Organizational Culture Management and Project Implementation of Non-Governmental Organizations in South Sudan

Alex Atsiaya Alex Imbwaga*[1], Lucy Ngugi[2]

*[1,2] Department of Management Science, School of Business, Economics and Tourism

Kenyatta University

Abstract: **This study investigated how organizational culture management specifically teamwork, stability, risk-taking, and hierarchical culture affects the implementation of nongovernmental organization (NGO) projects in South Sudan, where project failure rates remain alarmingly high. Grounded in open systems theory, stakeholder theory, and the resource-based view, the research targeted 233 NGO projects and sampled 147 using simple random sampling. Primary data were collected through semi-structured questionnaires administered to project managers, technical staff, and project supervisors. Both descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted following a pilot study and adherence to ethical standards. The findings revealed mixed effects of culture dimensions on project implementation. Teamwork exhibited a positive but insignificant influence on project completion, while stability culture demonstrated a significant positive effect. Conversely, a risk-taking culture showed a negative, though insignificant, relationship with project implementation. Hierarchical culture indicated a positive but insignificant effect on NGO project success. The study recommends strengthening institutional capacity for NGOs in South Sudan, particularly in project management, risk assessment, and stakeholder engagement. Government support through targeted training and resources can help NGOs establish stronger governance structures that enhance stability and resilience, ultimately improving project implementation outcomes.**

Keywords: **organizational culture management, nongovernmental organization (NGO), project implementation.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective project implementation has become a central priority for organizations seeking to deliver results within defined budgets, timelines, and scopes (Jarrah, Jarah, & Altarawneh, 2022). Despite advancements in project management practices, high failure rates persist globally, with project failure in Africa estimated at over 50% and nearly 64% of donor-funded projects failing to reach completion (WFP, 2018). Factors contributing to project implementation failure include inadequate project investigation, poor financial planning, ineffective leadership, unclear objectives, weak team coordination, and insufficient planning (Jarrah, Jarah, & Altarawneh, 2022; Muneer et al., 2022). Understanding organizational operations, structures, and culture can help align project management practices with strategic objectives (Kliem & Ludin, 2019; Morrison et al., 2018).

Organizational culture significantly influences employee behavior, decision-making, and project outcomes. It comprises shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that guide interactions and influence knowledge generation and resistance to change (Delgado, 2023; Piwowar-Sulej, 2021; Wong, 2023). Teamwork culture promotes collaboration, trust, and knowledge-sharing among employees (Maika & Wachira, 2020; MSU, 2023; Simhon, 2023), while stability culture emphasizes rules, consistency, and reliable processes to enhance organizational efficiency (Maika & Wachira, 2020; Saylor, 2023). Risk-taking culture encourages innovation and informed decision-making under uncertainty (IRM, 2019;

Maika & Wachira, 2020; PMI, 2019), whereas hierarchical culture values formal structures, communication protocols, and clearly defined roles to ensure order and operational effectiveness (Fernandes, Pereira, & Wiedenhöft, 2023; Lee & Ding, 2023; Piwowar-Sulej, 2021). These cultural dimensions can either facilitate or hinder successful project implementation depending on the organizational context.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a critical role in implementing development and humanitarian projects worldwide. NGOs address issues such as poverty alleviation, health, education, human rights, and community development (Charny, 2024; Muriana & Vizinni, 2018; Mutole, 2019; Ndei & Mutuku, 2021). In South Sudan, NGOs have contributed to humanitarian relief and post-conflict development by delivering interventions in food security, health, education, WASH, peacebuilding, women's empowerment, agriculture, and psychosocial support (UNOCHA, 2018; WFP, 2018). Despite their efforts, project implementation in South Sudan is constrained by ongoing conflict, insecurity, access restrictions, financial limitations, and institutional weaknesses (OCHA, 2018; World Bank, 2019).

Although prior research has examined organizational culture and project management across various sectors (Arogundade, 2020; Basu, Ma, & Shen, 2023; Essex, Kennedy, Miller, & Jameson, 2023; Grebe & Marx, 2023; Maika & Wachira, 2020; Moczydłowska et al., 2023; Owino & Kiberia, 2019), few studies have explored the collective influence of cultural dimensions on NGO project implementation in fragile and post-conflict contexts. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how teamwork, stability, risk-taking, and hierarchical cultures affect project implementation of NGOs in South Sudan.

2. THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Organizational culture significantly influences project implementation in NGOs, especially in dynamic and complex contexts like South Sudan. The study is grounded in Open Systems Theory, which views organizations as interdependent systems interacting with their environments, highlighting the role of stability and teamwork in project success (Bertalanffy, 1928; Johnson, Scholes, & Whittingham, 2008; Bastedo, 2004). Stakeholder Theory emphasizes the importance of engaging all relevant stakeholders—including donors, project teams, and beneficiaries—to optimize project outcomes (Freeman, 1984, 2010; Harrison, Bosse, & Philips, 2010; Philips, 2003). The Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory posits that unique, firm-specific resources, such as organizational culture, provide competitive advantages, fostering effective project execution (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991; Grant, 2013).

Empirical studies indicate that teamwork culture promotes collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and enhanced organizational performance across diverse contexts (Askari et al., 2020; Rieger & Klarmann, 2022; Basu, Ma, & Shen, 2023; Bokaii, 2023). Stability culture, characterized by rules, consistency, and structured processes, enhances strategy implementation and staff alignment, though its impact may vary across settings (Arogundade, 2020; Maika & Wachira, 2020; Akpa, Asikihia, & Nneji, 2021). Risk-taking culture supports innovation and informed decision-making, positively influencing project sustainability when aligned with organizational objectives (Kanu, 2020; Maika & Wachira, 2020; Moczydłowska et al., 2023; Grebe & Marx, 2023). Hierarchy culture, which emphasizes formal structures, protocols, and clear authority, strengthens operational efficiency and ensures task accountability (Owino & Kiberia, 2019; Lee & Ding, 2023; Essex, Kennedy, Miller, & Jameson, 2023). Together, these theoretical and empirical insights suggest that NGOs in South Sudan can improve project implementation by strategically cultivating teamwork, stability, risk-taking, and hierarchy cultures while engaging stakeholders and leveraging organizational resources.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of organizational culture on project implementation of NGOs in South Sudan. The target population comprised 233 NGO projects (129 international and 104 national), with respondents including project managers, technical staff, and project supervisors. A stratified random sampling technique was applied to select 147 projects using Yamane's (1967) formula, ensuring proportional representation of international and national NGOs. Primary data were collected through semi-structured questionnaires, divided into sections on participant demographics and study objectives. The instrument underwent pilot testing with 15 NGO projects to ensure reliability and validity. Validity was assessed through face, content, and construct validity, while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 confirming internal consistency. Data collection followed ethical protocols, with approvals obtained from relevant authorities and questionnaires administered using a drop-and-pick-later method. Data analysis combined descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard

deviation) and inferential statistics (regression analysis) to examine relationships between organizational culture dimensions (teamwork, stability, risk-taking, hierarchy) and project implementation. The regression model applied was:

$$PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TC + \beta_2 SC + \beta_3 RC + \beta_4 HC + \varepsilon$$

Where PI represents project implementation and TC, SC, RC, and HC represent teamwork, stability, risk-taking, and hierarchy culture respectively.

This methodology provided a rigorous framework to assess the effects of organizational culture on NGO project outcomes in South Sudan.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics

Teamwork Culture

Teamwork culture shared values, norms, and behaviors that promote collaboration s essential for NGO project implementation in South Sudan. Respondents emphasized the importance of trust, employee involvement, and management support during projects. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Teamwork Culture

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Trust among employees is very important during project implementation	4.3	6.8	6.8	51.3	30.8	3.9744	1.0210
Employee involvement in aspects of the project is essential	1.7	5.1	11.1	53.8	28.2	4.0171	0.8708
Management support is essential during project implementation	1.7	10.3	7.7	57.3	23.1	3.8974	0.9320
Fostering trust among employees aids improved project implementation	4.3	4.3	5.1	48.7	37.6	4.1111	0.9894
Adequate involvement of employees is essential in achieving optimal project implementation	3.4	5.1	6.0	51.3	34.2	4.0769	0.9573
Providing management support aids enhanced project delivery	3.4	2.6	8.5	56.4	29.1	4.0513	0.8891
Average Score	-	-	-	-	-	4.0214	0.9433

Effectiveness of teamwork culture in practice is shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Effectiveness of Teamwork Culture

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	67	57.3
No	50	42.7
Total	**117**	**100.0**

Stability Culture

Stability culture, emphasizing consistency, structured processes, and autonomy, was strongly supported. Respondents agreed that rule-setting, autonomy, and consistent procedures enhance project implementation.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Stability Culture

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Setting rules is important	3.4	2.6	4.3	59.8	29.9	4.1026	0.8649
Autonomy is an important practice	1.7	0.9	3.4	67.5	26.5	4.1624	0.6818
Ensuring consistency is important	1.7	3.4	0.9	61.5	32.5	4.1966	0.7683
Effective dissemination of rules improves implementation	1.7	1.7	2.6	65.8	28.2	4.1709	0.7106
Autonomy is key in project implementation	2.6	4.3	9.4	58.1	25.6	4.0000	0.8710
Effective stability culture enhances implementation	2.6	2.6	12.0	63.2	19.7	3.9487	0.8078
Average Score	-	-	-	-	-	4.0969	0.7846

Table 4: Stability Culture and Project Enhancement

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	71	60.7
No	46	39.3
Total	117	100.0

Risk-Taking Culture

Risk-taking culture promotes innovation, creativity, and stakeholder engagement. Respondents generally agreed on its importance, though adoption was limited in practice.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Risk-Taking Culture

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Innovation practices enhance NGO projects	1.7	5.1	4.3	70.1	18.8	3.9915	0.7712
NGO projects are implemented through creativity	0	3.4	0	78.6	17.9	4.1111	0.5536
Stakeholder decision-making is important	0	5.1	4.3	71.8	18.8	4.0427	0.6617
Innovativeness is essential	1.7	4.3	2.6	65.0	26.5	4.1026	0.7811
Creativity is essential	2.6	7.7	7.7	65.8	16.2	3.8547	0.8736
Risk-taking culture is essential	0.9	7.7	6.0	66.7	18.8	3.9487	0.7970
Average Score	-	-	-	-	-	4.0085	0.7397

Table 6: Practiced Risk-Taking Culture

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	50	42.7
No	67	57.3
Total	117	100.0

Hierarchy Culture

Hierarchy culture emphasizes structured communication, clear chains of command, and specialized personnel. Most respondents agreed on its importance, though perceptions of practical effectiveness were mixed.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Hierarchy Culture

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Effective communication is essential	1.7	4.3	0.9	71.8	21.4	4.0684	0.7396
Proper chain of command should be followed	1.7	0.9	4.3	73.5	19.7	4.0855	0.6509
Specialized employees should be involved	1.7	0.9	3.4	73.5	20.5	4.1026	0.6484
Experts should be utilized	1.7	1.7	6.0	68.4	22.2	4.0769	0.7090
Management communication of processes	1.7	2.6	4.3	70.1	21.4	4.0684	0.7159
Risk-taking culture is essential	14.5	8.5	3.4	69.2	4.3	3.4017	1.1749
Average Score	-	-	-	-	-	3.9672	0.7731

Table 8: Effectiveness of Hierarchy Culture

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	60	51.3
No	57	48.7
Total	117	100.0

Project Implementation

Project implementation performance was moderate, with strengths in timely completion and cost control, but lower performance in quality.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of Project Implementation

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
All stages completed on time	3.4	5.1	8.5	64.1	18.8	3.8974	0.8846
Project aligns with stipulated costs	4.3	3.4	6.0	55.6	30.8	4.0513	0.9455
Project of good quality delivered on time	11.1	29.1	18.8	33.3	7.7	2.9744	1.1778
Project completed within specified duration	0	1.7	0.9	59.0	38.5	4.3248	0.6673
Controlling costs is important	2.6	3.4	6.8	68.4	18.8	3.9744	0.7929
Average Score	-	-	-	-	-	3.8445	0.8936

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients show relationships between organizational culture and project implementation:

Table 10: Correlation Results

Variable	Project Implementation	Teamwork	Stability	Risk-Taking	Hierarchy
Project Implementation	1				
Teamwork Culture	0.543**	1			
Stability Culture	0.689**	0.764**	1		
Risk-Taking Culture	0.000	-0.045	0.016	1	
Hierarchy Culture	0.186*	0.064	0.180	0.547**	1

Note: $*p < 0.05$, $*p < 0.01$

The analysis indicates that teamwork and stability cultures are strongly positively correlated with project implementation, while hierarchy culture shows a weak positive relationship. Risk-taking culture is not significantly related to project implementation in the South Sudan NGO context.

Multiple Linear Regression Results

The relevance of the use of multiple linear regression analysis is quite important in the study of organizational culture on the implementation of projects by the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in South Sudan. With this statistical method, it becomes easy to quantify the effects of a particular cultural dimension such as teamwork culture, stability culture, risk-taking culture, and culture of hierarchy on the results of project implementation. This analysis is summarised in Table 11.

Table 11: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	21.872[a]	4	5.468	26.153	.000
Intercept	.799	1	.799	3.821	.053
Teamwork Culture	.043	1	.043	.208	.649
Stability Culture	7.267	1	7.267	34.756	.000
Risk Taking Culture	.130	1	.130	.622	.432
Hierarchy Culture	.325	1	.325	1.553	.215
Error	23.417	112	.209		
Total	**1774.520**	**117**			
Corrected Total	45.289	116			

a. R Squared = .483 (Adjusted R Squared = .464)

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Table 11 shows a corrected statistically significant model, $F(4, 112) = 26.153$, $p < .001$, which means that the joint predictors explain a statistically significant portion of variance in project implementation. This result is a solid support to the claim that the shared influences of the predictor variables, teamwork culture, culture of stability, culture of risk-taking, culture of hierarchy, are huge factors that explain the variance in the dependent construct (implementation of projects). The analysis also indicates that the R 2 is 0.483 indicating that 48.3 per cent of variability in project execution can be attributed to organization culture management (teamwork culture, stability culture, risk -taking culture, and hierarchy

culture). Frost (2023) says that a low R2 does not nullify the statistical significance of the predictors or the estimated coefficients; it just means that the model only explains a relatively small proportion of the variance in the dependent variable. Ozili (2022) argues that low values of R2 are acceptable in social-science research, with a minimum value of 0.1 (10 percent) being acceptable, since predictors tend to have a low predictive value, but the main aim of the research is how significant they are; a low R2 with statistically significant predictors is a good model. It is based on this premise that the study went ahead to test the individual predictor coefficients with the confidence that the combination yields a total effect of explaining the variance in the dependent variable as shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Robust Parameter Estimates

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Intercept	.863	.442	1.955	.053	-.012	1.738
Teamwork Culture	.037	.082	.456	.649	-.125	.200
Stability Culture	.615	.104	5.895	.000	.409	.822
Risk Taking Culture	-.064	.081	-.788	.432	-.225	.097
Hierarchy Culture	.143	.114	1.246	.215	-.084	.370

Source: Field Survey (2025)

As indicated in Table 12, it was estimated that constant term in the model was 0.863; it was, however, found statistically not significant since its p-value is 0.053. This implies that project implementation would not bear any effect if there are no explanatory variables (teamwork culture, stability culture, risk-taking culture, and hierarchy culture). This study examined the impact of four organizational culture dimensions; teamwork, stability, risk-taking, and hierarchy on NGO project implementation in South Sudan. The results revealed that stability culture is the most significant predictor of project success. NGOs exhibiting consistent processes, predictable decision-making, and management continuity achieved higher completion rates, with stability fostering reliability, reducing disruptions, and enhancing stakeholder collaboration ($\beta = 0.615$, $p < 0.001$).

In contrast, teamwork culture showed a positive but statistically insignificant effect ($\beta = 0.037$, $p = 0.649$). While collaboration, trust, and participation were recognized as beneficial, these factors alone were insufficient to overcome systemic challenges such as political instability, social conflict, and resource limitations. Similarly, risk-taking culture demonstrated a negative, non-significant effect on project implementation ($\beta = -0.064$, $p = 0.432$). In South Sudan's volatile and resource-constrained environment, cautious approaches and robust risk management practices limited the influence of risk-taking on project outcomes. Hierarchical culture also had a positive but insignificant impact ($\beta = 0.143$, $p = 0.215$). While hierarchy provided clarity and stability, excessive rigidity could hinder flexibility and innovation, emphasizing the need for adaptive decision-making and stakeholder engagement alongside formal structures.

Multiple Linear Regression Results

The study examined the effect of organizational culture on NGO project implementation in South Sudan using multiple linear regression. This method quantified the influence of teamwork, stability, risk-taking, and hierarchical cultures on project outcomes.

Table 13: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	21.872	4	5.468	26.153	.000
Intercept	0.799	1	0.799	3.821	.053
Teamwork Culture	0.043	1	0.043	0.208	.649
Stability Culture	7.267	1	7.267	34.756	.000
Risk Taking Culture	0.130	1	0.130	0.622	.432
Hierarchy Culture	0.325	1	0.325	1.553	.215
Error	23.417	112	0.209		
Total	1774.520	117			
Corrected Total	45.289	116			

$R^2 = 0.483$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.464$

The overall model was significant ($F_{(4, 112)} = 26.153$, $p < .001$), indicating that the joint predictors explain 48.3% of variance in project implementation.

Table 14: Robust Parameter Estimates

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Intercept	0.863	0.442	1.955	.053	-0.012	1.738
Teamwork Culture	0.037	0.082	0.456	.649	-0.125	0.200
Stability Culture	0.615	0.104	5.895	.000	0.409	0.822
Risk Taking Culture	-0.064	0.081	-0.788	.432	-0.225	0.097
Hierarchy Culture	0.143	0.114	1.246	.215	-0.084	0.370

The intercept was not statistically significant ($p = 0.053$), implying that project implementation requires explanatory variables. The coefficient for teamwork culture was positive ($\beta = 0.037$) but not significant ($p = 0.649$), indicating a minimal effect on NGO project implementation. Qualitative findings suggest teamwork is valued but insufficient to overcome external challenges such as political instability, resource limitations, and conflicting objectives. Stability culture had a significant positive effect on project implementation ($\beta = 0.615$, $p < 0.001$). Qualitative insights highlighted that consistent processes, predictable management, and clear procedures enabled NGOs to navigate the volatile South Sudanese environment effectively, supporting project success.

Risk-Taking Culture

Risk-taking culture showed a negative but non-significant effect ($\beta = -0.064$, $p = 0.432$). NGOs in South Sudan tended to prioritize caution due to political, economic, and operational risks, limiting the practical benefit of a risk-taking culture on project outcomes.

Hierarchy Culture

Hierarchy culture was positively associated with project implementation ($\beta = 0.143$) but not significant ($p = 0.215$). While structured management and clear lines of authority were valued, strict hierarchies sometimes hindered flexibility and innovation. NGOs were found to balance hierarchical control with collaborative practices to improve outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of organizational culture on the implementation of NGO projects in South Sudan. The analysis revealed that among the cultural dimensions considered—teamwork, stability, risk-taking, and hierarchy stability culture emerged as the most significant factor affecting project success. Stability culture, characterized by consistency, predictable procedures, and reliable management practices, was found to positively and significantly contribute to project implementation. NGOs that cultivate a stable organizational environment are better equipped to manage challenges, adapt to changing circumstances, and maintain project momentum, ultimately ensuring more efficient project outcomes.

In contrast, teamwork culture, while positively associated with project completion, did not demonstrate a statistically significant impact. Although collaboration and effective communication were recognized as valuable by staff, the study found that teamwork alone was insufficient to overcome the challenges posed by South Sudan's volatile and resource-constrained environment. Similarly, risk-taking culture was negatively associated with project implementation, though the effect was not statistically significant, suggesting that risk-tolerant behaviors do not substantially contribute to success in high-risk contexts where cautious and conservative approaches may be more effective. Hierarchy culture showed a marginally positive but non-significant effect, indicating that formal structures and authority alone do not drive project outcomes, and that flexibility and collaborative decision-making may mitigate potential limitations of rigid hierarchies.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, several recommendations emerge. First, there is a need for the government and relevant stakeholders to invest in strengthening the institutional capacity of NGOs in project management, risk analysis, and stakeholder engagement. Training and support programs should aim to enhance organizational resilience, improve adherence to standardized procedures, and foster robust governance practices. Second, NGOs should prioritize the

development of a stable organizational culture, ensuring consistency in operations, decision-making, and management practices. Such stability provides a foundation for effective project implementation and the capacity to respond efficiently to challenges. Finally, while teamwork, hierarchy, and risk-taking are not primary drivers in this context, NGOs should continue to cultivate collaborative practices and flexible management approaches to complement the benefits of a stable organizational framework.

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