

Research Article

The Role of Management in Organizations in Developing Countries

^aAbiyah Hadassah Jane Limunga and ^{*b}Chi Valery Che

^aBusiness Administration and Public Policy, Higher School of Banking, Finance and Management, Yaoundé, Cameroon

^bUniversity of Yaoundé II, Cameroon

^aEmail: abiyajane29@gmail.com; ^{*b}Email: chivalery89@gmail.com

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Abstract

Effective management is pivotal for organizational success in developing countries like Cameroon, yet context-specific strategies remain underexplored. This study addresses the challenge of adapting management practices to Cameroon's unique socio-economic and cultural landscape, marked by economic volatility, limited resources, and cultural diversity. The objective is to identify practices that enhance organizational performance and employee engagement. The research question explores how management adapts to these challenges and their impact. Employing qualitative methods, including interviews and questionnaires with employees and managers, the study reveals that adaptive leadership, cultural alignment, human resource development, and continuous strategic planning significantly boost performance, though limited infrastructure and bureaucratic inefficiencies pose barriers. Recommendations include enhancing leadership training, fostering cultural competence, investing in employee development, and improving infrastructure through public-private collaboration. This research offers actionable insights for practitioners and policymakers to drive sustainable organisational success in Cameroon and similar contexts.

Keywords: Management, Organizations, Public Policy, Developing Countries, Cameroon.

1. Introduction

Effective management is critical for organizational success, yet there remains a significant gap in understanding how management practices influence organizations in developing countries like Cameroon [1]. These organizations face complex challenges, including economic instability, limited resources, and socio-cultural dynamics that can hinder effective management [2]. This study investigates the unique factors shaping management practices in Cameroon and explores how they can be optimized to enhance organizational performance and contribute to socio-economic development.

A key issue is the scarcity of comprehensive research on management strategies tailored to the Cameroonian context. While extensive literature exists on management in developed countries, these models are often inapplicable in developing nations due to distinct socio-economic conditions, such as high poverty rates, inadequate infrastructure, and cultural diversity [3]. In Cameroon, these conditions necessitate management approaches that are responsive to local realities.

Cultural factors also play a significant role in shaping management practices. Cameroon's diverse population, with over 250 ethnic groups, influences communication styles, decision-making processes, and leadership expectations, which differ from Western management paradigms [4]. Understanding these cultural dimensions is essential for developing strategies that resonate with local employees and enhance productivity. Integrating traditional values into modern management frameworks can further strengthen organizational commitment [5].

This research addresses the problem of identifying and analyzing effective management practices within Cameroon's socio-economic and cultural context. By bridging the gap between theoretical management frameworks and practical applications, the study aims to provide actionable insights for practitioners and policymakers, fostering organizational success and sustainable development in Cameroon and similar developing countries.

2. Background to the Research

The rapid advancement of digital technologies, including robotics, the internet of things (IoT), machine learning, and smart devices, has transformed various aspects of human life, including business operations [6]. In the 21st century, artificial intelligence (AI) and automation have become integral to industries, influencing politics, economics, healthcare, education, and social interactions. In Africa, AI adoption is growing, with over 2,400 AI-specialized companies, 41% of which are startups, potentially contributing \$1.2 billion to the continent's GDP by 2030 if Africa captures 10% of the global AI market [7].

In Cameroon, the integration of technology into business operations presents both opportunities and challenges. While technology enhances efficiency, it raises ethical and legal concerns, particularly regarding data privacy, intellectual property, and employment laws [8]. For instance, AI-driven systems can process tasks rapidly, but their use questions the role of human labor, especially in roles like waitstaff or administrative positions, which are increasingly automated. This shift raises ethical concerns about job displacement in a country where employment is critical for family sustenance. Moreover, technologies like surveillance systems and digital signatures increase risks to data privacy, particularly in developing countries with limited cybersecurity infrastructure. The Cambridge Analytica scandal exemplifies how AI-driven data analytics can undermine individual autonomy in political and public spheres, highlighting the need for ethical oversight in technology use [9].

Firms developing digital technologies bear a moral responsibility to address these issues proactively, especially in nascent regulatory environments like Cameroon's, where external oversight is limited. Large corporations, such as Microsoft and Google, have initiated efforts to establish principles for responsible AI use, though skepticism remains about their focus on public interest [10]. Design choices in technology development also embed assumptions about users and usage, necessitating ethical considerations during the design phase [11].

This background highlights the intersection of technology and management in Cameroon, emphasizing the need for ethical and context-specific management practices to navigate these challenges and leverage opportunities for organizational and national development.

3. Research Problem

The integration of modern technology into business operations in developing countries like Cameroon offers significant benefits but also presents ethical and legal challenges that require effective management. The replacement of human labor with automated technologies, such as AI and robotics, threatens job security, particularly for low-skill workers in roles like waitstaff, secretaries, and gatekeepers. This shift raises ethical questions about the societal impact of automation in a context where employment is a primary source of livelihood [12].

Additionally, automated systems lack the moral judgment, empathy, and cultural sensitivity inherent in human interactions, which are critical for effective management in Cameroon's culturally diverse environment. The use of technologies like surveillance cameras and digital signatures increases risks to data privacy, especially given the rise of cybercrime and limited regulatory frameworks in developing countries. For instance, determining legal liability in cases of AI-related errors, such as a malfunctioning automated system causing harm, remains unclear, posing both ethical and legal dilemmas [13]. These challenges are compounded by Cameroon's socio-economic conditions, including inadequate infrastructure, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and limited access to resources, which hinder effective management. Managers must develop strategies that address these barriers while aligning with local cultural values to enhance organizational performance and employee engagement [14]. This research seeks to explore how management practices can be tailored to overcome these challenges and drive sustainable organizational success in Cameroon.

4. Research Question

How do management practices in organizations within Cameroon adapt to unique socio-economic and cultural challenges, and what impact do these practices have on organizational performance and employee engagement?

5. Literature Review

5.1. The Importance of Management in Developing Countries

Effective management is essential for organizational success in developing countries, where economic and political volatility poses significant challenges. Robust management practices enhance resilience and

adaptability, enabling organizations to navigate unstable environments. In Cameroon, infrastructural deficiencies and limited resources require managers to adopt innovative strategies to maintain operational efficiency [15]. Poor management frameworks reduce an organization's ability to respond to market changes and capitalize on opportunities [16].

5.2. Challenges Faced by Organizations in Cameroon

Cameroonian organizations face economic instability due to fluctuating markets and inflation, which threaten sustainability. Limited access to technology and inadequate infrastructure further hinder operational efficiency. Bureaucratic inefficiencies and regulatory barriers create additional obstacles, requiring managers to develop adaptive strategies that leverage local resources [17].

5.3. Cultural Influences on Management Practices

Cameroon's cultural diversity, with over 250 ethnic groups, significantly shapes management practices [18]. Understanding local customs and values is critical for effective leadership. Participative leadership styles that align with communal values foster employee commitment and collaboration, enhancing organizational performance. Managers who integrate cultural norms into decision-making processes create a sense of belonging, driving innovation and team cohesion.

5.4. Human Resource Development and Capacity Building

Investing in human resource development is critical in Cameroon, where access to quality education and training resources is often limited. Effective training and capacity-building programs enhance employee skills, leading to improved performance and higher job satisfaction. Organizations that prioritize the development of local talent not only boost productivity but also contribute to broader societal progress by fostering a skilled workforce [19]. For instance, mentorship programs and on-the-job training initiatives enable employees to acquire practical skills tailored to local market needs, increasing their adaptability in competitive environments [20].

A culture of continuous learning is essential for organizational success in developing countries. By providing regular workshops, skill development sessions, and opportunities for professional growth, managers can cultivate a motivated and competent workforce. Such initiatives also enhance employee retention, as workers feel valued and empowered to contribute to organizational goals. In Cameroon, where unemployment and underemployment are significant challenges, organizations that invest in human resource development create pathways for economic empowerment, aligning with national development objectives [21].



Figure 1. Human resource management system (Source: LinkedIn).

6. Strategic Planning and Adaptability

Strategic planning is a cornerstone of effective management, particularly in Cameroon's dynamic and unpredictable business environment. Organizations that adopt flexible and adaptive strategic planning are better equipped to respond to market fluctuations and stakeholder feedback. This approach involves setting long-term objectives while regularly reassessing strategies based on local knowledge and socio-economic

trends. For example, businesses that incorporate community insights into their planning processes can anticipate consumer needs and align their offerings accordingly, enhancing market competitiveness [22].

Adaptability is critical in navigating Cameroon's economic challenges, such as inflation and regulatory barriers [23]. Managers who employ continuous evaluation and adjust strategies proactively can mitigate risks and seize emerging opportunities. This flexibility ensures that organizations remain resilient in the face of external pressures, such as supply chain disruptions or policy changes [24]. Strategic planning grounded in local realities also fosters innovation, as managers leverage indigenous knowledge and resources to develop context-specific solutions [25].

The literature highlights the necessity of tailored management practices that address Cameroon's unique economic, cultural, and organizational challenges. By integrating cultural alignment, human resource development, and adaptive strategic planning, managers can enhance organizational performance and contribute to sustainable development. These insights provide a foundation for the empirical investigation of management practices in Cameroon, as presented in the results section.

7. Results

This study provides valuable insights into effective management practices in Cameroon, based on qualitative data collected from employees and managers across various organizations. The findings are derived from responses to a structured questionnaire and interviews, highlighting key strategies that drive organizational success. The results are summarized below:

- ☞ **Adaptive Leadership:** Organizations led by managers who adapt quickly to local challenges achieve greater success. Employees emphasized that responsive leadership fosters strong workplace relationships and meets team needs effectively, enhancing overall performance [26].
- ☞ **Cultural Alignment:** Incorporating local cultural values into management practices significantly boosts employee motivation and commitment. Participative decision-making and respect for traditional norms create a sense of belonging, as reported by participants [27].
- ☞ **Human Resource Development:** Organizations that prioritize training and capacity-building programs experience improved employee performance and higher job satisfaction. Mentorship and skill development initiatives were cited as key contributors to positive workplace outcomes [28].
- ☞ **Strategic Planning:** Continuous strategic planning and evaluation enable organizations to adapt to market changes effectively. Strategies informed by local knowledge provide a competitive advantage, allowing businesses to navigate economic volatility [29].
- ☞ **Challenges in Implementation:** Limited resources, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and inadequate infrastructure pose significant barriers to effective management. These obstacles often prevent organizations from fully realizing the benefits of their management strategies [30].

Table 1. Summary of key findings.

Category	Description	Key Findings
Adaptive leadership	Leadership styles that respond to local challenges.	Management success measures from leaders involve immediate adaptation to the requirements of team members.
Cultural alignment	Integration of local cultural values into management.	Organizations that implement participative decision-making processes enhance worker dedication and team spirit.
Human resource development	Focuses on training and capacity-building initiatives.	Organizations focusing on employee skill improvement experience increased job satisfaction and superior workplace performance.
Strategic planning	Approaches to planning and reassessing strategies.	A continuous strategic assessment enables businesses to respond effectively to market shifts and changes.
Challenges in implementation	Barriers to effective management practices.	Ineffective management stems from insufficient resources, bureaucratic difficulties, and limited infrastructure.



Figure 2. Management levels (Source: alamy.com).

- ☞ **Graphical Data Presentation Summary:** The qualitative data were analyzed to identify recurring themes, such as the importance of cultural alignment and adaptive leadership. Visual representations, such as bar charts, were used to illustrate the frequency of responses related to leadership effectiveness and training program availability, highlighting the prevalence of positive outcomes in organizations with robust management practices.

8. Limitations

This study has two primary limitations. First, the sample size is relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to all organizations in Cameroon. Second, the research focuses on specific regions within Cameroon, potentially overlooking variations in management practices across other areas of the country, such as rural versus urban settings.

9. Originality

This study contributes to the literature on management practices in developing countries by focusing on Cameroon, a context that has received limited scholarly attention. By integrating qualitative data from local employees and managers, the research provides nuanced insights into how socio-economic conditions and cultural factors shape management approaches. This addresses a critical gap in understanding organizational effectiveness in similar developing contexts, offering a foundation for future research and practical applications.

10. Conclusion

This study underscores the critical role of tailored management practices in navigating Cameroon's complex socio-economic and cultural challenges. Adaptive leadership, cultural alignment, and robust human resource development are essential for enhancing organisational performance and employee engagement. Despite barriers like inadequate infrastructure, strategic planning grounded in local realities fosters resilience and innovation. By implementing the recommended strategies, organisations can achieve sustainable success, contributing to Cameroon's broader socio-economic development. This research bridges a critical gap, offering a foundation for future studies and practical applications in developing countries.

11. Recommendations

- ☞ **Enhance Leadership Training Programs:** Organizations should invest in training programs that develop adaptive leaders with strong emotional intelligence and decision-making skills. Workshops and mentorship opportunities can equip managers to address Cameroon's unique business challenges, fostering resilience and innovation [31].
- ☞ **Foster Cultural Competence in Management:** Organizations should incorporate local cultural values into management practices through team-building activities and training that respect Cameroon's diverse traditions. Aligning organizational goals with local customs enhances employee commitment and motivation [1].
- ☞ **Invest in Human Resource Development:** Continuous employee training and mentorship programs are essential for improving skills and job satisfaction. A systematic approach to employee development fosters a motivated and competent workforce, driving organizational success [28].

- ☞ **Implement Continuous Strategic Planning:** Organizations should adopt strategic management systems with regular evaluations based on market trends and stakeholder feedback. Proactive planning ensures responsiveness to socio-economic changes and maintains competitiveness [32].
- ☞ **Address Infrastructure and Resource Challenges:** Collaboration between government and private sector leaders is critical to improving infrastructure and resource availability. Policies promoting investment in technology and logistics can enhance organizational operations and efficiency [33].
- ☞ **Encourage Collaborative Networks:** Establishing networks among businesses, educational institutions, and government agencies can facilitate knowledge sharing and resource access. These partnerships strengthen organizational capabilities and improve the business environment in Cameroon [34].

Declarations

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Appendix

A Sample of the Questionnaire

- ✧ **Coding: 1–500**
- ✧ **Gender:**
 - a) Female
 - b) Male
- ✧ **Job/Occupation:**
- ✧ **Marital Status:**
 - a) Married
 - b) Single
 - c) Divorced
- ✧ **How would you rate the effectiveness of leadership in your organization?**
 - a) Excellent
 - b) Good
 - c) Fair
 - d) Poor
- ✧ **What are the main challenges you face in management practices?**
- ✧ **How important is cultural alignment in your organization's management practices?**
 - a) Very important
 - b) Important
 - c) Somewhat important
 - d) Not important
- ✧ **What type of training programs does your organization offer?**
- ✧ **Do you find your tasks manageable or overwhelming?**
 - a) Manageable
 - b) Overwhelming
- ✧ **What tools do you use for your tasks?**
 - a) Laptops
 - b) Computers
 - c) Smartphones
 - d) Others: _____
- ✧ **Who provides the necessary equipment for your job?**
 - a) Employee
 - b) Employer
- ✧ **Does your organization prioritize human resource development?**
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- ✧ **Have you encountered any barriers to effective management in your organization?**
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- ✧ **How often does your organization reassess its management strategies?**
 - a) Monthly
 - b) Quarterly
 - c) Annually
 - d) Never
- ✧ **Do you feel involved in your organization's decision-making processes?**
 - a) Always
 - b) Often

- c) Sometimes
- d) Never

✧ **How adaptable is your organization to market changes?**

- a) Very adaptable
- b) Somewhat adaptable
- c) Not very adaptable
- d) Not adaptable at all

✧ **Have you experienced any stress related to management practices?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

✧ **If yes, what do you believe caused it?**

✧ **Have you noticed any changes in your wages related to management effectiveness?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

✧ **Do you believe your rights as an employee are respected in your organization?**

- a) Yes
- b) No