

The influence of strategic solutions on the performance improvement of NGOs in Morogoro, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of strategic solutions on the performance improvement of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Morogoro, Tanzania. Guided by an integrated theoretical framework combining the Resource-Based View and Stakeholder Theory, the research examined the effects of leadership commitment and resource allocation on organizational performance. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed. The study targeted a population of 473 NGO managers, from which a systematic sample of 217 respondents was selected for a quantitative survey, supplemented by 55 purposively sampled in-depth interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression in SPSS, and qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis in NVivo. The results demonstrated that leadership commitment ($\beta = 0.333$, $p < 0.001$) and resource allocation ($\beta = 0.427$, $p < 0.001$) were significant predictors of organizational performance, jointly explaining 55.8% of its variance. Resource allocation emerged as the strongest determinant. The study concludes that strategic leadership and efficient resource management are paramount for enhancing NGO performance in resource-constrained settings. It recommends policy interventions such as mandatory leadership certification and fiscal incentives for diversified local funding to build organizational resilience, reduce donor dependency, and improve sustainable impact. Future research should adopt longitudinal and comparative approaches across multiple regions and incorporate objective performance metrics. Findings underscore the need for compulsory leadership certification programmes and strategic reforms in resource management, including tax incentives for local fundraising and performance-based allocation. These interventions can strengthen NGO governance, reduce donor dependency, and enhance sustainability in resource-constrained environments.

Keywords: Leadership, NGO Performance, Resource Optimization, Strategic Solutions

I. INTRODUCTION

The operational landscape for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide is one of escalating complexity, marked by burgeoning global needs, constricting financial resources, and intensified demands for demonstrable accountability (Banks et al., 2015). As pivotal actors in implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), NGOs are under mounting pressure to demonstrate their effectiveness amid volatile funding streams and shifting donor priorities (Basilio, 2016). Despite channeling an estimated \$2 trillion in annual development assistance, the global NGO sector continues to face profound scrutiny regarding the long-term sustainability and genuine impact of its investments (Bloodgood & Schmitz, 2024). This scrutiny is fueled by persistent, transnational challenges, including the existential threat of financial instability reported as the primary operational constraint by 60% of international NGOs (Li & Farid, 2023) a problem exacerbated since the 2008 financial crisis (Walton et al., 2016). Compounding this is a pervasive deficit in leadership and governance, with 54% of NGOs globally citing inadequate management capacity as a critical performance barrier (Manley, 2024). Furthermore, development effectiveness is consistently undermined by a disconnect between program design and local contexts, resulting in an estimated 30-40% of NGO projects failing to achieve their intended outcomes (Kwao & Amoak, 2022).

This global predicament finds particularly acute expression in Sub-Saharan Africa. Regional studies reveal alarming statistics that underscore a crisis of sustainability and governance. Approximately 63% of organizations grapple with severe donor dependency, while 58% report significant governance deficiencies that critically impair decision-making processes (Henry et al., 2023; Orwa & Odollo, 2023). These structural vulnerabilities yield concerning results: nearly 40% of development projects fail to achieve their intended impacts, and a mere 29% of interventions demonstrate viability beyond their initial funding cycles. These systemic weaknesses are further amplified by the region's unique socio-political and economic volatilities, with fluctuating political environments affecting 72% of NGOs

and economic instability impacting 68%, thereby creating a perfect storm that fundamentally undermines developmental progress across the continent.

Within this regional panorama, Tanzania's NGO sector serves as a critical conduit for addressing pervasive socio-economic challenges, often complementing government efforts in delivering essential services like healthcare, education, and agricultural support to rural populations. Nevertheless, Tanzanian NGOs are not insulated from these systemic pressures. Empirical evidence indicates that local organizations frequently contend with profound obstacles, including extreme donor dependency, weak institutional governance, and a significant misalignment between project designs and authentic community needs, all of which collectively erode their capacity for sustainable impact (Temba, 2020; Onesmo & Mushi, 2022). While governmental interventions, such as the NGO Act of 2002 and its subsequent amendments, aim to bolster transparency and accountability, and while there are concerted efforts to foster community-NGO partnerships for enhanced program sustainability (Ezekiel, 2024), the operational environment remains decidedly challenging.

A pertinent theoretical framework for analyzing these performance challenges is the Resource-Based View (RBV). RBV contends that an organization's sustained competitive advantage and performance are predicated on its unique bundle of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991). When applied to the Tanzanian NGO context, where tangible financial resources are perpetually scarce, the RBV lens usefully redirects focus towards the critical, yet often underutilized, intangible resources. Foremost among these is strategic leadership commitment. Conceptualized as the dedication, strategic vision, and proactive engagement of an organization's senior management, leadership commitment transcends mere administrative function; it is a strategic, internal resource that directly catalyzes performance. Emerging studies within Tanzania corroborate this view, highlighting that committed leadership is a pivotal factor in navigating turbulent environments, instilling a culture of accountability, and making strategic decisions that optimally leverage scarce resources (Kasanga & Mokaya, 2017; Mwita & Mrema, 2023). It is this committed leadership that acts as the essential catalyst for activating and orchestrating other organizational assets.

Consequently, this study is anchored in the investigation of the relationship between key strategic variables. The independent variables under examination are leadership commitment and resource allocation. The former encompasses the active involvement and strategic direction set by top management, while the latter, viewed through the RBV lens, refers to the strategic process of identifying, acquiring, and deploying both tangible and intangible resources to maximize value and align with strategic objectives. The dependent variable is NGO Organizational Performance, a multifaceted construct measured through indicators such as project goal achievement, stakeholder satisfaction, financial sustainability, operational efficiency, and organizational learning.

Despite a growing body of literature on NGO management, a critical gap persists in understanding how these strategic, resource-based factors interact to determine organizational performance in resource-constrained settings like Morogoro, Tanzania. Local NGOs are often caught in key tensions between donor dependence and local autonomy, structured and adaptive leadership, and centralized versus participatory decision-making (Kessy, 2025). Therefore, by analyzing the dynamics between leadership commitment, resource allocation, and organizational performance within Tanzania's specific socio-economic context, this research aims to provide actionable, evidence-based insights. The findings are anticipated to contribute meaningfully to scholarly discourse in development management and offer pragmatic strategies for enhancing sustainability, optimizing resources, and strengthening community collaboration for NGOs operating in similarly constrained environments across East Africa and beyond.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Tanzania face serious challenges that limit their effectiveness and long-term sustainability. Across the country, issues such as heavy reliance on donors, weak governance, and inefficient operations are common. This is evidenced by the fact that over 30% of registered NGOs are inactive or have been closed due to poor financial management, and only about 35% of NGOs in Sub-Saharan Africa successfully achieve their project objectives (Henry et al., 2023; (NaCoNGO, 2023). Although the National NGO Policy of 2001 was created to guide the sector, its implementation has been weak. For instance, 78% of NGOs still depend heavily on foreign funding, and only 22% have met half of the policy's required standards (NaCoNGO, 2023).

Recent research points to two core problems that contribute to this situation: First, there is a significant gap in leadership skills, with about half of all NGO managers lacking formal training in strategic management (Allu et al., 2024). Second, resources are often poorly managed, with nearly 70% of NGOs failing to optimally use their funds and assets (Kaputa & Simon, 2024). Furthermore, while these national studies effectively identify broad challenges, they do not examine how the three issues, such as leadership, community engagement, and resource management, interconnect and influence each other at the local level. This represents a significant gap, especially for the Morogoro region. The specific social and economic environment in Morogoro likely shapes how these challenges unfold, but there is a lack of detailed research on this topic. Previous studies have examined these issues separately at the national scale but have not

combined them to create a practical, integrated model for a specific region like Morogoro. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to fill this gap by examining how leadership capacity, stakeholder engagement, and resource optimization work together to influence the sustainable performance of NGOs in Morogoro. The results of this research are intended to provide a practical, evidence-based framework to help local NGOs, practitioners, and policymakers improve performance and strengthen the development contributions of the civil society sector in Morogoro.

1.2 Research Objectives

- i. To find out the effect of Leadership Commitment on organizational performance of NGOs.
- ii. To examine the effect of resource allocation on the organizational performance of NGOs;

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, introduced by Wernerfelt.,(1984) and further developed by Barney (1991), posits that an organization's performance is fundamentally determined by its ability to effectively manage and leverage its internal resources. According to this theoretical framework, organizations that possess resources characterized as valuable, rare, inimitable, and well-organized (as per the VRIO framework) are more likely to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage and superior performance (Gerhart, 2021). Unlike externally focused strategic models that emphasize market conditions or competitive dynamics, RBV centers on internal capabilities, asserting that long-term success stems from the efficient management and strategic utilization of available resources (Mailani et al., 2024).

For non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the strategic utilization of financial resources, human capital, and institutional knowledge is critical to enhancing service delivery and ensuring long-term sustainability (Kibet & Kibati, 2024). Strategic solutions serves as a vital mechanism for optimizing the use of these resources, with three key components leadership commitment, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement playing a pivotal role in influencing organizational performance (Kabeyi, 2019). The RBV theory underscores that an organization's success hinges on its capacity to manage, allocate, and leverage its internal resources effectively. Leadership commitment refers to the dedication and active involvement of top management in guiding the organization toward its strategic objectives.

Effective leadership ensures that resources are aligned with the organization's mission and vision, fostering a culture of accountability, innovation, and resilience (Barney, 1991). Within the RBV framework, leadership commitment enhances an NGO's ability to mobilize and optimize its resources, ensuring their effective utilization for mission-driven activities. When leaders demonstrate strong commitment, they inspire confidence among stakeholders, improve decision-making processes, and create an environment conducive to achieving long-term sustainability and performance (Henry et al., 2023).

Leadership commitment also plays a critical role in risk planning, as committed leaders are more likely to anticipate potential challenges, allocate resources strategically, and implement proactive measures to mitigate risks (Kabeyi, 2019). By safeguarding valuable resources and maintaining operational stability, leadership commitment aligns with RBV's assertion that well-managed internal capabilities are essential for achieving superior organizational outcomes.

H₀₁: Leadership commitment has a significant effect on the organizational performance of NGOs in the Morogoro Region.

The RBV theory suggests that organizations with superior internal capabilities, such as leadership commitment, are better equipped to protect their valuable resources, maintain operational stability, and achieve sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Leadership commitment is a critical internal capability that drives Strategic solutions, resource optimization, and risk mitigation. Committed leaders ensure that resources are aligned with the organization's mission, foster a culture of accountability and innovation, and proactively address challenges to safeguard the organization's assets (Kabeyi, 2019; Henry et al., 2023).

Within the RBV framework, leadership commitment enhances an NGO's ability to mobilize and leverage its resources effectively, ensuring their availability for mission-critical activities.

When leaders demonstrate strong commitment, they inspire confidence among stakeholders, improve decision-making processes, and create an environment conducive to achieving long-term sustainability and performance (Mailani et al., 2024). Leadership commitment also plays a pivotal role in risk planning, as committed leaders are more likely to anticipate potential threats, allocate resources strategically, and implement proactive measures to mitigate risks.

If the hypothesis that leadership commitment significantly contributes to NGO performance is rejected, it would challenge RBV's assertion that well-managed resources, underpinned by strong leadership, are essential for achieving superior organizational outcomes. Conversely, confirming this hypothesis would provide robust evidence for RBV's argument, demonstrating that leadership commitment is a critical internal capability that enables NGOs to optimize their

resources, mitigate risks, and sustain high performance. Thus, this hypothesis underscores the importance of leadership commitment as a key driver of organizational performance, aligning with RBV's emphasis on the strategic management of internal Resources.

Resource allocation refers to how NGOs distribute financial, human, and material resources to different activities and projects (Kithinji et al., n.d.). According to RBV, efficiently allocating resources to high-priority activities maximizes their value and contributes to superior organizational performance (Boadi-sarpong et al., 2023). NGOs with well-structured allocation mechanisms can ensure that limited resources are directed toward impactful initiatives, reducing waste and improving efficiency (Gul & Morande, 2023).

H₀₂: Resource allocation has significant effect on the organizational performance of NGOs in the Morogoro Region.

From an RBV perspective, organizations that strategically allocate resources to high-impact activities gain a competitive advantage by enhancing their operational effectiveness. If resource allocation is found to significantly influence NGO performance, rejecting this hypothesis would further validate RBV's emphasis on resource optimization as a key driver of success.

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical research consistently underscores the pivotal role of leadership commitment as a cornerstone of organizational performance, particularly for NGOs operating in complex, resource-constrained environments. The interplay of leadership styles and their commitment is a critical area of inquiry. A study in Korea by Kim & Oh.(2023) demonstrated that a synergistic combination of transformational and transactional leadership yields the strongest correlation with organizational commitment, though transformational leadership shows marginally more favorable outcomes. This aligns with findings from Tanzania, where Kasanga and Mokaya.,(2017) identified strong positive correlations between the core components of transformational leadership idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation and enhanced performance at Compassion International Tanzania. Similarly, research in Kenya by Orwa and Odollo.,(2023) provides direct evidence that leadership commitment significantly and positively influences NGO performance.

The mechanisms through which leadership exerts its influence are further elucidated in qualitative studies. Hayat (2024) emphasizes that effective leadership drives innovation and change by fostering trust, shaping organizational culture, and ensuring strategic clarity. This is corroborated by Manley (2024), whose phenomenological study of INGO leaders identified a leader's collaborative posture and practice as fundamental to building trust and shared ownership, which are essential for transformative change. However, the Tanzanian context reveals that leadership challenges persist. The study by Mtunge and Mokaya (2016) in Arumeru District confirmed significant correlations between leadership vision, communication, and commitment with project implementation success, yet noted a high rate of incomplete projects, suggesting that commitment alone may be insufficient without adequate supportive structures.

Concurrently, the strategic allocation of resources emerges as an equally critical determinant of organizational sustainability and performance. The efficient orchestration of resources is a universal challenge. Allu et al. (2024) highlight that poor data availability and suboptimal allocation strategies lead to significant resource underutilization across projects, advocating for centralized systems to improve efficiency. This perspective is reinforced by the Resource-Based View, which suggests that the strategic management of internal capabilities is key to performance. However, the NGO context presents unique resource challenges. In Uganda, Henry et al. (2023) found that diversified donor bases and strategic partnerships significantly enhance the sustainability of Community-Based Organizations, while in Tanzania, Onesmo and Mushi (2022) identified a critical need for capacity building in resource development and management within rural NGOs.

The nexus between leadership and resource management is particularly crucial. Studies indicate that management competency is an essential for effective resource utilization. The study by Kaputa & Simon.(2024) found that poor management competence and a lack of accountability directly negatively impacted project success in a Zambian NGO. Similarly, Ezekiel. (2024) identified management competency in resource mobilization and grant writing as a primary determinant of financial sustainability for local NGOs in Arusha, Tanzania, though a concerning number lacked clear strategies. This underscores that leadership commitment must extend to the smart stewardship of resources. As Nyambaka and Sagini (2024)found in Kenya, strategic management practices like effective crisis management and internal resource analysis significantly improve NGO performance, yet many organizations lack these formalized processes.

In synthesis, the empirical literature confirms that leadership commitment and strategic resource allocation are inseparably linked drivers of NGO performance. Committed leadership provides the strategic vision and fosters the organizational culture necessary for success, while effective resource allocation ensures that the tangible and intangible assets required to execute that vision are optimally deployed. The findings from various contexts, including Tanzania, point to a critical gap: the need for NGO leaders to not only be committed and inspirational but also possess the strategic

acumen to build robust resource systems, diversify funding, and implement stringent financial controls to navigate the precarious operational landscapes they inhabit.

2.3 Research Gaps and Contributions

Although earlier works have highlighted the importance of leadership (Haule, 2024; Manley, 2024; Orwa & Odollo, 2023) and resource leveraging (Allu et al., 2024; Grant, 1991; Henry et al., 2023; Mailani et al., 2024) to NGO performance, these studies are often contextually limited, theoretically deficient, or analytically narrow. Few studies use a merged theoretical perspective that incorporates both Stakeholder Theory and Resource-Based View (RBV) (Grant, 1991; Henry et al., 2023). Even fewer have focused specifically on Tanzanian NGOs, where the problems of donor dependence, below-standard internal governance, and resource insufficiency are particularly acute (Grant, 1991; Mailani et al., 2024). Further, current literature tends to treat leadership and resource allocation as separate constructs. There exists a gap in academic research that articulates the intertwined dynamics between leadership commitment and strategic allocation of resources, and how these dynamics influence overall performance outcomes. Just as NaCoNGO (2023) and Ezekiel (2024) have indicated, a lack of intertwined strategy perpetually compromises organizational resilience as well as sectoral credibility.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design

This study used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore the relationships between leadership commitment, resource allocation, and NGO performance. The quantitative component aimed to identify statistical connections, while the qualitative component provided contextual insights to clarify and expand on these findings. This approach was selected to enhance the depth and validity of the results through methodological triangulation.

3.2 Study Area

The study was carried out in Morogoro Region, Tanzania, focusing on NGOs registered and operating across seven districts. These NGOs represented various sectors such as health, education, economic empowerment, and environmental conservation. Including NGOs from both urban and rural areas provided a more comprehensive understanding of organizational performance in different settings.

3.3 Study Population

The target population included 473 NGO managers listed in national and regional databases. These managers were considered appropriate respondents because of their active involvement in strategic planning, resource management, and organizational decision-making. Regarding the qualitative part, the study focused on senior NGO leaders with experience in governance, donor engagement, and operational management.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The sample size for the quantitative part of the study was calculated using Yamane.,(1967) formula for finite populations to ensure accuracy and representativeness(Adam, 2020; Ajay & Micah, 2014). The estimated population of registered NGOs in the Morogoro region was 473. Using Yamane's formula at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, the minimum sample size was determined as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{473}{1 + 473(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{473}{2.1825}$$

$$n = 217$$

Where:

n = sample size;
N = population size (473)
e = margin of error (0.05)

A total of 217 NGO managers participated in the survey. NGOs were first categorized by size and sector, then respondents were chosen using systematic random interval sampling to ensure representativeness. For the qualitative

part, saturation was achieved after purposively selecting 15 senior NGO leaders based on their strategic roles and decision-making authority. This approach allowed for a more in-depth examination of leadership practices, resource utilization, and contextual performance factors.

3.5 Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected through a structured questionnaire addressing key areas such as leadership commitment, resource allocation efficiency, and organizational performance. The questionnaire was pre-tested for clarity and relevance before being distributed either electronically or in person, based on regional accessibility. Qualitative insights were obtained from semi-structured interviews with managers, focusing on NGO internal dynamics, decision-making, and resource management. Moreover, organizational documents like strategic plans and audit reports were reviewed to corroborate the responses.

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using SPSS, with multiple regression assessing the proposed relationships between leadership commitment, resource allocation, and performance. Construct validity was supported by the VRIO framework, while internal consistency was confirmed by a high Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.964$), exceeding recommended threshold of 0.7. Qualitative interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically in NVivo, employing an inductive coding approach that allowed patterns to emerge naturally. These themes were then compared with the quantitative results through joint display tables for a comprehensive interpretation. Triangulation, which integrated survey results, interviews, and documents, enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Mzumbe University Directorate of Research and Postgraduate Studies (DRPS) and the regional registrar of NGOs in the Morogoro region. All participants provided informed consent, including clear details about the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any time. Data were anonymized and stored securely. Additionally, validation workshops were held with participating NGOs to confirm the accuracy of interpretations and foster transparency.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Response Rate

Out of 217 questionnaires sent to NGO managers in Tanzania, 203 were returned, yielding a 93.5% response rate, which meets the threshold (Salum et al., 2017). This high participation, common in development and NGO surveys, was likely due to effective follow-up, collaboration with NGO networks, and the perceived importance of the study. This participation enhances data validity, reduces bias, and supports the generalizability of findings.

Table 1

Response Rate

Description	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires distributed	217	100
Questionnaires returned	203	93.5
Questionnaires not returned	14	6.5

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

This section provides a descriptive overview of the study's three main variables, including leadership commitment, resource allocation, and organizational performance, supported by both quantitative data and qualitative insights. The variables were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, and the findings are analyzed within the framework of theory and relevant empirical research.

4.2.1 Leadership Commitment

Table 2 provides a summary of the key variables related to leadership commitment. This table outlines the selected items examined in the study.



Table 2

Summary of the Variables based on Leadership Commitment

S/N	Items	Mean (M)	SD	Remarks
1	Leaders allocate sufficient resources (budget, staff, time)	4.07	0.95	High
2	Leadership communicates the strategic plan clearly to all employees	4.00	0.90	High
3	Leaders regularly review progress against strategic objectives	4.10	0.88	High
4	Senior leadership actively champions the organization's strategic goals	4.37	0.74	Very High
5	Strategic plan performance metrics are discussed in leadership meetings	3.99	0.82	High
6	Leadership adjusts strategies based on performance reviews	3.98	0.92	High
7	Leaders actively participate in key strategic decisions	4.35	0.78	Very High
8	Leadership seeks input from employees before finalizing decisions	3.98	0.96	High
9	Leaders demonstrate accountability for strategic plan outcomes	4.07	0.93	High
	Grand Mean	4.10	0.88	High

The study found a generally strong level of engagement and accountability among organizational leaders, with a grand mean of 4.10 (SD = 0.88). The highest-rated practices were senior leadership's active championing of strategic goals (M = 4.37, SD = 0.74) and their participation in key strategic decisions (M = 4.35, SD = 0.78). These findings indicate that leadership is essential in driving the organization's vision and shaping its strategy. This aligns with the Resource-Based View (RBV), which posits leadership as a valuable, rare, and inimitable internal resource that is critical for sustaining a competitive advantage (Barney et al., 2021; Wright et al., 1994).

Qualitative data offered further insights. One respondent noted:

"In our organization, leadership goes beyond signing documents or issuing directives. Our leaders actively engage with staff through monthly reflection meetings where we discuss goals, challenges, and progress. This regular interaction fosters a shared sense of purpose, improves coordination, and builds trust across teams."

This reflects the transformational leadership approach that boosts internal cohesion, trust, and performance. This finding is supported by studies from Orwa and Odollo (2023) and Henry et al., (2023), who identified participatory leadership as a key factor driving performance in East African NGOs. However, not all leadership practices were seen as enabling. Another respondent stated:

"Our leader is highly dedicated and passionate about the mission, which we value. However, in practice, every decision, even small operational approvals, must go through her. This centralization causes delays and bottlenecks, especially when quick action is needed at the field level. It can also sometimes limit staff autonomy and reduce overall responsiveness"

This observation highlights the potential pitfalls of overly centralized decision-making, a challenge also reported by Temba (2020) and Ezekiel (2024), who noted that hierarchical leadership structures often hinder timely decision-making and innovation in NGOs.

4.2.2 Resource Allocation

Table 3 presents a summary of the key variables associated with resource allocation. This table details the various variables measured in relation to how resources are allocated within the organization

Table 3

Summary of the Variables based on Resource Allocation

S/N	Variables	Mean (M)	SD	Remarks
1	Our budget allocations directly support strategic priorities	4.16	0.93	High
2	Leadership conducts quarterly reviews of budget utilization	4.12	1.01	High
3	Real-time budget tracking systems are fully operational	3.85	1.08	Moderate
4	Monthly efficiency assessments of all resources	3.75	1.00	Moderate
5	Resources are reallocated within 30 days of identifying inefficiencies	3.49	0.91	Moderate to Low
6	Quarterly performance metrics (ROI, cost-benefit) inform decision-making	3.93	0.76	Moderate to High
7	Maintain ≥ 3 distinct funding sources (grants/donations/earned income)	3.78	1.02	Moderate
8	Dedicated staff/team actively secures new funding quarterly	3.83	1.05	Moderate
9	Documented 3-year strategy to diversify funding exists	3.79	1.11	Moderate
	Grand Mean	3.86	0.98	Moderate overall



The analysis presents a mixed view of resource allocation, with a moderately positive overall rating ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.98$) reflecting strong strategic oversight in budget alignment and quarterly reviews, but revealing critical operational gaps in real-time tracking, efficiency assessments, and agile resource reallocation. Furthermore, mid-range scores in funding sustainability highlight a vulnerability in long-term financial resilience, a challenge consistent with findings from other Tanzanian studies on donor-dependent organizations (Ezekiel, 2024; Kaputa & Simon, 2024). The significant response variability also suggests inconsistent implementation across departments. Ultimately, strengthening systems for timely reallocation, real-time tracking, and diversifying funding streams is paramount for enhancing the organization's overall agility and sustainability

Qualitative insights corroborated these findings. One finance manager observed:

"Most of our grants are tied to pre-defined budgets and line items set by donors. Even when local needs evolve or community priorities shift mid-project, we have little to no flexibility to reallocate funds without seeking formal approval. This rigidity often prevents us from responding effectively to real-time challenges on the ground."

This rigidity limits adaptive planning and responsiveness, as highlighted in the works of Moshtari et al. (2024) and Mawdsley (2012), who emphasize that donor-imposed constraints can restrict NGOs' operational flexibility. Another respondent added:

"We do our best with the limited resources available, trying to meet our targets and serve the communities. But when it comes to financial sustainability, being able to operate independently and consistently over time, that's the real challenge. It's the elephant in the room that no one wants to talk about, yet it affects everything we do."

This echoes earlier findings by NaCoNGO. (2023), which identified overreliance on donor funds and weak local fundraising capacity as persistent risks to NGO viability. These insights reinforce the RBV's emphasis on strategic resource deployment, while also underscoring the need to build internal resilience to external funding fluctuations (Grant, 1996; Teece et al., 2009).

4.2.3 Organizational Performance

Table 4 provides a summary of the variables related to organizational performance. This table highlights the selected items assessed to evaluate how organizational performance is measured and understood within the context of the study.

Table 4
Summary of the Variables based on Organizational Performance

S/N	Item	Mean (M)	SD	Remarks
1	Employee satisfaction surveys are conducted at least annually	3.70	1.196	Moderate
2	Employee feedback leads to measurable improvements in work conditions	3.92	0.992	High
3	Transparent and timely system for addressing employee grievances	3.95	1.050	High
4	Organization proactively monitors and controls operational costs	4.24	0.796	High
5	Budget adjustments are made promptly when cost overruns occur	4.19	0.897	High
6	Regular audits identify opportunities for cost efficiency	4.37	0.945	High
7	Staff and financial resource usage is tracked in real-time	4.15	0.899	High
8	Resources are reallocated within 30 days to support high-priority needs	3.92	0.903	High
9	Performance metrics (e.g., ROI) are used to evaluate resource effectiveness	4.08	0.853	High
10	All employees have clear, measurable productivity targets	4.17	0.885	High
11	Employees receive necessary tools/resources to meet productivity goals	4.18	0.885	High
12	Productivity reviews are conducted quarterly with actionable feedback	4.14	0.750	High
13	Service quality for beneficiaries is monitored using standardized metrics	4.02	0.898	High
14	Beneficiary feedback directly informs service delivery improvements	4.15	0.937	High
15	Staff undergo bi-annual training to enhance service delivery skills	3.65	1.222	Moderate
	Grand Mean	4.06	0.94	High

The analysis reveals a high overall level of organizational performance ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.94$), with the strongest aspects being financial oversight and operational efficiency, such as regular audits for cost efficiency ($M = 4.37$) and cost monitoring and control ($M = 4.24$). This suggests that, on average, the organization perceives itself as effective in meeting core operational and financial objectives. This finding is consistent with Kabeyi.(2019) and Henry et al.(2023), who observed that despite structural challenges, many East African NGOs continue to deliver valuable services. However, the moderately lower scores for employee-focused activities like annual satisfaction surveys ($M = 3.70$) and staff training ($M = 3.65$) compared to financial metrics suggest that internal constraints in human resource development may be dampening overall performance outcomes. One program coordinator noted:



"Yes, we do meet our targets—but many of those targets are donor-driven and don't always reflect the actual needs and priorities of the communities we serve. There's often a disconnect between what's funded and what's truly relevant on the ground, which limits the long-term impact of our interventions."

This reflects the ongoing debate around performance measurement in NGOs, where achieving donor-defined metrics does not always equate to community impact (Banks et al., 2015; C. Batti., 2014). Another interviewee observed: *"Sometimes, our performance reports look strong on paper—indicators are marked as achieved, and outputs appear satisfactory. But the reality on the ground can be very different. Projects often struggle due to delayed disbursement of funds or chronic understaffing, which hampers timely implementation and reduces actual impact."*

This highlights a discrepancy between reported and actual performance, influenced by contextual constraints such as funding instability and bureaucratic delays an issue also discussed by Lewis.(2003) and Naidoo.(2011). Therefore, these findings reinforce the integrated role of leadership and resource management in shaping performance. Strong internal systems enhance the likelihood of meeting targets, but broader sustainability remains vulnerable to environmental factors.

4.3 Inferential Analysis

4.3.1 Leadership Commitment

Table 5 presents the results of the inferential analysis examining the impact of leadership commitment on the organizational performance of NGOs.

Table 5
Leadership Commitment on the Organizational Performance of NGOs

Variables	N	df	r.cal	p.val	Decision
Leadership	217				
Organizational Performance	217	436	.668	0.0009	Accepted

p>0.05

The quantitative analysis revealed a moderately strong, statistically significant positive relationship between leadership commitment and organizational performance ($r = 0.668$, $p = 0.0009$). This foundational finding was further elucidated by the multiple regression, which showed leadership commitment as a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.333$, $p = 0.000$). This quantitatively affirms that leadership is not merely a supportive function but a direct driver of performance.

The qualitative data brings this correlation to life, revealing three key mechanisms through which committed leadership operates. First, the involvement of leaders in structured strategic planning reported by 80% of the organizations emerged as critical. This finding directly aligns with (Allu et al., 2024), who identified a strategic management skills gap as a primary weakness in Tanzanian NGOs. The present study demonstrates that closing this gap through active leadership engagement has tangible benefits. As one CEO illustrated, shifting from "executive orders to co-created strategies" dramatically increased program compliance from 60% to 85%. This supports participatory governance models advocated by Temba. (2020), showing that leadership which facilitates, rather than dictates, unlocks higher performance.

Second, leadership's role in strategic resource reallocation was highlighted. The finding that 65% of leaders actively pivot budgets to align with priorities addresses the issue of resource mismanagement identified by (Kaputa & Simon, 2024). It suggests that effective leadership is a key variable separating organizations that suffer from mismanagement from those that practice strategic optimization. A Program Manager's statement that reallocation "required leadership to champion the pivot at the board level" underscores that financial flexibility is as much a governance and leadership issue as it is a technical one.

Third, the operational engagement of executives in solving bureaucratic bottlenecks was a key differentiator. The regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.333$) quantifies the importance of this hands-on involvement. The qualitative finding that 70% of NGOs see improved outcomes when leaders are operationally engaged provides a practical explanation for this statistic. It diverges from a purely top-down, visionary model of leadership, suggesting that in the challenging context of Tanzanian civil society, performance is also driven by leaders who are directly involved in clearing operational path blocks, a phenomenon vividly captured by the concept of protected "strategy hours."

These quantitative findings complement qualitative insights from NGO managers who emphasized how leadership engagement "turns vision into impact," echoing (Manley, 2024) observations about collaborative leadership in international NGOs. Transformative impact of this involvement was captured by an Education NGO CEO who observed that:

"Our transition from top-down directives to collaborative strategy development boosted program compliance rates from 60% to 85%."



This finding indicates that participatory leadership approaches produce significantly better outcomes than traditional hierarchical models. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of leadership in resource coordination. In 65% of high-performing NGOs, management teams actively participated in budget realignment to prioritize strategic goals. A Program Manager's account illustrated this:

"Securing funding reallocation for youth training required persistent leadership advocacy at the board level - it transcended mere financial considerations."

This emphasizes how effective leaders act as champions for resource optimization. Third, operational engagement proved to be a key differentiator. Seventy per cent of respondents reported that executive involvement in daily operations helped overcome bureaucratic barriers. A Health NGO Planning Officer's comment encapsulated this finding:

"Without leadership protecting dedicated 'strategy hours', routine firefighting consumes all organizational capacity."

This suggests that hands-on leadership can significantly improve operational efficiency among NGOs in Morogoro region.

4.3.2 Resource Allocation

Table 6 displays the results of the inferential analysis exploring the effect of resource allocation on the organizational performance of NGOs.

Table 6

Resource Allocation on the Organizational Performance of NGOs

Variables	N	df	r.cal	p.val	Decision
Resources	217				
Organizational Performance	217	436	.704	0.0000	Accepted

p>0.05

The analysis identified resource allocation as the single strongest predictor of organizational performance in the regression model ($\beta = 0.427$, $p = 0.000$), with a very strong positive correlation ($r = 0.704$). This confirms the proposition of Henry et al.,(2023) that resource constraints are a major barrier to goal achievement. However, this study moves beyond merely noting the constraint to explicating its dynamics. The strong positive relationship indicates that performance is tightly linked to practices of budget utilization, funding sustainability, and resource optimization. This finding converges with national data from (NaCoNGO, 2023), which links financial mismanagement to organizational failure. However, the qualitative data reveals the complex challenges behind the numbers: a significant 60% of NGOs face donor-imposed restrictions that stifle this optimization. The compelled abandonment of a livelihoods program for a donor-preferred maternal health initiative is a classic example of how external dependency can undermine contextual relevance and, ultimately, performance.

Furthermore, the consequences of poor allocation are severe, with 45% of NGOs reporting they had to scale back programs due to funding gaps. The resulting reliance on community volunteers, while a cost-effective strategy, introduces new risks like burnout, highlighting a difficult trade-off between financial sustainability and human resource well-being. Notably, a point of divergence from a purely resource-dependent narrative is the finding that 30% of organizations had rejected funding due to mission misalignment. This suggests that a certain level of strategic maturity and leadership fortitude exists within the sector, where performance is defined not just by activity levels but by adherence to core mission, even at a financial cost (Ezekiel.,(2024). However, qualitative data revealed significant challenges in resource optimization. 65% of organizations reported constraints imposed by donor restrictions, with one manager lamenting,

"We had to halt a successful livelihoods program when funding was solely linked to maternal health initiatives"

This underscores the tension between donor priorities and local needs. Additionally, funding instability has become a significant challenge, with 45% of NGOs needing to scale back programs due to financial shortages. As one respondent noted,

"After losing a major grant, we depended heavily on volunteers to keep operations going. Although this was cost-effective at first, it eventually caused staff exhaustion, lowered morale, and a noticeable decline in service quality."

4.3.3 Organization Performance

The multiple regression model, which explains 55.8% of the variance in organizational performance ($R^2 = 0.558$, F-statistic = 90.489, $p < 0.005$), provides powerful evidence for an integrated approach to understanding NGO



performance. The individual contributions of resource allocation ($\beta = 0.427$) and leadership commitment ($\beta = 0.333$) demonstrate that these are not isolated factors but interconnected pillars. The findings suggest a synergistic relationship: strong leadership is a prerequisite for effective resource allocation, and adequate resources enable leadership strategies to be implemented. An executive can champion a strategic pivot (leadership), but success depends on their ability to reallocate funds (resource allocation). Conversely, a perfectly crafted budget is useless without the leadership to defend it and navigate its implementation. This directly addresses the research gap identified in the problem statement, demonstrating how the "triad" of challenges here, focusing on leadership and resources, manifests and interacts not in isolation, but in a tightly coupled system.

Table 7
Effects of Leadership Commitment and Resource Allocation on NGOs Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	R	R ²	F
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	.812	.203		4.001	.000			
	Leadership	.332	.064	.333	5.185	.000			
	Resources	.428	.072	.427	5.964	.000	.747	.558	90.489

This analysis emphasizes that both resource allocation and leadership commitment are crucial factors in NGO performance, with resource management being the slightly more influential predictor. To improve organizational results, NGOs should focus on leadership development programs and establish effective resource management systems to ensure efficient use of financial, human, and material assets. Future studies could investigate additional factors, such as stakeholder engagement or external funding dynamics, to further refine predictive models of NGO effectiveness. One Finance and Administrative Manager commented that:

"We track milestones, but real success shows when communities own the outcomes, like when mothers' groups sustain health programs after our exit. That's why researchers share progress dashboards with staff and gather stakeholders quarterly to discuss what's working or needs to change."

The study offers important theoretical insights by demonstrating how both the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory apply to NGO management. The findings show that strong leadership acts as a key organizational resource that meets all VRIO criteria, supporting but qualifying Mailani et al., (2024) application of RBV to non-profit contexts by demonstrating how intangible assets like leadership culture can create competitive advantages even in resource-constrained environments. Moreover, while the study largely confirmed theoretical expectations, two unexpected findings emerged that contribute to ongoing scholarly debates. Firstly, the weaker than anticipated relationship between resource allocation and performance challenges conventional NGO management wisdom that prioritizes community engagement, adding nuance to (Donaldson & Preston, 1995) critiques by suggesting that in Tanzanian contexts, internal capabilities may outweigh external relationships in driving effectiveness. Second, the high variability in sustainable funding perceptions ($SD = 1.06$) reveals deeper systemic issues that extend Onesmo and Mushi (2022) work on rural Tanzanian NGOs by quantifying the financial instability challenges they described qualitatively.

The study answers its hypotheses while advancing scholarly understanding in several ways. Regarding how leadership commitment affects performance, the results demonstrate that engaged leadership enhances strategic coherence, resource alignment, and operational efficiency, building on but providing more granular evidence than Kasanga and Mokaya (2017) transformational leadership study in Tanzania. Concerning resource allocation approaches, the findings show that budget discipline, optimization techniques, and mission-aligned funding strategies prove most effective, offering empirical validation to Nyambaka and Sagini (2024) strategic management recommendations while adding new quantitative evidence from the Tanzanian context. These contributions collectively advance both theoretical and practical understanding of NGO management in developing economies.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

This study investigated how strategic management affects NGO performance in Morogoro, Tanzania. Key insights show that leadership commitment is essential, as mission-driven leaders improve performance and better coordinate operations. Resource allocation is identified as the most important factor; effective practices help maximize limited resources while maintaining quality. Additionally, a hierarchy of priorities develops as leadership creates the foundation, and resource allocation helps turn the vision into action. These findings offer an evidence-based, practical model for Tanzanian NGOs facing leadership challenges and reliance on donors. However, the results strongly support the argument that breaking the cycle of NGO underperformance in Tanzania requires a fundamental rethinking of

management paradigms. It is not a choice between strengthening leadership or improving resource management; the evidence indicates that both must be addressed simultaneously and in an integrated manner. Effective leadership acts as the catalyst that transforms allocated resources into tangible performance outcomes, creating an organizational environment where strategic planning, financial agility, and mission fidelity drive sustainable success.

5.2 Recommendation

The findings underline the importance of creating policies specifically for Tanzania. The researcher recommends making certification mandatory for NGO leaders and offering tax incentives to promote local fundraising. These steps are crucial as Tanzania reforms its NGO sector and seeks to cut reliance on foreign funding. Based on solid evidence and the local context, this study offers valuable insights into NGO management, providing practical solutions to sustainability challenges. It highlights the significance of leadership commitment and resource strategies in enhancing NGO performance, focusing on two main goals: firstly, understanding how leadership influences performance, and secondly, evaluating the effectiveness of resource allocation in environments heavily reliant on donors with limited funds.

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