

REGULATING DISTRESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN KENYA

Ruth Munguti.

DBA Candidate, Chandaria School of Business, United States International University – Africa, Kenya.

Dr James Karimi (PhD).

Lecturer, Chandaria School of Business, United States International University – Africa, Kenya.

Dr Juliana Namada (PhD).

Lecturer, Chandaria School of Business, United States International University – Africa, Kenya.

©2026

International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration (IAJHRBA) | ISSN 2518-2374

Received: 4th March 2026

Published: 8th March 2026

Full Length Research

Available Online at: https://iajournals.org/articles/iajhrba_v5_i2_243_262.pdf

Citation: Munguti, R., Karimi, J., Namada, J. (2026). Regulating distress and organizational effectiveness of faith-based organizations in Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration (IAJHRBA) | ISSN 2518-2374*, 5(2), 243-262.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of regulating distress on the organizational effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) in Kenya. The study was guided by adaptive leadership theory, which emphasizes leaders' ability to manage stress and maintain productive levels of tension within organizations. A descriptive correlational design was adopted, and data was collected from 28 top-level managers in registered FBOs in Kenya using structured questionnaires, with 20 valid responses representing a 71.4% response rate. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis. The findings revealed a strong positive and significant relationship between regulating distress and organizational effectiveness ($r = 0.726$, $p < 0.05$). Regression results showed that regulating distress accounted for 52.7% of

the variation in organizational effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.527$), indicating that effective conflict management, supportive environments, and clear direction significantly enhance FBO performance. The study concluded that leaders who maintain composure, manage stress, and provide clarity during challenging situations improve institutional stability, stakeholder satisfaction, and goal achievement. It recommends that FBOs strengthen leadership development programs focusing on conflict management, setting goals, adaptive and emotional intelligence skills to ensure resilience and sustainability in dynamic environments.

Keywords: Regulating Distress; Organizational Effectiveness; Faith Based Organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Regulating distress is often associated with organizational effectiveness (Siddiqua et al., 2022). It involves maintaining a balance between productive stress and overwhelming tension within the organizations (Tripathi & Kalia, 2024). Adaptive leaders recognize that changes create uncertainty that comes with some level of unavoidable stress and therefore are responsible for monitoring such distress from followers or employees and offering support to maintain it at productive levels (Sunderman, Heuvel, & Rink, 2020). Hernandez-Santiago and Perez-Rivera (2022) showed that leaders who exhibit adaptive attributes such as flexibility, rapid decision-making, positivity, and consistent communication successfully guided organizations through crises. These traits created stability and confidence among employees, enabling organizations to thrive during uncertainty, demonstrating that regulating distress enhances organizational effectiveness. On their part Northouse (2021) explained that adaptive leaders are responsible for managing distress to ensure that it remains conducive to productivity rather than destructive.

Conflict management, is a key mechanism for regulating distress, and refers to the process of minimizing the negative effects of conflict while maximizing its beneficial outcomes (Akhigbe,

2020). Conflict management enables adaptive leaders to turn potential disruptions into constructive opportunities (Northouse, 2021). This process involves employing various strategies to either prevent or resolve disputes. The overall performance of an organization depends, in part, on how conflicts are managed. Conflicts are inherent in organizations due to the potential mismatch between organizational objectives and those of individual stakeholders (Agbo, 2020). As such, conflicts are unavoidable within groups and organizations. John-Eke and Akintokunbo (2020) emphasized that effectively managed conflict fosters healthy competition, strengthens teamwork, and bridges communication gaps, all of which leads to improved organizational performance. Similarly, research within Bangladesh's banking sector confirmed that functional conflict, when managed appropriately, positively contributes to organizational success (Siddiqua et al., 2022). These findings affirm that managing distress through controlled conflict enhances organizational outcomes.

In order to manage distress stemming from change, adaptive leaders must possess the critical skill of conflict management (Northouse, 2021). A study by John-Eke and Akintokunbo (2020) delved into the role of conflict management in enhancing organizational effectiveness, drawing insights from previous global research on the subject. The study suggests that a well-managed conflict can yield positive outcomes, including fostering healthy competition, fortifying teamwork, stimulating participation, and bridging communication gaps. Additionally, research within the Bangladesh banking industry corroborated the critical role of conflict management in either resolving conflicts or utilizing them to augment organizational success (Siddiqua, et al., 2022). Notably, functional conflict was identified as a positive contributor to organizational success, with a discernible association between functional conflict and organizational effectiveness. In North Carolina, Northouse (2019) postulated that effective communication, a key aspect of regulating distress, was associated with improved organizational climate and enhanced effectiveness. Besides, Clear and open communication was thus identified as a mechanism for maintaining a productive work environment, underscoring its importance across organizational contexts.

Another dimension of regulating distress is creating a holding environment, which provides safety and support during change (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky (2009); Northouse, 2021). A holding environment is one where employees or followers feel secure when facing adaptive challenges, but not so comfortable that they avoid addressing critical issues that arise from such challenges. define a holding environment as a framework that fosters psychological safety and trust, allowing employees to adapt to change (Tripathi & Kalia (2024). Leadership plays a key role in establishing this environment by utilizing communication and empathy to ensure a sense of safety and protection for employees (Northouse, 2021). Such a secure environment minimizes anxiety and uncertainty during transitional periods, fostering greater employee engagement and trust. It provides stability and support, allowing employees to navigate complex processes like change management and conflict resolution (Heifetz et al., 2009). Supporting evidence from Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed, and Iqbal, (2021) demonstrated that toxic environments negatively affect engagement and productivity, while supportive environments enhance well-being, belonging, and performance. This reinforces the idea that a

holding environment is fundamental for maintaining organizational harmony and effectiveness during periods of distress.

In the Kenyan context, FBOs play a pivotal role in social development, delivering services in areas such as healthcare, education, and poverty alleviation (Wambugu, 2022). However, these organizations face numerous adaptive challenges, including financial constraints, donor dependency, and stakeholder conflicts (Boro et al., 2023; Dada et al., 2021). Such pressures often produce organizational distress that, if unregulated, undermines performance and sustainability. Leaders within FBOs must therefore cultivate adaptive capacity to regulate distress, foster open communication, manage conflict productively, and create holding environments that sustain effectiveness amid volatility (Valeras & Cordes, 2020; Northouse, 2021).

Organizational Effectiveness (OE) refers to the extent to which an organization achieves its goals through the optimal use of available resources and alignment between its mission, strategy, structure, and human capital (Islam, Khan, & Ahmed, 2022; Yassin & Obeidat, 2020; Well Hub, 2024). Effective organizations exhibit adaptability, innovation, competitiveness, and efficient resource allocation, which together enhance operational efficiency and sustainability (Abatecola, Belussi, Breslin, & Filatotchev, 2020; Naveed, Alhaidan, Halbusi, Al-Swidi, 2022). Several models explain OE from different perspectives. The goal attainment model assesses success based on achieving predefined objectives; the system resource approach emphasizes the organization's ability to acquire and utilize critical resources; and the process approach evaluates the internal efficiency of operations. The strategic constituency and stakeholder approaches focus on satisfying key actors essential to organizational survival, while the competing values and abundance models highlight balancing priorities and cultivating positive organizational values (Islam et al., 2022). However, no single model universally captures OE, as definitions and measures vary across organizational contexts (Ismael, Abubakar, & Musa, 2021; Tomassini & Baggio, 2022).

In the context of FBOs, OE relates to how effectively these entities achieve their spiritual and social missions while utilizing resources efficiently. Since universal measures of OE are lacking, this study adopted a goal-based, resource-based, and internal process model (Islam et al., 2022). This integrative approach evaluates FBOs based on goal accomplishment, resource acquisition, and internal processes. Goal accomplishment assesses the extent to which FBOs achieve strategic and mission-driven objectives, focusing on service delivery, stakeholder satisfaction, and trust (Jacobs & Palito, 2012; John-Eke & Akintokunbo, 2020; Queenan, Grunert, & Murphy, 2021). Resource acquisition examines the ability of FBOs to mobilize finances, human capital, and partnerships necessary for sustaining operations and achieving objectives (Jacobs & Palito, 2012; Cameron, 2015). Internal processes evaluate how efficiently resources are transformed into services through effective communication, job satisfaction, teamwork, and leadership engagement (Lannes, 2021; Yassin & Obeidat, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Faith-Based Organizations face multiple challenges that hinder their sustainability and effectiveness, including increased competition for resources, reliance on donor funding, evolving expectations for accountability (Boro, Macharia, & Wambugu, 2023), conflicting stakeholder interests (Wiltshire, Malhotra, & Axelsen, 2018), and unanticipated operational costs (Princes & Said, 2022). These issues result in funding gaps that strain programs and service delivery (Dada, Okechukwu, & Adewale, 2021; Thampi, 2023; Bore & Macharia, 2022). Many FBOs in the health sector operate in isolation without strong partnerships (Boro et al., 2023), and despite managing 40% of Africa's healthcare services (WHO, 2008), they often lack adequate funding and equipment, particularly during crises like COVID-19 (Vilakati, Dlamini, & Mabuza, 2020). Operational capacity and religiosity affect collaboration, with only well-resourced FBOs forming effective partnerships (Fu, Cooper, & Shumate, 2021), while misunderstandings of FBO missions hinder cooperation with other sectors (Ellis & Fitzgerald, 2022). In Kenya, institutional weaknesses, governance gaps, and exclusion continue to obstruct FBO efforts (Wambugu, 2022), alongside financial vulnerability, low internal controls, and the demands of a volatile global context intensified by the challenges such as floods, drought, and outbreak of diseases (Iswan & Kihara, 2022; Yakovleva, 2022).

These financial, operational, and contextual pressures generate organizational distress that negatively affects stability and overall effectiveness. The growing uncertainty and resource scarcity within FBOs call for leadership approaches that can regulate distress, maintain calm, and provide direction amid challenges. However, existing research has paid limited attention to how leaders within FBOs manage distress to sustain organizational performance and resilience. Although prior studies have shown positive associations between conflict management and organizational effectiveness (Lannes, 2021) and highlighted leadership adaptability in crisis management (Hernandez-Santiago & Perez-Rivera, 2022), these findings have not been contextualized to Kenyan FBOs. Leadership in this sector operates under unique pressures, resource constraints, stakeholder diversity, and mission-driven demands, that intensify organizational distress, yet empirical evidence on how distress regulation influences effectiveness remains scarce.

Existing research on regulating distress has largely focused on diverse industries and global contexts, limiting its generalizability to FBOs in Kenya. Studies affirm that regulating distress enhances organizational effectiveness, but findings remain context-specific and sectorally limited (Douglas, Mwaura, & Ng'ang'a, 2022; Alshurideh & Obeidat, 2021; Thampi, 2023). The lack of empirical studies examining the role of regulating distress, an aspect of adaptive leadership, in FBO settings creates both a theoretical and contextual research gap. In light of these challenges and gaps, this study sought to establish the influence of regulating distress on the organizational effectiveness of FBOs in Kenya. By focusing exclusively on regulating distress and Kenyan FBOs, the study bridges the regional, industry, and methodological gaps identified in existing literature, and provides evidence-based insights for enhancing FBO performance through effective distress regulation.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of adaptive leadership on the organizational effectiveness of Faith-Based organizations in Kenya.

Research Question

The research was guided by the following research question; To what extent does regulating distress influence the organizational effectiveness of Faith Based Organizations in Kenya?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review focuses on the theory that underpins the study, the conceptual model and related empirical research

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework shows and explains the theory that underpins the study and the relevant constructs. It gives a systematic view of the subject being investigated (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). As shown in figure 1 below, regulating distress is one of the six behaviours of adaptive leaders.

This study is underpinned by adaptive leadership theory. The framework was introduced by Harvard Business professors Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky (1994) in *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, providing a new approach to leadership focused on helping organizations navigate continuous change and adaptive challenges. Heifetz drew inspiration from evolutionary biology, noting that just as living organisms adapt to environmental changes by retaining essential traits for survival, adaptive leaders help organizations preserve core values while adjusting to new challenges (Heifetz, et al., 2009). The process involves observing patterns, interpreting challenges, and designing interventions to manage complex problems (Northouse, 2021). Leaders act as facilitators, enabling people to confront difficult realities and learn new ways of coping with change.

Within this framework, regulating distress is one of the central leader behaviours. It entails maintaining an optimal balance between too much and too little stress during periods of change (Heifetz et al., 2009). Adaptive leaders ensure that the level of tension within an organization remains productive, not paralyzing. They do so by creating holding environments, safe spaces that support open dialogue, trust, and learning, where followers can process change without becoming overwhelmed. Setting goals enables employees to have direction and stay focused on achieving those goals (Northouse, 2021).

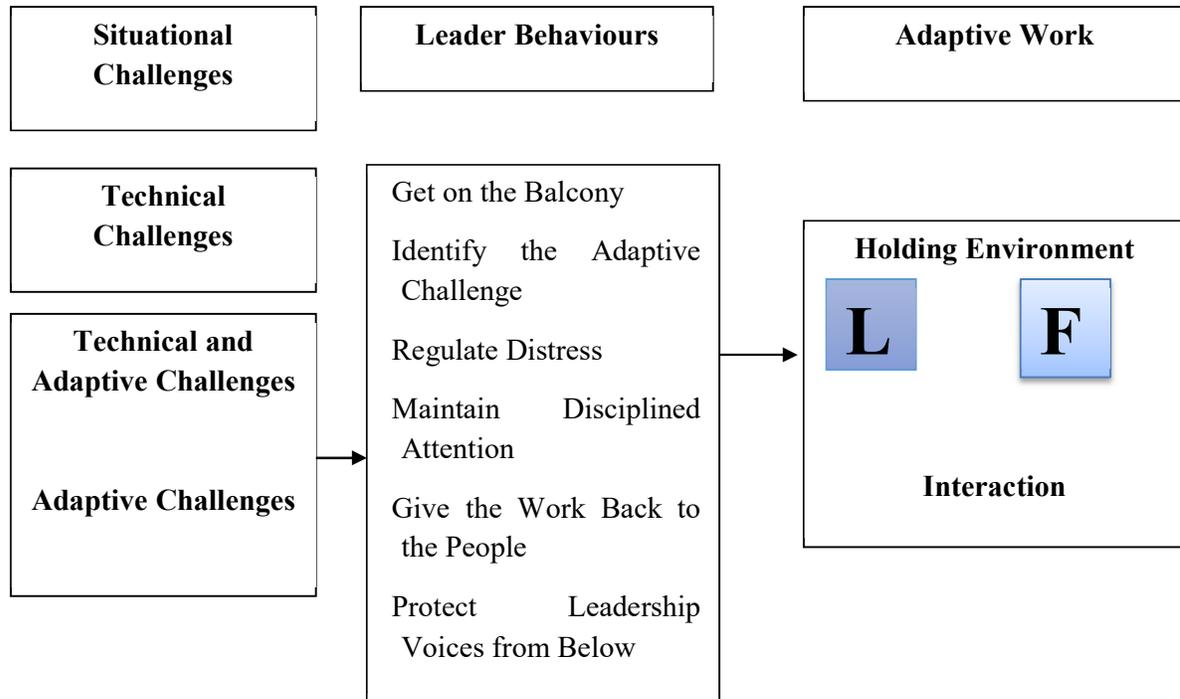


Figure 2.1: Adaptive Leadership Framework by Northouse (2021)

Regulating distress thus enables leaders to keep individuals focused on adaptive work while preventing burnout or withdrawal. It involves identifying the sources of conflict, managing anxiety, and ensuring that the stress associated with change does not exceed the individual and organization’s capacity to absorb it. Through this balance, leaders maintain order amid disruption, allowing organizations to respond effectively to evolving challenges.

Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual framework represents the cognitive diagram or the researcher's perceived interrelations between the independent and dependent variables outlined in the research questions. It shows the configuration of the investigation and the primary variables concerning the research problem, depicted within a schematic model (Ugoani, 2021). Figure 2 below represents the conceptual model of the study.

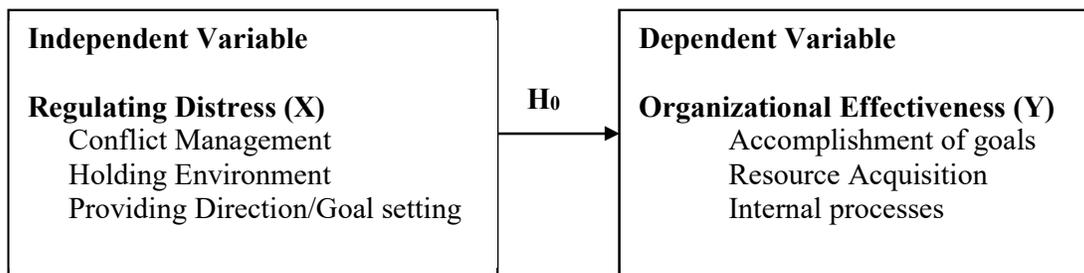


Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework

Regulating Distress

Organizational change is required to address adaptive challenges, however sometimes such change causes anxiety and uncertainty. Excessive levels of distress impair performance, whereas moderate amounts can be beneficial (Northouse, 2021). Regulating distress requires leaders to keep an eye on stress levels, while offering the right kind of support to sustain productivity (Sunderman et al., 2020). Managing conflict, creating a holding environment, and providing direction through setting goals are all part of regulating distress (Akhigbe, 2020).

Conflict management

Conflict management refers to the process of minimizing the negative effects of conflict while maximising on its beneficial outcomes (Akhigbe, 2020). This process involves employing various strategies to either prevent or resolve disputes. The overall performance of an organization depends, in part, on how conflicts are managed. Conflicts are inherent in organizations due to the potential mismatch between organizational objectives and those of individual stakeholders (Agbo, 2020). As such, conflicts are unavoidable within groups and organizations. A leader's capability in handling disputes is reflected in how proficiently they manage such conflicts, and that capacity is integral in the management of employee's distress to maintain it at productive levels (Northouse, 2021). Organizations that fail to resolve conflicts may suffer from decreased productivity, high employee turnover, diminished morale, a decline in innovation, and the fostering of a hostile work environment, all of which undermine employee engagement and organizational effectiveness (Safitri & Saputra, 2023). Leaders must manage conflicts effectively to sustain productive distress levels because they are a natural occurrence in organizations (Agbo, 2020; Northouse, 2021). Effective conflict management promotes cooperation, creativity, and organizational success, but poor conflict resolution reduces morale and productivity (Safitri & Saputra, 2023; Gwanyo, Dickson, & Waya, 2020).

Holding Environment

A holding environment is one where employees or followers feel secure when facing adaptive challenges, but not so comfortable that they avoid addressing critical issues that arise from such challenges. Leadership plays a key role in establishing this environment by utilizing communication and empathy to ensure a sense of safety and protection for employees (Northouse, 2021). Such secure environment minimizes anxiety and uncertainty during transitional periods, fostering greater employee engagement and trust. It provides stability and support, allowing employees to navigate complex processes like change management and conflict resolution (Heifetz et al., 2009). According to Northouse (2021), stakeholders collaboratively define problems, identify competing needs, and engage in heated discussions that can lead to negotiations and problem-solving. New issues may arise, and fresh agreements or partnerships can be established. The holding environment is characterized by trust, security, a supportive framework, well-defined boundaries, and growth opportunities (Caulfield & Senger, 2017). Employees have a sense of belonging and the environment is instrumental in facilitating change, managing conflicts, encouraging innovation, and promoting open communication, important factors that enhance organizational adaptability and effectiveness (Tripathi & Kalia, 2024). Leaders play a key role in addressing both individual and collective

needs, fostering professional development, and promoting trust and transparency within teams. Such supportive environment is essential for achieving organizational goals. These settings foster participation, trust, and adaptability to change (Heifetz et al., 2009). A holding environment promotes flexibility and open communication, and is characterized by growth support, and well-defined boundaries (Caulfield & Senger, 2017; Tripathi & Kalia, 2024).

Providing Direction

This involves identifying the adaptive challenges and stating them in a way that they can be addressed. In challenging times, goals could be ambiguous or entangled, and the leaders have the responsibility to create a sense of clarity, order, uncertainty while reducing or regulating the distress that the followers could be experiencing (Northouse, 2021). Leaders can provide such clarity by providing direction or setting goals that are in line with organizational vision. Adaptive leaders can clarify issues and match activities with the organization's vision by giving guidance through setting goals (Northouse, 2021). Setting clear objectives helps followers to navigate change in a positive way by reducing ambiguity, maintaining focus, and controlling distress.

Organizational Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness (OE) is the degree to which an organization achieves its objectives by optimizing resources and aligning mission, strategy, and human capital (Islam et al., 2022; Well Hub, 2024). OE includes agility, innovation, adaptability, competitiveness, and talent retention (Naveed et al., 2022). Multiple models, such as goal attainment, system resource, process, stakeholder, and competing values, assess OE from distinct perspectives (Islam et al., 2022; Ismael et al., 2021). However, no universal model applies across all sectors due to contextual differences.

This study evaluated organizational effectiveness in Kenyan FBOs, using three dimensions: goal accomplishment, resource acquisition, and internal processes. Goal accomplishment assesses the attainment of mission-driven objectives and the satisfaction of stakeholders (Akhigbe, 2020; John-Eke & Akintokunbo, 2020). Resource acquisition measures the ability or an organization to obtain and efficiently use financial, human, and technical resources from the external environment (Jacobs & Palito, 2012; Queenan, et. Al, 2021). The internal process dimension considers operational efficiency, trust, communication, and employee engagement as key indicators of effectiveness (Sharma & Singh, 2019; Yassin & Obeidat, 2020).

Organizational effectiveness ultimately reflects an organization's ability to achieve strategic objectives, maintain stakeholder trust, and secure long-term sustainability through effective leadership, collaboration, and resource management (Ramesh, 2019)

Empirical Review

Regulating distress is an adaptive leadership behaviour through which leaders monitor, manage, and maintain employee stress within productive levels to promote performance and goal achievement (Northouse, 2022). It involves establishing a holding environment, offering direction, managing conflict, and fostering productive norms to prevent distress from becoming dysfunctional. The study focused on three key elements through which leaders regulate

distress, conflict management, supportive environment, and goal setting, and how this influence organizational effectiveness in Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs).

Stakeholders have diverse and differing goals, making it inevitable to avoid conflicts in organizations (Agbo, 2020). Conflict management determines the degree of organizational harmony and performance (Safitri & Saputra, 2023). Empirical research shows that effective conflict management has been repeatedly associated with better organizational outcomes. Shabani, Behluli, and Qerimi (2022) discovered that, although the impacts differed depending on the situation, conflict management styles—in particular, obliging and compromising—were highly connected with organizational performance in both public and private organizations in Kosovo. A different study in Nigeria's Rivers State found a favourable correlation between organizational success and accommodating and compromise conflict management approaches, highlighting the need for cooperation and cooperative problem-solving (Akhigbe, 2020). According to John-Eke and Akintokunbo (2020), poor management of conflict lowers performance and morale, but constructive conflict improves communication, teamwork, and production.

Comparable findings in Somalia demonstrated that effective conflict management significantly improved productivity ($r = 0.67$) and lowered turnover ($r = -0.59$), while unresolved conflict damages morale and efficiency (Mohamed, Mahamud, & Balatito, 2024). Accommodating and compromise strategies impaired performance in microfinance institutions, while dominating and cooperating techniques improved it in Kenya (M'mbwanga, Maore, & Were (2021). This research show that successful conflict resolution techniques promote stability and concentration, which improves organizational effectiveness. Sectoral disparities demand contextual analysis; therefore, this study focuses on conflict resolution in Kenyan FBOs.

A holding environment is a psychologically secure and encouraging framework that helps staff cope with stress and uncertainty throughout change while fostering participation and trust (Heifetz et al., 2009; Kegan & Lahey, 2016). Open communication, creativity, and flexibility are necessary for the success of an organization (Tripathi & Kalia, 2024). Supportive environment mediated these effects by fostering a sense of belonging and well-being, while toxic environments in Chinese SMEs dramatically decreased employee engagement and productivity (Rasool et al. 2021). Similarly, a positive work atmosphere improved organizational performance in Indian IT companies both directly and indirectly, by fostering more creativity and learning agility (Tripathi & Kalia, 2024). These studies demonstrate how supportive leadership, safety, and trust foster employee enthusiasm, creativity, and resource optimization, thus enhancing the efficacy of the organization. This idea is applied to FBOs in the current study, where supportive workplaces lessen discomfort and match the goals of service delivery and organizational mission with employee emotional health.

Employees can better manage uncertainty during organizational transition when they are given clear goals to work toward (Northouse, 2022). Alignment of goals with organizational vision and mission improves performance, maintains focus and reduces stress. By promoting justice, peace, and worker well-being. Xie and Lin (2023) discovered that incorporating the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the strategic goals increased organizational effectiveness in the Chinese automobile industry. Establishing strategic direction greatly improved sustainability and efficacy, according to a related study on FBOs conducted in Nigeria (Dada et al., 2021). Leadership skills, creativity, and well-defined goals enhanced FBO resilience and long-term viability. These results show that strategic direction and objective clarity are essential for controlling distress, preserving concentration, and improving the accomplishment of organizational tasks. In the Kenyan context, FBO leaders can minimise employee fears, align teams with faith-driven goals, and maintain performance during change by providing clear direction.

Global and regional empirical research emphasizes the importance of goal-setting, supportive environments, and conflict management as key strategies for leaders to regulate distress and improve organizational effectiveness. Faith-Based Organizations, which function under different cultural and spiritual mandates, have received little empirical attention in previous research, which have mostly concentrated on the public or commercial sectors outside of Kenya. In order to fill a contextual, methodological, and theoretical gap in the literature on adaptive leadership, this study empirically investigates how regulating distress through goal-setting, conflict resolution, and a supportive environment affects the organizational effectiveness of FBOs in Kenya.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a positivist philosophy. Positivism involves working with observable social realities to produce law-like generalizations (Park, Konge, & Artino, 2020). Positivists assert that knowledge can be derived from sensory experiences and interpreted through reason and logic. This philosophy aligns with the purpose of this study, which is to examine the influence of regulating distress on organizational effectiveness in FBOs in Kenya through quantifiable and empirical data. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted. This design systematically describes existing conditions and relationships among the study variables without manipulating them (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The approach enabled the researcher to assess the relationship between the independent variable (regulating distress) and the dependent variable (organizational effectiveness) among FBOs in Kenya. This design was appropriate because it allowed the use of quantitative methods, including descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis, to determine the strength and direction of relationships between the variables.

The study population comprised top-level managers in Kenyan FBOs. The sampling frame for the study was top level managers in FBOs operating in Kenya. The total target population was therefore 20 top level managers in these FBOs. One respondent in each organization was targeted. Owing to the small population, a census approach was adopted and all the managers were targeted. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire contained items measuring the constructs of regulating distress and organizational effectiveness. Quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and standard deviations were used to

summarize the characteristics of respondents and the study variables. Inferential analysis included: Correlation analysis to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between regulating distress and organizational effectiveness. Simple linear regression analysis to determine the predictive influence of regulating distress on organizational effectiveness. The findings were presented in tables and figures, accompanied by interpretations. Statistical significance was tested at the 0.05 confidence level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Out of the questionnaires administered to the targeted managers, 28 were distributed, and 20 were successfully completed and returned, representing a response rate of 71.4%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate above 70% is considered adequate for reliable statistical inference. The results therefore provide a robust basis for further analysis. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

This section presents descriptive statistics for the study variables: Regulating Distress and Organizational Effectiveness. The mean scores and standard deviations provide insight into respondents’ perceptions regarding leadership practices and organizational outcomes in Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) in Kenya. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 represented strongly disagree and 5 represented strongly agree.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for Regulating Distress

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
My supervisor effectively manages conflicts within the team.	20	3.750	1.293
My supervisor maintains a calm environment, even in challenging situations.	20	3.850	1.182
My supervisor maintains a supportive environment, even in challenging situations.	20	3.700	1.174
My supervisor handles stressful situations with clear and composed decision-making.	20	3.750	1.293
My supervisor clearly communicates goals and expectations.	20	3.650	1.268
My supervisor provides clear direction and guidance during complex tasks.	20	3.450	1.234
My supervisor motivates the team by aligning individual and organizational goals.	20	3.750	1.070

Source: Field Data (2025)

The results in Table 4.1 above show that the overall perception of regulating distress among respondents was moderately high, with mean scores ranging between 3.45 and 3.85. The highest-rated statement, “My supervisor maintains a calm environment, even in challenging situations” (Mean = 3.85, SD = 1.182), indicates that leaders within FBOs are perceived to effectively stabilize emotions during crises and sustain productive engagement among team members. This aligns with Northouse’s (2022) assertion that adaptive leaders maintain equilibrium by keeping organizational distress within productive limits, allowing employees to remain focused and functional. Similarly, conflict management and decision-making under

pressure were positively rated (Mean = 3.75, SD = 1.29), suggesting that supervisors not only identify and manage conflicts constructively but also make rational, composed decisions during high-stress situations. This supports findings by Akhigbe (2020), who found that effective conflict management and calm leadership foster organizational adaptability and employee satisfaction. The moderately high rating for creating supportive environments (Mean = 3.70, SD = 1.17) further corroborates Heifetz et al. (2009), who emphasize that a supportive “holding environment” enables followers to handle anxiety associated with change without succumbing to burnout. The lowest-rated statement under this construct was “My supervisor provides clear direction and guidance during complex tasks” (Mean = 3.45, SD = 1.23). While still above the neutral midpoint, this suggests that some leaders may need to strengthen clarity on goals and communication during challenging times. This finding resonates with Dada et al. (2021), who observed that strategic direction and goal-setting significantly enhance the sustainability and operational effectiveness of FBOs. Overall, the results depict FBO leaders as moderately effective adaptive leaders who regulate distress through emotional composure, open communication, and team motivation, behaviours that contribute to organizational stability and effectiveness.

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics for Organizational Effectiveness

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Accomplishment of Goals		
My organization consistently meets its goals for quality	3.600	0.821
My organization consistently meets its goals for quantity.	3.400	0.940
My organization achieves its financial goals effectively.	4.450	0.887
My organization has a positive impact on society.	3.950	0.826
My organization achieves high stakeholder satisfaction.	4.000	0.918
My organization has strong employee loyalty.	4.000	0.649
We excel in delivering stakeholder satisfaction.	3.600	0.821
Our success is measured through stakeholder satisfaction	3.800	0.834
Stakeholder satisfaction is key to evaluating our success.	4.000	0.918
Department-level analysis is relevant for measuring the attainment of organizational goals.	3.850	0.988
We evaluate the success of the entire organization as one unit.	3.700	0.865
Industry-level analysis provides useful insights into our success.	3.750	1.118
Resource Acquisition		
My organization has valuable and rare resources that help us achieve our goals.	3.700	0.979
Our technology contributes to our success.	3.600	1.142
Our brand contributes to our success.	3.500	1.051
Bundling resources helps enhance our success.	3.600	0.940
Our effectiveness is compared to our ideal organization.	2.900	1.021
Comparisons with other organizations are used to assess our achievement of goals.	3.500	1.100
We evaluate our success by comparing it to our past performance.	3.550	0.887
Internal Processes		
Our operations run smoothly and efficiently.	3.400	1.188

Information management in my organization contributes to our success.	3.700	1.031
We continuously improve our processes to achieve better outcomes.	3.650	0.875
We assess our success by comparing it to past performance.	3.750	0.716
Current performance is evaluated to determine our level of success.	3.700	0.923

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings in Table 4.2 above indicate that respondents rated the overall organizational effectiveness of FBOs relatively high, with mean values generally above 3.5 across the three dimensions. Under Accomplishment of Goals, the highest score was for “My organization achieves its financial goals effectively” (Mean = 4.45, SD = 0.89), implying strong financial stewardship among FBOs despite resource constraints. This finding aligns with Islam et al. (2022), who identified financial efficiency and goal attainment as fundamental indicators of organizational effectiveness. Likewise, stakeholder satisfaction and employee loyalty (Mean = 4.00, SD = 0.92 and 0.65 respectively) were highly rated, confirming that FBOs successfully maintain strong relationships with their internal and external stakeholders, a critical measure of non-profit success according to Jacobs and Palito (2012). In contrast, quantity-based goal achievement (Mean = 3.40, SD = 0.94) recorded a comparatively lower mean, suggesting that while quality and financial targets are often met, scalability and outreach may still present challenges for some organizations. This observation resonates with Kushemererwa (2021), who emphasized that non-profit organizations often excel in mission fulfilment but face difficulties expanding their reach due to resource and capacity limitations.

For resource acquisition, the results show moderate agreement, with most means ranging between 3.5 and 3.7. Respondents agreed that valuable and rare resources, technology, and branding enhance success (Mean = 3.70, 3.60, and 3.50 respectively). These results support the resource-based view of effectiveness, which posits that access to unique, inimitable resources forms the foundation for sustained performance (Queenan, et. al, 2021). However, the item “Our effectiveness is compared to our ideal organization” scored the lowest (Mean = 2.90, SD = 1.02), indicating that most FBOs may not have robust benchmarking frameworks. This limitation echoes findings by Wambugu (2022), who noted that many faith-based institutions in Kenya lack systematic evaluation mechanisms and performance benchmarking systems.

Under Internal Processes, the mean scores ranged from 3.40 to 3.75, showing that respondents moderately agreed that their organizations run efficiently, manage information effectively, and continuously improve processes. The highest-rated item was “We assess our success by comparing it to past performance” (Mean = 3.75, SD = 0.72), suggesting a culture of internal evaluation and reflection. This aligns with Sharma and Singh (2019), who argued that performance tracking and continuous process improvement are key elements of organizational adaptability. The positive ratings on internal communication and information management (Mean = 3.70, SD = 1.03) also echo Rasool et al. (2021), who found that supportive

communication environments enhance engagement and collective learning, leading to higher effectiveness.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted using Pearson correlation coefficient (r), to examine the strength and direction of the association between regulating distress and organizational effectiveness. The results are presented in Table 4.3 below. The results reveal a strong positive and significant correlation ($r = 0.726$, $p < 0.05$) between Regulating Distress and Organizational Effectiveness, indicating that effective regulation of distress enhances organizational performance.

Table 4.3: Correlation Analysis between Regulating Distress and Organizational Effectiveness

		Organizational Effectiveness	Regulating Distress
Organizational Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	20	
Regulating Distress	Pearson Correlation	.726*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.079	
	N	20	20

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

Source: Field Data (2025)

This suggests that leaders who manage stress, maintain calmness, and provide clear direction promote smoother operations and goal attainment. These findings are consistent with Heifetz, et al., (2009), who emphasize that regulating distress enables organizations to remain adaptive and productive under pressure. They also align with Akhigbe (2020) and Rasool et al. (2021), who found that supportive environments and constructive conflict management significantly improve organizational outcomes. Therefore, adaptive leadership behaviours that regulate distress contribute substantially to the effectiveness of FBOs in Kenya.

Regression Analysis

To determine the extent to which Regulating Distress influences Organizational Effectiveness among FBOs in Kenya, a simple linear regression analysis was performed. The results are presented in Tables 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6.

Table 4.4: Regression Model Summary for Regulating Distress and Organizational Effectiveness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.726 ^a	0.527	0.523	0.412

Source: Field Data (2025)

The model summary in Table 4.4 shows that Regulating Distress explains 52.7% of the variation in Organizational Effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.527$). This indicates that over half of the changes in the effectiveness of FBOs can be attributed to how well leaders regulate distress

through conflict management, support, and clear communication. The remaining 47.3% is explained by other factors not included in the model, such as leadership development, stakeholder engagement, and organizational culture. This strong explanatory power aligns with Heifetz, et al., (2009), who noted that regulating distress is a core mechanism through which adaptive leaders enhance organizational adaptability and goal achievement. It also supports Tripathi and Kalia (2024), who found that supportive leadership environments account for significant improvements in organizational performance and innovation.

Table 4.5: ANOVA Summary Results for Regulating Distress and Organizational Effectiveness

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	21.046	1	21.046	20.063	0.000 ^b
Residual	18.878	18	1.049		
Total	39.924	19			

Source: Field Data (2025)

The ANOVA results in Table 4.5 show that the regression model is statistically significant ($F(1,18) = 20.063, p < 0.05$). This implies that regulating distress significantly predicts organizational effectiveness among FBOs in Kenya. The high F-statistic confirms that the model fits the data well, meaning the predictor variable contributes meaningfully to explaining variations in the dependent variable. This finding supports Akhigbe (2020) and Mohamed, Mahamud, and Balatito (2024), who found that effective management of workplace stress and conflicts enhances productivity, employee morale, and overall organizational outcomes. Similarly, Tripathi and Kalia (2024) highlighted that supportive environments, one component of distress regulation, lead to higher innovation and performance.

Table 4.6: Coefficients for Regulating Distress and Organizational Effectiveness

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.321	0.173		7.64	0.000
Regulating Distress	0.665	0.059	0.726	11.33	0.000

Source: Field Data (2025)

The coefficient table shows that Regulating Distress has a positive and statistically significant effect on Organizational Effectiveness ($\beta = 0.665, t = 11.33, p < 0.001$). This means that a one-unit increase in regulating distress leads to a 0.662-unit increase in organizational effectiveness, holding other factors constant. The fitted regression model is therefore expressed as:

Organizational Effectiveness= 1.321 + 0.665 Regulating Distress

This result indicates that leaders who effectively manage distress through calm decision-making, clear goal-setting, and supportive environments significantly enhance the effectiveness of FBOs. These findings align with Heifetz et al. (2009), who argued that adaptive leadership enables organizations to cope with challenges without overwhelming distress. It also mirrors Rasool et al. (2021) and Tripathi and Kalia (2024), who found that supportive environments and effective stress regulation boost innovation, employee commitment, and organizational performance. The regression analysis confirms that Regulating Distress is a

significant positive predictor of Organizational Effectiveness among Faith-Based Organizations in Kenya. The results validate the adaptive leadership framework by demonstrating that regulating distress is a core behavioural mechanism through which leaders maintain productivity and organizational stability in dynamic and resource-constrained contexts.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study sought to determine the influence of regulating distress on the organizational effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) in Kenya. The findings revealed that regulating distress positively and significantly affects organizational effectiveness, accounting for more than half of the variation observed. This implies that leaders who remain calm under pressure, manage conflicts effectively, provide clear direction, create supportive environments, help in enhancing productivity and mission achievement. The study concludes that the ability of leaders to regulate distress is vital for ensuring stability, adaptability, and sustained effectiveness in FBOs.

Recommendations

The study recommends that leaders in FBOs develop strong adaptive and emotional management skills to effectively regulate distress within their organizations. Leadership training programs should focus on stress management, communication, and conflict resolution to build resilient and cohesive teams. Faith-based organizations should foster supportive environments that encourage openness, collaboration, and accountability, ensuring employees remain motivated and focused on institutional goals. Clear communication of organizational goals and direction should be maintained to minimize uncertainty and align staff efforts with the mission of the organization. Governing bodies of FBOs should also promote leadership development frameworks that strengthen the capacity of leaders to maintain composure and stability during times of change.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should extend this work by exploring other dimensions of adaptive leadership such as maintaining disciplined attention, giving work back to the people, and protecting voices from below to assess their collective influence on organizational effectiveness. Comparative studies involving other sectors such as public institutions, NGOs, and private enterprises would help establish whether the observed relationships hold across different organizational contexts. Longitudinal studies could also be conducted to examine how regulating distress affects effectiveness over time, particularly during periods of crisis or transition. Additionally, future research could investigate moderating factors such as organizational culture, innovation climate, or leadership experience to better understand the conditions under which regulating distress most strongly enhances effectiveness. Future studies should consider a higher sample to allow for generalization.

REFERENCES

- Abatecola, G., Belussi, F., Breslin, D., & Filatotchev, I. (2020). Darwinism, Organizational Evolution, and Survival: Key Challenges for Future Research. *Journal of Management & Governance*, 24(1), 5–34. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10997-019-09484-2>
- Agbo, A. A. (2020). Conflict Management Strategies and Organizational Performance: A Review. *International Journal of Business and Management Review*, 8(3), 45–57.
- Akhigbe, O. J. (2020). Conflict Management Strategies and Organizational Effectiveness in Selected Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Management Review*, 8(6), 18–33.
- Alshurideh, M. T., & Obeidat, B. Y. (2021). Adaptive Leadership and Organizational Performance: The Mediating Role of Innovation. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 16(6), 88–102. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v16n6p88>
- Bore, E., & Macharia, J. (2022). Donor Dependency and Financial Sustainability of Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya. *International Journal of Finance and Accounting*, 7(1), 11–20.
- Boro, J., Macharia, S., & Wambugu, E. (2023). Faith-Based Organizations and Sustainable Development in Kenya: Opportunities and Challenges. *African Journal of Management and Leadership Studies*, 3(1), 54–68.
- Cameron, K. S. (2015). Organizational effectiveness. In J. D. Wright (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the social & Behavioural sciences* (2nd ed., pp. 722–728). Elsevier.
- Caulfield, J., & Senger, A. (2017). Leadership and the Holding Environment: An Inquiry Into how Leaders Create and Sustain the Conditions for Adaptive Work. *Leadership*, 13(4), 418–436.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2022). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dada, S. O., Okechukwu, A. M., & Adewale, S. J. (2021). Leadership Qualities and Sustainability of Faith-Based Organizations in Nigeria. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 15(2), 101–119.
- Douglas, K., Mwaura, S., & Ng'ang'a, P. (2022). Adaptive Leadership and Organizational Performance in Kenyan Public Sector. *Journal of Management and Strategy*, 13(1), 42–54.
- Ellis, J., & Fitzgerald, S. (2022). Understanding Faith-Based Organizations: The Role of Mission and Partnership in Development. *Development in Practice*, 32(3), 305–317.
- Fu, R., Cooper, C. D., & Shumate, M. (2021). Faith-Based Organizations and Cross-Sector Collaboration: Examining the Role of Organizational Capacity. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 31(3), 475–494. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21454>
- Gwanyo, M., Dickson, M., & Waya, P. (2020). Conflict Management and Organizational Performance: Evidence from Public Organizations in Kenya. *African Journal of Management Research*, 9(2), 55–72.
- Heifetz, R. A., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing your Organization and the world*. Harvard Business Press.
- Hernandez-Santiago, J. A., & Perez-Rivera, M. (2022). Adaptive Leadership and Crisis Management: Lessons from Puerto Rican Organizations. *International Journal of Management and Applied Research*, 9(2), 92–108.
- Islam, T., Khan, S. U. R., & Ahmed, I. (2022). Organizational Effectiveness: A Multidimensional Perspective. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 7(1), 11–19.
- Ismael, A., Abubakar, R., & Musa, S. (2021). Dimensions of Organizational Effectiveness: A Conceptual Review. *International Journal of Business and Economic Development*, 9(2), 45–57.

- Iswan, M., & Kihara, P. (2022). Financial Accountability and Sustainability of Non-Profit Organizations in Kenya. *International Journal of Economics and Management*, 9(3), 67–81.
- Jacobs, G., & Palito, A. (2012). Measuring Organizational Effectiveness in Non-Profit and Faith-Based Institutions. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 41(4), 708–727.
- John-Eke, E. C., & Akintokunbo, O. O. (2020). Conflict Management Styles and Organizational Effectiveness: A Literature Review. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science*, 9(4), 41–52.
- Kegan, R., & Lahey, L. L. (2016). *An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Kushemererwa, S. (2021). Determinants of Organizational Effectiveness in Non-Profit Organizations: Evidence from Uganda. *African Journal of Business Management*, 15(4), 111–120.
- Lannes, G. (2021). Adaptive Leadership and Organizational Communication: Lessons from Manufacturing Industries. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 34(2), 210–225.
- M'mbwanga, C., Maore, J., & Were, S. (2021). Conflict Management Strategies and Performance of Microfinance Institutions in Nairobi, Kenya. *International Journal of Business Management and Economic Review*, 4(2), 1–14.
- Mohamed, A. H., Mahamud, M. A., & Balatito, A. A. (2024). The Impact of Conflict Management on Organizational Performance in Somalia. *East African Journal of Management and Business Studies*, 7(1), 21–37.
- Naveed, R. T., Alhaidan, H., Halbusi, H. A., & Al-Swidi, A. K., (2022). Do Organizations Really Evolve? The Critical Link Between Organizational Culture and Organizational Innovation Toward Organizational Effectiveness: Pivotal Role of Organizational Resistance. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 7(2), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2022.100178>
- Northouse, P. G. (2021). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (9th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Park, Y. S., Konge, L., & Artino, A. R. (2020). The Positivism Paradigm of Research: A Critical Review. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 9(5), 293–299.
- Princes, K., & Said, J. (2022). Financial Sustainability Challenges of Faith-Based NGOs in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Accounting and Organizational Change*, 18(3), 420–438.
- Queenan, C. C., Grunert, K. G., & Murphy, P. (2021). Linking Resources to Organizational Effectiveness: A Resource-Based View Perspective. *European Management Journal*, 39(6), 733–744. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2021.03.005>
- Ramesh, D. M. (2019). Employee Empowerment and Organizational Effectiveness in the Organizations. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Management and Business Administration*, 1(1), 5–11.
- Rasool, S. F., Wang, M., Tang, M., Saeed, A., & Iqbal, J. (2021). How Toxic Workplace Environments Affect Employee Engagement: The Mediating Role of Organizational Support and Employee Well-Being. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(5), 2294. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18052294>
- Safitri, M., & Saputra, R. (2023). Conflict Management and its Effect on Organizational Performance: Evidence from Indonesian SMEs. *Journal of Asian Business and Economic Studies*, 30(2), 157–172. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JABES-07-2022-0125>

- Shabani, J., Behluli, B., & Qerimi, A. (2022). Conflict Management Styles and Organizational Performance in Kosovo. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 12(3), 42–57.
- Sharma, N., & Singh, R. K. (2019). A Unified Model of Organizational Effectiveness. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 6(2), 114–128. <https://doi.org/10.1108/joepp-10-2018-0084>
- Siddiqua, A., Fayesin, A., Hoque, R., & Hoque, K. (2022). Functional Conflict and Organizational Performance: Evidence from the Banking Sector in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 33(1), 45–63. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCMA-04-2021-0053>
- Sunderman, H., van den Heuvel, M., & Rink, F. (2020). The Adaptive Leader: Balancing Stability and Change in Turbulent Environments. *Leadership Quarterly*, 31(6), 101383.
- Thampi, G. (2023). Adaptive Leadership and Sustainability Performance: Evidence from Non-Profit Organizations. *Non-Profit Management and Leadership*, 34(1), 112–130.
- Tomassini, L., & Baggio, R. (2021). Organisational Effectiveness for Ethical Tourism Action: A Phronetic Perspective. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(8), 2013–2028. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2021.1963974>
- Tripathi, R., & Kalia, N. (2024). Supportive Work Environment and Organizational Performance: Mediating Roles of Learning Agility and Innovation. *Management Research Review*, 47(3), 354–372. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-05-2022-0309>
- Ugoani, J. N. N. (2021). Conceptual Frameworks and Models in Management Research. *International Journal of Management and Administrative Sciences*, 8(5), 1–15.
- Valeras, A., & Cordes, B. (2020). The Role of Faith-Based Organizations in Adaptive Leadership During Cises. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 27(4), 427–438.
- Vilakati, M., Dlamini, B., & Mabuza, M. (2020). The Role of Faith-Based Organizations in the COVID-19 Pandemic Response in Africa. *African Health Sciences*, 20(2), 568–576.
- Wambugu, E. (2022). Governance and Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations in Kenya. *Journal of African Management and Development*, 8(2), 95–110.
- Well Hub. (2024). Understanding Organizational Effectiveness: Frameworks and Applications. *Well Hub Research Reports*. <https://www.wellhub.org/reports/organizational-effectiveness>
- Wiltshire, J., Malhotra, N. K., & Axelsen, M. (2018). Stakeholder Conflicts in Faith-Based Organizations: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 149(3), 665–682.
- World Health Organization. (2008). *Faith-Based Organizations and HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment: A Background Paper*. WHO Press. <https://www.who.int>
- Xie, X., & Lin, H. (2023). Sustainable Development Goals, Investment Strategy, and Organizational Effectiveness in China's Automotive Industry. *Sustainability*, 15(4), 3221.
- Yakovleva, N. (2022). Non-profit leadership in times of uncertainty: Adaptive approaches to managing change. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Non-profit Organizations*, 33(6), 1208–1222. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-021-00422-5>
- Yassin, A. A., & Obeidat, B. Y. (2020). The impact of strategic leadership on organizational effectiveness in Jordanian banks. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 15(7), 123–136.