

# **EFFECT OF STRATEGIC RESPONSES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF UNITED NATIONS WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME IN SOUTH SUDAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

United Nations World Food Programme is operating in turbulent, insecure, complex, and rapidly changing external environments. For it to remain relevant and continue to deliver the most needed humanitarian assistance, World Food Programme South Sudan continues to innovate ways to perform and remain at the top of its contextual dynamics using specific strategies to respond to the emerging changes in the external environment. The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of strategic responses on the performance of the United Nations World Food Programme in South Sudan. The study sought to find out the effect of restructuring of activities, partnership and donor relations management, safety and security of personnel and assets and service to beneficiaries on the performance of UNWFP in South Sudan. The study reviews both theoretical and empirical literature. The study was conducted in Juba, South Sudan where World Food Programme has its headquarters and all the top managers are based and in the sub-offices and field offices. The independent variables are; restructuring, partnership and donor relation, safety and security of personnel and assets and beneficiary service. The target population was fifty-six professional employees in South Sudan. The Stratified sampling method was used in this study to obtain a sample size of fifty employees. For primary data collection, questionnaires were used. Quantitative and qualitative data were both collected from the respondents. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics analysis

such as frequencies, mean scores, standard deviation and regression analysis. Qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. The basis of using descriptive approach was to give a basis for determining the weights of the variables under study. The findings are presented using tables, pie charts, and bar graphs for easier interpretation. It has been found that, there was a significant positive relationship between WFP responses and WFP performance. There was a strong positive correlation between partnership and donor relations and WFP performance which was statistically. The safety and security were the second variable with a positive correlation with WFP performance. Restructuring process has resulted into the realization of; staff efficiency, training and development. According to majority of the respondents, most jobs were redesigned, business process reengineering and outsourcing of some functions were also undertaken by World Food Programme, that has fundamentally changed the techniques things were done. The study also found that, cooperating partners field level agreements and donor relations management were properly implemented in World Food Programme South Sudan. The study concluded that, majority of respondents have agreed with measures undertaken by WFP security in maintaining access in high risk areas and ensuring personnel safety and security. The study established that, WFP South Sudan gives faster and friendly service to beneficiaries. The study recommends that more fixed-term positions to be created to ensure staff motivation, job security and avoid employees' turnover.

The efforts to attract and retain donors should be sustained by adhering to donor restrictions and reporting in addition to all-time donor visibility norm. It has also been recommended that all staff in the head office to be trained on fire management skills. Technology adoption, training for staff and partners to be promoted to improve efficiency and the deliveries of the humanitarian assistance to beneficiaries. The on-going efforts to boost beneficiary services and improve the performance of

WFP should be sustained. This study recommends that further study should include respondents from; cooperating partners, donor community and beneficiaries especially the refugees. This is important to establish the effect of strategies employed by World Food Programme on its performance to deliver in the ever-changing external environment of South Sudan.

**Key Words:** *strategic responses, performance, United Nations World Food Programme, South Sudan*

## **INTRODUCTION**

A strategy is a design or plan that assimilates organization's major goals, policies and actions arranges into a unified physique (Porter and Kramer, 2011). Strategic management is therefore about determining on a strategy and planning how the strategy is to be operationalised through strategic analysis, strategic choice, strategic implementation and control (Johnson G. et al., 2008). The strategic management process permits an organization to benefit from key environmental opportunities to minimise the impact of external pressures, capitalize upon internal strengths, overcome weakness and enhance performance. Many research studies have resolved that organizations that have adopted strategic management are likely to be more profitable and successful than those that do not (Fred, 2011).

Strategic management concept has nowadays progressed to the extent that, its prime value is to aid the organization to efficaciously operate in complex and dynamic environment. To be competitive in the dynamic environment, corporations must become more flexible and less bureaucratic. In stable environments such as those that have existed in the past, a competitive strategy merely involved defining a competitive position and then defending it.

Organizations should develop strategic liveness to swing from one leading strategy to another. Strategic elasticity, the ability of an organisation to shift from one dominant strategy to another, requires a long-term commitment to the nurturing and the development of critical resources (Wheelen and Hunger 2011). It also necessitates that the company becomes a learning organization, an organization fortified at acquiring, creating and transferring knowledge and adjusting its behaviour to reproduce and reflect new knowledge and understanding (Wheelen and Hunger 2011). Learning organizations evade stability through unceasing self-examinations and experimentations. Employees at different levels within the organization must be included in strategic management process through environmental scanning for critical data, suggesting changes to programmes and strategies, considering changes in the environment and work with

the team to uninterruptedly improve work procedures and evaluation techniques to improve (Sull, 2009).

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

United Nation World Food Programme, South Sudan (UNWFP) is operating in a complex and ever-changing external environment. It faces many challenges that eventually affect the way it operates to realize its strategic plan of delivering the most needed food assistance to the vulnerable and food insecure population in South Sudan (Taye, 2014). Changes in technology have rendered the old ways of doing business obsolete, there is a need for WFP to adopt new ways of doing things to continue to perform. For instance, assessment and registration of beneficiaries require GPS and biometrics technology such as SCOPE, beneficiaries demand efficient and friendly services. There is a need to buy modern equipment, adopt new management practices, develop personnel and use the latest IT to continue to perform (Schnepf, 2016). The deteriorating security situation led to the killing of at least 35 Humanitarian workers in South Sudan in 2013 (Aid Worker Security Report, 2014). The unstable political status quo, poor infrastructure and the worsening economic condition in the country forced WFP to come up with appropriate strategies to enable it to perform in the turbulent external environment (El Hag Yousif, 2011). For instance, in the year 2013 and the year 2016, WFP relocated its nonessential staff from Malakal and Juba as a result of the insecurity. This had affected the implementation of some of WFP activities in the area. The South Sudan economic prospects remain drab due to the unresolved economic insubstantialities, social political, and enduring global gusts. The civil war has resulted in stern social and humanitarian catastrophes and diverted the badly desirable resources from development needs to emergency intrusion. As of September 2017, about 2 million persons remained internally displaced of which 213,000 sought protection in UN compounds and more than 1.8 million absconded to the neighbouring countries. Approximately (6) million people were severe food insecure (African Economic Outlook (AEO) (2018). The drive of this study was to establish the effect of strategic responses on the performance of UNWFP in South Sudan. The study determined the business strategies that WFP has implemented to ensure its success in the humanitarian aid context. The findings of this study filled the knowledge gap, since no research on strategic responses by UNWFP South Sudan had been conducted.

## **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The general objective of the study was to establish the effect of strategic responses on the performance of UNWFP in South Sudan.

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

1. To find out the effect of restructuring of activities on the performance of UNWFP in South Sudan.

2. To find out the impact of partnership as strategic responses on the performance of UNWFP in South Sudan.
3. To ascertain the outcome of safety as a strategic response on the performance of UNWFP.
4. To determine the result of effective service to beneficiaries as a strategic response on the performance of UNWFP in South Sudan.

## **THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Resource Dependency Theory**

The year 2019 marked the 41st anniversary of the publication of Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) "The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective". Since its publication, resource dependence theory (RDT) has developed to one of the most significant theories in organizational theory and strategic management. RDT symbolizes the firms as an open system, reliant on exigencies in the business external environment (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). As Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) postulate, it is very important to understand organisations context to understand their behaviour. RDT categorises the influence of external factors on organizational behaviour. Although forced by their business context, managers can act to reduce environmental ambiguity and dependence. The core of these actions is the notion of power to control vital resources (Ulrich & Barney, 1984). Organizations often tend to condense others power and increase their own. Pfeffer (1987) offers the fundamental argument of the resource dependence perspective and interorganizational relations that organizations are not independent, but rather are constrained by a network of interdependencies with other organizations. Organisations depends on each other specifically when faced with uncertainty about what the actions will be of those organizations with similar mandate. This leads to a situation in which survival and continuous success are uncertain. Therefore, organizations take actions to manage external interdependencies, although such actions are inevitably never completely successful and produce new patterns of dependence and interdependence. This perspective, as well as its proposition that organizations must respond to the external environment, has reached established stage in organizational theory and strategic management as there is lack of recent theoretical interest in RDT as a foundational theory because of the opportunity for further development, refinement, and application. Future research would also benefit from exploring other actions firms can take to manage or reduce environmental dependencies.

This study considers, restructuring of activities including outsourcing that has become much more predominant in recent years, yet research applying RDT to supply chain management is minimal. The interorganisational relationships made possible by the incredible advances in communication and transportation technology have introduced new levels of environmental dependency between WFP and its outsourcing partners. This study sees the need to explore more on outsourcing of WFP activities to some business organisation as part of restructuring strategy and explore the ways to improve on Partnership and donor relation management.

## **Population Ecology Theory**

The first clear formulation of population ecology theory by Michael T. Hannan and the late John H. Freeman was in 1977 American Journal of Sociology piece, "The population ecology of organizations" and later refined in their 1989 book Organizational Ecology. This book scrutinises the environment in which organizations contest and how a natural selection process occurs. This theory looks at the death of organizations (organisation mortality), the birth of new organizations (organizational founding), as well as organizational growth and change.

In the social sciences, organizational ecology is considered a theoretical and empirical approach that is a sub-field of organizational studies. Organizational ecology exploits understandings from economics, biology and sociology, it uses statistical analysis to try to comprehend the circumstances in which organizations emerge, grow, and die.

From a real-world position, sustainability issue in organizational practice in recent years has developed as one of the most critical issues facing an organization. It is believed that population ecology has appreciated intuitions for sustainability in organizations, and that its potential to make contributions to sustainability research and practice are yet to be fully realized (Hannan and Freeman, 1989).

Population ecology has several key assumptions, the first assumption is that organizational change occurs at the population level through organizational births and deaths (Hannan and Freeman, 1989). This does not mean that individual organizations cannot change. Organizations can and often do change, in sometimes, radical ways, but often the transformation can be extremely detrimental to organization survivability (Barnett and Carroll, 1995).

The second major assumption of population ecology idea of inertia or inactivity, which states that the environmental selection favours organizations with high level of apathy (Hannan and Freeman, 1984). To achieve high levels of inertia, an organization must have high levels of reliability and accountability, which in turn help to create high reproducibility (standardized routines). High levels of reproducibility generate strong inertial pressures (Haveman, 1992; Greve, 1999).

For United nation World Food Programme to keep her place as the largest humanitarian agency of the UN system, continue to rejuvenate and avoid death, it should continue to restructure its activities by adopting the latest technology and improve processes and systems, improve partnership and donor relation management to enable it to reach a wider range of beneficiaries through cooperating partners and secure the needed funding for its projects. Safety and security measures for personnel and assets on other hand is key to remaining in business as humanitarian work is naturally undertaken in insecure surrounding and friendly service to beneficiaries is very important social approval element and the considered the result of the humanitarian intervention on the other. This is particularly important in the sense that donors would like to receive

beneficiary impression and feedback on the services they have receive as a precondition for the agency to receive more funds.

### **Institutional Theory**

Institution theory was introduced by Joseph Goguen and Rod Burstall in the late seventies of the last century as a response to the explosion in the population of logical systems in use in formal specification theory and practice. Institutional theory is a philosophy on the profounder and more robust facets of social structure. It deliberates on the procedures by which structures, including schemes, rules, norms, and routines, become recognized as social behaviour authoritative guidelines. Different components of institutional theory explicate how these fundamentals are created, adopted, diffused and improved over space and time and how they fall into decline and disuse. Scott (2001) states that, institutions are social structures that have accomplished a high degree of resilience. They are composed of cultural-regulative, normative and cognitive elements that, together with accompanying actions and resources, offer firmness and meaning to social life. Institutions are transmitted by innumerable carriers' types, including relational systems, symbolic systems, artefacts and routines. Institutions function at different stages of jurisdiction, from the Global system to localize interpersonal relationships. Institutions connote stability but are subject to incremental and discontinuous change processes.

The old institutionalism saw light at the end of the 19th century and developed as a clear path in the 1920s-1930s. The theory endeavoured to take a middle ground between economics and Marxism. The old institutional economics tried to reject classical economic theories and analyse institutions. Scott (2008) believes that, institutional theory is "a widely accepted theoretical bearing that highlights legitimacy, isomorphism, and rational myths." Researchers constructing on this viewpoint emphasize that imitation is an important insight of Institutional Theory, rather than optimizing their structures, practices and decisions, organizations look to their counterparts for indications of appropriate behaviour they could adopt.

As asserted by Kraft's Public Policy (2007) Institutional Theory is "Policy-making frame that stresses the legal and formal features of organisations structures." Scott (1995) specifies that, organizations must conform to the rules and belief systems prevailing in the environment to survive (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977). The United Nation adopts specific security level systems particularly in insecure environment, this forces the UN agencies, funds and programmes to put into place specific security measures that allow the UN organizations to carry out the humanitarian respond to the indigent and change their structures and approaches to the way of doing business because institutional homogeneity, both structural and procedural approaches will earn the organization legitimacy (Dacin, 1997; Deephouse, 1996; Suchman, 1995).

Different international organizations operating in South Sudan challenging environment face assorted pressures to change their strategies and the technique of conducting business (Martinsons, 1993; Porter, 1990). It is therefore very important for WFP to restructure its

activities to respond to the changing external dynamics. Since humanitarian contributions are mainly driven by donor conditions and restrictions, it is also important for WFP to develop strategies for partnership and donor relations management to be able to deliver the badly needed humanitarian assistance (Marquis and Tilcsik, 2016). The UN as an institution dictates that all its agencies, funds and programmes implement the UN core values of, integrity professionalism, and respect for diversity, WFP is to develop a specific strategy based on these core values to improve the delivery of relief service to the beneficiaries (UN Deployment Training Materials, 2017)

## **EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Organizational Restructuring and Performance**

Balogun (2007) pronounces that, organizational restructuring is a strategic plan of change that is developed by top organization management to align business plans with the organizational operations. Restructuring thus, has a momentous impact on organization resources, particularly human resource (Lawler and Mohrman, 2003). For instance, in Kenya, firms have been obliged to restructure their activities to respond to the changes in the market (Kavoo-Linge and Kamoche, 2015). Agarwala (2007) acknowledges that, the twenty-first century is exceptional with the prevailing changes in the business environment as many business firms are undergoing analogous drifts which include economic development, recession, an upsurge in number of skilled unemployed labourers, massive redundancies and extensive recruitments. For example, nowadays international organizations get rid of a clear majority of employees and outsource their various functions to the external companies within the host community or in neighbouring countries (Mutai, 2012). Agarwala (2007) stipulates that many organizations have grasped on how to commence a successful restructuring exercises using proper human resource planning (HRP) this must timely be conducted as market changes are continuous, dynamic and complex, in addition to many paradoxes in managing human resource. DeCenzo and Robbins (2008) asserted that, for an organization to exist it should visit HRP especially when responding with strategic dynamics inform of organizational restructuring. Talent management is a vital factor to be considered throughout HRP exercise (Armstrong, 2009; Agarwala, 2007; Lawler & Mohrman, 2003).

Corporate restructuring is generally used to symbolise significant changes in the structural mechanisms of organizations through conscious management action. Agarwala (2007) postulates that restructuring is intended to achieve strategic, operational, financial and personal objectives in addition to branding corporate restructuring into organizational restructuring, portfolio restructuring and financial restructuring.

After an organization has resolved the calibre of the staff to be retained resulting from restructuring changes and identified ways to manage the reserved talent, the next phase is to determine what sort of development needs to be adopted (Garavan et al., 2012). This is because in the event of acquisitions, expansion, mergers, joint ventures or downsizing, staff may be



transferred to different sections within the same organisation with different roles that may necessitate new skills. For example, employees may be required to learn new skills to operate a new equipment or new IT systems. In this regard development then becomes imperious to ensure that employee can commence their new roles and perform. There is need for an organization to identify the staff to be developed or trained, competencies or skills they lack, what sort of backing they need, who will lead the development process, and what is the timeline (Garavan et al., 2012). To be able to achieve that, an organization needs to adopt a clear policy on employee capacity development. The talent development policy aids the organization to map talent development scope (WordPress, 2010).

The emergence of new technologies in the humanitarian community has required changes in the organization of work. For instance, Jonathan Rivers who works as a technical officer for the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) as soon as he arrived in Cambodia in 2014, he noticed how much time he and his colleagues spent retrieving data from different departments for their food security analysis task (Jayanthi et al., 2009). Rivers knew there must be a better way to gather the information on the WFP's school feeding programme for students at 4,500-5,000 Cambodian schools, to allow technical officers perform vulnerability assessment and mapping, more efficiently (Jayanthi et al., 2009). Rivers developed a real-time monitoring and evaluation system using mobile phones that lets field monitors enter data on logistics and supply chains, the information is displayed on an interactive Google Maps. Innovative technology-based solutions such as this one has allowed the UN funds and programmes to develop in recent years to restructure and streamline their work and improve service delivery performance in developing countries (Roseanne Gerin, 2017).

### **Partnership, Donor Relations Management and Performance**

Partnership is a balanced relationship between comparatively equal parties which assigns to each partners rights, duties and responsibility (Grünewald, 2017). While it is almost impossible for an organisation to carry out its mandate without donors' support, most organisation cannot effectively deliver without the support of cooperating partners (Grünewald, 2017).

**Partnership:** Partnership is an agreement to perform together a task that will benefit all the parties involved by reducing duplication of efforts and achieving synergies that could not be realised by a single partner operating alone (Glasby and Dickinson, 2014). A successful partnership is characterised by a robust commitment from each partner it augments the effectiveness and impact of action through more efficient and combined use of resources and eventually promotes innovation. To realise sustainable success, it is essential that straightforward and domestic parameters be created and decided upon; correspondingly essential are the resourcing, appropriation of funds and the political will (Glasby and Dickinson, 2014).

Co-operation within a partnership is communal and is operative if the partners share one strategic vision, are all equal members in an encoded organisational structure and hunt for compatible goals (Regina Brandstetter, 2006). Ownership notion is habitually used in this regard to label

institutional emotional binding as well as persons involved, which should preferably be with the partners not the outsiders. To effect change, the partnership should be able to bring together different actors in concerted action as well as in a well-managed cooperative effort (Regina Brandstetter, 2006).

To be effective, a partnership should have recognisable and an independent structure to help establish its distinctiveness. The structure should have steadiness and perpetuity, a certain degree of autonomy and to some extent flexibility as well (Scott, 2008). It is also significant to review communication channels to ensure that all partners are involved and are kept informed. Partnership enjoys political and social approval, the partners demonstrates determination and admit the feasibilities of their political responsibilities reflects a strong sense of ownership (Scott, 2008). Agreements are based on obligations, distinguishable responsibilities and joint rights, signed by all relevant parties as partnership takes a comprehensive approach. Strong commitment from each partner is echoed as all partners are equally present and where appropriate they are represented by experienced influential individuals within their organisation (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009).

Resources, technology, knowledge and ideas are mutually shared within the partnership, equal opportunities are secured within the partnership, adequate human and financial resources are accessible for execution (Katzenbach and Smith, 2015). The partnership should be able to raise funds from a variety of sources and have a good foundation of human resource management, financial controls practice and accounting procedures (Katzenbach and Smith, 2015). Considerable resources and energy are dedicated to monitoring and evaluation exercise to enhance performance based on realistic but demanding targets and performance indicators that are clearly defined and a learning culture is nurtured. Tasks, responsibilities and resources may fluctuate but the value added on performance attained by each partner from the partnership is undoubtedly recognised (Brandstetter, 2006)

The wider public should be informed by public relations about the activities, targets and measures of the partnership activities (Brandstetter, 2006). A Comprehensive monitoring system should be adopted to evaluate achievements of the partnership, determine the needed enhancements and adapt extra planning to improve performance. A periodical evaluation of partnership to demonstrate the value added should be conducted and reports thereof are published (Brandstetter, 2006).

**Donor Relations Management:** Donor relations management (DRM) is the process in which an organization fortifies its relationship with donors to augment donor attraction and retention. More frequently NGOs hire consultants or fundraising officers to undertake resource mobilization task but likely ignores the donor retention or relationship building area. A clearly defined plan is needed as well as an effective communication tool. With the technological advancement numerous options are available for an organisation to groom and manage its relationship with donors. A good rapport can be built with the donors through upgraded channels

of communication (Joshi, 2016). DRM is a comprehensive approach that ponders many elements that smooths a long-term donor engagement that leads to funding opportunities and sustainable resources. Attracting donors and nurturing a long-term relation with them is habitually a challenge for many organizations (Mohammed Abo Ramadan, 2015).

The significant role played by donors is to guarantee adequate funding sources for organisations. If donors deferred financing organisations, then most of them would close as most organisations rely on contributions and donations for their imminent existence. Accordingly, donors have an important role to play in strategic management process in organisations; meanwhile most NGOs cannot financially afford on their own to run their organisation strategic management process (Joshi, 2016). It should also be noted that donors regularly put more emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation stage since this phase reflects the performance of an NGO and helps the donors decide whether to keep funding or halt. Donors might also play a role harmful to organisations. Elbers and Arts (2011) stated that donors may request organisations to formulate a strategic plan as a requirement for the organization to access funding consequently, this may drive organisations to superficially experience the strategic management process without its full adaptation and ownership.

Donors occasionally push their agenda into organisations strategic content. This might result in absurdity between organisations programme toward the targeted beneficiaries and the donors' agenda. Furthermore, most donors do not typically stick to long-term financing that assures the realization of organisations plans and strategies since their funding is project-based (Ramadan, 2015). This might result in weakening organisations capability in executing their plans and strategies in an effective manner. In this case, organisations must be smart enough to balance their own agenda with that of the donors. Additionally, organisations should diversify their donation basket by relying on multiple donors to sustain their identity and unique strategic character (Ramadan, 2015).

### **Safety and Security of Humanitarian Worker in Complex Security Environments**

Humanitarian intervention is naturally executed in complex, insecure and rapidly changing surroundings. It is not a new phenomenon for humanitarian organisations to operating in the face of various forms of hostilities. Major attacks against non-military aid workers which were on mountain route since the late 1990s, have begun to soothe in most humanitarian aid sceneries around the globe according to incident statistics (Stoddard et al., 2009). This can be largely accredited to the rigorous improvements by relief organisations in security management system that permits for more effective risk assessment exercise and mitigation measures by field staff. Similarly, since 2005 or 2006, some tremendously violent operational settings have increased total aid worker fatalities globally in Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan in the top the list. This embraces a growing attacks incidence, sophisticated lethal weapons and tactics and particularly noticeable upsurge in kidnapping events (Stoddard et al, 2009).

It has been evident that kidnapping incidents victims were slain considering the common consequence of sufferers being freed alive this continued to remain the fastest mounting attack type distressing Humanitarian workers. As organisations familiarised themselves with snigger and more defending security measures such as restricted movement in some zones, tactics such as violent road banditry and armed robbery have fallen (Jan Egeland et al., 2011). Furthermore, kidnappings have confirmed to be a lucrative business for the criminal gangs who can demand victims' families and organisations to pay a ransom for their release or consequently sell the victims to other armed groups who eventually use them for political leverage as propaganda tool or to show control over a certain territory as far as authority is concerned. For kidnappers, humanitarian workers are obviously not the only targets, but they incline to appear a more noticeable and easier one (Jan Egeland et al., 2011).

Upright Norms for attaining and upholding access in a high-risk and more challenging security conditions include active acceptance-based methods or approaches. Aid groups can choose to pursue acceptance-based security measures for their workers and actions in different ways alongside a gamut that ranges from an instinctive style of a passive acceptance to a bearing of an active acceptance linking proactive outreach strategies, to straight humanitarian conciliation for security guarantees and access assurances (Adan, 2018). A research conducted by OCHA found out that generally the more diligent and vigorous the organisation appeared to be in its acceptance exertions, and the greater its communication and negotiation capacity with all parties, the better security and access it could obtain (OCHA, 2011).

Better option to reduce visibility could be by adopting co-location norm with local or accepted organisations by subleasing office space in a local organisation. Avoiding the white four-wheel drive Landcruiser vehicles e.g. in Chad and Sudan Darfur region, the car-jacking has significantly reduced using vans and minibuses instead of four-wheel drive vehicles (Egeland et al., 2011). Many NGOs in Pakistan and Afghanistan testified that they feel safer when they use locally hired cars. There exists no comprehensive approach on providing staff in the field with the best security communications equipment. A low-profile approach impedes the use of CODAN radios with long antennas, some organisations have adopted satellite phones such as Thuraya in the vehicles. Yet, satellite phones and GPS have been recognised to increase the local armed gangs' suspicions (Adan, 2018). Where appropriate, avoid road travel and routes with frequent incidents, it is a common tuning that requires increased financial capitals to meet air travel costs. When this is not likely, some organisations have trained their staff members on how to act in these scenarios by not to resist, they should surrender phones and cash if necessary (OCHA, 2011).

Deterrent measures are about posing a counter threat to deter a potential threat. They are principally understood to mean the use of force or threat. Although many humanitarian aid groups are trying to avoid the mode of using armed security personnel, virtually all aid agencies have used some sort of armed protection at some point or another (Stoddard et al, 2007). One organisation guideline postulate that under explicit circumstances armed protection could be

used especially in the event when many lives are at risk and the threat is not political but is related to widespread banditry (Johnston and Clark, 2008). Other measures include the hold-up or extraction of operations, use of area security rather than armed escorts or employ community-based policing mechanisms. Other operational means for enhancing secure access as rapid response mechanisms are very important. These encompass a high degree of elasticity with effective programming in rapidly changing and unpredictable security situations, and light transfer strategy (Johnston and Clark, 2008). These involve an operative network of mobile response teams, that execute programme activities for the affected local communities for limited of time (Johnston and Clark, 2008).

Where market conditions permit, the use of cash and voucher approaches in some contexts is seen as fruitful, WFP and NGOs have invested in infrastructures to provide cash-based transfers rather than procuring, transporting, stowing, and distributing in-kind commodities. By doing so, agencies are progressively exploiting new technological approaches to transfer money to beneficiaries. In South Sudan for example, WFP uses service provision companies to deliver cash to beneficiaries (Jan Egeland et al., 2011). New technologies, such as mobile phones, smart prepaid cards or debit cards and SIM cards are being used to transfer money to beneficiaries. Small-scale livelihood and resilience activities in addition to self-support projects are similarly considered to be an alternative means of channelling assistance to beneficiaries. This is considered as actions for mitigating protection risks, where extensive emergency relief might not be desirable or possible (Jan Egeland et al., 2011).

### **Effect of Service to Beneficiaries on the Performance of WFP in South Sudan**

Beneficiaries usually are those in a state of poverty, vulnerability and marginalisation who are intended to benefit from activities of an NGO, these are the primary stakeholders of a humanitarian intervention or a development programme (Bond, August 2006).

In business, customer service is more than customer relationship management or how frontline employees are good to clients. Relatively, relishing and satisfying customers is the goal of outstanding client orientation package or excellent customer service. Because different services types have different customer needs. Therefore, different customer service strategies must be tailored to target different customer needs (Spector, 2001).

Customer perspective in non-profit organisation is exactly that. A non-profit food pantry's customer perspective would be the perspective of those receiving the food benefits, but it is born of and nurtured by the organization improving its image and its relations with those customers. This specific aspect of the customer perspective includes the stakeholder of society. Hartnett and Matan (2011) state that, BSC can help an NGO to establish how the community is being develop by the added value from its activities. BSC is critical as it measures the impact between the organization's stated objectives and activities it offered on one hand and the intended results on the other.

Listening to the Beneficiaries is very crucial as it is in the case of profit-based organisation. Firms regularly receive a prompt wakeup call when they fail to listen to their customers, profit margins and revenues the global yardstick of progress generally fall (Stid, 2011). In the humanitarian aid world, however, beneficiaries have few options, NGOs may not receive timely signal if they ignore their beneficiaries' preference. Beneficiaries often accept an imperfect intervention rather than no aid at all they normally show gratefulness for inadequate effort. Stid (2011) labels the incentive structure that, the attention swings more toward the requirements of the donor who pays for the cost of humanitarian intervention versus the unmet aspirations and needs of the intended receivers the aid services. Here beneficiaries do not buy the services they receive as they are paid for by a third party. Henceforth, this distortion of power dynamic requires community leaders to pursue and use beneficiary voice.

Twersky et al. (2013) offer examples in health care and education sector where beneficiaries perspective is systematically beseeched and used to guide programme and policy choices and improve performance of an organisation. In re-counting these auspicious cases, they consider the value and usefulness of the information. Twersky et al. (2013) believe that attending to beneficiaries is both the smart and correct action to take. Beneficiary observations and perceptions are the preliminary basis of information that is needed for practice improvements that lead to better results. A nascent body of research proves the relation between beneficiaries' perceptions and beneficiaries' results (Twersky et al, 2013).

There have been numerous studies on strategic responses to changes in environment for various firms, but none has been done for United Nations World Food programme in South Sudan. Mucheke (2013) studied The Effect of Strategic Management Practices on Yehu Microfinance Trust Fund, Mombasa County. Njiru (2012) focused on strategic responses of KCB Nyeri County branches in the face of changing environment. Kimutai (2010), strategic response to competition by Kenya Ports Authority. The study found out that, laying-off of excess workers, putting in place a modern structure and change of organization culture improve port performance. The study discloses the challenges faced by the Authority such as political changes, which in most cases leads to instability at the port for instance the disputed 2007 elections that led to post election chaos. It is worth mentioning that, the abovementioned studies were carried out in profit-based organisation, thus, findings are mostly applicable to profit-based companies. There is a PhD Thesis by Fidaa Shehada (2010) a case study on three Palestinian NGOs Strategic Organizational Responses to Environmental Pressures. Organization (Org A) is a non-partisan and non-profit organisation that aims at empowering Palestinian women and enhancing their role in the society. Organization (Org B) is a non-profit health organisation (Org C) that empowers women, ask people to boycott Israeli products and work for improving the Palestinian national economy.

The research concludes that, organizations are not totally passive to conform to the institutional pressures exerted on them, they can understand their surroundings, make choices as well as respond strategically to the pressures. These responses may diverge from compliance to

resistance and to changing or influencing the environment itself, but Shehada (2010) did not consider specific strategies to address issues such as donor fatigue, partnership management and insecurity.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive surveys are intended to measure the features or attributes of a given population, either at a specific point in time or comparatively over time (Gay, 2010). Furthermore, Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) reported that research entails an investigation of an institution, individual, group, or phenomenon. The design was used in the study since according to (Kothari, 2014) survey is concerned with recording, describing, analysing and reporting circumstances that existed or exist. The study examines the effect of strategic responses on the performance of WFP in South Sudan in the last ten years.

### **Target Population**

The population of the study was fifty-six (56) UNWFP South Sudan professional employees' category, those who formulate strategies, oversee and execute them. The population included the Country Director (CD), Deputy Country Directors (DCDs), heads of units (HOU), head of sub offices (HSOs) or field offices (FOs), international experts and national officers.

### **Sampling Frame**

The sampling technique used in this study as stated in table 3.2 was stratified sampling techniques. This is applied by picking a sample from each group of employees to make it as representative of all categories of 56 employees' as possible. The total sample size was 50 Professional employees. Using Taro Yamane method (uniproject materials, 2016), the sample size was obtained by;

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

Where: n is the desired sample size, N= known population and e = margin of error expressed as decimal. For 0.95 confidence interval level e= 0.05.

Given the population size of (56) the minimum sample size is driven by:

$$n = 56 / (1 + 56(0.0025)) = 56 / 1.14 = 50 \text{ people}$$

In addition to one (1) country director two (2) deputy country directors, the researcher randomly chose eleven (11) Heads of Units, thirteen (13) Heads of Sub-offices /Field Offices and twenty-three (23) professional employees using stratified sampling.

## **Data Collection Procedure**

Primary and secondary data were used in this study. The questionnaires were used to collect primary data. The questionnaires had closed and open-ended questions. The questionnaires were administered using email for those employees in the sub-offices and field offices and drop-and-later-pick method for those employees based in Juba. The questionnaire was used because it was faster, less costly and it covers a wider spectrum of the study respondents, (Kothari, 2004). The researcher designed the questionnaire based on the objectives of the research. The questionnaire was divided into six sections: Section A sought the respondents' bio data. Section B - pursued information on the respondents' assessment of the restructuring activities undertaken by UN WFP. Section C was meant to elicit information on the respondents view on whether WFP South Sudan has achieved its strategic apt on partnership and donor relation management. Section D collected data on respondent's views on whether WFP South Sudan is employing appropriate measures to maintained safety and security of WFP Personnel and assets while delivering the most needed food assistance. Section E established respondents' opinion on the level of beneficiaries' satisfaction with services provided by WFP South Sudan. Secondary data was collected from the existing WFP South Sudan published reports in WFP website, journals and books.

## **Data Analysis and Presentation**

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analysed by means of content analysis as it is the most suitable method of analysis for qualitative data. Nachmias and Nachmias (2000) define content analysis as a procedure for creation inferences by objectively and systematically recognising specified features of messages and using them to relate propensities. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis such as percentages, frequencies, mean scores, standard deviation and regression analysis model. The data collected was presented by using, charts, tables and pie charts. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Research (SPSS).

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

Over the years, restructuring has been on-going in WFP South Sudan, with the view of enhancing staff efficiency, advance processes and systems and improve the delivery of food aid to beneficiaries, as found in this study. The study established that overall, the respondents agreed that restructuring as strategic responses to improve WFP performance. Moreover, the respondents agreed that staff cost reduction staff efficiency, training and development job redesign and outsourcing of some functions were used as strategic responses. The respondents were not sure whether Conversion of jobs/positions to fixed term or indefinite employment and combined divisions or units were strategic responses to enhance performance.

The study found that, cooperating partners field level agreements (CP FLAs) had been used by WFP in response to emerging changes in the humanitarian environment to enable it to continue



to deliver the most needed relief aid to the needy. WFP allowed the CPs to implement some activities on its behalf. Thus, allowed WFP to reach a bigger number of beneficiaries. The study also found that, most respondents strongly agreed and agreed that; Donor visibility, adherence to Donor restrictions and reporting and information sharing with the concerned stake holders were used as a strategic response to enhance performance. Most respondents also suggested that, good communication characterised by timely response, transparency and accountability were needed to improve partnership and donor relations management.

Augmenting safety and security of personnel and assets was another strategic response adopted by WFP to improve its performance in South Sudan. The study found that majority of respondents agreed that, information dissemination and mitigation measures against potential security threat, timely response by WFP Security during emergency and action by WFP in maintaining access in high risk areas are instrumental in minimizing hazards and allowing the humanitarian assistance to beneficiaries in high-risk areas. Most respondents agreed that awareness creation is vital. Enhancing beneficiary services was noted to be another strategic response adopted by WFP to enhance performance.

Beneficiaries feedback is usually obtained and dealt with appropriately. The study found that, majority of respondents agreed that, beneficiary feedback, faster food distribution, friendly service and relationship management were used as a strategic response to augment performance. The study has identified three major problems facing the delivery of humanitarian assistance to beneficiaries in South Sudan as being; security threats, poor road networks and poor infrastructure. Furthermore, the study found that, majority of respondents commented that, technology adoption, staff and partners training to be promoted to improve efficiency and aid delivery.

## **INFERENCE STATISTICS**

The study desired to determine the strategic responses of UNWFP to changing external environment in South Sudan. Regression analysis was conducted to explain this relationship. Regression analysis was conducted using SPSS. The findings of this research indicated that, there was an overall positive relationship between employee performance and rewards. The findings are as shown in the tables 1 below.

**Table 1: Model Summary**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
1	0.415 <sup>a</sup>	0.757	0.681	0.94153

a. Predictors: (Constant), restructuring, partnership and donor relations, safety and security, beneficiaries service

In the model summary, “R” value is used to indicate direction and the strength of the relationship between the variables. The closer the value gets to 1, the stronger the relationship. Here, there was a general positive relationship between the variables under test as R= 0.415. The adjusted R-

Square was found to be 0.757 in the study. This value shows that the strategic responses by WFP can explain the 68.1% variance in WFP performance. Restructuring, partnership and donor relations, safety and security and beneficiaries’ service contribute to a substantial extent for the improvement of WFP performance in South Sudan. It therefore suffices to conclude that restructuring, partnership and donor relations, safety and security, beneficiaries service are essential strategic responses by WFP to improve its performance in South Sudan.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted the results in table 2 below show, Partnership and donor relations (0.00233) and safety and security (0.0237), influence on strategic responses of UNWFP to improve its performance were significant while beneficiaries service (0.1894) and restructuring (0.3982) were not statistically significant.

**Table 2: Multiple Regression**

Factor	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	2.19	.964	.248	2.293	.007
Restructuring	0.42	.079	.053	.2513	.3982
Partnership and donor relations	0.69	.077	.036	.3546	.00233
Safety and security	0.71	.052	.048	.4822	.0237
Beneficiaries service	0.36	.047	.009	.1857	.1894

The regression equation,  $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$  becomes:

$$Y = 2.19 + 0.42 X_1 + 0.69 X_2 + 0.71 X_3 + 0.36 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where: Y is the dependent variable (WFP performance),  $X_1$  is the Restructuring variable,  $X_2$  is the partnership and donor relations variable,  $X_3$  is Safety and security variable and  $X_4$  is the beneficiary service.

From the regression equation established, taking all the factors (restructuring, partnership and donor relations, safety and security, beneficiaries’ service) constant at zero, the on strategic responses to enhance WFP performance in South Sudan would be 2.19. Moreover, if the other variables remain constant, a unit increase in restructuring will result in a 0.42 increase in responses of WFP to improve its performance. A unit increase in partnership and donor relations will lead to a 0.69 increase in responses of WFP, whereas a unit increase in safety and security will yield 0.71 increase in WFP performance and a unit increase in beneficiaries’ service will lead to 0.36 increase in WFP performance in the ever-changing environment of South Sudan.

Analysis of variance was also done to establish the significance of the regression model as shown in table 3 below. At 95% confidence level, a significant value (p-value) of 0.0015 and F-value of 142.09 was registered. The regression model has a probability less than 0.0015 of giving a wrong prediction. It indicates that, the overall regression model is statistically significant performance indicator.

**Table 3: Analysis of Variance**

Model	Sum of Squares	D f	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	330.119	2	165.059	142.090	0.0015
Residual	98.74	85	1.1616		
Total	421	87			

Correlation can be defined as the relationship between two variables or among many variables (Orodho, 2003). The study used Pearson R correlation coefficient to determine how the variables associate.

**Table 4: Correlation Matrix**

Pearson Correlation		Restructuring	Partnership and Donor Relations	Safety and Security	Beneficiaries Service	WFP performance
Sig (2-tailed)	Restructuring	1				
	Partnership and donor relations	0.463	1			
	Safety and security	0.633	0.508	1		
	beneficiaries Service	0.665	0.778	0.579	1	
	WFP performance	0.587	0.811	0.648	0.554	1
	Restructuring	1				
	Partnership and donor relations	0.014	1			
	Safety and security	0.032	0.221	1		
	Beneficiaries service	0.039	0.013	0.039	1	
	WFP performance	0.028	0.011	0.027	0.01	1

From the results in table 4 above, there was a strong positive correlation ( $r=0.811$ ) between the partnership and donor relations and the WFP performance which was statistically significant at  $\alpha=5\%$ , with a  $P=$ value of 0.011. The safety and security were the second variable with a positive correlation with WFP performance ( $r=0.648$ ) and statistically significant at  $\alpha=5\%$ .

## CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that, WFP has incorporated several strategic responses to improve its performance in South Sudan. The management recognises that, WFP must continue to deliver under different conditions. Among the strategic responses which WFP executed included; restructuring of some functions and activities. The study found that, restructuring process has resulted into the realisation of; staff efficiency, training and development. According to majority of the respondents, most jobs were redesigned, business process reengineering and outsourcing of some functions were also undertaken, that has fundamentally changed the techniques things

were done in WFP South Sudan. Therefore, it can be concluded that, restructuring process was a substantial strategic response to improve WFP performance in South Sudan.

The study also declares that, cooperating partners (CP) field level agreements (FLAs) were properly implemented in WFP South Sudan. Information sharing with the concerned stake holders, donor visibility, adherence to donor restrictions and reporting were contributory in soliciting funds for the projects and activities. It can be concluded that partnership and donor relations management were important strategic response to enhance performance to continue to deliver.

Information dissemination, mitigation measures against potential security threat, timely response by WFP security during emergency and action by WFP in maintaining access in high risk areas were found to be effective strategic response by WFP South Sudan to improve performance.

The study further concludes that WFP is giving faster and friendly service to beneficiaries and all these were realised by WFP South Sudan according to most of the respondents. In conclusion, WFP emergency unit has been enhanced and other strategies initiated to discourse the changing external environment in South Sudan and continues to perform.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study examined the effect of strategic responses on the performance of United Nations World Food Programme in South Sudan. From the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended that, restructuring is important to an organization, it is recommended that, more fixed-term positions to be created. Job enrichment and job rotations opportunities in form of temporary duty within and without the country could be availed to the national professional officers to allow them to build their capacity thus increasing their deliverables. These can also include some mechanisms for empowering the national professional officers by engaging them in decision-making process.

Effective communication, transparency and accountability are recommended for the improvement of partnership including donor relations management. The vitalities to attract and retain donors should be sustained by continuous adherence to donor restrictions and reporting in addition to all-time donor visibility norm.

Regarding safety and security, most respondents have agreed that, hazard prevention awareness is vital, and it has also been suggested that, all staff in the head office are to be trained on fire management skills. Accommodation facilities for WFP international staff should be improved. Security related simulation exercises on South Sudan context, should be regularly carried out in WFP.

Technology adoption, further training for staff and partners to be promoted to improve staff efficiency and enhance the deliveries of the humanitarian assistance to beneficiaries. The on-

going efforts to enhance beneficiary services using SCOPE platform should be sustained to continue to improve performance.

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