

Influence of Emotional Support on Humanitarian Aid Response in Arid and Semi-Arid Areas in Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of emotional support on humanitarian aid response in arid and semi-arid areas in Kenya. The study used a positivism approach and explanatory research design. The target population was 5996 from which a sample of 375 respondents was obtained using the Yamane formula. Structured questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect the data. The study used a stratified random technique to select the respondents. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis and presented in prose form. Moreover, SPSS Version 25 was used to organize and analyze the quantitative data. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in tables and graphs. The study found that emotional support is positively and significantly related to humanitarian aid response in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas in Kenya ($\beta=0.520$, $p=0.000$). The results indicate that a unitary increase in emotional support will increase the humanitarian aid response in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas in Kenya by 0.520 units when other factors are held constant. The study concludes that emotional support encourages an individual to work hard at reaching goals, increasing humanitarian aid responses. Emotional support involves listening and empathizing with the team members, which positively impacts the delivery of humanitarian aid. Motivation drives individuals to work hard to achieve goals, thus increasing humanitarian aid response. Employees who trust leaders are less likely to quit, increasing humanitarian aid responses. Emotional support is an essential leadership ingredient that binds any relationship into a practical and working partnership. It is recommended that the management of the NGOs involved in the humanitarian aid response should concentrate more on emotional support. The management of NGOs should consider increasing the monetary benefits package they give to the team members. In addition, the management teams in organizations should always carry out a thorough study of the various motivational tools that can motivate employees. The management should listen to the view of the team members.

Keywords: Emotional support, humanitarian aid response, arid and semi-arid areas, Kenya

Introduction

Humanitarian aid response is the process needed to deliver aid to the people in need (Sullivan, 2017). In most cases, national and international aid agencies provide technical and financial assistance to the victims after a disaster (Stanikzai, 2017). The humanitarian organizations mobilize a large amount of aid to disaster areas after the disasters (Egeland, 2017). However, the distribution of these resources creates many challenges such as time, cost, coverage and eligibility. Humanitarian aid response is related to many activities such as involving many stakeholders for managing the disaster, enormous effort and different processes (Bisri, 2019). The management of disasters is also associated with activities such as accessing up-to-date and appropriate information for effective communication to prompt collaboration and improve integration (Holzer et al., 2020).

The humanitarian aid response can be impacted by emotional support. The humanitarian aid response in the study was measured using timely delivery, meeting the purpose/targets and appropriate delivery. Emotional support involves listening and empathizing with the team members (Chaudhri et al., 2017). The emotional support in the study is measured using motivation, trust and demonstrating empathy. It was noted by Kahungya (2016) that motivation encourages an individual to work hard at reaching goals. Motivation drives individuals to work hard to achieve goals, thus increasing humanitarian aid response (Sameer, 2015). Trust is an essential leadership ingredient that binds any relationship into a practical and working partnership (Kahungya, 2016). Empathy includes the leaders in humanitarian organizations who can understand what other people/ team members are experiencing from within or the capacity to place oneself in another's position (Islam et al., 2020).

Despite having various NGOs in Kenya focused on humanitarian activities, there are still challenges in addressing the country's challenges, such as sustainable food production interventions (Nienke & Gert-Jan Stads, 2020). In some cases, the humanitarian aid response has been marred by misaligned partner expectations and ineffective coordination (Mwangi & Anaya, 2020). Jhuthi (2015) indicated that more than 50% of all projects carried out by NGOs are not sustainable and collapse in less than one year after the exit of the donors. A study by Wanja (2017) indicated that most NGOs have been recording poor performance in completing projects on time, within the allocated budget, and achieving the set objectives. It was reported by Sala, Otieno, Nzuma and Mureithi (2020) that humanitarian aid response in the ASAL areas during a disaster has been very low, with poor coordination, lack of goodwill and inadequate commitment. Moreover, the ASAL areas have frequently suffered from drought and floods, and the responses to these disasters have been unsatisfactory (Abdilatif et al., 2018). Based on this background, the study examined the influence of emotional support on humanitarian aid response in arid and semi-arid areas in Kenya to bridge the knowledge gap.

Statement of the Problem

Humanitarian response among some of the NGOs in Kenya has not been adequate. In Kenya, NGOs received a total of Ksh 165.97 billion in 2018/19, an 8 percent increase from the previous year in 2017/2018. However, according to the Public Benefits Organizations Authority, the total expenditure was Ksh 132.1 billion, representing 79.59% usage. This indicated that there is inefficiency in the utilization of the funds. Moreover, despite having various NGOs in Kenya

focused on humanitarian activities, there still exist gaps in addressing the challenges affecting the country, such as sustainable food production interventions (Nyambura et al., 2019). Besides, it was reported by Sala et al., (2020) that humanitarian aid response in the ASAL areas during a disaster has been very low with poor coordination, lack of goodwill and unsatisfactory dedication. The Humanitarian aid response in some ASAL areas has been marred by misaligned community expectations and ineffective coordination (Mwangi & Anaya, 2020).

A study conducted by Wanja (2017) indicated that humanitarian aid response within the ASAL areas has been inadequate due to a deficiency of teamwork and misalignment of interests. Further, based on the empirical studies reviewed, there is inadequate information to make inferences for the current study. Notably, criticisms of reviewed studies are based on knowledge, practice and policy gaps. The knowledge gap emerges from the fact that some of the studies were conducted outside Kenya. Further, none of those studies conducted in Kenya focused on arid and semi-arid areas in Kenya. Moreover, from the reviewed studies, none of them particularly examined the influence of emotional support on humanitarian aid response. Moreover, the practice gap is that humanitarian aid response in the ASAL areas during a disaster has been very low with poor coordination, lack of goodwill and unsatisfactory dedication (Sala et al., 2020). In addition, there is no national platform to encourage collaborative partnerships in humanitarian organizations, which might have delayed upscaling and commercialization of aid delivery during a disaster. Thus, the current research was worthy of being conducted to bridge the existing knowledge, practice and policy gaps in the field of influence of emotional support on humanitarian aid response in arid and semi-arid areas in Kenya

Research Question

To what extent does emotional support influence humanitarian aid response in Arid and Semi-Arid areas in Kenya?

Hypothesis

H₀: Emotional support has no significant influence on humanitarian aid response in Arid and Semi-Arid areas in Kenya

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

The theory deemed relevant to inform the study was shared leadership theory. This theory was linked to the study variable to bring out its relevance. The theory was developed by Mary Parker in 1924. The theory was further advanced by Gibb in 1954 when he wrote that leadership is probably best conceived as a group quality, as a set of functions that the group must carry out. Further, in 1977, Rush et al., (1977) added more information to the theory and indicated that shared leadership is one of the critical elements that influence the success of an organization. The study of Pearce and Sims (2000) showed that shared leadership is a collaborative effort where one person may be in charge, but power and influence are shared within the group. Moreover, Cawthorne (2010) advanced the theory by indicating that shared leadership leads from the middle of the organization. The theory states that effective leadership incorporates maximizing all of the human resources in an organization by empowering individuals and taking leadership

positions in their areas of expertise (Pearce et al., 2008). The theory establishes that the efficiency of the employees is stimulated by the teamwork and cooperation existing within the organization that emerges due to the kind of relationship existing. Emotional support involves listening and empathizing with the team members (Omolo & Mose, 2019). The theory indicates that shared leadership includes practicing emotional support. According to the theory, emotional support involves listening and empathizing with the team members (Bathurst & Monin, 2010). The theory indicates top leadership listening to the problems of other employees increases the motivation and efficiency level (Pearce et al., 2008).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 shows the relationship between emotional support and organizational performance

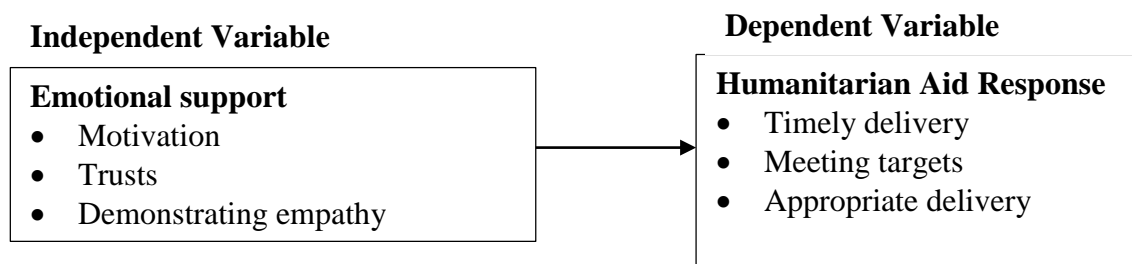


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Empirical Review

Emotional support involves listening and empathizing with the team members (Omolo & Mose, 2019). The leadership of the organization demonstrates emotional support through listening to the problems of other employees and this can increase their motivation and high delivery levels (Mkutano & Sang, 2018). Emotional support can include showing empathy (Islam et al., 2020). The trust exercise in an organization among the employees can be critical in maximizing the confidence and ensuring effective Humanitarian aid response (Omolo & Mose, 2019). The emotional support in the study includes motivation, trust and demonstrating empathy. Motivation refers to a complexity of forces that inspires a person at work to intensify his or her desires and willingness to use the potentialities to achieve organizational goals or objectives (Kahungya, 2016). Empathy is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within their frame of reference, that is, the capacity to place (Obliopas et al., 2020). Empathy is a key part of emotional intelligence that researchers believe is critical to being an effective leader (Obliopas et al., 2020; Tzouramani, 2017).

Moreover, Kamran (2018) examined the impact of a leader's empathy on employees' state of motivation to work. The data was obtained through standardized interviews of Managers of Lidl Sverige AB, and self-administered questionnaires filled by the employees of Lidl Sverige AB. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling approach. Well-Founded Theory was used to analyze the data collected. The results of the study indicated empathy is a fundamental competence of a leader for social awareness and social effectiveness in work life. A leader can assist employees in their needs and demands to accomplish personal and organizational goals as a result of demonstrating empathy. The study concluded that Leaders' empathy encourages

employees to discuss work problems, thus increase commitment and motivation. The study was focused on employees' state of motivation to work and thus presents a conceptual gap. Another study was conducted by Seno (2017) to look at the influence of the demonstration of empathy on humanitarian aid response. The study indicated that one of the key factors influencing humanitarian aid response is demonstrating empathy among the team. The significance of the demonstration of empathy is that it gives all the groups involved that they are valued. In addition, Rahman and Castelli (2018) depicted that empathy does not mean identifying with another, thus canceling their personality, but getting in their minds and souls to understand how they perceive reality.

Methodology

The study used positivism as its research philosophy and an explanatory research design to explain the causal relationship between shared leadership and organizational performance in NGOs. The study focused on 20 NGOs with global networks and targeted 5996 respondents from top, middle, and lower-level management. The study used stratified random sampling to select a sample of 375 respondents from 20 NGOs. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire and interview guides, and analyzed using content analysis, SPSS, descriptive, and inferential statistics. The summary of the target population is depicted in Table 1

Table 1. Target Population

NGO	Top level management (Managers)	Middle level management (Supervisors)	Lower-level management (support staff)	Total
Concern worldwide	13	29	261	303
The CARE International	6	27	198	231
International Committee of the Red Cross Rescue Committee	19	48	362	429
Amref	17	42	221	280
Lutheran World Federation				
Danish Refugee Council	14	39	188	241
International Rescue Committee	11	36	301	348
Unicef	26	53	418	497
World Vision	9	26	262	297
Mercy Corps	6	22	181	209
Aga Khan foundation	14	32	367	413
Save the Children	10	38	284	332
Islamic relief	12	25	166	203
UNHCR	22	43	397	462
Windle trust	8	29	122	159
Action Aid	12	21	166	199
WFP	18	49	352	419
RTI International	16	38	219	273
CARITAS	14	37	188	239

MSF	11	33	155	199
Norwegian Refugee Council	16	37	210	263
Total	274	704	5018	5996

Source: Organization's websites (2021); Public Benefits Organizations Authority (2021).

Results

Response Rate

The study had a response rate of 94.40%, which is considered adequate for the analysis. The response rate for managers, supervisors, and support staff was 85.71%, 90.70%, and 95.50%, respectively. The response rate was considered adequate for the analysis since, according to Ahmad and Halim (2017), response rates of above 60% of the sample size is sufficient for the analysis and making of inferences. Besides, Freiman, Chalmers, Smith and Kuebler (2019) note that at least a response rate of above 50% should be considered satisfactory for the analysis.

Table 2. Response Rate

Response	Targeted respondents	Response (Those responded)	Percentage
Total (managers, supervisors and support staff)	375	354	94.40%
Top level management (Managers)	21	18	85.71%
Middle level management (Supervisors)	43	39	90.70%
Lower-level management (support staff)	311	297	95.50%

Emotional Support and Humanitarian Aid Response

The presentation of the findings regarding the variable includes diagnostic tests, descriptive statistics, qualitative analysis and inferential statistics.

Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Support

The study found that most supervisors and support staff agreed that motivated employees are more hardworking and focused on achieving the organization's objectives, as the mean score was 4.02 with a standard deviation of 1.18. The study found that most respondents agreed that organization leadership has tolerance toward other team members, which motivates them to work toward meeting the goals with a mean score of 4.05 with a standard deviation of 1.10. Further, it was found that most respondents agreed that rotation of employees is one of the utilized strategies to enhance motivation; thus, high humanitarian aid response since the mean score was 3.95 with a standard deviation of 1.17. In addition, it was revealed that most respondents agreed

that the organization's leadership could build trust and manage conflict, thus high employee performance as the mean score was 4.04 with a standard deviation of 0.95. The study showed that most respondents agreed that the relationship between employees and the organization is good because the mean score was 4.07 with a standard deviation of 0.90. It was revealed that the majority of the respondents agreed that organizational trust influences the performance of the employees in the organization, with a mean score of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 1.13. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents agreed that organizational leadership has partnership and individual capacities and this increases the satisfaction of the employees, thus high-performance levels, as the mean score was 3.91 with a standard deviation of 1.25. The study established that most respondents agreed that the organization's management expresses empathy to show the team members they care for their needs hence high employee performance (mean score was 4.11 with a standard deviation of 0.92). Moreover, it was found that most of the respondents agreed that organizational leadership demonstrates empathy to everyone, thus high organizational performance (mean score was 4.02 with a standard deviation of 1.06). The study revealed that most respondents agreed that empathy provides the step to the basic responsibility of the leader to generate resonance in the organization, as the mean score was 3.91 with a standard deviation of 1.08. The study found that the average mean score of the survey statements/questions under emotional support was 3.98, with a standard deviation of 1.06. This signified that most respondents agreed with the survey statements/questions developed under emotional support.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Support

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Motivated employees are more hardworking and focused to achieve the objectives of the organizations.	6.20%	8.00%	6.80%	35.40%	43.50%	4.02	1.18
The organization leadership has tolerance toward other team members which motivates them hence working toward meeting the goals	1.50%	7.70%	8.00%	54.80%	28.00%	4.00	0.90
The organization management understands the motivation of the team which increase the Humanitarian aid response	2.10%	13.10%	6.20%	35.10%	43.50%	4.05	1.10
Rotation of employees is one of the utilized strategies to enhance motivation thus high Humanitarian aid response	1.50%	19.00%	4.80%	32.10%	42.60%	3.95	1.17
The organization leadership has the ability to build trust and manage conflict thus high	2.70%	6.00%	9.50%	48.50%	33.30%	4.04	0.95

employee performance								
The relationship between employees and the organization is good	1.50%	6.20%	8.90%	50.00%	33.30%	4.07	0.90	
Organizational trust influences the performance of the employees in the organization	6.00%	10.40%	6.80%	48.20%	28.60%	3.83	1.13	
The organization leadership has partnership and individual capacities and this increases the satisfaction of the employees thus high-performance levels	3.00%	19.90%	5.70%	26.20%	45.20%	3.91	1.25	
The management of the organization expresses empathy to show the team members they care for their needs hence high employee performance	0.90%	8.00%	8.00%	44.90%	38.10%	4.11	0.92	
The empathy of leaders is a key part of emotional intelligence for leaders in the organization that stimulate Humanitarian aid response	2.10%	15.80%	4.50%	46.40%	31.20%	3.89	1.08	
The organization leadership demonstrates empathy to everyone thus high organizational performance	2.40%	10.40%	9.20%	38.70%	39.30%	4.02	1.06	
Empathy provides the step to the basic responsibility of the leader to generate resonance in the organization	5.40%	9.50%	2.40%	54.50%	28.30%	3.91	1.08	
Average						3.98	1.06	

Inferential Statistics

The inferential statistics includes correlation and regression analysis

Correlation Analysis for Emotional Support

The correlation analysis shows the movement/ association of the variables. The study results of the correlation analysis in Table 4 indicate that a positive and significant association exists between emotional support and humanitarian aid response ($r=.581$, $p=.000$). Thus, an increase in emotional support will also increase the humanitarian aid response and vice versa.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis of Emotional support and Humanitarian aid response

		Humanitarian aid response	Emotional support
Humanitarian aid response	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Emotional support	Pearson Correlation	.581*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

Regression Analysis for Emotional Support

The regression analysis includes the presentation of model fitness, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression coefficients. The results presented in Table 5 established that emotional support is satisfactory in influencing the humanitarian aid response in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid areas. The coefficient of determination, also known as the R square, was 0.338 (33.8%). This implied that emotional support could explain 33.8% of the variations in the humanitarian aid response in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas in Kenya.

Table 5. Model Fitness of Emotional Support and Humanitarian Aid Response

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.581a	0.338	0.336	0.25072

a Predictor: (Constant), Emotional support

The results presented in Table 6 shows a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05; thus, emotional support is significant in determining the humanitarian aid response in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas in Kenya. This implies that emotional support is important in determining the humanitarian aid response in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas in Kenya.

Table 6. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Emotional Support and Humanitarian aid response

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.699	1	10.699	170.201	.000b
	Residual	20.996	334	0.063		
	Total	31.695	335			

a Dependent Variable: Humanitarian aid response

b Predictors: (Constant), Emotional support

Table 7 shows that emotional support is positively and significantly related to humanitarian aid response in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid areas ($\beta = 0.520$, $p = 0.000$). The results indicate that a unitary increase in emotional support will increase the humanitarian aid response in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid areas by 0.520 units when other factors are held constant. The P value is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. The model is;

$$Y = 1.989 + 0.520X$$

Where: -

Y= Humanitarian aid response

X= Emotional support

Table 7. Regression coefficients of Emotional Support and Humanitarian Aid Response

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.989	0.168		11.867	0.000
	Emotional support	0.520	0.040	0.581	13.046	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Humanitarian aid response

Diagnostic Tests for Emotional Support

The diagnostic tests conducted to ensure the requirements for regression are met included normality tests, linearity test, multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity.

Normality Tests for Emotional Support

The study employed the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test to examine whether the data is normal. The results from Table 8 show that the data was normally distributed as the respective p values for the variable was greater than 0.05. Therefore, we can conclude that the data is normally distributed.

Table 8. Normality Test for Emotional Support

Kolmogorov–Smirnov test.			
Variables	Statistic	df	Sig.
Emotional support	0.100	336	0.090

Linearity Test for Emotional Support

Figure 3 shows that emotional support depicted a straight-line relationship with the humanitarian aid response. In addition, the R-squared showed the percentage of the dependent variable variation that a linear model explains.

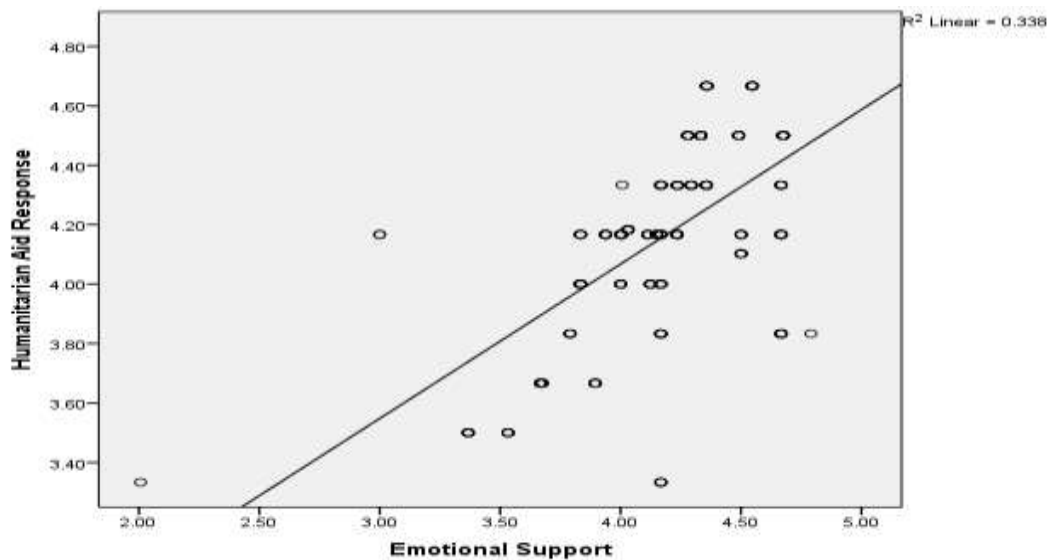


Figure 3. Scatter Plot of Emotional Support against Humanitarian Aid Response

Multicollinearity for Emotional Support

The multicollinearity test was done using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The results in Table 9 indicated the absence of multicollinearity since the VIF value was less than 10.

Table 9. Multicollinearity Test for Emotional Support

Variables	VIF
Emotional support	1.437

Heteroscedasticity for Emotional Support

The study employed the Breusch-Pagan test to examine whether Heteroscedasticity exists. Results in Table 10 show that the p-value is greater than 0.05. Then the null hypothesis is not rejected at a critical p-value of 0.05 since the reported value is $0.065 > 0.05$. The study concludes that the data did not suffer from heteroscedasticity.

Table 10. Heteroscedasticity Test for Emotional Support

Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test for heteroscedasticity		
Ho: Constant variance		
Variable: fitted values of Humanitarian Aid Response		
chi2(1)	=	1.57
Prob > chi2	=	0.065

Discussion of Findings

The descriptive statistics showed that the average mean score of the survey statements/questions under emotional support was 3.98, with a standard deviation of 1.06. This signified that most respondents agreed with the survey statements/questions developed under emotional support. The correlation results showed a positive and significant association between emotional support and humanitarian aid response. The study indicated that emotional support could explain 33.8% of the variations in the humanitarian aid response in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas in Kenya. The study showed that emotional support is positively and significantly related to humanitarian aid response in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid areas ($\beta=0.520$, $p=0.000$). Emotional support plays a pivotal role in the effectiveness of humanitarian aid response, serving as a key variable that can influence outcomes. According to the study, emotional support, which was conceptualized through factors like motivation, trust, and empathy, showed a strong and positive correlation with how well aid was delivered in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid areas. Specifically, emotional support was found to explain 33.8% of the variations in aid response, suggesting that it's a significant driver of success. Whether among team members, managers, or even the beneficiaries, the presence of emotional support can encourage more effective communication, foster collaboration, and ultimately lead to more efficient and effective aid delivery. Therefore, incorporating emotional support mechanisms into humanitarian efforts could serve as a critical strategy for improving aid effectiveness.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that a unitary increase in emotional support will increase the humanitarian aid response in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas in Kenya by 0.520 units when other factors are held constant. The null hypothesis was rejected since the value of p was less than 0.05. Therefore, emotional support significantly influences humanitarian aid response in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas in Kenya. Emotional support encourages an individual to work hard at reaching goals, increasing humanitarian aid responses. Emotional support involves listening and empathizing with the team members, which positively impacts the delivery of humanitarian aid. Motivation drives individuals to work hard to achieve goals, thus increasing humanitarian aid response. Employees who trust leaders are less likely to quit, increasing humanitarian aid responses. Emotional support is an essential leadership ingredient that binds any relationship into a practical and working partnership.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the management of the NGOs involved in the humanitarian aid response should concentrate more on emotional support. The study indicated a unitary increase in emotional support increases the humanitarian aid response in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas in Kenya by 0.520 units when other factors are held constant. The management of the NGOs should consider increasing the monetary benefits package they give to the team members. In addition, the management teams in organizations should always carry out a thorough study of the various motivational tools that can motivate employees. The management should listen to the view of the team members. The study recommends another study be conducted to examine other factors other than emotional support that could influence the humanitarian aid response in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas in Kenya. Likewise, the study was only conducted in NGOs; thus, another study can be conducted in other public and private sectors and compare the results.

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