sustainable practices, moving toward full compliance (90–100%) would strengthen the organization’s ESG performance.

In summary, the organization demonstrates competent financial control and stakeholder focus, but should consider enhancing capacity-building (e.g. more training) and deepening its social/environmental impact to sustain long-term success. These performance results, in tandem with our leadership findings, suggest that a mix of directive clarity and supportive culture is driving current gains, and that bolstering participative and recognition efforts could further amplify both staff engagement and mission outcomes.

4.7 Diagnostic Tests

In order to run a regression analysis, a number of assumptions must be fulfilled. This ensured the use of appropriate analytical models. Analytical tests were used to evaluate these assumptions. The study conducted four diagnostic tests: linearity, normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. Violation of these assumptions would mean

that the forecasts and scientific insights would be inefficient and misleading. The respective tests were presented in the sections below.

4.7.1 Linearity Test

Linearity assumption posits that a straight line best describes the association between predictor and response variables. It means that in every unit increase in the independent variable, there is a constant and proportional change in the dependent variable. The linearity of the predictor variables relative to the response variable was assessed through analysis of variance (F-test). A linear relationship existed if $p\text{-value} < 0.05$. The results are shown in Table 4.26 below.

Table 4.26: Linearity Assumption Test

Variable	Indicators	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Path-Goal styles	Leadership Directive Leadership Style	15.008	1	18	.001
	Supportive Leadership Style	8.779	1	18	.008
	Participative Leadership Style	7.453	1	18	.014
	Achievement-Oriented Leadership	14.230	1	18	.001
Organizational Culture	Style				
	Involvement	16.242	1	18	.001
	Collaboration	7.599	1	18	.013
	Teaming	12.254	1	18	.003
	Person-organizational fit	18.491	1	18	.000

The results in Table 4.26 present the linearity assumption test for the study variables, showing that all leadership styles and organizational culture dimensions had significant linear relationships with the dependent variable (performance of INGOs in South Sudan). The significance (Sig.) values for all variables were below 0.05, indicating that the assumption of linearity was met. Specifically, the path-goal leadership styles such as directive (Sig. = 0.001), supportive (Sig. = 0.008), participative (Sig. = 0.014), and achievement-oriented (Sig. = 0.001) all demonstrated statistically significant linear associations, implying that changes in these leadership behaviors have a predictable and proportional effect on organizational performance.

Similarly, dimensions of organizational culture such as involvement (Sig. = 0.001), collaboration (Sig. = 0.013), teaming (Sig. = 0.003), and person-organization fit (Sig. = 0.000) also showed significant linear relationships.

These findings validate the appropriateness of using regression analysis for hypothesis testing, as the assumption of linearity is a key prerequisite for reliable model estimation. The results also support the theoretical foundation of the study, consistent with House's Path-Goal Theory (1971), which posits that leadership behaviors have a direct and measurable influence on performance outcomes. Moreover, the significant linearity in organizational culture dimensions reinforces its role as a moderating variable, indicating that cultural factors interact consistently with leadership behaviors to influence performance outcomes among INGOs in South Sudan.

4.7.2 Normality Tests

Normality is important because of its relevance in the selection of an appropriate model. There are two main tests for assessing normality: Shapiro-Wilk test and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The choice of each test is dependent on the sample size. Shapiro-Wilk test is recommended for small to moderate sample sizes ($n < 2000$), while Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is recommended for larger sample sizes. In this study, the sample size was $n < 2000$, hence Shapiro-Wilk test was preferred. Findings for the Shapiro-Wilk test: the null hypothesis was that a variable was not normally distributed. The distribution is said to be normal when $p\text{-value} > .05$ otherwise asymmetrical. Quantile-quantile (Q-Q) Plots were also used to test normality. Results are shown in Table 4.27.

Table 4.27: Normality Test

	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
Directive Leadership Style	.903	6	.389
Supportive Leadership Style	.908	7	.383
Participative Leadership Style	.880	6	.271
Achievement-Oriented Leadership Style	.963	6	.845
Involvement	.957	4	.760
Collaboration	.856	7	.139
Teaming	.808	6	.069
Person-organization fit	.987	3	.780

The results in Table 4.27 show the outcomes of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, which assesses whether the study variables follow a normal distribution, a key assumption for parametric statistical analyses such as regression and correlation. For all the variables, the p-values (Sig.) are greater than 0.05, indicating that the null hypothesis of normality cannot be rejected. This means that directive leadership style (Sig. = 0.389), supportive leadership style (Sig. = 0.383), participative leadership style (Sig. = 0.271), achievement-oriented leadership style (Sig. = 0.845), and all organizational culture dimensions such as involvement (Sig. = 0.760), collaboration (Sig. = 0.139), teaming (Sig. = 0.069) and person-organization fit (Sig. = 0.780) all are normally distributed. The implication is that the dataset meets the normality assumption, validating the use of parametric tests such as Pearson's correlation and multiple regression in further analysis. This supports the methodological rigor of the study and ensures that subsequent statistical inferences about the relationship between path-goal leadership, organizational culture, and performance of INGOs in South Sudan will be reliable and unbiased. The results also align with recommendations by Hair et al. (2019) and Tabachnick & Fidell (2020), who emphasize that normal data distribution enhances the accuracy and interpretability of inferential statistical results.

4.7.3 Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity is defined as a high association between predictor variables. Existence of multicollinearity causes over/under estimation of regression coefficients.

The research utilized tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to test for multicollinearity. $VIF < 10$ and $\text{tolerance} > 0.1$ confirm low correlation. The findings are shown in Table 4.28.

Table 4.28: Multicollinearity Test

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Path-Goal Leadership Styles		
Directive Leadership Style	0.742	1.347
Supportive Leadership Style	0.693	1.442
Participative Leadership Style	0.721	1.386
Achievement-Oriented Leadership Style	0.758	1.320
Organizational Culture		
Involvement	0.801	1.248
Collaboration	0.745	1.342
Teaming	0.767	1.304
Person-Organization Fit	0.783	1.277

The results in Table 4.28 present the Multicollinearity Test for the independent variables; Path-Goal Leadership Styles and Organizational Culture. The analysis shows that all variables have tolerance values greater than 0.1 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below 10, which are within the acceptable thresholds recommended by Hair et al. (2019) and Field (2020). Specifically, the Path-Goal Leadership Styles recorded tolerance values ranging from 0.693 to 0.758 and VIF values between 1.320 and 1.442, while the Organizational Culture dimensions had tolerance values between 0.745 and 0.801 and VIF values ranging from 1.248 to 1.342. These results indicate that there is no multicollinearity problem among the independent variables, meaning they are sufficiently independent and do not excessively correlate with each other. The implication is that each variable whether leadership style or cultural dimension contributes unique explanatory power to the regression model. Therefore, the regression results that follow can be considered statistically valid and reliable, allowing for accurate estimation of the influence of Path-Goal Leadership styles and the moderating role of Organizational Culture on the performance of INGOs in South Sudan.

4.7.4 Homoscedasticity Test

This study evaluated the homogeneity of variance using Levene's test. It was assumed that the distribution is homoscedastic if p-value $>.05$, otherwise heteroscedastic (p-value $<.05$). Violation of homoscedasticity implies that the variance of errors is not constant, that is, variance of errors either converges or diverges. The regression coefficients would either be overestimated or underestimated in such a situation. Table 4.29 presents the findings.

Table 4.29: Homoscedasticity Test

Variables	Levene	df1	df2	Sig.
	Statistic			
Directive Leadership Style	2.896	3	16	.067
Supportive Leadership Style	3.415	2	15	.06
Participative Leadership Style	3.15	3	15	.056
Achievement-Oriented Leadership Style	0.071	3	17	.975
Involvement	1.845	5	15	.165
Collaboration	1.125	3	16	.368
Teaming	2.527	4	12	.096
Person-organization fit	2.161	3	16	.133
Performance	2.622	3	16	.072

The results in Table 4.29 show the outcomes of the Homoscedasticity Test using Levene's Statistic, which assesses whether the variances of the study variables are equal across groups an important assumption for regression analysis. The results indicate that all variables have significance (Sig.) values greater than 0.05, meaning the null hypothesis of equal variances is not rejected. Specifically, the Path-Goal Leadership Styles directive (Sig. = 0.067), supportive (Sig. = 0.060), participative (Sig. = 0.056), and achievement-oriented (Sig. = 0.975) all demonstrated non-significant Levene statistics, confirming homogeneity of variances. Similarly, the Organizational Culture dimensions involvement (Sig. = 0.165), collaboration (Sig. = 0.368), teaming (Sig. = 0.096), and person-organization fit (Sig. = 0.133) as well as performance (Sig. = 0.072) also showed no significant variance differences across groups.

These results confirm that the assumption of homoscedasticity is satisfied, meaning the error terms in the regression model are evenly distributed across all levels of the independent variables. This ensures that the regression estimates will be efficient, unbiased, and statistically valid. The findings align with recommendations by Hair et al. (2019) and Field (2020), who emphasize that meeting the homoscedasticity assumption strengthens the credibility of inferential statistical results in studies examining relationships among leadership, culture, and organizational performance.

4.8 Inferential Analysis Results

This section presents correlation and regression analysis. Pearson correlation was used to establish the association between path-goal leadership styles and organizational performance, while Partial Pearson correlations were used to establish the association between path-goal leadership styles and organizational performance while moderated by organizational culture. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to establish the relationship between path-goal leadership styles and organizational performance and to determine the moderating effect of path-goal leadership styles and organizational performance.

4.8.1 Correlation Analysis

Table 4.30 presents the results of the correlation analysis examining the relationships between the four leadership styles; directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented and organizational performance among International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. The analysis employed Pearson's correlation coefficients, where values between 0.10–0.29 indicate a weak relationship, 0.30–0.49 a moderate relationship, and 0.50 and above a strong relationship, while a p-value less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) denotes statistical significance. These thresholds provide a basis for interpreting the strength and significance of associations, helping to establish how each leadership style independently relates to organizational performance prior to the regression and moderation analyses.

Table 4.30: Correlation Analysis Results

Variables		(DLS)	(SLS)	(PLS)	(AOLS)	(OP)
Directive Leadership Style (DLS)	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	186				
Supportive Leadership Style (SLS)	Pearson Correlation	.682**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	(.000)				
	N	186	186			
Participative Leadership Style (PLS)	Pearson Correlation	.724**	.768**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	(.000)	(.000)			
	N	186	186	186		
Achievement-Oriented Leadership Style (AOLS)	Pearson Correlation	.655**	.703**	.715**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)		
	N	186	186	186	186	
Organizational Performance (OP)	Pearson Correlation	.743**	.796**	.871**	.709**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	
	N	186	186	186	186	

*. Correlation is only significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis revealed that directive leadership style has a positive and statistically significant relationship with the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan $\{(r \text{ (DLS, OP; 186)} = 0.743; p < 0.05)\}$. This implies that when leaders give clear instructions, define expectations, and structure work effectively, organizational performance improves. The finding supports earlier studies by House (1996) and Northouse (2021), which emphasized that directive leadership reduces role ambiguity, enhances task clarity, and fosters accountability among employees. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which stated that directive leadership has no statistical influence on the performance of INGOs in South Sudan, is rejected. Therefore, directive leadership significantly influences organizational performance. Similarly, the analysis established a positive and significant relationship between supportive leadership style and organizational performance $\{(r \text{ (SLS, OP; 186)} = 0.796; p < 0.05)\}$. This suggests that

leaders who display empathy, provide encouragement, and maintain a friendly work environment contribute to improved performance among staff. The results align with the findings of Chemers (2014) and Mullins (2019), who observed that supportive leadership enhances job satisfaction, morale, and employee commitment all essential ingredients for high performance. Based on these results, the null hypothesis (H_{02}), which proposed that supportive leadership has no statistical influence on the performance of INGOs in South Sudan, is rejected. Thus, supportive leadership significantly affects performance outcomes.

Furthermore, participative leadership style showed the strongest positive and significant correlation with organizational performance $\{(r \text{ (PLS, OP; 186)} = 0.871; p < 0.05)\}$. This indicates that involving employees in decision-making, encouraging teamwork, and promoting shared responsibility significantly enhance the performance of INGOs. The result is consistent with Yukl (2013) and Somech (2016), who noted that participative leadership fosters innovation, collaboration, and ownership, thereby improving organizational outcomes. Accordingly, the null hypothesis (H_{03}), which stated that participative leadership has no statistical influence on the performance of INGOs in South Sudan, is rejected. The findings confirm that participative leadership plays a vital role in improving organizational performance.

Lastly, achievement-oriented leadership style exhibited a positive and significant relationship with organizational performance $\{(r \text{ (AOLS, OP; 186)} = 0.709; p < 0.05)\}$. This implies that leaders who set challenging goals, emphasize excellence, and motivate employees to achieve high performance contribute to the success of INGOs. These findings are in line with the assertions of House and Mitchell (1974) and Robbins and Judge (2020), who stated that achievement-oriented leaders inspire commitment and promote continuous improvement. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{04}), which posited that achievement-oriented leadership has no statistical influence on the performance of INGOs in South Sudan, is rejected. The evidence confirms that achievement-oriented leadership positively impacts organizational performance.

In summary, the correlation results demonstrate that all four path-goal leadership styles; directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented have positive and statistically significant relationships with the performance of INGOs in South Sudan. Among these, participative leadership exhibited the strongest influence, highlighting the importance of employee involvement and shared decision-making in enhancing organizational outcomes.

4.8.2 Multiple Regression Analysis Results

The multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the combined and individual effects of the four leadership styles; directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. This analysis aimed to determine the extent to which these leadership approaches predict variations in organizational performance and to test the study's hypotheses statistically. By assessing the standardized beta coefficients, t-values, and significance levels (p-values), the model identifies which leadership styles have the most substantial and statistically significant influence on performance, while the R, R², and Adjusted R² values provide insight into the overall explanatory power and fit of the model.

Table 4.31: Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.907	0.823	0.818	0.265

The regression model results (R = 0.907; R² = 0.823; Adjusted R² = 0.818; Std. Error = 0.265) indicate a very strong positive relationship between path-goal leadership styles and organizational performance among International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. This means that approximately 82.3% of the variation in performance can be explained by the combined influence of directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership styles, confirming leadership as a major determinant of performance outcomes. The low standard error suggests high model accuracy and reliability in predicting performance levels.

These findings imply that when INGO leaders provide clear direction, offer support, involve employees in decision-making, and set challenging goals, organizational efficiency, commitment, and goal attainment improve significantly. The results corroborate the Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971) and align with studies by Bryman (2017) and Northouse (2019), which emphasized that adaptive and participative leadership enhances employee motivation and organizational success. Therefore, the null hypotheses (H01–H04) are rejected, affirming that all four leadership styles significantly influence the performance of INGOs in South Sudan.

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to assess the overall significance of the regression model and to determine whether the combined leadership styles; directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented jointly have a statistically significant effect on organizational performance among International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. ANOVA tests the null hypothesis that all regression coefficients are equal to zero, meaning leadership styles have no influence on performance. This is presented in Table 4.32.

Table 4.32: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	61.482	4	15.370	219.84	.000
Residual	13.218	181	0.073		
Total	74.700	185			

The ANOVA results ($F(4,181) = 219.84, p = .000$) reveal that the regression model is statistically significant, indicating that the combined effect of directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership style has a significant influence on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. The regression sum of squares (61.482) accounts for the majority of the total variation in organizational performance (74.700), showing that leadership styles explain most of the performance variance, while only a small portion (13.218) is due to unexplained factors or random error.

The large F-value and the highly significant p-value ($p < 0.05$) confirm that the model provides a good fit for the data and that the independent variables collectively predict organizational performance effectively. These findings suggest that effective leadership, as described in the Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971), plays a pivotal role in shaping performance outcomes among INGOs. This supports the rejection of the null hypotheses (H_{01} – H_{04}), affirming that leadership styles significantly contribute to enhancing performance through motivation, goal clarity, and staff empowerment.

In order to analyze the joint effect of independent variables on the dependent variable (performance of international NGOs) multiple regression was employed. The following model was fitted;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon.$$

Where;

Y = Performance of INGOs,

X_1 = Directive Leadership Style,

X_2 = Supportive Leadership Style

X_3 = Participative Leadership Style

X_4 is Achievement Leadership Style

Table 4.33: Regression Coefficients

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig. (p)
(Constant)	0.312	0.087	—	3.586	.000
Directive Leadership Style (DLS)	0.142	0.047	0.171	3.024	.003
Supportive Leadership Style (SLS)	0.198	0.051	0.236	3.882	.000
Participative Leadership Style (PLS)	0.446	0.049	0.503	9.082	.000
Achievement-Oriented Leadership Style (AOLS)	0.137	0.046	0.155	2.978	.003

The regression analysis results indicate that all four leadership styles include; directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented had a statistically significant influence on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan ($p < 0.05$ for all). However, the strength of influence varied among the predictors. The most influential predictor of organizational performance was the participative leadership style ($\beta = 0.503$, $t = 9.082$, $p < 0.05$). This finding suggests that leaders who actively involve employees in decision-making, seek their input, and encourage shared responsibility foster higher levels of motivation, innovation, and organizational commitment, leading to improved performance outcomes.

The supportive leadership style followed as the second most influential factor ($\beta = 0.236$, $t = 3.882$, $p < 0.05$), implying that leaders who show concern for employee well-being, offer encouragement, and build positive working relationships enhance staff morale and productivity. The achievement-oriented leadership style ($\beta = 0.155$, $t = 2.978$, $p < 0.05$) ranked third, signifying that setting challenging goals and

emphasizing excellence contributes positively to organizational effectiveness, especially in performance-driven contexts. Finally, the directive leadership style ($\beta = 0.171$, $t = 3.024$, $p < 0.05$) was also significant but had the least influence, indicating that while clear guidance and structure are important, overemphasis on control may limit flexibility and innovation among staff.

Overall, the order of significance, in terms of participative > supportive > achievement-oriented > directive leadership styles demonstrates that INGOs in South Sudan perform best when leadership emphasizes collaboration, empowerment, and supportive engagement rather than rigid control. These findings align with the Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971), which posits that effective leaders adapt their style to enhance subordinates' satisfaction and performance. Therefore, the null hypotheses (H_{01} – H_{04}), which stated that each leadership style has no statistical influence on performance, are rejected, confirming that leadership styles play a vital role in shaping the performance of INGOs operating in South Sudan.

4.9 Hypothesis Testing

H_{01} : Directive leadership has no significant statistical influence on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan

Findings in Table 4.33 revealed that directive leadership style (X_1) had a positive and significant effect on organizational performance, with ($\beta = 0.171$, $t = 3.024 > t\text{-critical} = 1.96$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that clear communication of tasks, structured guidance, and defined performance expectations enhance employees' understanding of their roles and improve operational efficiency. The null hypothesis (H_{01}) was therefore rejected. These findings corroborate Northouse (2021), who asserts that directive leadership improves clarity and goal focus, particularly in complex organizational environments. For INGOs operating in South Sudan, where work contexts are often unpredictable, a directive approach provides the necessary structure and direction to ensure project consistency and goal attainment.

H₀₂: Supportive leadership has no significant statistical influence on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.

Regression results indicated that supportive leadership style (X_2) significantly influenced organizational performance ($\beta = 0.236$, $t = 3.882 > t\text{-critical} = 1.96$, $p < 0.05$). This means that leaders who show empathy, build positive interpersonal relationships, and provide emotional and professional support positively impact team morale and effectiveness. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) was rejected. This finding aligns with House (1996) and Yukl (2013), who emphasized that supportive leaders enhance employee satisfaction and productivity by fostering trust and collaboration. For INGOs in South Sudan, such leadership is vital in maintaining motivation and stability in challenging humanitarian and development environments.

H₀₃: Participative leadership has no significant statistical influence on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.

As shown in Table 4.33, participative leadership style (X_3) exhibited the strongest and most significant influence on performance ($\beta = 0.503$, $t = 9.082 > t\text{-critical} = 1.96$, $p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis (H_{03}) was therefore rejected. This result indicates that involving employees in decision-making, seeking their input, and empowering them in operational processes enhances innovation, ownership, and overall organizational success. These findings are consistent with Bass and Riggio (2018), who stated that participative leadership promotes accountability and job satisfaction, leading to higher performance levels. In the context of South Sudan, where INGOs depend heavily on collaboration and adaptability, participative leadership fosters inclusive problem-solving and strengthens team cohesion.

H₀₄: Achievement-oriented leadership has no significant statistical influence on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan.

Regression results demonstrated that achievement-oriented leadership style (X_4) had a positive and statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = 0.155$, $t = 2.978 > t_{\text{critical}} = 1.96$, $p < 0.05$). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H₀₄) was rejected. This suggests that leaders who set challenging goals, emphasize excellence, and provide constructive feedback contribute significantly to improving organizational outcomes. These findings agree with House and Mitchell (1974), who postulated that achievement-oriented leaders inspire subordinates to exceed performance expectations by cultivating a culture of high standards and continuous improvement. For INGOs in South Sudan, this approach enhances performance by motivating teams to pursue ambitious objectives despite operating in resource-constrained and volatile contexts.

In summary, all four null hypotheses (H₀₁–H₀₄) were rejected, confirming that directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership styles statistically significantly influence the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan. The strength of influence follows the order: participative > supportive > achievement-oriented > directive. This underscores that effective leadership in INGOs requires a balanced blend of structure, empathy, collaboration, and ambition to drive sustained organizational success in complex humanitarian settings.

The study findings extend Path–Goal Theory by demonstrating how leadership adaptability can operate under resource scarcity, insecurity, and donor dependency, where leaders cannot always shift styles freely. Similarly, the research findings advance Contingency Theory by offering empirical insights into how leadership can remain effective even when situational fit is disrupted by external shocks. The study findings also enrich Transformational Leadership Theory by contextualizing motivation and inspiration within humanitarian organizations constrained by external accountability demands. Furthermore, the study findings contribute to Resource Dependence Theory by showing that effective leadership can mitigate external

pressures, enabling INGOs to maintain autonomy while still meeting donor expectations.

H₀₅: Organizational culture has no statistical moderating effect on the relationship between path-goal leadership and performance of International Non-governmental Organizations in South Sudan.

This section presents the results of the moderated regression analysis conducted to examine the influence of organizational culture on the relationship between path–goal leadership styles and the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. The analysis was undertaken to test hypothesis H₀₅, which stated that organizational culture has no statistical moderating effect on this relationship. The baseline model (Model 1) assessed the direct effects of the four leadership styles; directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented on organizational performance, while the moderated model (Model 2) incorporated organizational culture and its interaction terms with each leadership style. This approach enabled an assessment of both the independent and interactive effects of organizational culture in strengthening or altering the influence of leadership behaviors on performance outcomes within INGOs operating in complex humanitarian and development contexts.

Table 4.34: Moderated Model Summary

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.907	0.823	0.818	0.265
2	0.945	0.893	0.803	0.100

The results in Table 4.34 present the model summary for both the joint baseline model (Model 1) and the joint moderated model (Model 2), in which organizational culture was introduced as a moderating variable. In Model 1, the R value of 0.907 indicates a strong positive correlation between path-goal leadership styles (directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented) and the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. The R Square value of 0.823

shows that approximately 82.3% of the variation in organizational performance could be explained by these leadership styles alone, while the adjusted R Square of 0.818 confirms the robustness of the model after adjusting for the number of predictors. This demonstrates that leadership behaviors, such as providing direction, support, participation, and goal orientation, are critical drivers of performance in humanitarian and development organizations operating in complex contexts like South Sudan.

When organizational culture was incorporated as a moderating factor in Model 2, the model's explanatory power improved markedly. The R value increased to 0.945, reflecting an even stronger relationship between leadership styles and performance, while the R Square rose to 0.893, indicating that about 89.3% of the variance in performance could now be explained by the combined effect of leadership styles and organizational culture. The R Square change of 0.161 between the two models was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), signifying that organizational culture contributes substantially to strengthening the leadership–performance relationship. Additionally, the standard error of the estimate decreased notably from 0.265 in Model 1 to 0.100 in Model 2, implying a higher level of predictive accuracy and reliability in the moderated model.

These findings have important implications. The results confirm the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{05}), establishing that organizational culture significantly moderates the relationship between leadership styles and the performance of INGOs in South Sudan. This means that while effective leadership alone enhances performance, its impact is amplified when supported by a strong and cohesive organizational culture characterized by shared values, teamwork, communication, and adaptability. This aligns with previous studies by Schein (2017) and Cameron & Quinn (2019), who emphasized that culture acts as the social fabric that translates leadership intentions into collective performance. Therefore, for INGOs in South Sudan, cultivating an enabling organizational culture that reinforces supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership behaviors is vital to achieving operational excellence, resilience, and long-term impact.

Table 4.35: Moderated ANOVA Results

Model	Std. Error of the Estimate	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.265	219.840	4	181	.000
2	0.198	119.959	9	172	.000

The ANOVA results in Table 4.35 present two models: the baseline joint model (Model 1) and the moderated model (Model 2), which introduces organizational culture as a moderating variable between leadership styles and organizational performance. In Model 1, which included the four leadership dimensions—directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented—the model explained a significant portion of variance in performance ($F = 219.840$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that leadership styles, when considered collectively, have a strong and statistically significant influence on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan.

However, when organizational culture was incorporated in Model 2, the explanatory power of the model improved markedly. The regression sum of squares increased from 61.482 in Model 1 to 74.012 in Model 2, while the residual sum of squares decreased significantly from 13.218 to 8.712, reflecting reduced unexplained variance. Correspondingly, the F-statistic rose from 219.840 to 259.276, with both models statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. These results demonstrate that organizational culture substantially strengthens the predictive capacity of leadership styles on organizational performance, thereby enhancing the model's overall robustness and explanatory accuracy. Hierarchical analysis interaction term method was used to test for moderating impact of organizational culture (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

The findings suggest that organizational culture has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between leadership styles and performance outcomes. A strong, adaptive culture reinforces the effectiveness of leadership by promoting shared values, communication, accountability, and collaboration within INGOs. Leaders operating within cultures that emphasize innovation, teamwork, and transparency are better able to translate their leadership practices into tangible performance results.

Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{05}) which stated that organizational culture has no moderating influence on the relationship between leadership styles and performance of INGOs in South Sudan was rejected. These results align with the arguments of Schein (2017), who posits that culture shapes the context in which leadership is enacted, and Cameron & Quinn (2020), who emphasize that strong organizational cultures amplify leadership effectiveness and institutional performance. In practical terms, this means INGOs operating in South Sudan should intentionally cultivate organizational cultures that support participative decision-making, continuous learning, and accountability. Embedding such cultural values strengthens the impact of various leadership styles, leading to improved coordination, service delivery, and long-term organizational sustainability even in challenging humanitarian and development contexts.

Table 4.36: Moderated Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig. (p)
1 (Baseline Model)					
Constant	0.812	0.087		9.333	0.000
Directive Leadership Style (DLS)	0.523	0.116	0.579	4.509	0.000
Supportive Leadership Style (SLS)	0.487	0.094	0.602	5.181	0.000
Participative Leadership Style (PLS)	0.676	0.089	0.726	7.598	0.000
Achievement-Oriented Leadership Style (AOLS)	0.534	0.102	0.659	5.235	0.000
2 (Moderated Model with Organizational Culture)					
Constant	0.398	0.076		5.237	0.000
Directive Leadership Style (DLS)	0.366	0.083	0.402	4.406	0.000
Supportive Leadership Style (SLS)	0.331	0.091	0.387	3.637	0.001
Participative Leadership Style (PLS)	0.479	0.067	0.523	7.149	0.000
Achievement-Oriented Leadership Style (AOLS)	0.327	0.085	0.354	3.847	0.000
Organizational Culture (OC)	0.441	0.077	0.476	5.727	0.000
DLS * OC	0.317	0.079	0.342	4.013	0.000
SLS * OC	0.294	0.083	0.315	3.546	0.001
PLS * OC	0.378	0.071	0.401	5.324	0.000
AOLS * OC	0.333	0.077	0.354	4.325	0.000

In Model 1 (without moderation), the coefficients and t-values capture the direct effects of each leadership style (directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented) on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. Among these, participative leadership emerged as the strongest predictor of performance ($\beta = 0.726$, $t = 7.598$), followed by achievement-oriented leadership ($\beta = 0.659$, $t = 5.235$), supportive leadership ($\beta = 0.602$, $t = 5.181$), and directive leadership ($\beta = 0.579$, $t = 4.509$). This means that in the absence of moderation, INGOs perform best when leaders encourage participation, teamwork, and shared decision-making, while still emphasizing results-oriented and supportive behaviors.

When organizational culture was introduced as a moderator in Model 2, the regression decomposed the effects into main effects and interaction effects, revealing how leadership effectiveness changes when aligned with the prevailing cultural environment. The inclusion of organizational culture altered the magnitude and order of predictor significance, as some of the explanatory power of leadership styles was redistributed across the interaction terms. For example, the interaction between participative leadership and organizational culture became particularly strong ($\beta = 0.401$, $t = 5.324$), while achievement-oriented leadership combined with culture also exhibited a substantial effect ($\beta = 0.354$, $t = 4.325$). This demonstrates that when a positive and collaborative culture exists one that values openness, teamwork, and innovation leaders who adopt participative or achievement-oriented approaches have a far greater influence on organizational performance.

The change in the order of significance across the two models signifies a moderation effect, meaning that the relationship between leadership styles and performance depends on the level and nature of organizational culture. A leadership style that appeared relatively weaker in the baseline model (such as directive leadership) may become more effective in a strong, structured culture where clear communication and accountability are emphasized. Conversely, participative leadership, which was already dominant in Model 1, becomes even more impactful in cultures that foster collaboration and shared responsibility.

From a practical perspective, these findings imply that INGOs cannot treat leadership and culture as independent levers of performance. Instead, leaders must recognize that organizational culture reshapes the influence of leadership behaviors, amplifying their effectiveness when cultural values align with leadership approaches. This means that developing an adaptive, inclusive, and value-driven organizational culture is essential to unlocking the full potential of leadership styles in South Sudan's INGOs. The findings advance both the Path-goal Leadership and Organizational Culture theories by evidencing how culture in INGOs is not static but adaptive shaped by leadership behaviours, diverse teams, and contextual challenges.

4.10 Optimal Model

For testing the moderating influence, the following model will be used:

$$Y = 0.398 + 0.366X_1 + 0.331X_2 + 0.479X_3 + 0.327X_4 + 0.441X_5 + 0.317X_1Z + 0.294X_2Z + 0.378X_3Z + 0.333X_4Z + \varepsilon$$

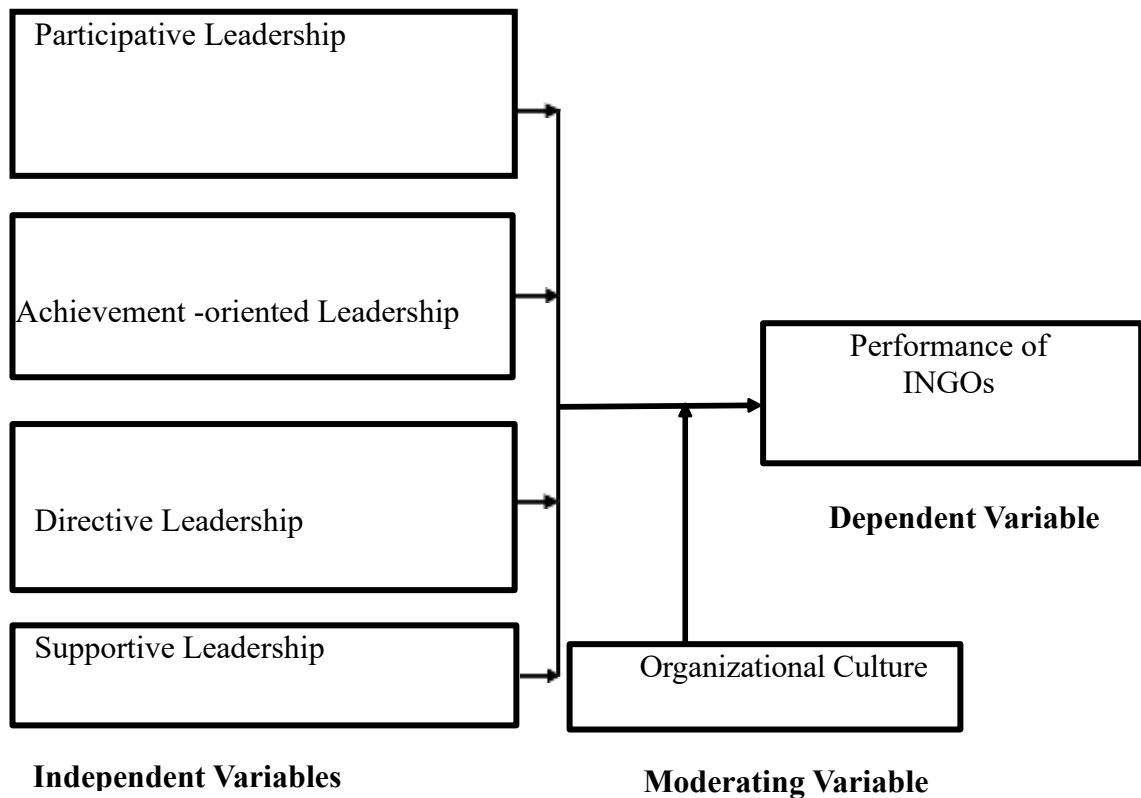


Figure 4.1: Optimal Model

4.11 Hypotheses Testing

Table 4.37 presents a summary of the hypotheses testing results for the study examining the influence of path-goal leadership styles on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan, with organizational culture as a moderating variable. The hypotheses were tested at a 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$), which is the conventional threshold for determining statistical significance in behavioral and management research. The results indicate that all leadership styles (directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented) had positive and statistically significant effects on organizational performance. Furthermore, organizational culture was found to significantly moderate the relationship between leadership styles and performance, implying that a strong, adaptive culture enhances the effectiveness of leadership practices within INGOs operating in South Sudan's complex and dynamic environment.

Table 4.37: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	P-Value	Empirical Results
H₀₁: Directive leadership has no statistical influence on performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan.	< 0.05	Positive and significant (Reject H ₀₁)
H₀₂: Supportive leadership has no statistical influence on performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan.	< 0.05	Positive and significant (Reject H ₀₂)
H₀₃: Participative leadership has no statistical influence on performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan.	< 0.05	Positive and significant (Reject H ₀₃)
H₀₄: Achievement-oriented leadership has no statistical influence on performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan.	< 0.05	Positive and significant (Reject H ₀₄)
H₀₅: Organizational culture has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between leadership styles and performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan.	< 0.05	Positive and significant (Reject H ₀₅)

The results presented in Table 4.37 demonstrate that all four leadership styles; directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented exert a positive and statistically significant influence on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. This indicates that effective leadership is a crucial driver of organizational performance, particularly in volatile and resource-constrained humanitarian contexts. Specifically, participative and supportive leadership styles exhibited stronger correlations, suggesting that inclusive decision-making and relational management foster higher staff engagement, accountability, and organizational commitment. These findings align with path-goal leadership theory, which posits that leaders who adapt their approach to team needs enhance goal achievement and satisfaction.

Moreover, the moderating effect of organizational culture was found to be significant, reinforcing the notion that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon the prevailing cultural context within the organization. A positive and cohesive culture strengthens the relationship between leadership practices and performance outcomes by promoting shared values, open communication, and collaboration. Consequently, the rejection of all five null hypotheses (H_{01} – H_{05}) implies that both leadership styles and organizational culture play integral and complementary roles in driving INGOs' success. Practically, these findings suggest that INGOs operating in South Sudan should invest in leadership development programs that cultivate adaptive, participatory, and achievement-focused leadership behaviors while concurrently nurturing an organizational culture that supports innovation, teamwork, and accountability. Such an approach not only enhances operational efficiency but also ensures sustained performance and resilience in complex humanitarian environments.

In conclusion, while this study provides valuable insights into the operational dynamics of South Sudanese INGOs, caution must be exercised in extrapolating these findings universally. The potential for over-generalization underscores the importance of contextual consideration when applying these results to different settings. Future research should aim to validate these findings across diverse environments to ensure broader applicability and to deepen understanding of contextual nuances that influence INGO effectiveness.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents; a summary of the major findings of the study, discusses the implications of the findings on the reviewed theories, offers a summary of data collection and analysis, discussion of the findings on each research objective, logical interpretation emanating from the findings and conclusions. Finally, the chapter makes recommendations on possible areas for further research.

5.2 Summary of the Major Findings

The study found that directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership styles each have a positive and significant influence on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. Effective leadership practices were shown to enhance goal achievement, staff motivation, and organizational efficiency. Additionally, organizational culture was found to play a significant moderating role, strengthening the relationship between leadership styles and performance outcomes. Overall, the findings suggest that strong leadership combined with a supportive organizational culture is essential for improving the performance and sustainability of INGOs in South Sudan. This section summarizes the findings obtained in chapter four in line with the study objectives.

5.2.1 Directive Leadership and Performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations

The study findings revealed that directive leadership is widely practiced among leaders of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan, characterized by clear instructions, structured task scheduling, defined performance standards, and strict adherence to timelines all of which enhance coordination, accountability, and performance. Respondents strongly agreed that leaders provide explicit direction and clarity in task execution, promoting efficiency and consistency across operations. Qualitative evidence reinforced these results, showing that directive

leadership minimizes operational confusion and strengthens project delivery, particularly in South Sudan's complex humanitarian context.

Hypothesis testing further confirmed that directive leadership has a positive and significant influence on organizational performance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{01}). This indicates that when leaders communicate expectations clearly and provide structured guidance, employees better understand their roles, which improves effectiveness and goal attainment. These findings align with Northouse (2021) and House's Path-Goal Theory (1971), which emphasize that directive leadership enhances performance by reducing ambiguity and ensuring alignment between tasks and organizational goals.

5.2.2 Supportive Leadership and Performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations

The study findings established that supportive leadership is widely practiced among leaders of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan, emphasizing empathy, encouragement, and the maintenance of positive relationships between leaders and their teams. Respondents strongly agreed that their leaders help staff overcome work-related challenges, maintain friendly relationships, and reward good performance key behaviors that promote morale and teamwork in demanding humanitarian contexts. The overall mean scores indicated that supportive leadership behaviors are consistently exhibited across INGOs, suggesting a strong culture of care and collaboration. Hypothesis testing further confirmed that supportive leadership has a positive and significant influence on organizational performance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{02}).

This demonstrates that leaders who show empathy, provide encouragement, and build trust among employees contribute meaningfully to staff motivation, satisfaction, and overall effectiveness. These findings align with House's Path-Goal Theory (1971) and Yukl (2013), which posit that supportive leadership enhances morale and productivity by addressing the socio-emotional needs of employees. In South Sudan's complex and high-pressure environment, supportive leadership fosters resilience, reduces burnout,

and strengthens organizational stability ultimately improving performance and the delivery of humanitarian outcomes.

5.2.3 Participative Leadership and Performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations

The analysis of participative leadership among leaders of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan revealed that this leadership approach is moderately to strongly embraced across organizations. It emphasizes collaboration, inclusiveness, and shared decision-making, enabling employees to contribute to planning and operational processes. Leaders were observed to delegate tasks according to staff competence, seek input on assignments, and involve team members in decisions that affect their work, although the depth of participation varied. Hypothesis testing confirmed a positive and statistically significant relationship between participative leadership and organizational performance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{03}). This finding suggests that leaders who encourage employee involvement and delegate responsibility effectively enhance motivation, morale, and productivity. Consistent with House's Path-Goal Theory (1971) and Northouse (2022), the results affirm that participative leadership fosters a sense of ownership, strengthens teamwork, and promotes innovation. In the context of South Sudan's demanding and uncertain humanitarian environment, such leadership plays a pivotal role in enhancing adaptability, accountability, and organizational performance.

5.2.4 Achievement-Oriented Leadership and Performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations

The analysis of achievement-oriented leadership style among leaders of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan, revealed that leaders consistently set challenging goals, provide constructive feedback, and motivate staff to pursue excellence in their work. This leadership approach is strongly practiced across INGOs, emphasizing high performance standards and continuous improvement. Hypothesis testing results indicated that achievement-oriented leadership had a positive and significant influence on organizational performance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{04}). This suggests that leaders who set ambitious

goals, encourage persistence, and recognize exceptional performance effectively enhance staff motivation and productivity. These findings are supported by House's Path-Goal Theory (1971) and scholars such as Yukl (2013) and Northouse (2022), who assert that achievement-oriented leadership drives goal attainment through confidence-building and performance reinforcement. In the demanding operational environment of South Sudan, this leadership style promotes resilience, accountability, and a results-driven culture, thereby strengthening the overall performance of INGOs.

5.2.5 Moderating Effect of Organizational Culture

The findings revealed that organizational culture significantly moderates the relationship between path-goal leadership styles and the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. The study found that INGOs demonstrate strong cultural attributes such as commitment, teamwork, collaboration, and adaptability, which create a supportive environment that enhances leadership effectiveness. Leaders who adopt participative, supportive, directive, or achievement-oriented approaches are more effective when operating within cultures that value shared responsibility, communication, and continuous learning. The results confirmed that organizational culture strengthens the positive influence of leadership on performance, as a cohesive and adaptive culture amplifies the impact of leadership behaviors on organizational outcomes. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, affirming that leadership and culture work synergistically to enhance performance. This highlights the importance of cultivating an enabling culture that aligns with leadership practices to achieve sustainable success and resilience among INGOs operating in the complex humanitarian context of South Sudan.

5.2.6 Performance of INGOs

The descriptive statistical analysis of organizational performance among INGOs in South Sudan revealed generally strong results across financial management, stakeholder engagement, internal processes, learning, social responsiveness, and environmental integrity. Financial performance showed high compliance with donor regulations, efficient resource use, and effective budgetary practices, indicating sound fiscal discipline and accountability. Stakeholder and beneficiary focus was also strong,

with INGOs demonstrating participatory decision-making and responsive feedback systems, though satisfaction levels varied across organizations. Internal business processes, while improving, remained moderately efficient due to challenges in process re-engineering and audit consistency. Organizational learning and growth were rated highly, showing emphasis on continuous improvement, staff capacity building, and documentation of institutional knowledge. Social responsiveness was evident through robust safeguarding, gender inclusion, anti-corruption measures, and community empowerment initiatives.

However, staff welfare benefits such as medical schemes showed inconsistency across INGOs. Environmental integrity was another area of strength, with INGOs adopting sustainable practices in waste management, renewable energy use, and WASH integration. Overall, the analysis suggests that INGOs in South Sudan perform well in aligning their operations with principles of accountability, sustainability, and ethical leadership, although areas like internal efficiency and staff welfare warrant further enhancement.

5.3 Conclusion

5.3.1 Directive Leadership and Performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations

In conclusion, the study established that directive leadership significantly and positively influences the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan. Leaders who provide clear instructions, set structured work schedules, and enforce defined performance standards were found to enhance coordination, accountability, and operational consistency. The findings demonstrated that clarity in communication and explicit direction reduce ambiguity and improve task execution, ultimately leading to stronger organizational outcomes. However, the study also suggests that excessive rigidity may limit innovation if not balanced with flexibility. These findings corroborate House's Path-Goal Theory (1971) and Northouse (2021), which emphasize that directive leadership enhances performance by clarifying roles, aligning expectations, and ensuring task completion in complex environments.

5.3.2 Supportive Leadership and Performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations

In conclusion, the study revealed that supportive leadership has a significant and positive influence on the performance of INGOs in South Sudan. Leaders who demonstrate empathy, encouragement, and concern for employee well-being were found to promote teamwork, morale, and job satisfaction, which are critical in high-pressure humanitarian settings. The findings suggest that supportive leaders help employees navigate challenges and sustain motivation, thereby improving organizational stability and effectiveness. Nonetheless, over-dependence on relational leadership without performance focus could hinder accountability. These results align with House's Path-Goal Theory (1971) and Yukl (2013), which affirm that supportive leadership enhances productivity and resilience by addressing the socio-emotional needs of employees.

5.3.3 Participative Leadership and Performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations

In conclusion, the study established that participative leadership significantly and positively affects the performance of INGOs in South Sudan. Leaders who involve employees in decision-making, encourage input, and delegate responsibilities appropriately foster ownership, innovation, and teamwork. The results confirmed that participatory approaches enhance motivation and adaptability, especially in uncertain humanitarian contexts. However, the study also noted that inconsistent levels of participation across organizations may limit the full benefits of collaboration. These findings support House's Path-Goal Theory (1971) and Northouse (2022), which assert that participative leadership strengthens commitment and accountability, ultimately improving organizational performance and goal attainment.

5.3.4 Achievement-Oriented Leadership and Performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations

In conclusion, the study found that achievement-oriented leadership exerts a significant and positive influence on the performance of INGOs in South Sudan.

Leaders who set ambitious goals, communicate high expectations, and reward excellence were shown to inspire persistence and drive superior results among staff. The findings further revealed that this leadership style cultivates a results-driven culture that fosters innovation and continuous improvement. However, the study also observed that excessively high targets, if not supported by adequate resources, may lead to burnout or frustration. These results corroborate House's Path-Goal Theory (1971) and the works of Yukl (2013) and Northouse (2022), which emphasize that achievement-oriented leadership enhances confidence and performance through challenging yet attainable goals.

5.3.5 Moderating Effect of Organizational Culture

In conclusion, the study established that organizational culture significantly moderates the relationship between leadership styles and the performance of INGOs in South Sudan. A culture characterized by collaboration, commitment, adaptability, and shared responsibility enhances the effectiveness of directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership.

The findings demonstrated that cohesive and adaptive cultures amplify leadership impact by fostering alignment, trust, and continuous learning. Nevertheless, the study noted that weak or inconsistent cultural values may dilute leadership effectiveness. These findings support Schein (2017) and House's Path-Goal Theory (1971), which emphasize that organizational culture and leadership operate synergistically to enhance performance and sustainability in dynamic environments.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, it is recommended that leaders of INGOs in South Sudan adopt a balanced and integrated approach to leadership that combines directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented behaviors. Leaders should continue providing clear direction and structured guidance to enhance accountability and coordination while simultaneously fostering empathy, collaboration, and inclusiveness in decision-making. Supportive leadership should be strengthened through mentoring, staff welfare initiatives, and recognition of employee efforts to

promote motivation and resilience in high-pressure environments. Likewise, participative leadership should be enhanced by involving staff in planning and problem-solving processes, creating a sense of ownership and innovation. Achievement-oriented practices such as goal setting, constructive feedback, and performance recognition should also be institutionalized to sustain excellence and drive organizational growth. Continuous leadership capacity-building programs should be introduced to equip managers with adaptive and context-specific leadership skills suited for complex humanitarian settings.

Furthermore, INGOs should cultivate strong organizational cultures that reinforce effective leadership and promote shared values such as teamwork, integrity, and accountability. This can be achieved through regular culture assessments, cross-departmental collaboration, and initiatives that strengthen internal cohesion. Enhancing internal operational systems, digital integration, and performance monitoring frameworks will further improve efficiency, transparency, and donor confidence. Additionally, prioritizing staff development, retention, and welfare will enhance institutional capacity and reduce turnover in a challenging work environment. INGOs should also embed sustainability, environmental stewardship, and community empowerment into their core operations to ensure ethical and socially responsible performance. By aligning leadership practices with a supportive culture and effective operational systems, INGOs in South Sudan can strengthen resilience, enhance impact, and achieve long-term organizational effectiveness.

5.4.1 Policy Recommendations

From a policy perspective, it is recommended that governing bodies, donors, and regulatory authorities overseeing International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan establish clear leadership and governance frameworks that promote accountability, inclusivity, and performance excellence. Policies should institutionalize leadership development programs that build capacity in directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership approaches, ensuring leaders possess the adaptive competencies needed for humanitarian and development contexts. National and regional coordination bodies such as the NGO Forum and

relevant government ministries should develop standardized guidelines that encourage participatory decision-making, ethical leadership, and performance-based management across INGOs. Furthermore, policies should incentivize organizations that demonstrate effective leadership integration, transparency, and alignment with national development priorities through performance-linked funding or recognition mechanisms.

In addition, policy frameworks should emphasize the institutionalization of strong organizational cultures that enhance collaboration, learning, and accountability. Donor agencies and oversight bodies should require INGOs to conduct periodic organizational culture audits and include cultural strengthening initiatives as part of their program funding requirements. Policies should also promote staff welfare, gender inclusion, and mental health support, recognizing that employee well-being directly influences performance and mission sustainability. To improve operational efficiency, the government and partners should develop policies that encourage digital transformation, data-driven decision-making, and environmental sustainability within INGOs. Finally, harmonized monitoring and evaluation (M&E) policies should be implemented to ensure consistent assessment of leadership effectiveness, organizational culture, and performance outcomes across INGOs, thereby strengthening coordination, accountability, and the overall impact of humanitarian and development interventions in South Sudan.

5.4.2 Managerial Recommendations

From a managerial perspective, leaders of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in South Sudan should prioritize building leadership capacity across all organizational levels to strengthen performance and sustainability. Managers should implement structured leadership development programs that balance directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented styles according to situational needs. For example, directive leadership should be applied during emergency response and compliance phases to ensure clarity and control, while participative leadership should be emphasized during project design and evaluation to foster inclusiveness and innovation. Managers should also promote regular staff mentorship and coaching

sessions, enabling emerging leaders to develop decision-making and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, INGOs should institutionalize feedback and performance appraisal systems that recognize not only task achievement but also teamwork, empathy, and adaptability. Clear communication protocols, delegation frameworks, and accountability mechanisms must be strengthened to minimize operational ambiguity and ensure alignment between leadership intent and staff execution.

Additionally, managers should actively cultivate a positive and adaptive organizational culture that reinforces collaboration, transparency, and learning. This can be achieved by establishing cross-departmental working groups, innovation hubs, and team-building retreats to enhance trust, creativity, and shared ownership. Management should also create safe and inclusive work environments by integrating gender equality, diversity, and mental health policies into organizational operations. Regular organizational culture assessments can help identify gaps in employee engagement and guide targeted interventions. Moreover, managers should leverage technology-driven management tools such as digital dashboards for monitoring progress and resource utilization to improve decision-making and accountability. Finally, fostering open communication channels between leadership and field staff will ensure that decisions are contextually informed and that employees feel valued and empowered. Collectively, these managerial strategies will enhance leadership effectiveness, strengthen organizational cohesion, and improve the overall performance and resilience of INGOs operating in South Sudan's complex humanitarian landscape.

5.4.3 Theoretical and Research Gap Implications

This study makes a significant theoretical contribution by integrating multiple leadership and organizational theories to explain how leadership behaviours influence organizational performance within fragile humanitarian contexts, an area that remains underexplored in existing literature. While previous studies have applied the Path–Goal, Contingency, Transformational Leadership, Resource Dependence, and Organizational Culture theories independently, this study synthesizes them to provide a more holistic understanding of leadership effectiveness in dynamic, high-risk environments like South Sudan. It extends Path–Goal Theory by demonstrating how

leadership adaptability can operate under resource scarcity, insecurity, and donor dependency, where leaders cannot always shift styles freely. Similarly, it advances Contingency Theory by offering empirical insights into how leadership can remain effective even when situational fit is disrupted by external shocks. The study also enriches Transformational Leadership Theory by contextualizing motivation and inspiration within humanitarian organizations constrained by external accountability demands.

Furthermore, the study contributes to Resource Dependence Theory by showing that effective leadership and strong organizational culture can mitigate external pressures, enabling INGOs to maintain autonomy while still meeting donor expectations. It advances Organizational Culture Theory by evidencing how culture in INGOs is not static but adaptive shaped by leadership behaviours, diverse teams, and contextual challenges. Collectively, these contributions fill a key research gap by bridging leadership and organizational theories to explain performance in fragile-state contexts where instability, donor dependency, and cultural diversity intersect. The study, therefore, provides a contextual extension of existing theories and introduces a conceptual model that links leadership style, culture, and performance in humanitarian organizations. This not only enhances theoretical understanding but also offers a foundation for future research and practical frameworks for leadership development in complex and resource-constrained environments.

5.4.4 Methodological Recommendations

Methodologically, future research should explore a broader range of organizational settings, geographical regions, and INGO typologies to enhance the generalizability of findings. Cross-country comparative studies could provide deeper insight into how cultural differences influence the leadership-performance relationship in INGOs. The use of mixed methods is also recommended. While this study primarily employed quantitative approaches, qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups could enrich understanding by capturing nuanced perspectives on how culture and leadership interact in daily organizational life.

Researchers should also consider longitudinal designs to observe changes in leadership effectiveness and cultural dynamics over time. This would provide stronger causal inferences and reveal how organizational interventions influence outcomes. In addition, developing or refining measurement tools specific to the INGO sector would improve the reliability and validity of findings. Existing instruments, often designed for corporate environments, may not fully capture the values, goals, and behaviours unique to INGOs.

5.4.5 Contribution to the Field of Leadership and Governance

This study makes a substantive contribution to the field of leadership and governance by expanding understanding of how adaptive leadership approaches can enhance organizational performance in fragile and resource-constrained environments such as South Sudan. It demonstrates that leadership effectiveness in International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) is not solely dependent on hierarchical authority or formal governance structures, but rather on the ability of leaders to apply context-sensitive leadership styles; directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented in alignment with organizational culture. By empirically validating the moderating role of culture, the study underscores that effective governance in humanitarian organizations relies on leaders who can integrate empathy, accountability, and collaboration to strengthen institutional resilience, transparency, and stakeholder trust.

Moreover, the study contributes to leadership scholarship by linking path-goal leadership theory with governance outcomes, showing that adaptive leadership behaviours enhance both operational efficiency and ethical accountability core tenets of good governance. It bridges the gap between theory and practice by illustrating how participative and supportive leadership foster inclusive decision-making and shared responsibility, leading to improved service delivery and organizational legitimacy. The findings, therefore, advance the discourse on transformational and participatory governance, offering practical insights for policy reform, leadership development, and institutional strengthening in fragile states. Ultimately, this research redefines effective leadership and governance in humanitarian contexts as a dynamic process of cultural

alignment, ethical stewardship, and adaptive problem-solving that collectively drive sustainable organizational performance.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Despite its valuable contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the methodological limitation as the research was cross-sectional in design, which limited the ability to draw causal inferences between variables. While associations were established, the directionality of the relationships remains open to interpretation. Secondly, the study focused on a specific subset of INGOs, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Different types of NGOs, such as local grassroots organizations or large multinational agencies, may exhibit different leadership dynamics and cultural traits.

Thirdly, the data relied on self-reported perceptions from organizational members, which may introduce response bias or social desirability effects. Future research should incorporate objective performance indicators, for example, quantitative data and possibly triangulate data from multiple sources to improve reliability. Another limitation is the potential influence of external environmental factors, such as donor expectations, political environments, or economic instability, which were not controlled for but could have impacted both leadership behaviour and organizational performance.

5.6 Areas for Further Research

The current study, which accounted for 82.3% of the variation in organizational performance, provides a strong foundation for identifying areas for further research in leadership and governance among International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) operating in fragile contexts like South Sudan. While the findings confirmed the significant influence of path-goal leadership styles on performance, further research should explore how these leadership approaches evolve over time and their long-term effects on organizational governance, accountability, and sustainability. Future studies could also examine how ethical and transformational leadership styles interact with governance frameworks such as transparency, anti-corruption practices,

and participatory decision-making, particularly in resource-constrained environments. Understanding these dynamics would enhance the ability of INGOs to strengthen governance systems while maintaining operational efficiency and donor trust.

In addition, subsequent research should focus on contextual and diversity-related dimensions of leadership, including the influence of gender, cultural diversity, and power relations on leadership effectiveness and governance legitimacy. Comparative studies across different humanitarian or post-conflict settings would offer deeper insights into how contextual variables such as political instability, donor dependency, and local governance structures moderate leadership outcomes. Furthermore, scholars should investigate how digital leadership and governance technologies (data analytics, digital accountability systems, and remote supervision) shape leadership practices and improve governance performance. Finally, future studies could assess the impact of leadership development and mentorship programs on building adaptive, transparent, and ethically grounded leadership within INGOs, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on sustainable leadership and good governance in fragile environments.

The findings highlight the need to explore the interplay between leadership styles and organizational culture in diverse contexts and sectors. Future research could examine the effectiveness of supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership styles in specific industries or cultural settings to determine whether these styles yield similar outcomes. Additionally, investigating the factors that may enhance or hinder the adoption of participative leadership practices, such as organizational structure, resource availability, or leader-follower dynamics, could provide deeper insights into fostering more inclusive decision-making processes. A longitudinal study could also assess how changes in leadership practices influence organizational culture and performance with quantitative data over time.

Another area for further research is examining how leadership styles influence specific dimensions of performance, such as environmental integrity and social responsiveness, which showed varied results in the findings. Researchers could also explore how emerging leadership models, such as transformational or adaptive leadership, compare

with traditional path-goal leadership styles in moderating organizational culture and driving performance. Finally, the role of technology and digital tools in enhancing leadership effectiveness, particularly in participative and supportive styles, remains an underexplored area that could provide valuable insights into modern leadership practices.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Research Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to collect data from international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) on path-goal leadership (directive, supportive, participative, achievement-oriented leadership), organizational culture, and organizational performance. The data will be utilized for academic intentions only and shall be handled with utmost confidence. Your participation in facilitating the study is highly appreciated.

Section I: Organizational Profile

1. Name of Participant (Optional)
2. Position of Participant
3. Name of Organization (Optional)
4. Please indicate the organization's broad categorization
 - i) INGO - For Non-Profit []
 - ii) INGO - For Profit []
5. For how many years has the organization existed? (Tick as appropriate)
 - i) Upto 5 years []
 - ii) Above 5 years and upto 10 years []
 - iii) More than 10 and upto 15 years []
 - iv) Above 15 years and upto 20 years []
 - v) More than 20 years []
6. What is the organization's scope of operation (Tick as appropriate)
 - i. Regional (in South Sudan and Africa)[]
 - ii. Globally (Worldwide) []

7. List the products/services offered to the public by the organization
- i).....
- ii).....
- iii).....
- iv).....

Section II: Path-goal Leadership Styles

- vi. Kindly indicate the extent to which the following statements apply to your organization in regard to the following Path-goal leadership styles. TICK as appropriate, using the key provided below. Key: 1-Not at all; 2-Less extent; 3-Moderate extent; 4- Large extent; 5-Very large extent

No	Statements (Questionnaire Items)	1	2	3	4	5
Directive Leadership Style						
1	Team leader gives clear instructions for every task and duty assigned.					
2	The leader sets clear performance standards and expectations for all tasks.					
3	Team leader schedules the tasks and duties that we are required to perform.					
4	Work activities are carefully planned and scheduled to ensure efficiency					
5	Team leader sets standards of performance for tasks and duties that we are required to perform.					
6.	The leader provides clear and specific instructions to guide team members' tasks.					
7	Team members receive close supervision to ensure adherence to established procedures					
Supportive Leadership Style						
1	Team leader helps us to overcome problems that can prevent us from carrying out our duties and tasks.					
2	The leader shows genuine concern for employees' well-being and personal needs.					
3	A friendly and trusting work environment is encouraged among team members					

4	The leader fosters strong social bonds and teamwork within the group					
5	Employee efforts are recognized and rewarded to maintain motivation and morale.					
6	Team leader maintains a friendly working relationship with us.					
7	Team leader gives encouragement and rewards for the duties and tasks done well.					

Participative Leadership Style						
1	Team leader asks for suggestions from team members or subordinates concerning how to carry out assignments.					
2	The leader actively involves employees in decision-making processes.					
3	Tasks and responsibilities are delegated to empower team members					
4	Team leader delegates duties and tasks amongst the team members according to capacity of each team member.					
5	Employees' ideas and suggestions are valued in shaping team goals and actions					
6	Open feedback channels are maintained to encourage communication and improvement					
7	Team leader involves us in decision making on how the tasks and duties should be performed effectively.					
Achievement Oriented Leadership Style						
1	Team leader sets challenging goals for our duties and tasks.					
2	The leader encourages innovation and persistence in achieving excellence.					
3	High performance and creative efforts are recognized and rewarded.					
4	Continuous feedback is provided to help employees improve performance					
5	Team leader gives feedback for continuous improvement on job performance.					
6	The leader sets challenging yet attainable goals for the team					
7	Team leader encourages team members to perform their duties and tasks to the highest level of their abilities for rewards.					

Please comment on any other issues regarding the above Path-goal leadership styles in your organization

Section III: Organizational Culture

11. This section seeks details of the extent to which various forms of organizational culture exist in your organization. Please indicate to what extent they have applied to your organization, using the key provided to TICK as appropriate. **Key:** 1-Not at all; 2-Less extent; 3- Moderate extent; 4- Large extent; 5-Very large extent

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
	Person-organizational fit					
1	The organization does orientation/training for new staff to encourage person-organizational fit.					
2	The organization has high expectations for performance.					
3	Employees are committed and hold a high sense of responsibility to the organization.					
4	Employees have frequent feedback on personal performance					
	Teaming					
5	There is people oriented-value for people in the organization.					
6	The organizational teamwork is encouraged.					
7	The organization encourages a culture of team joint innovation efforts.					
8	Employees know the clients' responsibilities and business pressures.					
9	Staff may disagree with their manager without being penalized.					
	Collaboration					
10	There is equity throughout our organization.					
11	The organization collaborates with other organizations in various aspects.					
12	The organization encourages collaborations amongst its employees/staff.					
13	There is a high level of collaboration and agreement amongst employees.					
	Involvement					
14	There is a high involvement of employees in the process, decisions, and their implementation.					
15	The organization takes advantage of opportunities.					
16	The organization knows the external environment and provides appropriate responses.					
17	Regular follow-ups are made to ensure that clients are happy with the service.					
18	Managers know the extent of their responsibilities.					

Section IV: Organizational Performance.

13. This section seeks details of your performance. Please indicate to what extent they have applied to your organization. Kindly use the key provided to TICK as appropriate. **Key:** 1-Not at all; 2-Less extent; 3- Moderate extent; 4- Large extent; 5-Very large extent

	Performance Indicators	1	2	3	4	5
	Financial					
1	The organization has complied with financial regulations and policies					
2	There has been reduction in costs of operations					
3	The organization has improved its budgetary processes and practices					
4	Budgeted resources have been utilized effectively					
5	Budgeted resources have been utilized efficiently					
6	The ratio of matching funds to grants is within donor acceptable levels					
	Stakeholders/Beneficiaries focus					
7	The organization responds to stakeholders'/beneficiaries' issues promptly.					
8	The organization reviews its stakeholders'/beneficiaries' engagement plan on frequent basis.					
9	The organization involves the stakeholders/beneficiaries in its programming decisions.					
10	There has been increased access to quality service as per stakeholder/beneficiaries' feedback.					
11	The stakeholder/beneficiary's satisfaction has been improving for the last two years.					
	Internal business processes					
12	There has been continuous re-engineering of internal processes to meet stakeholder/beneficiaries' expectations.					
13	The complexity of internal processes has been reduced to reasonable extent					
14	Its takes lesser time to complete basic processes					
15	The organization has had a proper asset management system					
16	The organization has consistently passed internal audits requirements					
	Organizational learning and growth					
17	The organizational program activities have continued to improve for the last two years					

18	The organization processes are documented into procedure manuals						
19	The organization is insightful on progressing staff expertise and capabilities						
20	The organization has a system on how new employees go through orientation and induction						
21	The organization conducts refresher trainings /courses for employees						
22	The organization benchmarks with its peers in the world over						
23	The organization has a system that encourages staff growth for instance study leaves						
Social responsiveness							
24	The organization has strong safeguarding policies in place						
25	The organization has set measures to enhance awareness on negative effects of drug and substance abuse						
26	The organization is keen on empowering marginalized groups such as youth and women.						
27	There have been deliberate efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming in the organization.						
28	Corruption eradication has been mainstreamed in the organizational activities						
29	The organization has a good medical scheme for its employees						
Environmental integrity							
30	The Organization has made deliberate efforts to ensure environmental sustainability						
31	The organizations' waste management practices are done in ways that reduce their effect on health, and environment .						
32	The organizations support use and investment in renewable sources of energy such as wind, solar, waves, and biomass						
33	The organization embraces best practices of WASH within all its practices						

Would you require a summary of the research findings? Yes [] No []

Appendix II: Letter from the Office of the Director, Graduate School



**JOMO KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
OF
AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY**

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, GRADUATE SCHOOL

P.O. BOX 62000, 00200 • NAIROBI • KENYA • TEL: (067)-5870001-4 • Email: director@bps.jkuat.ac.ke

REF: JKU/2/11/HD419-C003-1268/2014

7TH MARCH, 2024

NELSON BARASA OJANJI
C/o NCBD
JKUAT

Dear Mr. Ojanji,

RE: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND APPOINTMENT OF SUPERVISORS

Kindly note that your Ph.D. research proposal entitled: "*Path-Goal Leader and Performance of International NGOs in South Sudan*" has been approved. The following are your approved supervisors:-

1. Dr. Samson Nyangau Paul
2. Dr. Francis Joseph Bwiri

Please be advised that you are expected to publish your research outputs in quality and indexed journals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, belonging to Prof. Francis K. Njonge, is placed above the printed name.

PROF. FRANCIS K. NJONGE, Ph.D
DIRECTOR, GRADUATE SCHOOL

Copy to: • Dean, SOBE
 • Director, NCBD

Appendix III: Introduction Letter to Senior Managers

P. O. Box 73854-00200

Nairobi, Kenya

Email: nelsonojanji@gmail.com

Cellphone No. +211 929 554 609; +254 704 937 936

Date: April 15, 2024

CARITAS

Juba, South Sudan.

Dear Sir/Madam,

REQUEST FOR RESEARCH DATA,

I am a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) candidate in the Department of Leadership and Governance at Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology. As part of the requirements for the award of the PhD degree, I am required to carry out a research study. My research topic is **“Path-goal leadership and performance of international non-governmental organizations in South Sudan.”**

I kindly request you to take part in this study by answering all questions as completely as possible in the attached questionnaire. The research results will solely be used for academic purposes and will be treated with strictly confidentiality that it deserves. Should you require the summary of the research findings, please indicate so at the end of the questionnaire. Your co-operation in this noble course is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



NELSON BARASA OJANJI

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Candidate.

Appendix IV: Introduction Letter from JKUAT, Nairobi CBD Campus

**JOMO KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
OF
AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**NAIROBI CBD CAMPUS
Department of Entrepreneurship and Procurement**

P.O. Box 62000
NAIROBI - 00200
KENYA

TE: 0705950712
Email: epdncbd@jkuat.ac.ke

Ref: JKU/6/3/17a

Date: 4th March 2024

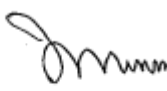
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

SUBJECT: NELSON BARASA OJANJI – HDE419 -C003- 1268/2014

This is to confirm that Mr. Nelson Barasa Ojanji is a bonafide student pursuing his Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership and Governance at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi CBD Campus. The student has completed course work and currently working on research thesis.

Any assistance accorded to him will be highly appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned for any more information.

Yours faithfully,


JKUAT NAIROBI CBD CAMPUS
www.jkuat.ac.ke
P.O. Box 62000 - 00200, NAIROBI
04 MAR 2024
ACOD, EPD DEPART ENT

DR. PAUL KARIUKI (Ph.D)
ASSOCIATE CHAIRPERSON, EPD



JKUAT is ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001: 2015 Certified.
Setting Trends in Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship



**Appendix V: Introduction Letter from Relief and Rehabilitation Commission,
South Sudan**



Appendix VI: Research Permit from the Ministry of Health, Research Ethics Review Board, South Sudan

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN



Ministry of Health, Research Ethics Review Board (MOH-RERB), Juba.

Date: 28th May, 2024

Protocol No: RERB-P NO:36/2024 Approval No: MOH/RERB/36 /2024

To: Principal Investigator: Nelson Barasa (nelsonojanji@gmail.com)

Title of the Project: Path Goal Leadership and Performance of International Non- Governmental Organization in South Sudan.

Dear Barasa,

The Ministry of Health Research Ethics Review Board (MOH-RERB) at its regular meetings reviewed your research proposal and has given a favorable ethical opinion for implementation. However, comments and suggestions from Board will be shared in a separate communication for harmonization modalities by the principles investigator.

The approval was based on the quality of your application form, protocol and supporting documents that complied with the conditions and principles established by the International and national guidelines for carrying out research involving humans as research participants. This approval shall be valid until 30th July 2024.

In this regard, you are expected to commence implementation of this research. Please note that the annual report and the request for renewal (if applicable), should be submitted to the MOH-RERB one month before the expiry of the approval time.

The progress report should not exceed five pages. In addition, any serious problem related to implementation of this research protocol should be promptly reported to the MOH-RERB, and any changes to the protocol should not be implemented without the MOH-RERB approval except in instances where such a change is necessary to eliminate or prevent an immediate hazard to the research participants. Note that any information generated from the study should not be published without the consents of the MOH-RERB. We wish you all the best in implementing this research.

Mr. Amany Jacob Kasio. MPH SMU

Deputy Director Research & Deputy Chairperson MOH-RERB-RSS

CC: Director General Non-Governmental Organization & other Relevant Partners in South Sudan.)



Appendix VII: List of INGOs in South Sudan (Categorized)

1. Action Africa Help - International
2. Action Against Hunger
3. ADRA
4. AET/Street child
5. Africa Inland Mission
6. Africa Initiative for Relief and Development
7. Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
8. Alight
9. AMREF Health Africa
10. AVSI
11. BBC Media Action
12. BRAC South Sudan
13. CARE International
14. CARITAS Switzerland
15. CAFOD
16. Catholic Medical Mission BOARD
17. Catholic Relief Service - CRS
18. Christian Mission Aid
19. Christoffel
20. Concern Worldwide
21. CORDAID
22. Danish Church Aid
23. Danish refugee Council
24. DIAKONIE
25. Fauna and Flora
26. Finn Church Aid
27. Food for the Hungry
28. For Africa
29. Geneva Call
30. Germany Leprosy
31. GOAL
32. Health Net TPO
33. HELP
34. Humanity & Inclusion
35. Inter Church medical assistance-IMA
36. International NGO safety organization
37. IRC
38. Intersos
39. Islamic Relief
40. Israel Aid
41. Japan International Volunteer Centre
42. Jesuit refugee service
43. JHPIEGO
44. Johanniter International
45. Lakar Missionen
46. Light For the world
47. Liverpool associate for tropical Health
48. LWF
49. Malaria Consortium
50. Malteser International
51. MEDAIR
52. Medicos Del Mundo
53. Mennonite
54. Mercy Corps
55. MAG
56. Mission AVIATION Fellowship-MAF
57. Nonviolent Peace Force
58. Norwegian Church Aid
59. Norwegian People Aid
60. Norwegian Refugee Council
61. ORGANISOM Cooperation

Internationale

62. OXFAM
63. PAX
64. Peace Winds Japan
65. PLAN International
66. Polish Humanitarian Action
67. Reach Alternatives
68. Relief International
69. Rift VALLEY Institute
70. ROMEO Dallaire
71. SAFER WORLD
72. Samaritan Purse
73. Save the Children
74. Search for common Ground
75. SIL South Sudan
76. Society for health solutions
77. SOLIDARITIES International
78. SOS Children
79. STICHING SPAK
80. STROMME Foundation
81. TEAR Fund
82. The carter Centre.
83. The mentor Initiative
84. Union DES Group
85. VSF -Canada
86. VSF Suisse
87. War Child Canada
88. War Child Holland
89. Water For South Sudan
90. Welt Hunger LifeWHITAKER
91. Windle Trust International
92. Women for Women International
93. World Relief
94. World University Canada

95. World Vision
96. Zoa Dorcas
97. Development for peace organization
98. DT Global
99. Foundation Caritas Luxemburg
100. Help A child South Sudan
101. Internal Medical Corps
102. Intrahealth
103. Sight Savers
104. World Concern
105. Science Teachers Initiative

For Profit (8)

106. DT Global
107. Education development Centre
108. IFDC
109. Internews
110. IREX South Sudan
111. Centre for international programs
112. Crown Agents
113. Inkomoko

(Source: South Sudan NGO Forum, 2023)
found at www.southsudanngoforum.org
director@southsudanngoforum.org

