



# STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PRACTICES, ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

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## Abstract

*This study sought to evaluate the moderating effect of environmental factors on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability of faith-based organizations. The study was anchored on contingency theory and was based on the positivism research paradigm. This study adopted explanatory research design and primary data was collected from 198 leaders working as heads of units, heads of departments, and directors in faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa. Descriptive statistics reported means and standard deviations respectively for the study variables; determining strategic direction at 4.41 and 0.480, exploiting and maintaining core competencies at 3.90 and 0.629, developing human capital at 3.79 and 0.647, balanced organizational controls at 3.85 and 0.587. Multiple linear regression analyses established that environmental factors positively moderated the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability of faith-based organizations. The study recommends that faith-based organizations should pay attention to the influences of environmental factors and take suitable measures to reduce their effect.*

*Keywords: Strategic Leadership Practices, Environmental Factors, Financial Sustainability, Faith-based organizations*

## INTRODUCTION

Globally, faith-based organizations have emerged as important actors in socio-economic development (Deacon & Tomalin, 2015). They are known to be agents of transformation in society since they are uniquely placed to mobilize faith communities towards the achievement of desired development results (Clarke & Ware, 2015). Much of the research and what has been written concerning faith-based organizations' role is mainly in mainstream religious organizations, the majority of whose structure is beyond the host country (Clarke & Ware, 2015). Globally, the financial support for faith-based organizations has not become sufficiently stable to maintain required social services. For example, most churches are membership-supported, and during times of fluctuating economies, membership donations have been seen to reflect such fluctuations (Mawudor, 2016).

The concept of financial sustainability for profit-oriented organizations can differ significantly from faith-based organizations that are non-profit in nature because of differences in the organizations' overarching goals (Mutinda & Ngahu, 2016). Financial capacity for a faith-based organization is seen in the availability of resources to the organization that is required to meet outlined goals (Schatteman & Waymire, 2017). The specific resources required depend on an organization's mission, operating environment, the method of service delivery, and the risk of possible adverse economic occurrences (Bowman, 2011a). An organization's resources give it the ability to react to unexpected results and have the capacity to seize opportunities yet at the same time maintain general organizational operations (Bowman, 2011b). According to Hoque and Parker (2015), the financial sustainability goal for faith-based organizations is to expand or maintain services and at the same time be able to overcome occasional shocks arising from the economy; such as changes in donations and short-term loss of program funding.

Effective strategic leadership has been known to expand and enhance organizations' adaptive and absorptive capacity which could be an effective response to changes in the operating environment (Boal & Schultz, 2007). To this effect, strategic leaders' effective behaviour has been valued due to its direct impact on organizational performance (Asif & Basit, 2021). Because of the continuous influence of environmental factors on the operations of an organization, a study to evaluate the moderating effect of environmental factors on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability was therefore valuable.

### Statement of the Problem

Historically, faith-based organizations in Africa concentrated on traditional objects of charity; such as people living in poverty, the young, the disabled, and the sick (Werber et al.,

2015). Recognition and support by donors, society, and other stakeholders led to the increase in the number of faith-based organizations and the magnitude of services they offered to the community (Hall Jackson et al., 2005). It is also the case that the history of development in Sub-Saharan Africa has; in many ways, been linked to the roles played by the church and organizations affiliated with churches in the areas of public performance and governance (Mawudor, 2016; Wodon, 2015). Because of the increased support by external donors, many faith-based organizations have depended on donors. As a result of this dependence, faith-based organizations have continued to experience low financial sustainability; which is evident whenever funding partners stop financing their operations (McCarthy et al., 2012).

According to Renoir and Guttentag (2018), many faith-based organizations, “struggle to develop and maintain their own financial resources and local and external financial resources required to realize their missions” (p. 6). This situation is evidenced by a lower ability to build a financial resource base that is diverse. The diversity of financial resources is required so that institutional structure and delivery of services for the target population continue in spite of the possible shake-up of an organization’s income sources (Helm, 2016).

Faith-based organizations operational in Africa are weak financially. Many have stopped operating, partly because of the economic levels in the context they operate. The legislative environment governing faith-based organisations are restrictive and may be constraining their capability for fundraising. Faith-based organizations depend mainly on a few large donors which places them at high risk in case such streams of revenue stop. Dependence on donors is evident in the way some have been compelled to change their mandates in compliance to the interest of donors, whereas others devote a significant amount of their resources to raising funds. Accordingly, the management of relationships with donors and looking for additional or new donors occupy the minds of faith-based organizations' leadership. This is remarkably different from faith-based organisations in the global north, where a significant number have adopted commercialization and social enterprise (Maboya & McKay, 2019).

According to Carter et al. (2014), faith-based organization leaders responsible for financial management have limited strategies to make sure that the faith-based organizations they lead remain fiscally sustainable. The limited strategies may be influenced by the dominant leadership models in most faith-based organizations namely; supportive, democratic, and transformational leadership. It, therefore, calls for further research to establish if strategic leadership can add value to efforts towards financial sustainability by faith-based organizations (Mwenje, 2016).

## Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to establish the moderating effect of environmental factors on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and the financial sustainability of faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa.

## THE LITERATURE

### Theoretical Foundation

This study is anchored on contingency theory. This theory advanced by Fiedler (1996), focuses on the characteristics that influence leaders' productivity. According to contingency theory, environmental characteristics influence an organization's capability to acquire resources and increase the likelihood of gaining access to resources. Ngugi (2013) contends that the extent to which there are changes in the organization's context is a key feature of the environment that affects the organization's ability to obtain resources. An alignment of the organizational characteristics to its context or environment results in increased organizational performance.

The contingency theory is concerned with matching the leadership style with the state of affairs prevailing within and around an organization. The proponents of the theory further argue that leadership style depends on various environmental factors in the organization and that effective leadership is dependent on how well the leaders' styles fit the organizational context. The contingency theory was appropriate for this study, given the influence of the complex and fast-changing environments in today's organizations (Boal & Schultz, 2007). Indeed, the theory is, as Ngugi (2013) observes, about the achievement of fit between the current organizational status and its desired position by taking into consideration the factors that influence the process. Leaders who are seeking to enhance the financial sustainability of their organizations should pay attention to the influence of environmental factors.

### Conceptual and Empirical Review

#### *Strategic Leadership Practices*

The role of strategic leadership is to enable the organization to move forward in order to succeed in the long term. This expectation is, however, dependent on whether an organization pursues and attains a lasting ability set that provides unique value to its constituents over the long term in the segment an organization serves (Hughes & Beatty, 2011). The key strategic leadership practices considered by this study are; strategic direction, human capital, core competencies, and organizational controls.

The determination of strategic direction refers to the development of an organization's longer-term vision (Ireland & Hitt, 2005). Lear (2012) noted that "determining strategic direction is focusing the organization on a long-term vision with a view to at least five years in the future" (p. 170). Determining the organization's vision or purpose entails articulating a realistic and clear statement on the reason for the organization's existence and what is distinctive about it. When that happens, the vision or purpose statement then empowers the organizational members to formulate and implement strategies that are aligned with the organization's vision (Slawinski, 2007). In formulating such a vision statement, leaders need to work with stakeholders to determine what purpose it is pursuing (Ireland & Hitt, 2005). Strategic direction helps organizational leaders to be strategic and orderly in their daily leadership (Olaka et al., 2017). This is in line with the finding of a study by Poku (2012) who established that strategic direction leads to higher performance in the banking industry.

According to Andersson and Ramos-Reid (2011), core competencies are strategically valuable abilities to the organization. Identifying core competencies can help leadership evaluate crucial gaps in the organization, such as lack of integration of competencies or lack of routines for sustaining resources (Ljungquist, 2013). According to Ljungquist (2013), core competencies in the non-profit sector should; "be unique and contribute to the provision of services or activities that few other institutions are able to provide with the same qualities, contribute to end-service benefits whether it be to internal or external and contribute to the development of a variety of services or activities offered by the organization" (p. 23). The leader's role is to identify the core competencies the organization needs for achieving its purpose and consequently work on the development, maintenance and exploitation of those core competencies (Ireland & Hitt, 2005). An organization will be able to explore additional resources with core competencies. Thus, a strategic leader needs to have access to and determine the resources that are required at any given period. A study by Al-Nashmi and Heba (2020) found that core competencies have a significant effect on the excellence of universities in Yemen. The findings also showed that the size of the university influenced the level of excellence (Al-Nashmi & Heba, 2020).

Human capital refers to the competencies, skills, and knowledge of an organization's entire workforce that enables them to carry out work and produce economic value (Mubarik et al., 2018). The development of human capital has an impact on the knowledge required by the organization through training programs that are effective. Developing human capital is also a proactive and a conscious approach used by strategic leaders who aspire to empower and utilize fully their potential to develop themselves (Slawinski, 2007). The development of human capital, therefore, provides organizational capacity building. When the performance of

employees increases, it leads to an organization's effectiveness since they would be more satisfied and committed. The most significant parts of a person's capital are attained through work experience and educational attainment (Borjas, 2013). The skills and knowledge of employees should be developed on an ongoing basis in order to align with new technologies and changes (Migwe, 2018). This is supported by Kiswili et al. (2019) who established a significant positive effect that the development of human capital has on the performance of deposit-taking SACCOs in Kenya.

Organizational control, "is the process by which an organization influences its functions and members to behave in ways that lead to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives" (Ireland & Hitt, 2005, p. 72). Hitt et al. (2014) observe that controls in an organization are typically marked by initially establishing standards, then performance measurement, then a comparison of performance with standards, and as a final step, taking the required corrective action. These controls comprise formal procedures dependent on information used to change patterns or maintain the activities of the organization. Controls are also helpful to strategic leaders in their duty to show how valuable strategies are to stakeholders and build credibility (Shields et al., 2000). The effectiveness of strategic controls increases significantly when leaders can make sense of different information sets leading to relevant insights that are competitive (Hitt et al., 1996). Stability is required for organizations to be assured of growth and prosperity (Ireland et al., 2013). A study by Ogechi (2016) established that balanced organizational controls positively influence the performance of small and micro-enterprises in Kenya.

### ***Environmental Factors***

The environmental factors refer to those elements existing outside the organizations boundaries such as economic, political, technological, social, legal, and ecological environment; that influence its performance (Richard et al., 2009). An organization's environment "consists of interrelated sets of variables that play a principal role in determining the opportunities, threats, and constraints that organizations face" (Jane et al., 2014, p. 407).

The "environmental conditions have changed dramatically because of the global economy. In the past few decades, environmental conditions were relatively stable and predictable compared with the current and predicted states of these conditions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (Ireland & Hitt, 2005, p. 65). In this regard, a leader's effort to enhance an organization's financial sustainability needs a comprehension of the forces external to the organization that has the potential to inhibit or facilitate that performance. As such, a change in the variables that exist in the external environment leads to environmental uncertainty (Pearce &

Robinson, 2011). Jane et al. (2014) found that superior performance in an organization is certain when an organization can respond to uncertainty in its environment. This is also aligned with the findings of a study by Akrofi (2017) who established that macro-environmental factors (economic, technological, political, and legal) influenced the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (Akrofi, 2017).

Renoir and Guttentag (2018) identified key factors that limit the ability of non-profit organizations to operate effectively. The factors include “social stigma, poor economic conditions, restrictive government regulations, lack of a local culture of philanthropy, taxation regimes, competition, and lack of access to skilled labour” (p. 9). These factors are similar to the key environmental factors identified by Sammut-Bonnici and Galea (2015) that affect faith-based organizations. They are economic, political and legal, social, and technological factors. This is in line with Banda (2020) who indicated that external environmental factors that have a bearing on organizational performance include political and economic factors which are macroeconomic and social and technological factors which are microeconomic in nature. These four factors were seen to be the key ones that potentially moderate the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability in faith-based organizations (Pearce & Robinson, 2011). The internal environmental factors were not considered since the organizations have control over them and are managed through effective strategic direction which is one of the variables in the study (Halmaghi et al., 2017).

Economic factors are elements of performance in an economy that impact an organization directly and have deep, long-term effects. Economic issues that affect organizations include recessions, unemployment, economic upswings, and other contextual factors affecting an organization's capacity to prosper and grow. Economic influences may also partially define the role of an organization in the political and legal environment, which helps to effectively assign power in society and implement the laws (Barkauskas et al., 2015).

Similarly, the political and legal systems in which an organization functions can play a crucial part in shaping the organization's stability in the long term and securing an organization's future. These political and legal systems are necessary in creating a favourable environment for the organization and are responsible for ensuring regulations about the operation and taxation needs of the broader community are addressed (Jones & George, 2014). The political-legal environment comprises factors such as regulatory policies, national development strategies, political stability, and government support.

Bureaucratic and legal restrictions inform the level at which revenue can be collected by an organization (Barkauskas et al., 2015).

Technological factors enhance the competitiveness of an organization. Technology helps in these achievements through timely provision of information, enhanced quality, other innovation measures and technology adapted, and the modernization of servicing system (Barkauskas et al., 2015). Barkauskas et al. (2015) assert the importance of ensuring that institutional information is widely available to all stakeholders when using information systems and modern technology.

### ***Financial Sustainability***

According to Bowman (2011b) and Muriithi (2014), there is a noteworthy difference in defining financial sustainability for a non-profit-making organization and a profit-making organization. This is dependent on the structure of the organization, the sources of an organization's revenue, and organizational goals. In the case of a faith-based organization that is not-for-profit in nature, its financial capacity is made up of the resources that allow the organization ability to make use of opportunities that arise and to be able to react to unexpected needs (Karanja & Karuti, 2014). The financial sustainability of a faith-based organization is demonstrated in "its ability to reallocate assets in the wake of opportunities and threats and be able to maintain sound financial balance over a long period" (Omeri, 2015, p. 740). The financial sustainability of faith-based organizations is also reflected in the organizations' capacity to raise funds locally or raise its revenue and reduce dependence on foreign support while still meeting its defined goals (Lewis, 2011). From the major elements that have a significant bearing on the financial sustainability of a non-profit organization, this study adopted the measures of financial sustainability of faith-based organizations identified by Mitlin et al. (2007) and Milelu (2018); namely income diversification, donor relationship management, and financial management practices.

The diversification of income relates to the ability of an organization to come up with many income sources to fund identified key activities and meet its goals (Mitlin et al., 2007). To be assured that services to the target beneficiaries even if donor support ceases, it is important that an organization has diverse income (Renz, 2016). According to Saungweme (2014), Income diversification is shown in the ability of an organization to increase internal and local sources of income. A sustainable non-profit organization, therefore, has to consider both external and internal dimensions because there is a key correlation between the financial sustainability and income diversification of non-profit organizations (Omeri, 2015; Saungweme, 2014).



Donor relationship management: Omeri (2015) posits that faith-based organizations bear the responsibility of ensuring investors and donors receive appropriate information in a way that is transparent and clear. Saungweme (2014) has the view that faith-based organizations' understanding of donor priorities, adjusting their systems appropriately, and adjusting their activities and processes to attract more donors is desirable for good donor relationship management. Waiganjo et al. (2012) stated that organizations that can align their programs to match the priorities of donors are likely to get their financial support and consequently attain financial sustainability. Saungweme (2014) established key indicators that form a basis for good donor relationships management as; "the number of donor-organized programs that non-profit organization is invited, the number of programs and projects that are donor-funded, repeat funding by donors, and donors funding of long term projects of non-profit organizations" (Ebenezer et al., 2020, p. 55).

Financial management systems: An organization should have the adequate internal capacity to do an assessment and management of risks linked to financial resources and funding. This should be done regularly in such a way that both managers and board members can understand and use them appropriately. The management should therefore establish the internal controls which assure that organizational goals may be achieved and that an undesirable event would be detected or prevented and appropriate correction is effected so that the business of the organization is conducted in a manner that is orderly (Kumar & Sharma, 2015). Sustainable faith-based organizations also have adequate financial reserves. They are able in a strategic way to meet financial obligations for the organization, including overheads (Pratt et al., 2012). The need for effective financial management by organizations and to put in place a financial plan which is sustainable in the long-term is necessitated by the fast changes in the donor community (Saungweme, 2014).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was built on the positivist approach which supports the aspect of hypothesis development and testing as advanced by Cooper and Schindler (2014). The study used descriptive research design which allowed the researcher to construct a suitable profile of accurate and complete information about the situation under evaluation (Nassaji, 2015).

The target population for this study was the 18 faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa. A total of 198 top-level leaders formed the respondents of the study who were studied at three levels namely directors, heads of departments, and heads of units. In order to be assured of a representative nature of the target population and to ensure

that the study objective would be attained, the researcher did a census of the target population (Cohen et al., 2011).

A questionnaire was used in this research for the collection of primary data. The questionnaire gathered demographic information on the respondents, strategic leadership practices, the influence of environmental factors, and financial sustainability in the organization (Creswell, 2015). Through the pre-testing process, the researcher checked the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The researcher used the Cronbach Coefficient (Alpha Value) to check the reliability of the questionnaire. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measures were used to check construct validity. Content validity of the instrument was attained through a comprehensive review of literature and by subjecting the instrument to an evaluation by strategic leadership and finance experts who gave their feedback on the relevance of each instrument item (Yusoff, 2019). Content validity process also made sure that the questions were easy to comprehend, clear, pleasant to the eye, and the sequence easier to follow (Kumar, 2019).

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **Response Rate**

With a total of 150 questionnaires duly filled and returned, it represented a rate of response of 75.8%. This was considered a high response rate and determined as adequate to permit the next step of analysis of data (Babbie, 2010). A questionnaire was considered duly filled if all the questions were answered correctly (one choice from the 5-point likert scale) and that there were no outliers.

A high response rate was desirable for this study in order to yield results that could better be inferred from the whole target population that was studied (Awino, 2011). The higher response rate was linked to adequate time for the questionnaires to be filled and returned, clarity of data collection procedures, the administration of the questionnaire through the online platform, and the availability of the researcher to answer questions from respondents (Saleh & Bista, 2017).

### **Strategic Leadership Practices**

The respondents were asked to choose whether they strongly disagreed, disagreed, were undecided or neutral, agreed or strongly agreed that strategic direction, core competencies, human capital, and organizational controls were being exercised in their organizations. The response results are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis for Strategic Leadership Practices

	Mean	SD
Strategic Direction:		
Sub variable aggregate: Mean/Standard deviation	4.41	0.675
Core Competencies:		
Sub variable aggregate: Mean/Standard deviation	3.90	0.901
Human Capital:		
Sub variable aggregate: Mean/Standard deviation	3.79	0.894
Organizational Controls:		
Sub variable aggregate: Mean/Standard deviation	3.84	0.819
Aggregate: Mean/Standard deviation	3.98	0.822

The above results show an aggregate mean response of 4.41 for strategic direction, 3.90 for core competencies, 3.79 for human capital and 3.84 for organizational controls. The aggregate mean score for strategic leadership practices was 3,98 This signified that a greater proportion of the respondents agreed that strategic leadership practices were being practiced among organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa. This is a similar finding to a study done by Kitonga (2017) who established that respondents agreed that strategic leadership practices were being practiced by non-profit organizations in Nairobi County.

### Environmental Factors

The respondents were asked to choose whether they strongly disagreed (SD), disagreed (D), were undecided or neutral (N), agreed (A) or strongly agreed (SA) that environmental factors influence financial sustainability in their organizations. The results of the responses are presented in the table 2 below.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis for Environmental Factors

Influence of environmental factors on financial sustainability	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total		
	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %	Mean	SD	
Political-legal Factors:								
The political situation in my country	5 3.3%	20 13.3%	27 18.0%	39 26.0%	59 39.3%	3.85	1.180	
Nature of the democratic space in my country	5 3.3%	27 18.0%	36 24.0%	43 28.7%	39 26.0%	3.56	1.156	
Government laws and regulations	6 4.0%	37 24.7%	22 14.7%	52 34.7%	33 22.0%	3.46	1.196	
The government foreign policies	10 6.7%	26 17.3%	35 23.3%	46 30.7%	33 22.0%	3.44	1.201	
Sub-variable aggregate: Mean/Standard deviation					3.58	1.183		

Economic Factors:							
Economic growth rate, inflation rate, fluctuation in exchange rates	3	9	21	66	51	4.02	0.952
	2.0%	6.0%	14.0%	44.0%	34.0%		
Unemployment levels, disposable income, and income distribution	5	17	30	60	38	3.73	1.067
	3.3%	11.3%	20.0%	40.0%	25.3%		
Sub-variable aggregate: Mean/Standard deviation				3.88	1.009		
Socio-cultural Factors:							
The values, religious beliefs, diverse demographics of society	7	28	32	57	26	3.45	1.121
	4.7%	18.7%	21.3%	38.0%	17.3%		
Levels of education, the language of the society served	15	39	37	40	19	3.06	1.200
	10.0%	26.0%	24.7%	26.7%	12.7%		
Sub-variable aggregate: Mean/Standard deviation				3.26	1.160		
Technological Factors:							
New inventions, changes in IT and mobile technology	9	35	31	49	26	3.32	1.183
	6.0%	23.3%	20.7%	32.7%	17.3%		
Internet technology and e-commerce innovations	7	31	32	52	28	3.42	1.149
	4.7%	20.7%	21.3%	34.7%	18.7%		
Sub-variable aggregate: Mean/Standard deviation				3.37	1.166		
Aggregate: Mean/Standard deviation				3.53	1.142		

Table 2...

The results in the table above show a mean average response of 3.53 for the influence of environmental factors on financial sustainability. This indicates that a greater proportion of the respondents agreed that environmental factors affected the financial sustainability of organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa. These findings agreed with previous results of the research done by Kipchumba (2018) who established that a greater proportion of those who participated in the study agreed that environmental factors had an influence on state corporation performance. Maina (2017) in a study on, "The effect of environmental factors on performance, a case of Barclays Bank" (p. 1) also established that a greater proportion of respondents agreed that environmental factors such as legal, political, economic, sociocultural factors had an influence on the bank's performance. On a study titled, "The impact of external business environment factors on the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises in the pharmaceutical industry in Kumasi Metropolis" (p. 1), Akrofi (2017) also found that majority of the respondents agreed that macro-environmental factors (economic, technological, political, legal) influenced the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises.

The highest mean was recorded in the statements, "Economic growth rate, inflation rate, fluctuation in exchange rates affect the financial sustainability of my organization" with a mean of 4.02. "The political situation in my country affects the financial sustainability of my organization" with a mean of 3.85 and, "Unemployment levels, the level of disposable income, and income distribution among the people served by my organization affect the financial sustainability of my organization" with a mean of 3.73. The lowest mean was recorded in the

statements, “Levels of education, the language of the society served by my organization affect the financial sustainability of my organization” with a mean of 3.06 and, “The rate of new inventions, changes in information technology and mobile technology affect the financial sustainability of my organization” with a mean of 3.32.

The economic factors were rated as the highest influencers with an aggregate mean of 3.88 while sociocultural factors had the lowest influence with an aggregate mean of 3.26. The elements of environmental factors that were rated as high influencers were; economic growth rate, inflation rate, fluctuation in exchange rates, the political situation in the country, unemployment levels, levels of disposable income, and income distribution among the people served by the organization (Fitza, 2017; Jane et al., 2014; Machuki & Aosa, 2011; Richard et al., 2009). The standard deviations for environmental factors ranged between 0.952 and 1.201 implying that there was moderate variation from the mean values obtained (Lee et al., 2015). The aggregate standard deviation value of 1.142 indicated some variation in the responses of the top-level leaders on whether environmental factors influenced financial sustainability in faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa. This variation could be attributed to the different locations that faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance were operating from (Redmond et al., 2011).

### Financial Sustainability of Faith-based Organizations

The respondents were asked to rate the level of financial sustainability in their organizations by choosing either strongly disagreed, disagreed, undecided, neutral, agreed, or strongly agreed to various measures of financial sustainability in a non-profit organization. The results of the responses are presented in table 3 below.

Table 3 Descriptive Analysis for Financial Sustainability

<i>The financial sustainability level of the organization</i>	Mean	SD
Income Diversification Sub variable aggregate:	4.23	0.849
Donor Relationship Management: Sub variable aggregate:	4.32	0.710
Financial Management Systems: Sub variable aggregate:	4.42	0.717
Aggregate:	4.33	0.753

The above results show a mean average response of 4.33 for financial sustainability. The highest mean was recorded in the statement, “My organization accounts for the funding it

receives by providing regular reports on its expenditure” with a mean of 4.69, and “My organization complies with donor guidelines in donor sponsored activities” with a mean of 4.62. The lowest mean was recorded in the following statements; “My organization receives subsidies from the government and donors” with a mean of 2.95, “My organization's funding is at least obtained from five different sources” with a mean of 3.72, “My organizations funding is at least obtained from five different sources” with a mean of 3.72, “My organization only mobilize income from sources that are within the values of the organization” with a mean of 4.19, “There is a plan for fundraising and development in my organization” with a mean of 4.26 and “My organization can attract funding by use of good funding proposals” with a mean of 4.28.

Some of the key indicators of low financial sustainability which were rated lower included; lower level of subsidies from the government and donors, organizational funding obtained from less than five different sources, organizations failing to mobilize income only from sources that are within their values, lack of planning for fundraising and development and organizations unable to attract funding by use of good funding proposals (Bowman, 2011a; Ebenezer et al., 2020; Mawudor, 2016; Mitlin et al., 2007). The standard deviations for financial sustainability ranged between 0.523 and 1.083 implying that there was a low variation from the mean values obtained (Lee et al., 2015). An aggregate standard deviation value of 0.753 implied low variation in the responses of the top-level leaders about the level of financial sustainability in faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa.

### **Moderating Effect of Environmental Factors**

The study used multiple regression analysis to test the moderating effect of environmental factors on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability among faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa. The following steps of multiple linear regression, which were informed by the recommendation by MacKinnon and Fairchild (2009), were applied in this research. A composite index was used for each of the variables used in the model. The empirical model for testing moderating effect is shown below.

$$\text{Step 1: } F_s = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SI + \varepsilon$$

$$\text{Step 2: } F_s = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SI + \beta_2 Ef + \beta_3 SI * Ef + \varepsilon$$

Where;  $F_s$  = Composite index for Financial Sustainability

$\beta_0$  = Constant;  $\beta_1$ ,  $\beta_2$  and  $\beta_3$  = Beta coefficients

$SI$  = Composite index for Strategic Leadership Practices

$Ef$  = Environmental Factors

$SI * Ef$  = Interaction of Strategic Leadership practices and Environmental Factors

The objective of this study was to establish the moderating effect of environmental factors on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability of organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa. The study thus hypothesized that environmental factors have no significant moderating effect on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability of faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa. The two-step multiple regression model recommended by Fairchild and MacKinnon (2009) was adopted by this study to test this relationship.

#### Step 1: Regress financial sustainability on strategic leadership practices

For this initial step, financial sustainability was regressed on strategic leadership practices guided by the regression model  $F_s = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SI + \varepsilon$ . The outcome is presented in table 4.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Results for Moderating Effect Step One

Model Summary:									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.821 <sup>a</sup>	.674	.672	.22657	.674	306.542	1	148	.001
a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership Practices									
ANOVA:									
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
1	Regression	15.736	1	15.736	306.542	.001 <sup>b</sup>			
	Residual	7.597	148	.051					
	Total	23.333	149						
a. Dependent Variable: Financial Sustainability									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership Practices									
Coefficients:									
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.			
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	.056	.234		.241	.810			
	Strategic Leadership Practices	.970	.055	.821	17.508	.000			
a. Dependent Variable: Financial sustainability									

As observed in the model summary in table 4 above, the adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.672 indicates that the regression model explained 67.2% of the variations in financial sustainability. This also implies that 32.8% of the changes in financial sustainability in organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa are affected by factors that were not part of the study.

The results for ANOVA as presented in table 4 above shows an F Statistic of 306.542 and a p-value of 0.001 which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This implies that

strategic leadership practices are significant in predicting the financial sustainability of faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa.

The results of the coefficients for the model variables are presented in table 4 above. It is noted that the beta coefficient for strategic leadership practices was 0.821 with a p-value of 0.000 which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This means that an increase in strategic leadership practices by a unit leads to an increase in financial sustainability by 82.1%. The p-value indicates that strategic leadership practices were significant in predicting financial sustainability. The summary of the regression model is:  $F_s = 0.056 + 0.821SI + \epsilon$

Step 2: Regression of Financial Sustainability on Strategic Leadership Practices Composite, Environmental Factors, and the interaction term.

For this second step, the following model was used:  $F_s = \beta_0 + \beta_1SI + \beta_2Ef + \beta_3SI*Ef + \epsilon$ . The environmental factors variable was added to the model in order to establish the new R-square value, the beta coefficient for the interactive term, and the level of significance for the interactive term. Table 5 below shows the regression model results.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Results for Moderating Effect Step Two

Model Summary:									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.827 <sup>a</sup>	.684	.678	.22463	.684	105.479	3	146	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership Practices, Environmental factors, Strategic Leadership Practices*Environmental Factors (SI*Ef)									
ANOVA:									
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
1	Regression	15.967	3	5.322	105.479	.001 <sup>b</sup>			
	Residual	7.367	146	.050					
	Total	23.333	149						
a. Dependent Variable: Financial Sustainability									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership Practices, Environmental factors, Strategic Leadership Practices*Environmental Factors (SI*Ef)									
Coefficients:									
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.			
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	-.310	.299		-1.040	.300			
	Strategic Leadership Practices	.922	.059	.780	15.512	.001			
	Environmental factors	-.020	.040	-.027	-0.504	.615			
	Strategic Leadership Practices*Environmental Factors (SI*Ef)	.160	.077	.117	2.079	.039			
a. Dependent Variable: Financial sustainability									



Based on the model summary results in table 5 above, the adjusted  $R^2$  value is 0.678, which implies that the regression model predicted 67.8% of the variation in financial sustainability after the introduction of the moderating variable (environmental factors). The ANOVA results shown in table 5 above indicate that the regression model F value was 105.479 with a p-value of 0.001. Because the p-value is lower than the level of significance of 0.05, it shows that the regression model was a significant predictor of financial sustainability of faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa.

From the variable regression coefficient results in table 5 above, it is noted that the beta coefficient for strategic leadership practices is 0.780 and its p-value is 0.001. The beta coefficient for environmental factors was -0.027 with a significance value of 0.615. The interactive term for strategic leadership practices and environmental factors had a beta coefficient of 0.117 and a p-value of 0.039. Tables 4 and 5 indicated the  $R^2$  values of 0.672 and 0.678 respectively. This is a 0.006 change in  $R^2$  value following the introduction of the moderating variable (environmental factors). This shows that environmental factors explain the 0.6% increase in financial sustainability. Since the p-value for the interactive term ( $SI*Ef$ ) is less than 0.05, the environmental factors have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability.

Based on the analysis results, the moderation model is summarised as follows:  
 $F_s = -0.310 + 0.780SI - 0.027Ef + 0.117SI*Ef + \epsilon$ .

## DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to establish the moderating effect of environmental factors on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and the financial sustainability of faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa. The study thus hypothesized that environmental factors had no significant moderating effect on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability of faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa.

The descriptive statistics on the environmental factors had an average mean of 3.52 which meant that respondents agreed on average that environmental factors affect the financial sustainability of faith-based organizations. The variable items focused on whether the environmental factors affect the financial sustainability of faith-based organizations. This was the lowest mean obtained from all the study variables and its low moderating effect on financial sustainability is supported by descriptive statistics. The elements that were rated as high environmental factors influencing financial sustainability were; economic growth rate, inflation rate, fluctuation in exchange rates, the political situation in the country and unemployment

levels, levels of disposable income, and income distribution among the people served by the organization that was rated as high influencers.

Multiple regression results revealed that the interactive term beta coefficient which gave the estimate of the moderating effect on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability was 0.117. The p-value for the interaction term for strategic leadership practices and environmental factors was 0.039 which was lower than the significance level of 0.05. It was also noted that after the introduction of environmental factors, the  $R^2$  value increased from 0.672 to 0.678 and the beta coefficient for strategic leadership practices decreased from 0.821 to 0.780, an indication that the predictor variables' effect decreased. This revealed that environmental factors had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability of organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa.

The moderating influence of environmental factors in this study was informed by the propositions of contingency theory credited to Fiedler (1996), which assert that environmental characteristics influence the ability of an organization to acquire resources and increase the likelihood of gaining access to resources. An alignment of the organizational characteristics to its context or environment results in increased organizational performance. The finding of this study that environmental factors have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability, confirms that contingency theory is applicable in faith-based organizations.

Empirically, the finding of this study that there is a significant moderating effect of environmental factors on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and financial sustainability is comparable to earlier research in other sectors. Hence, this study gives an understanding of the link between strategic leadership practices, environmental factors, and financial sustainability in the context of faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa.

## CONCLUSIONS

Environmental factors have a significant effect on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and the financial sustainability of faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa. A faith-based organization seeking to strengthen its financial sustainability should give attention to the influence of environmental factors. A faith-based organization should therefore seek to mitigate the negative effects of the following environmental factors on their work: Political situation in the country of operation, nature of the democratic space, government laws and regulations, government foreign policies, economic

growth rate, inflation rate, fluctuation in exchange rates, unemployment levels, the level of disposable income, and income distribution, values, religious beliefs, diverse demographics of the society, levels of education, the language of the society, rate of new inventions, information technology changes and mobile technology, internet technology, and e-commerce.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to manage the influence of environmental factors on financial sustainability, leaders of faith-based organizations affiliated to Wycliffe Global Alliance in Africa should focus their attention on limiting the influences of; economic growth rate, inflation rate, fluctuation in exchange rates, the political situation in the country and unemployment levels, levels of disposable income, and income distribution among the people served by the organizations that were rated as high negative environmental influencers. During the determination of strategic direction, leaders should evaluate how external factors are likely to influence outlined strategies and make suitable changes in order to limit the negative influences of the environment. This way, their organization is more likely to be fit for its context, which is consistent with strategic leadership theory.

This study focused on four environmental factors namely; political-legal, economic, social, and technological. This study proposes that further research be done using other environmental factors that influence the operations of faith-based organizations.

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