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PROJECT DISTRESS MANAGEMENT PRACTICE & EFFECTIVENES IN ETHIOPIA ORTHODOX TEWAHIDO CHURCH DEVELOPMENT INTER-CHURCH AID COMMISSION (EOC - DICAC)

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PROJECT DISTRESS MANAGEMENT PRACTICE & EFFECTIVENESS IN EOC-DICAC

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BY

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APPROVAL OF BOARD OF EXAMINERS

As a member of the Board of Examiners of the Master Thesis open defense examination, we testify that we have read and evaluated the thesis prepared by Taddila Yeheuela under the title of "Project Distress Management Practice and Effectiveness in EOC DICAC projects". We recommended that this thesis be accepted as fulfilling the thesis requirement for Master of Arts in Project Management.

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RESEARCH VALIDATION

I confirm that the research titled "Project Stress Management Practice and Effectiveness" has been thoroughly prepared by Taddila Yehuela. This research is entirely the work of the author. It does not include any material written by another individual in the past, and is solely the author's original work. Furthermore, this research paper has not been submitted to any educational institution

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I. ACRONYMS

EOC-DICAC: - Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission

PMI: - Project Management Institute

UNOPS: - United Nations Office for Project Services

ICRC: - International Committee of the Red Cross

UN OCHA: - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UNDP: - United Nations Development Program

NEMA: - National Emergency Management Agency

EAPs: - Employee Assistance Programs

FGDs: - Focus Group Discussions

ABSTRACT

This study tried to investigate the factors that contribute for project distressed and the prevention measure taken to avoid the project from failing. The study aimed at examining identify key internal and external factors influencing project distress management effectiveness, evaluate the positive and negative impacts of project distress management practices with regard to project timelines, budgets, quality, and overall success, assess the effectiveness of organizational policies and procedures related to project distress management and evaluate the availability and adequacy of organizational resources and support for project teams to manage distress. The study adopted a descriptive research method. The descriptive research design helped in observing the relationship between project distress management and factors failed in requirements gathering and documentation, proper planning, Project risk management, stakeholder involvement, scope change management. The study utilized both primary and secondary data to obtain firsthand information from Ethiopia Orthodox church inter Aid commission. The sampling technique used purposive sampling technique which endeavors to get an example of components in light of the judgment of the researcher. The data from the interviews were analyzed using a qualitative approach. This study proved EOC-DICAC's project distress management is significantly hampered by a reactive approach, inadequate systems, and external pressures, leading to ineffective interventions and hindering project success.

Keywords: - Project, project Management, Proactive Strategies, Project distress management,

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The research provided a comprehensive overview of its core components. It begins by highlighting the prevalence and impact of ineffective project distress management practices, particularly within Ethiopian projects and humanitarian organizations. A clear statement of the problem follows, articulating the challenges and complexities associated with managing project distress, specifically within the context of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC).

And the research outlines goal and specific objectives which was provided a guide and a clear direction. The significance of the study is emphasized, explaining its potential contributions to both EOC-DICAC and the broader field of project distress management in humanitarian and development contexts. Finally, provides an overview of the study's organization, providing a roadmap for the subsequent chapters. Distress management and practices by examining the challenges encountered and the strategies employed.

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Project distress isn't always a sudden, catastrophic event. It often develops gradually, starting with seemingly minor deviations that, if left unaddressed, snowball into major problems. These early warning signs can be subtle and easily overlooked if proper monitoring mechanisms are not in place. Understanding the underlying causes of project distress is crucial for developing effective management strategies.

Ineffective project distress management practices pose a significant challenge in Ethiopian projects, leading to time delays, cost overruns, and a decline in overall project performance. Even with advancements in project management, many Ethiopian organizations still face difficulties in achieving project success.

Research by PMI (2017) indicates that inadequate planning and resource allocation are among the most common causes of project delays. When organizations fail to invest sufficient time and effort into the initial planning stages, they often encounter unforeseen challenges that can significantly impact project timelines. PMI (2017) has highly emphasized cost overrun, the

phenomenon of exceeding the initial budget for a project or initiative, as a pervasive issue that can severely impact the effectiveness of distress management practices. When costs escalate beyond expectations, it can lead to negative consequences.

Likewise, project distress, characterized by escalating costs, missed deadlines, or quality issues, can significantly jeopardize a project's success. Effective management of such distress is crucial to mitigate risks and ensure project outcomes align with expectations (Kerzner, H., 2017). Customer satisfaction is a paramount aspect of project success, especially during times of distress. Effective project distress management practices that prioritize customer needs can significantly mitigate negative impacts and maintain positive relationships (Harvard Business Review, 2023).

Regarding distress management practices, a researcher from PMI (2023) emphasized that evaluating the effectiveness of implemented risk mitigation strategies is essential to ensure they are achieving their intended goals. A rapid response can significantly mitigate the negative impacts of project issues and improve overall project outcomes (McKinsey, 2022). Change management is a critical component of effective project distress management. It involves implementing strategies to address the challenges and disruptions caused by project issues while minimizing negative impacts (Harvard Business Review, 2023).

Project distress management in the Ethiopian context poses significant challenges for humanitarian and development organizations, including the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Relief Agency (EOC-DICAC). According to the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) humanitarian report (2023), limited access, security concerns, and resource constraints hinder their ability to effectively address the complex needs of displaced populations and those affected by conflict. Despite these obstacles, providing emergency aid, coordinating relief efforts, and addressing the root causes of conflict remain crucial for mitigating suffering.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC) established in 1972 by legal notice No. 415 to address the developmental and humanitarian problems in the country. EOC-DICAC has a mission of assisting the vulnerable communities in Ethiopia to attain self-reliance by tackling the root causes of poverty, migration, climate change, public health illiteracy problems by promoting sustainable development programs.

EOC-DICAC has passed through five strategic plan periods and gained accumulated experience in exercising strategic planning and management and since 2024 is executing the six five years strategic plan. The current five year strategic plan identified and prioritized strategic choices and objectives, the effective implementation of which will plan to improve and scale up EOC-DICAC program intervention. According to the EOC-DICAC annual performance report (2023), EOC-DICAC, like many other organizations, implements over 40 projects in all regions of the country, including conflict areas. The key focus includes the commission's capacity to address food insecurity, displacement, and social grievances, as well as its ability to coordinate with other stakeholders and ensure the sustainability of its interventions.

However, the complex challenges of internal conflict, drought, and a shortage of funds have been significant stressors for EOC-DICAC. Accordingly, improving the performance of its projects and employing project distress management strategies is crucial. Therefore, this research aims to assess the project distress prevention and intervention strategies of the EOC-DICAC project, evaluate the effectiveness of EOC-DICAC's project distress management and practices by examining the challenges encountered and the strategies employed.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Project distress management is a proactive approach to identifying and addressing potential issues that threaten project success before they escalate. It involves implementing strategies to mitigate risks, resolve conflicts, and maintain project momentum, crucial for timely and efficient project completion, especially in complex environments (PMI, 2023). Globally, projects face numerous challenges, including economic instability, geopolitical tensions, technological disruptions, and natural disasters, all of which can lead to delays, cost overruns, and failure. Effective project distress management is therefore essential to navigate these complexities (PMI, 2023).

Challenges to project success vary regionally. In developing regions, these challenges are exacerbated by infrastructure deficiencies, limited resources, and political instability (UNDP, 2023). Ethiopia, like many developing countries, faces unique challenges, including infrastructure limitations, economic constraints, political instability, and cost overruns, demanding a deep understanding of the local context and tailored strategies for effective project

distress management. This involves building relationships with local stakeholders, developing contingency plans, and leveraging innovative solutions (World Bank, 2023).

A significant contributing factor to project distress in Ethiopia is the lack of expertise in project management, risk assessment, and conflict resolution within many organizations, coupled with potential issues of poor governance and internal controls (UNOPS, 2023). The country's frequent political instability and conflicts, exemplified by events like the Tigray conflict, create a volatile environment, leading to project disruptions, delays, budget overruns, and even abandonment (ICRC, 2023; UN OCHA, 2023). These conflicts also highlight the challenges of access, safety, and addressing the needs of affected populations. Furthermore, many Ethiopian organizations lack the capacity, resources, and expertise for effective project management, leading to delayed responses and ineffective interventions (UNDP, 2023).

Research underscores the significant negative impact of project delays and cost overruns on financial health (Ethiopian Economic Association, 2023). Mesfin's (2019) assessment of project distress prevention strategies at the Addis Ababa City Road Authority (AACRA) revealed that nearly all road projects experienced delays, cost overruns, and subpar quality due to factors like right-of-way obstructions, stakeholder disengagement, lack of experienced professionals, and ineffective project management. Insufficient upfront planning and resource allocation further contribute to unforeseen challenges and delays (Kerzner, 2023).

Specifically within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church - Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC), a gap exists in research focusing on project distress prevention in humanitarian and development projects. EOC-DICAC may face constraints in funding, personnel, and infrastructure, hindering the implementation of effective strategies. The volatile political and security situation in Ethiopia presents additional challenges. The organization may also lack the necessary expertise and capacity in project management, risk assessment, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, external factors like natural disasters, economic crises, or global events can significantly impact project implementation and increase the risk of distress.
Therefore, this paper assesses project distress management practices and their effectiveness in EOC-DICAC projects, examining the impact of these strategies on project outcomes and

stakeholder satisfaction. It aims to provide recommendations for improving the implementation of these strategies within EOC-DICAC, addressing the identified gaps and challenges.

1.3. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

To assess project distress management practice and effectiveness of EOC-DICAC (Ethiopia Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission)

1.4. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To identify key internal and external factors (economic pressures, donor shifts, inflation, and political instability) influencing project distress management effectiveness
- To evaluate the positive and negative impacts of project distress management practices with regard to project timelines, budgets, quality, and overall success.
- To Assess the implementation of organizational policies and procedures related to project distress management
- To evaluate the availability and adequacy of organizational resources and support for project teams to manage distress.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ✓ How do internal and external factors (economic pressures, donor shifts, inflation, political instability, organizational structure, risk management practices) influence the effectiveness of project distress management
- ✓ What are the positive and negative impacts of current project distress management practices on project timelines, budgets, quality, and overall success?
- ✓ To what extent are organizational policies and procedures related to project distress management being effectively implemented across projects?
- ✓ How adequate and accessible are organizational resources and support for project teams in managing project distress?
- ✓ How effective is the organization's current approach to project distress management improvement?

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study directly identifies the needs of EOC-DICAC, providing tailored insights into their current distress management practices, their strengths, and areas for improvement. This targeted approach maximizes the study's practical value for the organization. A key element of the study is to understand the root causes of project distress. By identifying these underlying causes, EOC-DICAC can develop targeted strategies for prevention and mitigation, rather than simply reacting to symptoms.

The research contributes to the broader understanding of project distress management practices, enriching the existing literature with context-specific findings from the humanitarian and development sector in EOC- DICAC. This allows for comparative analysis and learning across different contexts.

Understanding the causes of distress allows for proactive resource allocation, preventing wasteful spending and ensuring resources are directed where they are most needed. This research will provide valuable guidance and direction, leading to projects being completed on time, within budget, and achieving their intended objectives, thereby maximizing the impact of their work.

By identifying vulnerabilities, EOC-DICAC can implement measures to mitigate risks and build greater resilience into their projects, making them less susceptible to disruption. In addition the study's findings will strengthen EOC-DICAC's project management capabilities, providing them with the knowledge and tools to better manage project challenges.

The research provides evidence-based insights that EOC-DICAC can use to make informed decisions about project management practices and resource allocation. Thus demonstrating strong project management practices, including effective distress management, can increase donor confidence and attract future funding.

There is no one dearth of studies focusing on project distress management within humanitarian and development projects in Ethiopia, particularly for organizations like EOC-DICAC. Other organizations can learn from EOC-DICAC's experiences and adapt successful distress management strategies to their own contexts. This research aims to bridge this gap by providing

valuable insights into the practices and effectiveness of project distress management. And by sharing knowledge and best practices, the research contributes to a general improvement in project management effectiveness across the humanitarian and development sector in Ethiopia.

Generally, this research has the potential to make a significant contribution to the field of project distress management, particularly in the context of humanitarian and development projects in Ethiopia. It also provide valuable insights and recommendations can help EOC-DICAC improve its practices, enhance project outcomes, and ultimately make a greater positive impact on the lives of vulnerable people.

1.7. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research investigates project distress management within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC), focusing on the strategies, effectiveness, and influencing factors of their current practices. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with quantitative data gathered through structured questionnaires. The research explores how EOC-DICAC identifies, assesses, and mitigates project distress, including their use of risk assessment, contingency planning, conflict resolution, and change management. It evaluates the effectiveness of these practices in achieving desired project outcomes, considering factors such as project timelines, budgets, quality, and stakeholder satisfaction. Furthermore, the study identifies key factors influencing the effectiveness of EOC-DICAC's distress management, examining the roles of organizational culture, leadership, resource availability, and external pressures. The research also analyzes the impact of distress management practices on project success, organizational performance, and, crucially, beneficiary well-being.

1.8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study primarily focused on EOC-DICAC and may not account for the broader context of project distress management in other similar organizations or industries. This limits the applicability of the findings to other settings. The study is cross-sectional and does not track

changes over time. As a result, it does not capture the long-term impact of any distress management interventions or policies that may be implemented in the future.

External Factors: While the study identified external challenges such as financial and political instability, it did not account for other external factors that could affect project distress management, such as market dynamics or technological changes. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the current state of project distress management at EOC-DICAC and offers actionable recommendations to improve project outcomes. Further research is needed to explore the long-term effectiveness of these recommendations and to validate the findings in a broader context.

1.9. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Distress**: Distress management is the process of addressing and mitigating an organization's crisis or high anxiety, enabling it to meet its obligations and adapt to change effectively. Kerzner, H. (2017).
- **Project Distress:** A situation where a project is significantly deviating from its original plan, experiencing performance issues that, if left unaddressed, will likely fail to achieve its goals within the specified scope, timeline, and budget Verzuh, E. (2015).
- **Project Management**: The planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of project activities to achieve specific goals within a defined scope, time, and budget Kerzner, H. (2017)
- **Humanitarian and Development** Projects: Initiatives aimed at addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, such as those affected by conflict, disasters, or poverty.
- **Organizational Factors**: Factors related to the structure, culture, and resources of an organization that can influence project distress, such as leadership style, communication channels, and available funding (Kerzner, 2017).
- **Individual Factors:** Factors related to the personal characteristics and experiences of project personnel that can contribute to distress, such as personality traits, coping mechanisms, and work-life balance.
- **Project Factors**: Factors related to the specific characteristics of a project that can influence distress, such as project complexity, uncertainty, and time pressure.

- **Distress Management Strategies**: Approaches and techniques used to mitigate the negative impacts of distress on project personnel and improve their well-being and productivity Crawford, L., & Cooke-Davies, T. (2010)
- **Resilience**: The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.
- **Organizational Support**: The extent to which an organization provides resources, encouragement, and assistance to its employees.

1.10. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction to project distress management, outlining the background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance, and scope of the study. Chapter two presents a comprehensive review of the existing literature, including definitions, theoretical and empirical studies, and a conceptual framework for project distress management. Chapter three details the research methodology, encompassing the research approach, data collection, and analysis methods. Chapter four will present the study's findings and a discussion of their implications in light of previous research and relevant theories. The final chapter will summarize the key findings, conclude, and provide recommendations for addressing project distress. The research paper will be concluded with a reference list and appendices containing survey questionnaires and other supplementary materials.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. REVIEW THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Distress management practice refers to the specific actions, processes, and techniques employed by organizations and project teams to address and mitigate project distress. It encompasses a range of activities, from proactive risk assessment and contingency planning to reactive interventions aimed at recovering troubled projects. Effective distress management practice requires a systematic approach, integrating various project management tools and methodologies with organizational support and leadership commitment. It also involves a deep understanding of the specific context of the project and the ability to adapt strategies as needed (Kerzner, 2017; PMI, 2021.

The theoretical literature on distress management practice focuses on various models, theories, and empirical research that explore how individuals, teams, and organizations address and mitigate stress in projects. These perspectives help to understand the role of perceptions, personal coping strategies, organizational support, and resources in managing distress effectively Hoy, M. G., & Tarter, R. E. (2013).

2.1.1 Appraisal Theory of Stress

According to (Matthews & Sanders, 2017) previous research emphasize Appraisal theory posits that an individual's interpretation of stressors significantly influences how they manage distress. In the context of project distress, this theory suggests that individuals who perceive project demands as challenges that can be achieved are more likely to engage in effective stress management strategies. Conversely, those who perceive demands as overwhelming or unmanageable are more likely to experience higher distress levels and struggle to cope. This concept emphasizes the importance of cognitive appraisal in shaping coping responses and distress management strategies.

2.1.2. Social Cognitive Theory

According to (Schwarzer 2010), Social Cognitive Theory highlights the central role of self-efficacy in coping with distress. individuals' beliefs about their ability to cope with challenges (self-efficacy), their expectations for future outcomes, and the coping strategies they adopt all influence their resilience and stress management. Individuals who lack confidence in their coping abilities may experience negative outcomes, such as reduced well-being and diminished productivity. In the context of project distress, this theory suggests that interventions to enhance self-efficacy can be vital in improving distress management, as individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to use adaptive coping strategies to deal with challenges.

2.1.3. Demands-Resources Model

Schaufeli & Bakker, (2004**)** highlighting that employee well-being is influenced by the balance between these factors. In stressful projects, high demands coupled with insufficient resources may lead to distress, whereas high resources (e.g., support, autonomy, job control) can buffer the negative effects of high demands. The interventions aimed at reducing excessive demands or increasing resources can be effective in managing project-related distress. The model suggests that a supportive work environment, characterized by adequate resources, can help individuals cope more effectively with stress.

2.1.4. Organizational Support Theory

Schaufeli & Bakker, (2004) Organizational Support Theory posits that employees are more likely to be motivated, committed, and productive when they perceive that their organization values them and supports their well-being. In the context of distress management, organizations that demonstrate concern for their employees' mental and emotional well-being can mitigate distress and enhance project performance. Key components of this theory in managing distress include perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee performance. Organizations that invest in reducing stress and providing adequate resources to employees can help improve overall project outcomes.

2.1.5. Resilience Theory and Coping Mechanisms

Resilience theory focuses on the ability of individuals to adapt and recover from distressing situations. Coping mechanisms such as mindfulness, relaxation techniques, and problem-solving skills are essential tools for building resilience. Research indicates that individuals who engage in stress management techniques like mindfulness or who possess strong problem-solving abilities are more likely to effectively manage distress and maintain performance during high-stress projects (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002). Moreover, research by NEMA (2023) emphasizes the importance of building resilience through training and interventions in high-pressure situations, such as emergency response or humanitarian projects.

2.1.6. Project Management Practices and Stress Reduction

Empirical evidence has demonstrated that effective project management practices can significantly reduce distress in teams. The presence of clear goals, well-defined roles, and transparent expectations reduces uncertainty and anxiety among team members. When project objectives are clearly communicated, employees are less likely to experience stress due to confusion or ambiguity (Demerouti & Bakker, 2005). Additionally, sound project management practices, such as regular monitoring, realistic deadlines, and appropriate risk management strategies, contribute to the reduction of stress and the enhancement of project outcomes.

2.1.7. Workplace Interventions for Distress Management

Workplace interventions such as workload management, team building, and performance management have been shown to reduce distress among employees. Effective workload management, including task prioritization and time management training, helps individuals cope better with high demands by managing time effectively and reducing feelings of overload (Demerouti & Bakker, 2004). Team-building activities improve communication, cohesion, and trust among team members, which can alleviate stress. Moreover, performance management interventions such as regular feedback and recognition can boost morale and reduce stress by creating a sense of accomplishment and reducing feelings of ineffectiveness (Miner et al., 2005).

2.1.8. Individual and Organizational Factors in Distress Management

Individual resilience, coping skills, and personal perceptions of stress are critical components in managing project distress. As mentioned earlier, factors such as self-efficacy, personal coping strategies, and emotional regulation influence how individuals react to stress. On the organizational level, supportive leadership, access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), and flexible work arrangements (e.g., remote work, flexible hours) play a significant role in managing distress (Massey & Robinson, 2015). Organizational culture, including communication practices and emotional support from leadership, has been shown to reduce the negative effects of stress on employees (Judge et al., 2002).

Generally the theoretical literature highlights that distress management in projects is a multifaceted process that involves individual, team, and organizational factors. Theories such as Appraisal Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and the Demands-Resources Model provide valuable insights into the cognitive and resource-based factors that influence distress management. Additionally, organizational support and workplace interventions can significantly reduce stress and improve overall well-being and performance. Understanding and applying these theoretical perspectives can help organizations and project managers develop more effective strategies for managing distress in projects.

2.2. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

This empirical research will provide valuable insights into the factors that influence how distress management is effective in humanitarian and development projects.

Organizational Culture and Support Systems:. Supportive leadership is crucial for reducing employee stress. Leaders who create a positive work environment, encourage open communication, and offer emotional support can significantly decrease stress levels among team members. Judge, T. A., Bono, J. E., Ilies, R., & Gerhardt, M. W. (2002). Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are helpful in assisting employees to manage stress and improve their overall well-being. Hoy, M. G., & Tarter, R. E. (2013). Studies have shown that flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or flexible hours, can decrease stress and improve employee satisfaction Massey, P., & Robinson, S. L. (2015). B., Fraccaroli, F., & Stieger, S.(2008).

Individual Resilience and Coping Mechanisms: - Stress Management Techniques: Mindfulness and relaxation techniques have emerged as valuable tools for managing distress and promoting well-being Segal, Z. V., Williams, J. M. G., & Teasdale, J. D. (2002). Problem-Solving and

Decision-Making Skills: These skills are essential for personnel to effectively manage challenges and uncertainties in emergency response national emergency management agency NEMA, (2023).

Project Management Practices: - have provided strong support for the effectiveness of project management practices in enhancing distress management. For example, research has demonstrated that clear project goals and expectations are associated with lower levels of stress and improved team performance Demerouti, E., & Bakker, A. B. (2005).

Organizational Interventions:- Workload Management: Effective workload management strategies, such as task prioritization and time management training, can lead to improved employee well-being and reduced absenteeism. Demerouti, E., & Bakker, A. B. (2004) Team Building: Team-building interventions can indirectly reduce distress by enhancing team cohesion and communication Miner, Cohen, S. A., & Bradford, D. L. (2005). Performance Management: Regular performance reviews and feedback can help employees identify areas for improvement, address concerns, and receive recognition for their accomplishments Ivancevich, J. M., & Donnelly, J. H. (2014).

A key research gap in distress management in humanitarian and development projects lies in the limited understanding of how existing organizational support systems, coping mechanisms, and project management practices can be effectively adapted to these high-pressure, crisis-driven environments. While supportive leadership, flexible work arrangements, and stress management interventions such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) have been shown to reduce stress in traditional settings, their application in humanitarian projects, where resources are limited and stress levels are elevated, remains underexplored. Additionally, while resilience and coping strategies like mindfulness are beneficial in reducing stress, their effectiveness in the context of emergency response and development projects requires further investigation. There is also a lack of research on how to integrate project management practices with distress management frameworks to optimize both employee well-being and project outcomes in these unique and challenging environments.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This conceptual framework explores the complex factors influencing the effectiveness of distress management practices. It posits that successful distress management is not a singular effort but rather a result of interplay between various internal and external factors, channeled through key

mechanisms. The central focus of this framework is the relationship between these influencing factors and the ultimate effectiveness of distress management practices.

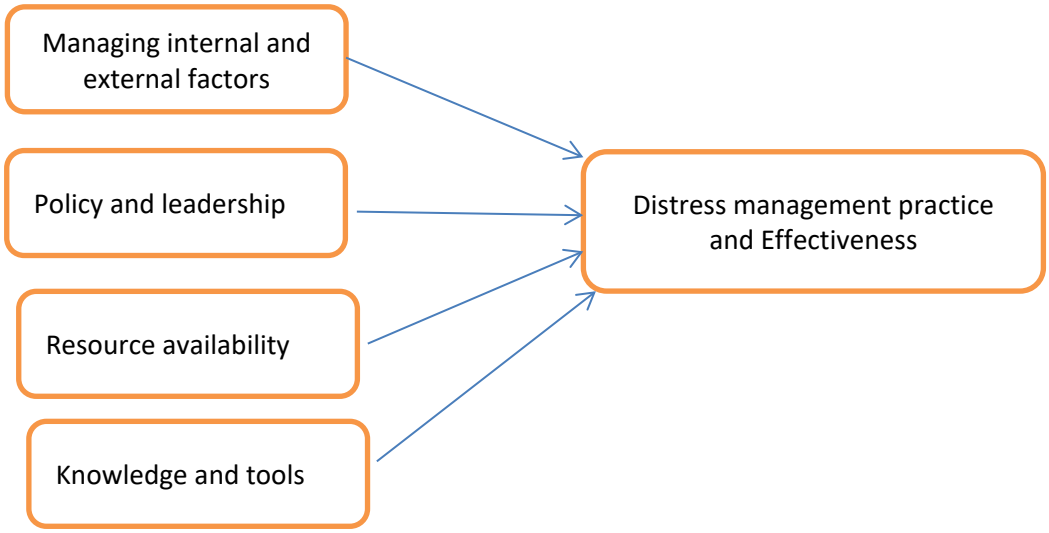
Several independent variables contribute to the effectiveness of these practices. Firstly, policy and leadership play a crucial role. Supportive policies that clearly outline guidelines and protocols, coupled with strong leadership commitment, create a culture that prioritizes well-being and fosters a proactive approach to distress management. Secondly, resource availability is essential. This encompasses adequate financial resources, sufficient trained personnel, and access to necessary tools and technologies to support distress management initiatives. Without these resources, even the best-intentioned programs may struggle to achieve their goals. Thirdly, the level of knowledge and tools available significantly impacts effectiveness. A thorough understanding of distress management principles, coupled with access to appropriate tools and techniques for identifying, assessing, and addressing distress, is crucial. This includes training programs, educational materials, and validated assessment instruments. Finally, the organization's ability to manage both internal and external factors is paramount. This overarching category encompasses the capacity to mitigate factors within the organization's operations, such as workload and workplace culture, as well as external pressures like societal expectations and economic conditions that can contribute to or exacerbate distress.

These independent variables influence distress management effectiveness through intervening mechanisms. Specifically, they directly impact the implementation and quality of distress management practices. For example, strong leadership may lead to better-funded programs (resource availability), which in turn allows for more comprehensive training (knowledge and tools). Similarly, effective management of internal factors like workload can directly reduce distress levels. These mechanisms act as the pathways through which the independent variables exert their influence on the ultimate outcome.

The dependent variable, and the ultimate measure of success, is distress management practice and effectiveness. This refers to the success of implemented practices in reducing distress, improving overall well-being, and achieving desired outcomes. These outcomes can include reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, improved mental health, and a more positive work environment. Measuring effectiveness requires careful consideration of appropriate metrics and a comprehensive evaluation strategy.

In essence, this framework highlights the interconnectedness of various factors in achieving effective distress management. It emphasizes that it is not enough to simply implement programs; organizations must also cultivate a supportive environment, provide adequate resources, ensure access to knowledge and tools, and actively manage both internal and external pressures to truly make a difference in the well-being of their members.

Conceptual frame work



CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANIZATION

The headquarters serves as the central hub for EOTC-DICAC's operations, overseeing project planning, implementation, and monitoring across various regions. Critical decisions regarding project management, resource allocation, and overall organizational strategy are decided at the headquarters level.

Conducting the study at the headquarters provided direct access to EOTC-DICAC staff involved in project management, allowing for in-depth interviews and data collection. However, while the headquarters was the primary focus, the study was also extend to selected project sites by using electronic data tools collected in organizational locations throughout Ethiopia. This was a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and experiences faced by EOTC-DICAC projects and staff working in different contexts. By combining data from the headquarters and project sites, the study was gained a broader perspective on project distress, organizational factors, and the effectiveness of distress management strategies across EOTC-DICAC's operations.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research employed a convergent parallel mixed methods design. This design was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of project distress management within EOC-DICAC by concurrently collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data streams, giving equal weight to each. The quantitative data, gathered through surveys and potentially existing project data, provided numerical insights into the frequency, severity, and impact of project distress, as well as the effectiveness of current management strategies. The qualitative data, collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with project personnel, explored the lived experiences, perspectives, and nuanced understandings of project distress and its management. Both datasets were analyzed independently and then the findings were converged during the interpretation phase to create a more holistic and insightful understanding of the phenomenon. This convergence allowed for a richer interpretation of the findings, leveraging the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and addressing the research

questions from multiple angles. This design aligns with the recommendations of Bryman & Bell (2015) for studying complex phenomena, as it allows for a more nuanced and completes understanding of the research topic, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

3.3. STUDY POPULATION

According to Barrett, M., & Morse, J. (2014), a sample size of 30-50 participants is often sufficient for achieving saturation in qualitative research. Based on this guideline, the population for this study was consisted of 50 project personnel from 830 staff , including project managers, team members, field staff, and stakeholders. These individuals were participated in focus group discussions (FGDs) and survey questionnaires.

3.4. SAMPLING.

A purposive sampling technique, as recommended by Creswell (2014) for distress management studies, was employed to select project personnel directly involved in project management and with experience in project distress. This focus on knowledgeable individuals allowed the research to gather in-depth insights from those most familiar with the topic, specifically staff selected based on their knowledge, skills, years of experience, and relevant position related to project distress, management practices, and effectiveness.

The estimated sample size was determined based on the principle of data saturation. It was anticipated that sufficient rich, detailed information about project distress management practices would be gathered by the 12th to 15th interview. The specific number of interviews was adjusted slightly depending on when saturation was actually reached during data collection. The researcher iteratively analyzed the data collected after each round of interviews (e.g., after every 2-3 interviews) to determine when saturation had been achieved.

50% head office stratification was maintained within this sample size, with approximately 6-8 participants from the head office and 6-8 participants from other locations. This estimated sample size aimed to balance gathering in-depth insights from knowledgeable individuals with effectively managing the data collection and analysis process

3.5. SAMPLING METHODS

According to Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., and Alkassim, R. S. (2016), purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was employed to select participants with specific expertise and

experience related to the research objectives. In this regard, purposive sampling was used to select participants from a list of potential respondents, including project managers, department heads, and officers at EOC-DICAC. This non-probability sampling method involves intentionally selecting participants based on their specific characteristics or attributes relevant to the research objectives. In this study, the selection criteria focused on individuals with direct involvement in project distress management, experience with diverse project types and complexities, knowledge of organizational culture and leadership styles, and the ability to provide in-depth insights into the challenges and strategies related to project distress. This approach was aimed at ensuring a sample with diverse perspectives and experiences, facilitating a rich and nuanced understanding of project distress within the organization

3.6. DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured interviews: - In-depth interviews was conducted with key project personnel to gather detailed information about their experiences with project distress, the factors contributing to distress, and the effectiveness of existing management strategies.

50 project personnel, including project managers, team members, field staff, and stakeholders. These individuals were participated in focus group discussions (FGDs) and survey questionnaires.

Questionnaires': - A structured questionnaire administered to 50 EOC-DICAC staff to collect quantitative data on the prevalence of distress, its impact on project outcomes, and the perceived effectiveness of organizational support, using the Kobo Toolbox.

Document analysis: - Relevant organizational documents, such as project plans, reports, and evaluation data, reviewed and analyzed to provide additional and insights into project distress management practices.

3.7. DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis:- "Key informant Interview, focus groups, and questionaries' generate rich, narrative data that can provide insights into the nuances of research experiences, management strategies, and project outcomes" (Yin, 2018). To collect such rich data, the researcher employed interviews and focus group discussions, utilizing qualitative data analysis.

Quantitative data analysis: - Surveys, performance metrics, and project management data used to measure the frequency, severity, and impact of specific research problem as well as the

effectiveness of data management strategies (Hair et al., 2010). in this regard descriptive statistics employed to summarize the quantitative data collected through the survey.

3.7. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

To assure validity and reliability, Cornbrash's alpha test used in this research paper generally accepted threshold for Cornbrash's alpha is 0.7 or higher. If the alpha result falls below this threshold, it may be necessary to remove items with low item-total correlations or re-examine the scale's structure. Neuman, W. L. (2014).

Regarding test-retest reliability, a low correlation might be indicating potential issues related to participant demographics, environmental factors, or the instrument itself. To mitigate these factors, a pilot test conducted with a small sample of 5-10 respondents to identify any potential issues with the instrument, such as unclear questions or confusing instructions. Feedback from the pilot test will be used to refine the instrument before administering it to the larger sample.

Reliability: The semi-structured interview format and focus group discussions provided a consistent framework for data collection, enhancing the reliability of the qualitative data. The iterative analysis process, conducted after every 2-3 interviews, allowed for ongoing refinement of the interview questions and probes, further contributing to consistency. Detailed notes and recordings of the interviews and focus groups were maintained to ensure accurate transcription and analysis. Member checking, where participants review the transcripts of their interviews or the summary of focus group discussions, was used to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the interpretations.

Validity: - The use of surveys, performance metrics, and project management data, as suggested by Hair et al. (2010), allowed for the measurement of specific variables related to the research problem, contributing to the construct validity of the study. Descriptive statistics were used appropriately to summarize the quantitative data, ensuring the accuracy of the data representation.

3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical considerations in research are crucial for conducting responsible and trustworthy studies Beauchamp, T. L., & Childress, J. F. (2019). Researchers must adhere to principles like informed

consent, confidentiality, data integrity, avoiding plagiarism, and respecting human subjects ASA (2017). On this regard the following issues will be considering ethical consideration. Such as informed and get consent from participants, ensuring they understand the study's purpose, kept the respondents data confidentiality and secure by using appropriate measures, clearly communicate any potential risks or discomforts associated with participation, analyze data ethically and will be avoided manipulating results to be predetermined conclusions and give credit to the original authors of ideas, information, or text used in the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

This research investigated the project distress management practices within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Interchurch Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC). Operating in a challenging environment with political instability and resource constraints, EOC-DICAC faced challenge in ensuring the success of its projects. This research analyzes the organization's distress management practice and effectiveness practices, identifies key gaps in distress management, and proposes actionable solutions to improve project outcomes and stakeholder satisfaction. The assessment results are as follows.

4.1. *RESPONDENTS DEMOGRAPHIC DATA*

4.1. 1. GENDER COMPOSITION

The data on table one above provides information about the gender distribution of a sample of respondents. Accordingly, out of a total of 50 sample respondents, 48 provided valid responses, making up 96% of the dataset, while 2 responses were missing, accounting for 4%. Among the valid responses, the gender distribution shows that 34 respondents (71%) were male, and 14 respondents (29%) were female.

	Value	Frequency	percent	Total Valid %
valid	Male	34	68%	71%
	Female	14	28 %)	29%
	Total	**48**	**96 %**	**100%**
	Missed data	2	4%	
	Total	**50**	**100%**	

Table 1:- Respondents Gender composition

4.1.2. AGE COMPOSITION

The data on table two below, shows the age composition of sample of respondents. Accordingly, Based on the response the highest number 21 respondents falls in the 46 to 55 age group. There are also a significant number of people (19) in 36 to 45 years of age group.

	Value	Frequency	%	Valid %

Valid	25-35	5	10	10
	36-45	19	38	39.58
	46-55	21	42	43.75
	56-65	0	0.0	0
	above 65	3	6	16.25
	Total	**48**	**96**	**100**
	Missed data	2	4	
Total		**100**		**100**

Table 2 age distribution of respondents

4.1.3. WORK EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS

The data on the table three below shows work experience distribution of 50 samples, with 48 providing valid responses. Among the valid responses, 10.42% have 1-5 years of experience, 37.5% have 6-10 years, and 45.83% have 10-15 years, and 6.25% have more than 20 years of work experience. The data indicates that the majority of respondents fall within the 6-15 years range, with a noticeable absence of individuals in the 16-20 years category with very extensive experience.

Value	Frequency	Percentage	Valid %
1-5 years	5	10	10,42
6- 10 years	18	36	37,5
10- 15years	22	44	45.83
16- 20	0	0	0
Above 20	3	6	6.25
Total	**48**	**96**	**100**
Missed data	2	4	
Total	**50**	**100**	

Table 3: Work Experience of respondents

4.1.4 EDUCATION BACKGROUND

The data on table four above depicts the educational background of the sample of 50 respondents. Accordingly, 3 individuals (6%) reported having a Bachelor's degree, while 45 individuals (90%) had a Master's degree. The remaining 2 individuals (4%) did not provide any data, with 96% of the data being valid. The majority of respondents have a Master's degree, and only a small percentage reported having a Bachelor's degree.

	Value	Frequency	%	Valid %
	Bachelor	3	6	6.25%

Valid	Master	45	90	93.75
	Total	**48**	**96**	**100**
	Missed data	2	4	
	Total	**50**	**100**	

Table 4: Work Experience of respondent

4.1.5. RESPONDENTS JOB CATEGORY.

As shown in the table five below 60 % of the sample respondents are project officers followed by 18.75% department heads and 12.5% project coordinators. This showed that a great number of respondents are project officers that are following and managing the day to day operation of the project and could better know and test the reality on the ground and experience the distressed and their projects management.

	Value	**Frequency**	**%**	**Valid %**
Valid	Department head	9	18	18.75
	Project coordinator	6	12	12.5
	Senior Management	3	6	6.25
	project officer	29	58	60
	Finance officer	1	2	2
	Total	**48**	**96**	**100**
	Missed data	2	4	
	Total	**50**	**100**	

Table 5:- Sample of respondents by job category

4.2. LIKERT SCALE ANALYSIS

4.2.1. KNOWING OF DISTRESSED PROJECTS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

62.5% respondents strongly agree, are aware of distressed projects and their management there are significant challenges when it comes to applying practical tools and interventions. A large portion of respondents (70.83%) feel they cannot effectively use tools to prevent distressed projects, and 66.66% are unsure about how to intervene when a project becomes distressed. This indicates that while there is theoretical awareness, there is a lack of confidence and capability when it comes to practically managing or preventing distressed projects. In addition knowing Distressed Projects (Variance = 1.57, SD = 1.25): The relatively low variance and standard

deviation suggest a moderate level of agreement among respondents about their knowledge of distressed projects. While there's some variation in responses, they tend to cluster somewhat around the average.

Preventing Distressed Projects (Variance = 2.13, SD = 1.46): The slightly higher variance and standard deviation compared to "Knowing Distressed Projects" indicate more disagreement among respondents regarding their ability to prevent distressed projects. There's a wider range of opinions on this topic.

Intervention Steps for a Distressed Project (Variance = 1.84, SD = 1.36): Similar to "Preventing Distressed Projects," the variance and standard deviation suggest a fair amount of disagreement about understanding and applying intervention steps. The spread is a bit less than preventing, but still shows varied confidence levels.

Recognizing a Potentially Distressed Project (Variance = 1.96, SD = 1.40): The variance and standard deviation are again moderately high, indicating a reasonable level of disagreement in recognizing potentially distressed projects. Respondents have diverse opinions and abilities in this area.

Key Program Staff Believes... (Variance = 2.77, SD = 1.66): This area shows the highest variance and standard deviation. This suggests the greatest level of disagreement among respondents regarding the criticality of project distress management within EOC-DICAC. Some staff may strongly agree, while others may be neutral or disagree, resulting in a wider spread of responses.

	Frequency and Percentage				
Value	Knowing Distressed Projects and Their Management	I can effectively use the tools, to preventing distressed projects	I understand and can apply the intervention steps for a distressed project	I recognize a potentially distressed project and understand why they become distressed	Key program staff believes that project distress management is a critical aspect of EOC-DICAC.
Strongly Disagree	30 (62.5%)	6 (12.5%)	9(19%)	7(14.6%)	0(0.0 %)
Disagree	7(14.6 %)	34(70.83%)	32(66.66%)	30 (62.5%)	6(12.5%)

Neutral	3(6.25%)	3(6.25%)	3(6.25%)	3(6.25%)	2(4.16%)
Agree	6 (12.5%)	3(6.25%)	2(4.16%)	8(16.7%)	11(23%)
Strongly Agree	2 (4.16%)	2(4.16%)	2(4.16%)	0(0.0%)	29(60.41%)

Table 6:- level of knowledge about distress management

The data suggests that while there's some agreement on knowing about distressed projects, there's considerably more disagreement and variation in perceived ability to prevent them, intervene in them, and even recognize them. The largest disparity in opinion lies in how critical staff perceives project distress management to be. This highlights potential training needs and the importance of building consensus on the importance of this aspect of project management. The higher standard deviations in the more action-oriented categories (prevention, intervention, recognition) suggest that targeted training or skill development could be beneficial. The very high standard deviation in the "Key Program Staff Believes" category suggests that leadership might need to work on building consensus and communicating the importance of this topic.

The provided statement on conceptual framework correctly identifies a key individual factor that can negatively impact project success, as supported by the previous research cited reference from the Project Management Institute (PMI) in their 2021 publication. Team conflict, knowledge gaps, personal clashes, disagreements, and power struggles can significantly disrupt collaboration and productivity within a project team. This aligns with the PMI's emphasis on effective team dynamics (knowledge) and conflict resolution as critical components of successful project management.

Therefore, it is crucial to focus on improving the training and support for staff in using the tools and applying intervention steps. Additionally, it's essential to prioritize distress management within the program and allocate adequate resources to ensure its effective implementation. By addressing these areas, the organization can enhance its ability to prevent and mitigate project distress, ultimately leading to better project outcomes.

The qualitative data also support distress management is not integrated into the project planning phase. This absence of proactive planning results in a lack of budget allocation, awareness, and preparedness for project distress. This reinforces the qualitative finding that staff lack confidence in applying preventative and interventional measures..

4.2.2. DISTRESS SYMPTOMS AND PERCEPTIONS

A significant proportion (68%) of respondents reported experiencing or perceiving significant distress symptoms, indicating a widespread perception of distress among the research

participants. This finding highlights a potential need for support and intervention. Furthermore, a lack of project management expertise can significantly hinder project success, leading to cost overruns and delays, as demonstrated by challenges faced by humanitarian development projects due to limited local staff capacity. Grounded in human capital theory (Noe et al., 2022), EOC DICAC projects should prioritize capacity building initiatives to address this gap. These initiatives should focus on enhancing local staff project management skills in key areas like planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and risk management. Practical strategies include professional certifications, mentoring programs pairing experienced project managers with project staff, and on-the-job training to bridge the gap between theory and practice, contributing to more effective project delivery.

Value	Frequency	%	Valid %
Disagree	1	2.0	2.1
Neutral	6	12	12.5
Agree	14	28.0	29.17
Strongly Agree	20	40.0	41.67
Disagree	1	2.0	2
Neutral	6	12	12.5
Total	**48**	**96**	**100**
Missed data	2	4	
Total	**50**	**100**	

Table 7:- Distress symptoms and perception.

4.2.3 PROJECT PLAN REVISION

The quantitative data indicates that project plan revisions are common practice following resource or time cuts, with 54.16% of respondents disagreeing with the statement that revisions don't happen. However, 35.4% who agreed, coupled with qualitative data from focus group discussions, paints a more nuanced picture. While the numbers indicts revisions occur, FGD participant's revealed concerns about the effectiveness and timeliness of these revisions.

Quote 1:- "*We revise the plan, but it's often too late, and the cuts have already done the damage.*"

'Quote 2:- "We're not consulted when the plans are changed, and then we're expected to make it work." These qualitative insights help explain why, even though revisions are happening, a significant portion of respondents still expressed concern. The FGD data highlights that the quality and process of plan revision are as important as the act itself. While the quantitative data shows that revisions happen, the qualitative data reveals how and why they might not be fully addressing the underlying issues. The neutral responses (6.25%) may reflect those who are unsure about the effectiveness of revisions. The data indicates (54.16%) of respondents disagree with the statement that there is no project plan revision after significant cuts in resources or time. This indicates that, in general, project plans are revised when necessary, even in the face of significant cuts. However, it's important to note that (35.4%) respondents agree with the project revision, this indicates that there are instances where plan revisions are not adequately implemented or are insufficient to mitigate the impact of resource or time constraints.

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid %
Strongly Disagree	2	4	4.16
Disagree	26	52	54.16
Neutral	3	6	6.25
Agree	17	34	35.4
Strongly Agree	0	0	0
Total	**48**	**96**	**100**
Missed data	2	12	
Total	**50**	**96**	

Table 8:- Project plan revision

4.3. PROJECT DISTRESS MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

4.3. 1. Prevention and intervention strategies

The quantitative data from Table Nine reveals a significant gap in organizational support for managing distressed projects at EOC-DICAC. A total of 87.6% of respondents either strongly disagree (64.6%) or disagree (23%) with the assertion that adequate training is provided on distressed projects, including prevention and intervention strategies. Only 12.5% of respondents were neutral, and none agreed or strongly agreed, strongly suggesting a lack of organizational support in addressing project distress.

Qualitative feedback from respondents further supports these findings. Many participants expressed concerns about feeling unprepared to manage distressed projects due to the absence of formal training programs. One respondent mentioned, "*We have not received any training on how to manage distress in our projects. Without it, we're just handling problems as they arise without any structured approach." Another respondent noted, "*The lack of proper training on distress management leaves us vulnerable when issues occur. We often feel like we are managing these challenges on our own, with no guidance or support from the organization." These comments reflect a broader sentiment that organizational support for distress management is minimal, exacerbating the challenges faced by employees and teams.

This absence of structured support may lead to poorly managed projects and exacerbate existing challenges, highlighting the need for comprehensive training programs and organizational intervention strategies

	Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Valid %**
	Strongly Disagree	11	62	64.6
	Disagree	31	22	23
	Neutral	6	12	12.5
	Agree	0	0	0
	Strongly Agree	0	0	0
Valid	**Total**	**48**	**96**	
	Missed data	2	4.	
	Total	**50**	**100**	**100**

Table 9:- . Prevention and intervention strategies

4.3.2. DISTRESS MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

As shown in table ten above on the presence of structure practice on the assessment of project performance 71.4% strongly disagree and 14.3% disagree. On the basis of the data, the overwhelming majority of respondents do not think there is a structured practice for assessing why projects underperform or have lower metrics. Only 6.1% agree that such assessment practices exist and the remaining 6.25% of the respondents were neutral response indicates that there might be some uncertainty or lack of awareness about assessment practice s in this area, but this is a minor proportion.

Generally the data strongly indicates that EOC-DICAC likely has not had effective or widespread assessment practices in place for understanding and addressing the reasons behind poor project performance or lower metric values. Without such assessments, it would be difficult to identify the causes of underperformance, leading to missed opportunities for improvement, and an overall lack of learning from past mistakes. Addressing this gap could improve project outcomes and performance in the future.

On the other hand in relation to high and low matrix value assessment the data indicates that (71.4%) of respondents strongly disagree, and 14.3% disagree, with the idea that EOC-DICAC not conducts formal analysis on why projects achieve high performance, This indicates a lack of such practices that could hinder the recognition and replication of successful strategies for future projects..

	Value	Frequency	%	Valid %
Valid data	Strongly Disagree	35	70	73
	Disagree	7	14	14.58
	Neutral	3	6	6.25
	Agree	3	6	6.25
	Strongly agree	0	0	
	Total	**48**	**96**	**100**
	Missed	2	4	
	Total	**50**	**100**	

Table 10: Distress management assessment

4.3.3. EFFECTIVELY REALLOCATES RESOURCES TO MANAGE OR PREVENT DISTRESS

The data indicates that 48% of respondents agree that EOC-DICAC effectively reallocates or secures additional resources in cases of insufficient resources, which suggests a positive perception of resource management in some areas. However, 37.5% of respondents disagree with this statement, indicating that the organization does not handle resource shortages effectively. Additionally, 12.5% of respondents are neutral, reflecting uncertainty or mixed experiences, while only 2% strongly disagree, signaling that there is still a small portion of the respondents who feel strongly about the inefficiency in resource management. Overall, 54% of respondents feel that EOC-DICAC fails to manage resources adequately during shortages, which points to a significant gap in resource management strategies.

Qualitative data from respondents further supports these findings. One participant shared, "In many cases, when resources run out, we are left without clear guidance on how to handle the situation. *We have to rely on external sources or hope for funding from donors, but there is little proactive planning in place*." This highlights a concern that, while some resources may be secured or reallocated, the process is not systematic or well-integrated into project planning. Another respondent added, "*Sometimes, the project is delayed or even shut down due to lack of resources, and we are told to wait for donor funding. It feels like there's no fallback plan*." This reflects a common sentiment that the organization's ability to manage resource shortages is reactive, rather than proactive.

Moreover, issues related to funding gaps and financial constraints were repeatedly mentioned in responses. One respondent noted, "Distress management is not considered during the planning phase. This leads to no resources being allocated to manage distress when issues arise. The lack of budget for this purpose exacerbates the problem when distress occurs." This reinforces the notion that the organization is not well-prepared to handle resource shortages in a way that minimizes the impact on project outcomes.

Additionally, respondents expressed concerns about donor dependency, with one stating, "*The organization depends too much on external donors for resources, and when donor interests shift or funding decreases, the projects suffer. There needs to be a more sustainable, internal resource management strategy.*" This suggests that the reliance on donor funding might pose risks, making resource allocation unpredictable and difficult to manage in times of distress.

	Value	Frequency	%	Valid %
	Strongly Disagree	1	2	2.1
valid	Disagree	18	36	37.5
	Neutral	6	12	12.5
	Agree	23	46	48
	Total	**48**	**96**	**100**
	Missed data	2	4	
	Total	**50**	**100**	

Table 11:- Effective reallocation resource.

4.3.4. PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The survey reveals varying levels of support for different project management tools, with some being perceived as more effective than others in contributing to project success and potentially mitigating distress.

Earned Value Analysis (EVA): receives the strongest endorsement, with 44.6% of respondents strongly agreeing and 27% agree. This strong positive sentiment, combined with a relatively low standard deviation of 1.03, indicates a high degree of consensus about EVA's utility in tracking project performance and identifying potential issues early. This aligns with the qualitative feedback, such as the comment, “EVA helps us track performance clearly and allows us to identify when things are going off track. It’s a useful tool to prevent distress in the project." The low standard deviation reinforces that this positive view is widely shared.

Work Breakdown Structure (WBS): WBS also enjoys significant support, with 85.41% agreeing that it is a valuable tool. However, the absence of any "strongly agree" responses and a low standard deviation of 0.66 suggest that while WBS is recognized as a fundamental tool for structuring projects, its perceived utility might be more procedural than dynamic. The comment, “WBS is effective for organizing the work, but it doesn’t really address the deeper challenges we face when things go wrong or when distress emerges," highlights this limitation. The low standard deviation shows widespread agreement on the basic value of WBS, but the lack of strong agreement and the qualitative feedback suggest that its role in preventing or managing distress is less clear.

Dynamic Risk Management: Dynamic Risk Management faces significant opposition, with 73% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. This, coupled with a standard deviation of 1.08, shows both strong negative sentiment and relatively high consistency in that sentiment. This indicates a lack of confidence in its effectiveness, potentially due to issues with integration and follow-through, as suggested by the comment, “Risk management isn’t integrated well into the process. It’s seen as a box to check rather than an active strategy for managing distress. There’s no follow-through when risks are identified.”

Scope Change Management: Scope Change Management is also largely rejected, with 83.33% disagreeing. The standard deviation of 0.83 suggests strong agreement on the ineffectiveness of this practice. The comment, "Scope changes are often not well managed. We end up overextended, and the budget doesn't stretch far enough. This leads to issues that could have been avoided," reinforces that poor scope management is a major contributor to project distress.

Milestone Trend Charts: Milestone Trend Charts show a divided opinion, with similar percentages agreeing and disagreeing. The relatively high standard deviation of 1.10 reflects this lack of consensus. This mixed sentiment suggests that these charts may not provide sufficient information for effective distress management, as indicated by the respondent's uncertainty about their impact., "*Milestone charts give a snapshot of where we are, but they don't tell us why we're behind or how to fix things. It's more about meeting deadlines than addressing project distress."* This comment reflects a potential limitation of Milestone Trend Charts as a reactive tool, rather than a proactive one.

	Value	Earned Value Analysis	Work Breakdown Structure	Dynamic Risk Management	Scope Change Management	Milestone Trend Charts
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0(0.0%)	0(0.0.)%	3(6.25%)	0(0.0%)	32(66.66%)
	Disagree	5 (10%)	4(8.33%)	35 (73%)	40(83.33%	6(12.5%)
	Neutral	9 (18.75%)	3(6.25%)	5 (10.4%)	5(10.41%)	4(8.33%)
	Agree	13 (27%)	41(85.41	5(10.4%)	3(6.25%)	6(12,5%)
	Strongly Agree	21 (44.6%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)

Table 12:- Effective reallocation resource.

4.3.5. LEVEL OF DISTRESS MANAGEMENT

The data shows a trend of decreasing variability as the project progressed. In the Root Cause Analysis and Corrective Action Plans stages, there was moderate variability (variance ≈ 0.64 and 0.60, standard deviation ≈ 0.80 and 0.78), indicating some fluctuation in these early phases, likely due to uncertainties in analyzing causes and developing solutions. However, as the project moved to the Revised Project Scope and Revised Project Plan, the variability significantly decreased (variance ≈ 0.03, standard deviation ≈ 0.17), reflecting a more focused and consistent approach to changes. The Gained Sponsor Approval phase showed slightly more variability (variance ≈ 0.08, standard deviation ≈ 0.28), but still low overall, suggesting a relatively stable approval process with minor differences. Overall, the project demonstrates increasing consistency, particularly in the later stages, with less fluctuation and more alignment in the scope, planning, and approval phases.

Value	Defined problem assigned owners	Conducted root cause &Force field analysis	Developed corrective action plans revise project scope	Revised project plan and deliverables	Gained sponsor approval authorization to continue the project
Strongly disagree	1(2%)	3(6.25%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
Disagree	22 (45.8)	34 (70.83%)	35(71.91%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
Neutral	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(2%)	1(2%)	1(2%)
Agree	12(25%)	13 (27%)	12 (25%)	47 (98%)	47 (98%)
Strongly agree	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)

Table 13:- Level of distress management

Based on the data and the factor of External Pressures (such as frequent changes in project scope, economic downturns, or stakeholder disagreements), the results suggest that EOC-DICAC's project distress management process may be significantly impacted by external factors that create uncertainty and pressure. (98%) on revising the project plan and deliverables and securing sponsor approval from donors indicates that the organization is generally responsive mechanism to external pressures. particularly in adapting the project to ensure continued support and funding, However the (45.8%) respondents not agree, 2% strongly disagree) on defining the problem and assigning ownership, and disagreement (70.83%) on conducting root cause and Force field analysis, indicates that external pressures may have hindered the organization's ability to effectively manage the initial stages of the project. Frequent changes in scope, economic challenges, or disagreements among stakeholders could have contributed to these inefficiencies, leading to unclear problem definitions and inadequate analysis. This aligns with PMI's (2021) assertion that external pressures can create significant uncertainty and disrupt project planning and execution. As external factors influence decision-making, the organization may struggle with early-stage clarity, affecting the overall effectiveness of its distress management efforts.

4.3.6. LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT MANAGING DISTRESS SITUATIONS

Value	Frequency	%	Valid %
Strongly disagree	43	86%	89.6%
Disagree	0	0.0%	0.0%
Neutral	1	2%	2.1%
Agree	4	8%	8.33%
Strongly agree	0	0,0%	0.0%
Total	**48**	**96**	**96%**
Missed data	2	4	4%
Total	**100**	**100**	**100%**

Table 12:- leadership involvement

A majority 89.6% response strongly disagree with the statement that senior leadership is actively involved in managing distress situations and ensuring adequate support to project teams. This indicates that there is a perceived lack of active involvement or support from senior leadership in

managing distress situations, which could be a concern for the organization. Only one respondent are neutral or disagree, indicating that the majority do not see this as strength of the current process.

On their other hand respondents (89.6) strongly disagree with the statement that distress management practices effectively manage stakeholder expectations during distress situations. Only a few respondents disagree or are neutral, but no one strongly agrees or agrees with the statement, indicating that the current distress management practices are not seen as effective in managing stakeholder expectations. This indicates that there is likely a significant gap in how distress situations are handled, particularly in terms of communication and expectation management with stakeholders.

In both cases, the overwhelming response is that distress management practices, including leadership involvement and stakeholder expectation management, are not functioning effectively. This indicates areas for improvement in both the active participation of senior leadership in distress management and the effectiveness of the distress management practices themselves. The organization need to consider revising its approach to project distress management to better support project teams and manage stakeholder expectations during challenging situations.

4.4. DISTRESS MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

4.4.1. MONITORING, RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK AND EARLY WARNINGS

	Value	Frequency	%	Valid %
Valid data	Strongly disagree	35	70	73%
	Disagree	9	18	18.75%
	Neutral	1	2	2.1%
	Agree	0	0	0%
	Strongly agree	3	6	6.25%
	Total	**48**	**96**	**100**
	Missed data	2	4	
	Total	**50**	**100**	

Table14:- Proactive monitoring and risk assessment

73% strongly disagree and 18.75% disagree) believe that the organization does not effectively identify distress signs early, either due to insufficient monitoring, risk assessments, or early warning systems. No respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the organization handles early

identification well. This indicates a critical gap in proactive distress management. The organization needs to enhance its monitoring systems, strengthen its risk assessment frameworks, and implement more robust early warning mechanisms to detect distress signals in a timely manner. The lack of alignment between organizational practices and project needs suggests a potential need for training, clearer communication, or structural changes to improve the early identification of project distress.

Qualitative data further supports these findings, highlighting that the organization's approach to distress management is reactive rather than proactive. One respondent noted, *"The Commission usually starts mitigation action after the project failure occurs. This is not a good organizational culture. DICAC does not have distress management strategies in place, but there are some assessment practices when a project is in distress, at all levels in the commission, though not to the expected level, and corrective action is taken too late."* This comment reflects the widespread concern that distress is not being identified and managed in advance, contributing to project failures.

Additionally, organizational factors such as leadership styles, resource availability, and culture have been identified as contributing to the inability to manage distress effectively. One respondent shared, "*Distress management is not considered at planning. Therefore, there is no budget to manage distress or awareness on the matter. Thus, some projects are closed due to financial shortages before attaining their intended objectives*." This response underscores the lack of prioritization for distress management during the planning phase, as well as the challenges related to resource limitations and financial constraints. These qualitative insights align with Kerzner's (2017) assertion that inadequate funding or staffing can limit the effectiveness of project monitoring systems and risk assessments, causing distress signals to go unnoticed. Furthermore, poor communication—such as unclear expectations or conflicting feedback—can contribute to delays in recognizing potential issues. The need for better resource allocation and communication practices is critical to ensuring timely identification and management of project distress (Kerzner, 2017).

Respondents also mentioned external factors that exacerbate project distress, including shifts in donor interest, inflation, and policy changes. As one participant explained, "By creating budget cuts and shifting donors' interests, we may reduce the planned target beneficiaries, which leads to delays in project implementation. Reduced funding, increased cost of materials, and changes in the priority of the community or expected outcomes contribute to project distress." These

factors highlight the vulnerability of the organization to external pressures, further complicating the management of distressed projects.

Despite these challenges, there are opportunities to mitigate the effects of distress. Respondents highlighted some positive factors, such as strong government cooperation, the availability of good project-supporting staff, and a pool of young and energetic staff. As one respondent noted, "*There is a good trust in government bodies and their willingness to cooperate, which provides a solid foundation for addressing project distress."* These strengths, if leveraged, can contribute to more effective management and mitigation of project distress in the future**.**

Generally, the data clearly indicates significant gaps in the organization's ability to proactively identify, assess, and manage project distress. Key factors such as insufficient resources, poor communication, and a reactive organizational culture hinder effective distress management. However, there are opportunities to address these challenges by improving resource allocation, strengthening communication practices, and taking advantage of internal strengths like government cooperation and a dedicated workforce.

4.4.2. RESOURCE, COMMUNICATION, CRISIS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Value	Distress mitigation strategies	Structured communication	Adequate and flexible resource	Dedicated crises management team	Uses technology
Strongly disagree	35 (73%)	3(6.25%)	31(64.58%	34 (71%)	13 (27.1%)
Disagree	9 (18.71%)	10 (20.83%)	12(25%)	11(23%)	2 (4.16)
Neutral	2 (4.16)	1(2.1%)	3(6.25)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
Strongly Agree	34 (71%)	2(4.16)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
Agree	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	% (0.0)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)

Table 15 resource, communication, crisis management strategies

Based on the above data (71%) respondents agree that structured communication exists within the organization, indicating a positive perception of communication systems. However, there are still some concerns, as 20.83% disagree and 6.25% strongly disagree, indicating that structured communication may not be perceived as fully effective or consistent by all employees. The presence of 1 neutral response indicates that at least one respondent is unsure about the

effectiveness of structured communication. The absence of anyone strongly agreeing (0%) suggests that while structured communication is recognized, it may not be viewed as exceptional or fully optimized.

The perception of adequate and flexible resources is also problematic, with 64.58% strongly disagreeing and 25% disagreeing, pointing to major concerns about resource availability and flexibility. This shortage of resources could impede the organization's ability to handle distress and adapt to changing circumstances. When it comes to the dedicated crisis management team, a large majority of respondents (71%) strongly disagree that such a team exists, and 23% disagree. This suggests that the organization lacks a formal or effective crisis management structure, which could be detrimental in responding to urgent distress situations. No respondents indicated strong agreement, emphasizing the lack of preparedness in this area.

Distress Mitigation Strategies: The extremely low mean (1.15) and a standard deviation of 0.81, coupled with 73% strongly disagreeing; clearly indicate a perceived lack of effective distress mitigation strategies. This highlights a critical gap in the organization's ability to proactively manage project distress.

Structured Communication: While a majority (71%) agree that structured communication exists, the mean of 2.98 and a standard deviation of 1.11, along with the significant percentage (26.08%) who disagree or strongly disagree, suggest that communication systems, while present, may not be fully effective or consistently implemented. The absence of "strongly agree" responses further reinforces this point. This suggests a need to investigate the specific communication challenges and identify areas for improvement.

Adequate and Flexible Resources: The low mean (1.42) and a standard deviation of 0.85, along with the vast majority (89.58%) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, demonstrate a severe perceived shortage of adequate and flexible resources. This lack of resources likely hampers the organization's ability to respond to project distress and adapt to changing circumstances.

Dedicated Crisis Management Team: The very low mean (1.17) and a standard deviation of 0.75, with 94% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, strongly indicate a lack of a dedicated crisis

management team. This absence leaves the organization vulnerable in the face of unexpected events or project crises.

Uses Technology: While the mean (3.15) is relatively higher, and a majority (71%) agree technology is used, the standard deviation of 1.02 and the significant minority (31.26%) who disagree or strongly disagree suggest that technology adoption or effectiveness may be inconsistent across the organization. The absence of strong agreement suggests there may be room to improve the way technology is integrated and applied to optimize its benefits.

4.4.3. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

	Value	Frequency	%	Valid %
Valid	Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	0.0%
	Disagree	2	4	4.61%
	Neutral	1	2	2.08%
	Agree	45	90%	93.75%
	Strongly agree	0	0.0%	0.0%
	Total	**48**	**96**	**100**
	Missed data	2	4	
	Total	**50**	**100**	

Table 16:- Stakeholder involvement

The data indicates that the majority (93.75%) of respondents believe stakeholder involvement is effective, with a small minority (4.61%) expressing dissatisfaction and only 2% remaining neutral, suggesting general agreement but not exceptional or outstanding involvement.

The satisfaction is described as "general agreement," which implies that while stakeholders are satisfied, the involvement might not exceed expectations or be perceived as outstanding.

Implication: There is room for improvement in stakeholder involvement to make it stand out. Focusing on proactive communication, personalized engagement, or involving stakeholders in decision-making could elevate satisfaction from "effective" to "exceptional," leading to even greater support and trust.

4.4.4. POLICY AND PROCEDURES

		Frequency and Percentage		
Valid		The policies and procedures regularly reviewed	Staff aware on adhering policies, procedures?	Policies and procedures addressed project distressed
	Strongly disagree	2(4.16%)	3(6.25%)	0(0.0%
	Disagree	41(85.41%)	44(91.6%)	43 (89.58%)
	Neutral	5(10.41%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
	Agree	0(0.0%)	1(2.08%)	3(6.25%
	Strongly Agree	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	2(4.16%)

Table 17: policy and procedures

The data reveals significant concerns regarding the current policies and procedures within the organization. There is a strong perception that these policies are not regularly reviewed or updated to address project distress, with 85,41% of respondents disagreeing that they are adapted to changing project needs. Additionally, 91.6% of respondents disagree that project teams are aware of or adhering to these policies, indicating a lack of engagement or understanding, which could lead to misalignment and inefficiencies. Furthermore, 89.58% of respondents disagree that the policies are effective and consistently applied, highlighting dissatisfaction with their ability to manage project distress. These issues point to the need for more dynamic policy reviews and updates, improved communication and training for teams, and better enforcement of policies to ensure alignment and effectiveness, ultimately improving project outcomes.

The data strongly suggests that the current policies and procedures are ineffective in their current form. The low levels of awareness, adherence, and the lack of adaptation to project distress indicate that these policies are not contributing positively to managing project distress. There is a clear need for dynamic, regularly reviewed policies that are well communicated to the staff and effectively applied to mitigate project distress.

In essence, the effectiveness of the policies in their current state is limited, as they are not sufficiently tailored, understood, or consistently enforced to help manage project distress.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMERY FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

- EOC-DICAC lacks a proactive distress management strategy, which leads to reactive actions once a project is already in distress. There is no early-stage intervention, and staff lacks confidence in problem definition, root cause analysis, and corrective action planning.
- There is dissatisfaction with the organization's monitoring systems, with 73% of respondents indicating a failure to detect distress signals early. This delays interventions, escalating project issues before they can be mitigated.
- Resource reallocation to distressed projects is inadequate, with 37.5% of respondents reporting dissatisfaction with the current system. The organization also lacks dedicated crisis management teams, hindering effective support during distress.
- The application of project management tools, such as Earned Value Analysis and Dynamic Risk Management, is not consistent. There is significant dissatisfaction regarding the organization's ability to manage distress effectively, signaling a need for more training and refinement of tools used.
- While risk management policies are updated regularly, there is no dedicated distress management policy, and staff has not been trained on handling distress situations. These points to a gap in the organization's ability to manage distress in a structured way.
- External challenges such as economic pressures, donor shifts, inflation, and political instability significantly affect project distress. These external factors, combined with a reactive approach, made it difficult for the organization to manage distress effectively.

1.1. CONCLUSION

EOC-DICAC faces significant gaps in its approach to managing project distress. A reactive approach, lack of proactive distress management strategies, insufficient monitoring and risk assessment, and inadequate resource management are primary concerns. Moreover, the organization’s reliance on external funding sources and its failure to prepare for potential distress situations exacerbate these issues. Addressing these challenges by improving early-stage

interventions, enhancing monitoring systems, and revising policies can help the organization better manage distress and achieve project success.

1.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations aim to address the significant gaps identified in EOC-DICAC's project distress management practices. By focusing on improving proactive strategies, enhancing monitoring systems, optimizing resource management, revising policies, and addressing external challenges, these recommendations are designed to strengthen the organization's ability to effectively manage project distress and ensure more successful project outcomes.

1. Proactive Distress Management Strategy:- To address the lack of a proactive distress management strategy during the early stages of project distress, EOC- DICAC should prioritize the development and implementation of a structured, early-stage intervention process. This process should include clear guidelines for problem definition, root cause analysis, and corrective action planning. A dedicated team should be trained to identify distress signals early and take action before issues escalate thus improving project outcomes and reducing the need for reactive measures.

2. Strengthen Monitoring and Risk Assessment Frameworks

EOC-DICAC should invest in enhancing its monitoring and risk assessment frameworks to improve the early identification of distress signals. The organization should explore advanced project management software or tools that offer real-time tracking and early warning systems, enabling more effective and timely responses to potential issues. Moreover, regular audits and reviews of the existing systems are essential to ensure that they are not only efficient but also continuously adapted to the evolving project landscape.

3. Improve Resource Management and Crisis Support

To improve resource management during distress, EOC-DICAC should develop a robust resource reallocation strategy that is responsive to the needs of distressed projects. This should involve establishing dedicated crisis management teams, trained in rapid resource mobilization, to provide immediate support when distress signals are detected. Regular training sessions on resource reallocation techniques and crisis intervention should be conducted to ensure that staff is well-prepared for such situations.

4. Enhance Training and Application of Project Management Tools

Given the mixed feedback regarding the application of project management tools, EOC-DICAC should focus on increasing staff proficiency with the tools that have proven to be effective, such as Earned Value Analysis, while addressing skepticism around tools like Dynamic Risk Management. This should involve additional training, pilot projects, and feedback loops to refine tool usage. The organization should also explore integrating other modern tools designed for distress management and project risk mitigation to enhance their overall project management capabilities.

5. Revise Policies and Procedures for Distress Management

EOC-DICAC should create a dedicated distress management policy that clearly outlines the steps to be taken during distress situations. This policy should be aligned with updated risk management frameworks and include guidelines for staff training in distress management. Additionally, the organization should review and revise its current procedures to make them more practical and effective, with an emphasis on providing the necessary support for projects in distress and integrating distress management into the overall risk management process.

6. Address External Factors Affecting Distress Management

To mitigate the impact of external factors, EOC-DICAC should adopt a more proactive approach that anticipates and accounts for economic pressures and stakeholder disagreements. Developing stronger communication channels with external stakeholders, along with strategies for negotiating and managing external pressures, will help the organization reduce the negative effects these factors can have on distress management. Additionally, strengthening collaboration with stakeholders to identify potential issues earlier in the process will enable more timely intervention and reduce reactive responses to project distress.

2. FUTURE STUDY

Future research could focus on exploring proactive distress management models, evaluating the role of emerging technologies in early identification of distress signals, and investigating effective resource reallocation strategies during project distress. Additionally, studies could assess the impact of training on the application of project management tools, the long-term effects of policy changes on distress management outcomes, and the influence of external factors such as economic pressures on project distress. These research areas would provide valuable insights to enhance distress management practices and contribute to more effective project outcomes in organizations like EOC-DICAC.

3. ANNEX

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3.2. RESEARCH QUESTION

I. Survey Research question on Distress Management in Humanitarian Projects

Dears,

My name is Taddila Yeheula, and I am a final year postgraduate student in Project Management at St. Mary's University. For my research project, I am investigating distress management practices and their effectiveness in EOC-DICAC's humanitarian and development projects. Your participation and honest responses are highly valuable to my research. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. No individual responses will be identified in the final report.

Estimated Time to Complete: 15 minutes

Instructions

- Please answer all questions provided.
- Make your responses clear and concise.
- Select the appropriate box (X or √) for multiple-choice questions.
- Write your answers within the designated areas for essay or open-ended questions.
- If you have any questions or require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at:
  - ✓ Phone: 0919825351
  - ✓ Email: yanubeyene@gmail.com

Thank you for your time and cooperation**!**

Part one: - Demographic Information

1. What is your Gender? 1. Male ☐ 2. Female ☐
2. What is your Age Group? 25 to 35 ☐ 36 to 45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65☐ above 65 ☐
3. How long have you been working in this organization? 1 to 5 ☐ 6 to 10 ☐ 11 to15 ☐ above ☐
4. Your background/level of education? Diploma ☐ Degree ☐ Masters ☐ PhD ☐

5. What is your Job Title? Department head ☐ senior Management ☐ Project Manager ☐project officer ☐ Meal officer ☐ Finance head ☐ Gender focal ☐ Humanitarian ☐ engineer, Risk management officer ☐

Part Two: - Close Ended Question

Please indicate the importance of following factors that contribute to the success or resulted in failure of your project, scoring **"X"** or **"√"** for each questions on tables based on your opinion

1= **strongly Disagree** 2 = Dis**agree** 3= **Neutral** 4= **strongly agree** 5= **Agree**

1. How would you rate the overall culture of EOC-DICAC on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is highly risk-averse and 5 is highly risk-tolerant?

	Close ended Question	**Rating your response**				
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
1	**Knowing Distressed Projects and Their Management**					
1	If projects exhibit a performance trend that, if continued, will result in failure, it is symptomatic of a distressed project					
1	I recognize a potentially distressed project and understand why they become distressed					
1	I can effectively use the tools, templates, and processes for preventing distressed projects					
1	I understand and can apply the intervention steps for a distressed project, such as conducting a Root Cause Analysis and performing a SWOT analysis					
1	Key program staff believes that project distress management is a critical aspect of EOC-DICAC.					
1.1.	**Kindly rates your agreement with the following key project distress symptoms in EOC-DICAC?**					

	Mostly there is Lag Time Between Project Approval and Kick-Of among EOC-DICAC projects					
	Mostly there is No Plan Revision after significant Cuts in resources or time					
	Project activities has done with few planning or thought in EOC-DICAC					
	Project staff over committed to prevent project distress					
1.2	**EOC-DICAC and Project Distress management Practices**					
	There is a practice of providing training on how to understand distressed projects, their prevention and intervention strategies at EOC-DICAC					
	It is common to see unmanageable Project Scope at EOC-DICAC's projects					
	There is a good practice of retaining employees at EOC-DICAC					
	There is an assessment practices on why projects registered poor performance or lower metric values					
	There is also an analysis why projects registered high metric value or performance at 3EOC-DICAC					
	It is common in EOC-DICAC to generate complete requirements documentation at the beginning of a project and critical change managements .					
	In case of insufficient resources, EOC - DICAC effectively reallocates resources or takes steps to secure additional resources					
2.1	**In what level do you agree on the practices of the following key prevention strategies**					
	Requirements gathering					
	Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) construction					
	Dynamic risk management process					
	Scope change management process					

	Milestone trend charts					
	Earned value analysis					
2.2	When projects become distressed and need interventions strategy EOC-DICAC will use the four step process such as Analyze Current Situation, Revise Desired Goal, Evaluate Options, Generate Revised Plan					
2.3	**In what practice level do you agree on the following key: an intervention Process of project distress management in EOC-DICAC?**					
	Defined problem(s) and assigned owner(s)					
	Conducted root cause analysis and Force field analysis					
	Developed corrective action plans revise project scope					
	Revised project plan and deliverables					
	Gained sponsor approval from donor and authorization to continue the project					
2.4	Senior leadership at EOC-DICAC is actively involved in managing distress situations, ensuring that adequate support is provided to project teams					
	Distress management practices effectively manage stakeholder expectations during distressful situations					
3	**Distress Management Effectiveness**					
	There is an early identification of distress sign and symptoms in the organization through proactive monitoring, risk assessment framework and early warnings. There is timely and quick response to project distresses and also there is time to escalate issues to senior management or specialized teams when needed					
	There is always a distress mitigation strategies like Root Cause					

	Analysis, Corrective Action Plans and change managements					
	There is structured communication in EOC-DICAC that can serve during project distress					
	There is adequate and flexible resource to manage project distress in EOC-DICAC					
	There is dedicated crises management team that helps the project distress managements					
	There are competent and experienced teams that help Project distress management in EOC-DICAC.					
	There is a good project success rate at EOC-DICAC					
	There is an integration of risk management in all project cycle management process as well as organizational culture of risk awareness					
	EOC-DICAC uses technology to monitor and report financial and physical Activities					
	EOC-DICAC a good performance in satisfying customers and keep its reputation and work towards continuous improvements					
4	**Policy and Procedures**					
	The project teams aware and adhering the policies and procedures?					
	Policies and procedures effective and addressed project distressed applied consistently					
	The policies and procedures regularly reviewed and updated to addressed project distress management					

II. Interview question

1. What is your position within the commission
2. How long you work in the commission
3. How do you know project distress management effectiveness in the commission
4. What are the primary distress management strategies that EOC-DICAC employs in its projects?
5. How effective do you find these strategies in addressing project distress?

6. Are there any specific challenges or limitations in implementing these strategies?
7. What are the key factors that you believe influence the effectiveness of distress management practices in EOC-DICAC's projects?
8. How do the commission culture, leadership styles, and resource allocation impact the implementation and effectiveness of distress management strategies?
9. Are there any external factors (e.g., economic conditions, political instability) that significantly affect project distress and the effectiveness of management practices?
10. What have been the outcomes and impacts of EOC-DICAC's project distress management practices on project timelines, budgets, quality, and overall success?
11. Can you share specific examples of how distress management practices have helped to mitigate project challenges or improve outcomes?
12. What are the potential negative consequences or unintended side effects of certain distress management strategies?

III. Focus Group Discussion Questions

1. What are some common challenges and stressors that project teams face within EOC-DICAC?
2. How do these challenges impact project timelines, budgets, and quality?
3. What distress management strategies have you found to be most effective in addressing project challenges?
4. Are there any strategies that you believe are underutilized or not working well?
5. Is the commission culture and leadership styles influence the implementation and effectiveness of distress management practices?
6. Are there any the commission policies or procedures that hinder or facilitate effective distress management?
7. Are project teams provided with sufficient resources (e.g., financial, human, technological) to effectively manage distress?
8. What additional resources or support would be helpful in improving project distress management?
9. How do external factors (e.g., economic conditions, political instability) impact project distress and the effectiveness of management practices?
10. How does EOC-DICAC respond to these external challenges?