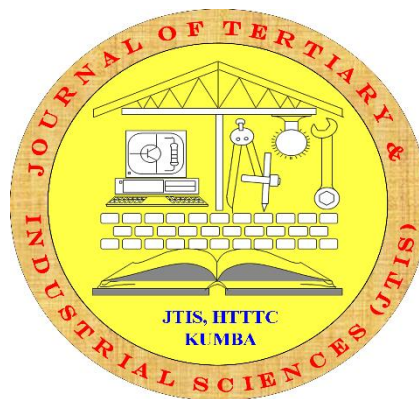


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P.O Box: 249 Buea Road, Kumba
Tel: (+237) 33354691 – Fax: (+237) 33354692
Email: editor@jtis-htttcubuea.com
Website: <https://www.jtis-htttcubuea.com>

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ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

The Impact of Gender Equality on the Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations in the North West Region of Cameroon

EYONG Ako¹, FOKAM Jeff Astein² and TENJOH Ngo Armstrong³

¹Department of Organizational Sciences, HICM,
University of Bamenda, Bamenda, Cameroon
Email: akorolly87@yahoo.com

²Department of Management Sciences, HTTTC Kumba,
University of Buea, Buea, Cameroon
Email: jeffastein@yahoo.com

³Department of Organizational Sciences, HICM,
University of Bamenda, Bamenda, Cameroon
Email: armstrongtenjoh@gmail.com

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to examine the effects of gender equality on the performance of non-governmental organisations in North West Region of Cameroon. The study used primary data obtained through closed ended questionnaires provided to a purposive sample of 91 NGOs in the North West region of Cameroon. The data gathered from the respondent was analysed using Ordinary Least Square technique (OLS). The results suggest that gender-responsive practices are particularly important for driving performance in organizations with female-dominated top management, while organizational experience is more important in organizations with male-dominated top management. This study demonstrates that the adoption of gender-responsive human resource practices, such as equal opportunities in recruitment, training, and promotion, to improve Organizational performance. The promotion and the development of a gender-responsive Organizational culture that values diversity, inclusion, and equity to enhance the performance of NGOs. Promote the adoption of gender-responsive human resource practices and organizational culture in organizations with female-dominated top management to enhance performance.

Keywords: Gender equality, Leadership, Culture, Performance, NGOs.

1. Introduction

In today business world gender equality and the performance of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is a topic of growing importance and has attracted the interest of scholars and researchers in recent years (Hibbs, 2022). There has been a global movement towards promoting diversity, gender equality in various sectors, including the non-profit sector (Pring & Palmiano-Federer, 2020), as gender inequality is not just bad for their economic empowerment but also has serious macroeconomic implications for the country.

Globally, gender equality progress has been slow with 200 of the largest companies in the world from 2004 to 2014 increasing the percentage of women board directors by only 7.4% between 2004 and 2014. This is less than 1% annually over the same period.

The problem underpinning this current study is the fact that, despite a 6.3% increase in employment over the past six years, women continue to be underrepresented in managerial roles. In Poland, although 48% of women are employed, only 10% hold managerial positions (Choroszewicz, 2014), and a mere 4% serve on the managerial boards of the 500 largest companies in the country. These disparities in the representation of women in managerial positions may be attributed to the perception that men possess superior leadership qualities, as traditionally, masculine traits such as power and control have been associated with effective leadership.

In Cameroon, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play a crucial role in addressing social challenges and promoting social change. However, the extent to which these organisations prioritize and incorporate gender equality into their operations and policies remains a significant question.

Cameroon's cultural context presents specific challenges and opportunities for promoting gender equality within NGOs. Traditional gender roles and societal norms can perpetuate gender disparities and limit women's representation and participation in decision-making processes. It is crucial to understand these cultural dynamics to design effective strategies that address the unique challenges faced by NGOs in Cameroon regarding gender equality. It is therefore against the above research gaps that the study seeks to investigate the effect of gender equality on the performance of non-governmental organisations in the northwest region of Cameroon. Specifically to identify the effect of gender balance in leadership on the performance of non-governmental organisations in the northwest region of Cameroon, to examine the effect of gender-responsive human resources on the performance of non-governmental organisations in the northwest region of Cameroon and to analyse the effect of gender-responsive organisational culture on the performance of non-governmental organizations in the northwest region of Cameroon.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual literature

Gender Equality

According to Coe *et al.* (2019). Gender equality are fundamental principles that underpin efforts to create fair and equitable societies, costs of gender inequality as the foregone gain that would have occurred had women participated more fully in the formal work sector and been trained and then utilized up to their full productive capacity in the formal work sector. Polat (2011) considers gender equality as the process of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background or identity, have equal access to resources, opportunities, and participation in social, economic, and political spheres. According Smith and Sinkford (2022), gender equality is interconnected and mutually reinforcing,

as achieving true inclusion requires addressing the gender-based barriers and biases that hinder equality.

Fundamentally, gender disparity results from the social development of distinct roles, expectations, and values for various genders. Because of these gender norms and preconceptions, men are frequently granted greater privileges, power, and opportunities than women in a hierarchical society (Coe *et al.*, 2019). This leads to a number of inequalities, including the gender pay gap, in which women are paid less for doing the same work as men, and restricted access to leadership and decision-making positions across a range of industries. Collaboration and partnerships are essential for developing and implementing policies, programs, and initiatives that promote inclusion and gender equality across different sectors and contexts. This includes fostering dialogue, sharing best practices, and mobilizing resources to support collective efforts towards transformative change.

Gender Balance in Leadership

Leadership is not a position. It is a mind-set and a set of actions that inspire and motivate others to achieve common goals. Effective leaders empower their team members, foster collaboration, and drive innovation. Leadership is an attitude as well as an action. It can be most suitably described as the process of influence through which one person can support others in the accomplishment of a common goal (Chemers, 1997). There continues to be an ongoing discussion about whether leaders are “born” or “made.” Some argue that certain traits are inherent, while others believe that leadership skills can be developed through experience and education. Ultimately, gender balance in leadership contributes to broader societal goals of gender equality and social justice. It challenges traditional gender norms, stereotypes, and prejudices that hinder women's and marginalized genders' progress in leadership positions (Bierema, 2016). By breaking down these barriers, organizations can create more inclusive and equitable societies, where individuals of all genders have the opportunity to contribute their skills, expertise, and perspectives to drive positive change and shape the future (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010).

This alignment can enhance the organisation's reputation, build trust, and attract loyal customers and clients. By embracing gender balance in leadership, organisations can strengthen their market position and create a competitive advantage.

Gender-Responsive Human Resources Policies

The foundation of gender mainstreaming begins at the personal level, with individuals adopting the right perspectives, values, competencies, and experiences (Bandiyono & Marbun, 2022). It requires a deep conviction and commitment to incorporate gender considerations into all aspects of decision-making and action (Bandiyono & Marbun, 2022). Moving beyond the individual level, civil service institutions play a crucial role in building capacity within the bureaucracy and the government as a whole. These

institutions can promote robust advocacy for gender mainstreaming and ensure that public services address the practical needs of women, men, and individuals with disabilities (Orser *et al.*, 2021). Data-driven decision-making enables organizations to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and make evidence-based adjustments to their policies and practices.

Gender-Responsive Organisational Culture

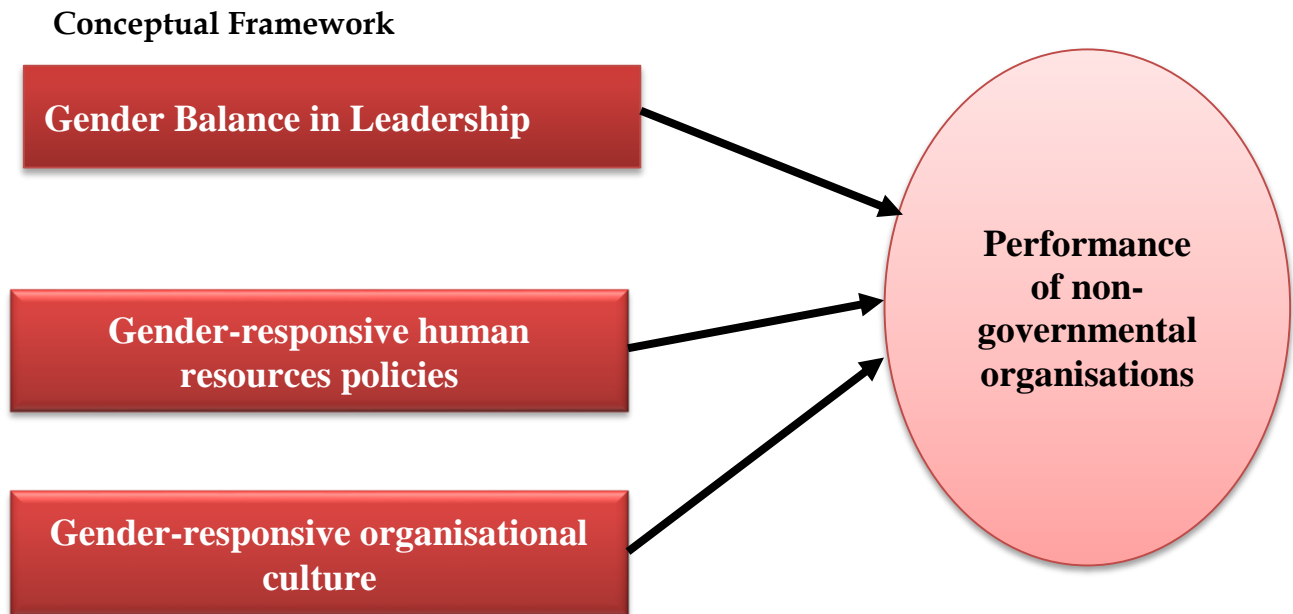
Gender-responsive organisational culture is essential for creating an inclusive and equitable workplace (Chitsamatanga *et al.*, 2018). Its values diversity, promotes equal opportunities, supports work-life balance, and prevents gender-based discrimination. By cultivating a gender-responsive culture, organizations can harness the full potential of their workforce, enhance employee engagement and well-being, and ultimately improve organisational performance and effectiveness.

In a gender-responsive organisational culture, diversity and inclusion are embraced as strengths (Goldberg, 2015). The organisation recognizes the importance of diverse gender identities and experiences and actively seeks to create an environment where all individuals are valued, respected, and empowered. This includes creating spaces for open dialogue, listening to and amplifying diverse voices, and actively challenging gender-based biases and stereotypes.

The Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

The performance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) refers to the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of their activities in achieving their mission and objectives (Brown, 2009). It encompasses the outcomes and results of an NGO's work, as well as the processes and resources utilized to accomplish them. Ebrahim (2003) explained that, performance evaluation in the context of NGOs involves assessing the organization's ability to generate positive social, environmental, or humanitarian change, as well as its ability to manage resources, engage stakeholders, and demonstrate accountability.

However, the performance of non-governmental organizations encompasses mission achievement, efficiency, stakeholder engagement, and accountability (Lecy *et al.*, 2012). Evaluating and enhancing NGO performance involves assessing their impact, resource utilization, stakeholder relationships, and accountability mechanisms. Brown (2009) stated that, by striving for excellence in these areas, NGOs can effectively contribute to positive social change, optimize their operations, build strong partnerships, and ensure transparency and trustworthiness in their work.



Source: Author computation (2025)

Figure 1: Conceptual framework on the relation between independents variables and dependent variable

Transformational leadership theory is a leadership model that focuses on the ability of leaders to inspire and motivate their followers to achieve exceptional performance and personal growth. This theory was initially introduced by James V. Downton in 1973 and further developed by other scholars such as James MacGregor Burns and Bernard M. Bass. The theory suggests that transformational leadership has positive effects on both individual and organisational outcomes. It is associated with increased follower satisfaction, motivation, and performance. It also fosters a positive organizational culture, promotes employee development, and contributes to organizational success and growth (Krinsky & Hickson, 2014).

In conclusion, transformational leadership theory suggests that leaders who inspire and motivate their followers can positively impact organisational outcomes. Gender balance in leadership contributes to the application of transformational leadership practices by bringing diverse perspectives and challenging traditional gender norms.

Human Resource Management Theory (Maslow in 1943)

Human Resource Management (HRM) theory is a framework that encompasses various principles, concepts, and practices related to managing and maximizing the potential of an organisation's human resources. It focuses on the strategic management of employees to achieve organisational goals and objectives. Human resource management (HRM)

theory revealed that effective management of human resources can lead to improved organisational performance. It assumes that aligning HR policies and practices with organisational goals, fostering employee development and well-being, and ensuring fair and equitable treatment can enhance employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity (Mansaray, 2019).

Critics argue that HRM theory may be overly focused on individual employees and may not adequately consider broader societal and structural factors that influence organisational performance. They contend that HRM practices should not solely rely on individual-level interventions but also address systemic and institutional barriers that perpetuate gender inequalities. There are concerns that implementing gender-responsive policies alone may not address deeper power imbalances and gender inequalities within organizations, requiring a more comprehensive and intersectional approach.

In conclusion, human resource management theory emphasizes the importance of aligning HR policies and practices with organisational goals to enhance employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity. In the context of NGOs, gender-responsive HRM practices play a vital role in addressing gender-specific needs, promoting equality, and creating an inclusive work environment. By implementing gender-responsive policies and practices, NGOs can attract and retain diverse talent, foster a positive organisational culture, and ultimately improve organizational performance and effectiveness.

2.3. Empirical Review

A good number of studies have been conducted across the globe to show the effects of gender equity on the performance of organisations. For instance, Groves & LaRocca, (2011), carried out studies on the impact of gender balance in leadership and the effectiveness (Decision making and relationships) between transformational leadership and transactional leadership respectively in real estate and construction companies. In addition, to bring to light whether male leaders are more effective than female leaders, or the opposite. Data were collected from 267 respondents in Istanbul, sample of Turkish firms based on the study model data were examined using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software by applying frequency distribution tables also bar charts of questionnaire (part A) and further correlation, R-Square, ANOVA and Regression Analysis for questionnaire (part B). Results show that the relationship between gender, transformational leadership and transactional leadership and their effectiveness (Decision making and Relationships) in the companies is positive. This study has analysed through descriptive approach that was used to study about demographic profile of companies in Istanbul, and TRFL and TRSL items have been developed to test the hypothesis. Five-point Likert scale questionnaire and Seven-point Likert scale questionnaire has been adopted for data collection, the reliability statistics of all items was 0.887 for men and 0.915 for women which is excellent, in order to measure the

relationship among variables correlation a test was used, regression analysis R-Square interpretation, ANOVA was used to show the impact of DM and R on TRFL and TRSL of the companies. Statistical analysis also showed results and suggestions for this model.

Lafuente and Vaillant (2019), analyses how balance in leadership, and more specifically a configuration i.e. a proportion of women in the boardroom ranging between 40 and 60 percent affects economic and risk-oriented performance in financial firms. The empirical application uses a rich data set that includes detailed accounting and organisational information for all financial firms in the Costa Rican industry during the period 2000–2012. The proposed hypotheses are tested using panel data (fixed-effects) regression models that emphasize that bank performance is affected by various dimensions of the banks' gender diversity. The longitudinal analysis of the Costa Rican banking industry reveals that, unlike a proportion indicating a particular critical mass of women on the board, a balanced gender configuration yields superior economic performance (ROA and net intermediation margin). Additionally, the findings show that the performance benefits of gender diversity only exist in the presence of a gender-balanced board configuration, and that this positive effect is not conditioned by the presence of women leadership in the corporate hierarchy (Chair or CEO).

Babarinde *et al.* (2022) investigating the manifestations of gender balance in the Nigerian public sector. In circumstances where studies exist, there have been inconsistent results regarding the impact of gender balance or equality as it is more common in the literature on employee performance. It would not be sufficient to explain the gender balance practices in the literature without considering their practical manifestations and implications for employee performance. To this end, the study considered that gender balance practices are more important in the public sector because public organizations are more symbolic of national values. Focusing on the economic independence of men and women by studying opportunities for career progression and the role of organizational politics, empirical research is implemented to understand the effect of gender balance practice on employee performance. The study finds that organisational politics and as well as employees' perception of organizational fairness affects the performance of employees. These results imply that when gender balance practices are present, employees are more motivated regardless of gender. The study recommends that organisations should focus more on promoting gender balance practices in terms of providing employees with economic independence and also making rooms for both junior and senior-level staff to benefit from organisational politics

Gaston *et al.* (2020) examines if gender diversity within the governance structures of the National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), within the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) has an impact on gender membership in sport. The results indicate that females are largely under-represented in leadership roles within NGBs. Findings also indicate a positive correlation between female representation in the leadership

structure of NGBs, and the ability of the NGB to achieve female membership benchmarks, thus supportive of Critical Mass Theory. The implications of the study support both an ethical case for female representation, but highlights a clear business performance case for greater gender diversity in the senior roles of leadership within NGB's in the USPOC.

Chitsamatanga *et al.* (2018) investigate how universities can implement a gender responsive organisational culture to promote female leadership. With insights from two universities in Zimbabwe, this study, therefore, focused on how a gender responsive organisational culture could be promoted to enhance female leadership. A case study design was employed and the views of 10 university employees in leadership positions, comprising Pro-Vice Chancellors, Registrars, Faculty Deans, Directors of Gender Schools and Senior Administrative Registrars were sought using semi-structured interviews. The study also used document analysis. The results of the study indicated that universities were promoting transformational leadership in a bid to promote the gender agenda. Male hegemony and lack of gender knowledge were identified as playing key roles in hindering the acknowledgement of females in positions of leadership. The researchers recommend gender awareness programs and adequate financial and human resources as prerequisites for promoting gender responsive universities and enhancement of female leadership.

Ballados and Guevarra (2020) assess gender-responsiveness on organization culture and its influence on gender equality and the economic performance of SUCs in Negros Occidental, Philippines. The descriptive research design was employed and utilized a researcher-made questionnaire to gather data from randomly selected 36 administrators and 236 employees of SUCs. Using the mean, descriptive results showed high gender responsiveness and a great extent of influence on gender equality and the economic performance of SUCs. Also, the results of the Analysis of Variance and Kruskal-Wallis revealed that significant differences occurred in the level of gender responsiveness and the extent of influence on gender equality among SUCs. Employing Spearman rho, significant relationships were found among gender responsiveness, influence on gender equality, and economic performance. Higher gender-responsiveness may lead to a greater influence on the promotion of gender equality and economic performance.

3. Methodology

The study makes use of a survey research design and data was gotten through primary sources and the data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The population of study is constituted of NGOs operating in Bamenda 1, 2 and 3 municipalities and the target population is made up of Managers of these NGOs. Using a combination of the quota and purposeful sampling methods, we selected a sample of

30 per municipality that is in Bamenda 1 and 2 with the exception of Bamenda 3 having 31, making a total of 91 NGOs selected.

Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence, the proposed model to examine the effects of gender equality on the performance of NGOs in the Northwest Region of Cameroon can be specified as follows:

$$\text{Performance of NGOs (Perf)} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{gender inequality}) + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (3.1)$$

Where β_0 represents the intercept, β_1 represents the coefficient for gender equality and ε represents the error term. The regression analysis aimed to estimate the impact of gender equality on the performance of non-governmental organizations in the northwest region of Cameroon.

$$\text{Perfi} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{gbl}_i + \beta_2 \text{grhrp}_i + \beta_3 \text{groc}_i + \beta_4 \text{ageo}_i + \beta_5 \text{ne}_i + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (3.2)$$

Where: Perf = performance of NGOs; gbl= Gender balance in leadership; grhrp= Gender Responsive Human Resource Policies; groc= Gender Responsive Organisational Culture; ageo=age of organization: ee=number of employees.

The β_0 is a constant term and β_1 to β_3 are estimated parameters in the model and ε is an error term. The a priori expectation; $\beta_0 > 0$, $\beta_1 > 0$, $\beta_2 > 0$, $\beta_3 > 0$ $\beta_4 > 0$, $\beta_5 > 0$ the regression analyses coefficients from the regression showed the effect (positive or negative) of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

In order to increase the chances of getting honest responses from respondents and consequently more reliable data. Ethical considerations pervaded each phase of data collection in this study.

2. Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: the Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	39	42.9
	Female	52	57.1
Marital Status	Married	52	57.1
	Unmarried	34	37.4
	Widow	5	5.5
Educational level	Primary Certificate	7	7.7
	Secondary certificate	15	16.5
	Diploma	29	31.9
	Bachelors	15	16.5
	Masters	14	15.4

	Doctorate Degree	11	12.1
Type of Organisation	Faith base	3	3.3
	Non-Faith base	48	52.7
	Other Common Initiative groups	40	44.0

Source: Author Computation (2025)

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. The data shows that the sample is predominantly female, with 57.1% of the respondents being female and 42.9% being male. In terms of marital status, the majority of respondents (57.1%) are married, while 37.4% are unmarried, and 5.5% are widows.

Regarding educational level, the highest proportion of respondents (31.9%) hold a diploma, followed by those with a secondary certificate (16.5%) and a bachelor's degree (16.5%). A smaller percentage of respondents have a primary certificate (7.7%), a master's degree (15.4%), or a doctorate degree (12.1%). The educational profile of the respondents suggests a diverse range of educational backgrounds, which could influence their perspectives and experiences. The majority (52.7%) are affiliated with non-faith-based organizations, while 44.0% are part of other common initiative groups, and 3.3% are associated with faith-based organizations.

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Perf	91	4.28	1.056	2.375	5.625
GBL	91	3.782	.865	2	5
GRHRP	91	3.547	.871	1.375	5
GROC	91	3.456	.679	1.875	4.5
faith base	91	.033	.18	0	1
Non faith base	91	.527	.502	0	1
CIG	91	.44	.499	0	1
Top mgt male	91	.429	.498	0	1
Top mgt female	91	.571	.498	0	1
Exp	91	6.121	3.165	1	11
OrgSize	91	10.791	4.577	4	18

Source: Author Computation (2025)

The summary of descriptive statistics presented in Table 2 provides an overview of the key variables in the study. The performance (Perf) variable has a mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 1.056, with a minimum value of 2.375 and a maximum value of 5.625. This suggests that the performance of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

in the sample is generally high, with a moderate level of variation among the organizations.

The gender-based leadership (GBL) variable has a mean of 3.782 and a standard deviation of 0.865, with a minimum value of 2 and a maximum value of 5. This indicates that the gender-based leadership practices in the NGOs are generally positive, with some variation among the organizations. The gender-responsive human resource practices (GRHRP) variable has a mean of 3.547 and a standard deviation of 0.871, with a minimum value of 1.375 and a maximum value of 5. This suggests that the NGOs in the sample have relatively gender-responsive human resource practices, with some variation among the organizations. The gender-responsive organizational culture (GROC) variable has a mean of 3.456 and a standard deviation of 0.679, with a minimum value of 1.875 and a maximum value of 4.5. This indicates that the organizational culture in the NGOs is generally gender-responsive, with a relatively low level of variation among the organizations.

The data also provides information on the organizational characteristics. The majority of the NGOs in the sample are non-faith-based (52.7%), while 44% are community-interest groups (CIGs). The proportion of male and female top management is relatively balanced, with 57.1% of the organizations having female top management. The average organizational experience (Exp) is 6.121 years, with a standard deviation of 3.165 years, and the average organizational size (OrgSize) is 10.791, with a standard deviation of 4.577.

Regarding the issue of normality, the data appears to be generally normally distributed based on the mean and standard deviation values, as well as the range of minimum and maximum values. However, some variables, such as the binary variables (faith-based, non-faith-based, CIG, top management gender), may not follow a normal distribution due to their categorical nature. Additionally, the organizational size variable may have a skewed distribution, as it is a count variable with a potential for a larger range of values.

Table 3: Pairwise Correlation Analysis

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
(1) Perf	1.000										
(2) GBL	0.405	1.00									
		0									
(3) GRHRP	0.478	0.62	1.00								
		6	0								
(4) GROC	0.565	0.62	0.68	1.00							
		9	9	0							
(5) faith base	-	-	-	-	1.00						

	0.086	0.23	0.18	0.09	0						
		0	8	0							
(6)	-	0.07	0.11	-	-	1.00					
Non_faith_base	0.036	0	1	0.06	0.19	0					
				6	5						
(7) CIG	0.067	0.01	-	0.09	-	-	1.00				
		3	0.04	9	0.16	0.63	0				
			5		4	6					
(8)	-	-	-	-	0.08	0.01	-	1.00			
Top_mgt_male	0.292	0.10	0.11	0.16	9	9	0.05	0			
		6	4	6			1				
(9)	0.292	0.10	0.11	0.16	-	-	0.05	-	1.00		
Top_mgt_femal		6	4	6	0.08	0.01	1	1.00	0		
e					9	9		0			
(10) Exp	0.085	-	-	0.06	0.03	-	0.07	0.10	-	1.00	
		0.00	0.01	3	2	0.08	1	1	0.10	0	
		7	1			3			1		
(11) OrgSize	-	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.13	-	0.04	0.15	-	0.07	1.00
	0.029	0	0	1	0	0.08	1	7	0.15	9	0
						7			7		

Source: Author Computation (2025)

Performance (Perf) is positively correlated with gender-based leadership (GBL) (0.405), gender-responsive human resource practices (GRHRP) (0.478), and gender-responsive organizational culture (GROC) (0.565). This suggests that organizations with stronger gender-related practices and culture tend to have higher performance.

The gender-related variables (GBL, GRHRP, and GROC) are also highly correlated with each other, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.626 to 0.689. Nonetheless, this does not suggest Multicollinearity concerns given that their correlations are less than the bench mark (0.75). The binary variables related to organizational characteristics (faith-based, non-faith-based, and CIG) generally have low to moderate correlations with the other variables, with the highest correlation being between non-faith-based and CIG (-0.636). The top management gender variables (Top_mgt_male and Top_mgt_female) are perfectly negatively correlated (-1.000), as they are complementary and mutually exclusive. The organizational experience (Exp) and size (OrgSize) variables have very low correlations with the other variables, suggesting that they are relatively independent.

Linking Gender Equality and Performance of NGOs

Based on the results, Table 8 presents the results and tests conducted for the effects of gender equality on the performance of non-governmental organisations in North West Region of Cameroon.

Table 4: OLS Estimates

VARIABLES	(Global) Perf	(Non-Faith Base) Perf	(CIG) Perf
GBL	-0.147* (0.0858)	-0.280** (0.120)	-0.0998 (0.0919)
GRHRP	0.211** (0.106)	0.252 (0.152)	0.292** (0.117)
GROC	0.719*** (0.107)	0.370** (0.163)	0.956*** (0.104)
Non faith base (0 if otherwise)	-0.509 (0.400)		
CIG (0 if otherwise)	-0.420 (0.391)		
Top management male (0 if otherwise)	-0.419*** (0.0867)	-0.818*** (0.158)	-0.262*** (0.0779)
Exp	0.0168 (0.0136)	0.00571 (0.0208)	0.0503*** (0.0149)
OrgSize	-0.0133 (0.00912)	-0.0154 (0.0128)	0.000312 (0.0105)
Constant	2.313*** (0.502)	3.639*** (0.487)	0.137 (0.209)
Observations	91	48	40
R Square	0.373	0.291	0.702
F	23.54***	3.41***	23.54***
Breusch-Pagan	19.86***	14.70***	4.66**

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The Breusch-Pagan test for Heteroscedasticity is significant, suggesting the presence of Heteroscedasticity in the model, as such; the regressions are estimated with robust

standard errors to cater for this problem. The R square suggests that approximately 37.3% of variations in performance of NGOs in Bamenda Cameroon are due to variations in gender base practices and other control variables included in the model. The F statistics is significant at 1% for all models, indicating that the models are 99% reliable for policy purpose. Given the reliability of the models estimated, we proceed to interpret the regression coefficients.

Gender-based leadership (GBL) has a negative and statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = -0.147$, $p < 0.1$). This suggests that, on average, organizations with stronger gender-based leadership practices tend to have lower performance, holding other factors constant. We can reject the null hypothesis that GBL has no effect on performance. Gender-responsive human resource practices (GRHRP) have a positive and statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = 0.211$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that organizations with more gender-responsive HR practices tend to have higher performance. We can reject the null hypothesis that GRHRP has no effect on performance. Gender-responsive organizational culture (GROC) has a positive and highly statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = 0.719$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that organizations with a more gender-responsive culture tend to have higher performance. We can reject the null hypothesis that GROC has no effect on performance.

The organizational characteristics variables (non-faith-based and CIG) have negative but not statistically significant effects on performance. Top management gender (Top_mgt_male) has a negative and highly statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = -0.419$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that organizations with a higher proportion of male top managers tend to have lower performance, on average. Organizational experience (Exp) and size (OrgSize) have positive but not statistically significant effects on performance.

For the Non-Faith-Based Subsample, the results for the non-faith-based subsample are generally similar to the global model, with GROC having a positive and statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.370$, $p < 0.05$) and Top_mgt_male having a negative and highly statistically significant effect ($\beta = -0.818$, $p < 0.01$) on performance. GBL and GRHRP have the expected signs but are not statistically significant in this subsample.

In the CIG subsample, GRHRP and GROC have positive and statistically significant effects on performance ($\beta = 0.292$, $p < 0.05$ and $\beta = 0.956$, $p < 0.01$, respectively). Top_mgt_male has a negative and highly statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = -0.262$, $p < 0.01$). Organizational experience (Exp) has a positive and statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = 0.0503$, $p < 0.01$). Overall, the results highlight the importance of gender-responsive practices and organizational culture in driving performance, particularly in the CIG subsample. The negative effect of top management gender composition on performance is also a noteworthy finding across the different models.

Table 5: Comparative Assessment across Gender of Top Management

VARIABLES	(Top MGT Male) Perf	(Top MGT Female) Perf
GBL	-0.269* (0.149)	-0.221* (0.119)
GRHRP	0.0361 (0.143)	0.427*** (0.156)
GROC	0.978*** (0.203)	0.482*** (0.125)
CIG (0 if otherwise)	0.534 (0.333)	
Non faith base (0 if otherwise)	-0.295** (0.147)	1.447*** (0.196)
Exp	0.0633*** (0.0242)	-0.0262* (0.0152)
OrgSize	-0.0171 (0.0174)	-0.00512 (0.208)
Constant	1.530*** (0.467)	0.935*** (0.243)
Observations	39	52
R-squared	0.357	0.363
F	13.84***	9.62***

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

The OLS regression results presented in Table 5 provide a comparative assessment of the factors influencing organizational performance (Perf) across organizations with male-dominated versus female-dominated top management. For the Top Management Male Subsample, Gender-based leadership (GBL) has a negative and statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = -0.269$, $p < 0.1$). This suggests that, on average, organizations with stronger gender-based leadership practices tend to have lower performance when the top management is male-dominated, holding other factors constant. We can reject the null hypothesis that GBL has no effect on performance in this subsample. Gender-responsive organizational culture (GROC) has a positive and highly statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = 0.978$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that organizations

with a more gender-responsive culture tend to have higher performance when the top management is male-dominated. The CIG organizational characteristic has a positive but not statistically significant effect on performance, while the non-faith-based characteristic has a negative and statistically significant effect ($\beta = -0.295$, $p < 0.05$). Organizational experience (Exp) has a positive and highly statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = 0.0633$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that more experienced organizations tend to have higher performance in the male-dominated top management subsample.

For the Top Management Female Subsample, Gender-based leadership (GBL) has a negative and statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = -0.221$, $p < 0.1$), similar to the male-dominated subsample. Gender-responsive human resource practices (GRHRP) and gender-responsive organizational culture (GROC) both have positive and highly statistically significant effects on performance ($\beta = 0.427$, $p < 0.01$ and $\beta = 0.482$, $p < 0.01$, respectively). This indicates that these gender-responsive practices are particularly important for performance in organizations with female-dominated top management. The non-faith-based organizational characteristic has a positive and highly statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = 1.447$, $p < 0.01$), in contrast with the negative effect observed in the male-dominated subsample. Organizational experience (Exp) has a negative and statistically significant effect on performance ($\beta = -0.0262$, $p < 0.1$) in the female-dominated subsample, which is the opposite of the positive effect observed in the male-dominated subsample.

The comparative assessment highlights the differential effects of gender-responsive practices and organizational characteristics on performance depending on the gender composition of top management. The results suggest that gender-responsive practices, such as GRHRP and GROC, are particularly important for driving performance in organizations with female-dominated top management, while organizational experience is more important in organizations with male-dominated top management.

3. Conclusion

The study provides empirical evidence on the role of gender-responsive practices and organizational characteristics in influencing the performance of NGOs in Bamenda, Cameroon. The results emphasize the importance of implementing gender-responsive HR practices and cultivating a gender-responsive organizational culture to enhance organizational performance. Additionally, the negative effect of a higher proportion of male top managers on performance highlights the need to promote gender diversity in leadership positions to improve organizational outcomes.

The findings of this study underscore the importance of considering the gender composition of top management when examining the factors that influence organizational performance. The differential effects of gender-responsive practices and organizational characteristics highlight the need for tailored strategies and policies to

support performance in organizations with varying levels of gender representation in leadership positions.

Implications of the study

The study's finding can inform policy decisions aimed at promoting gender equality in NGOs, ultimately contributing to more effective and sustainable development outcomes.

The research can guide strategic planning for NGOs, helping them to develop more effective strategies for promoting gender equality and improving performance.

Contributions to science

This study can provide valuable insights into how gender equality affects the performance of NGOs in Cameroon, shedding light on the complex dynamics between gender equality and organisational effectiveness.

By focusing on the North West Region of Cameroon, this study can contribute to a deeper understanding of the specific challenges and opportunities faced by NGOs in this region, enriching the existing body of research on gender equality.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following policy recommendations can be made:

Encourage the adoption of gender-responsive human resource practices, such as equal opportunities in recruitment, training, and promotion, to improve organizational performance.

Promote the development of a gender-responsive organizational culture that values diversity, inclusion, and equity to enhance the performance of NGOs.

Implement policies and initiatives that increase the representation of women in top management positions to capitalize on the positive effects of gender diversity in leadership.

Provide capacity-building and training programs to support NGOs in integrating gender-responsive practices and improving gender diversity in their organizations.

Promote the adoption of gender-responsive human resource practices and organizational culture in organizations with female-dominated top management to enhance performance.

Suggestions for Further Study

Further research should:

Conduct a comparative study on the impact of gender equality on the performance of NGOs over time.

Conduct a qualitative study to explore the experiences and perceptions of NGOs staff and beneficiaries on the impact of gender equality on NGOs performance

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