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# Influence of Principle of Subsidiarity on Decision-Making at Children of God Relief Institute in Kitui County, Kenya

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***Abstract:*** *The principle of subsidiarity is increasingly important in strengthening employee participation, delegated authority, and responsiveness in organisational decision-making. However, effective application of subsidiarity may be constrained by the need to balance staff autonomy with managerial oversight. This study examined the influence of subsidiarity on decision-making at the Children of God Relief Institute in Kitui County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Participative Leadership Theory and Institutional Theory. A mixed-methods approach and convergent parallel design were adopted. The study targeted 172 participants using census and purposive sampling. Questionnaires were administered to 165 employees and caregivers, with 157 responding, while seven managers were interviewed. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 25 through descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data were thematically analysed. Subsidiarity was generally practised at COGRI, with a composite mean of 3.68 (SD = 0.99). A strong positive and statistically significant relationship existed between subsidiarity and decision-making ($r = .734$, $p < .001$). Regression analysis showed that subsidiarity significantly predicted decision-making ($\beta = .734$, $p < .001$) and explained 53.9% of the variance ($R^2 = .539$). Qualitative findings indicated that staff were generally empowered to make routine decisions within their responsibilities, while complex and resource-intensive decisions required management approval. The study concludes that effective delegation of authority and staff autonomy contributes to responsive decision-making. The study recommends strengthening delegation guidelines, staff participation, and appropriate managerial oversight at COGRI.*

***Keywords:*** *Principle of subsidiarity, decision-making, delegation of authority, staff autonomy, Children of God Relief Institute, Kitui County, Kenya.*

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# 1. Introduction

The principle of subsidiarity provides that decisions should be made at the lowest competent level, while higher levels provide support when lower levels lack the capacity or authority to act effectively (Melé, 2004). In organizational settings, subsidiarity promotes decentralization of responsibility, employee autonomy, participation, and accountability.

Effective organizational decision-making involves identifying problems, evaluating alternatives, selecting appropriate actions, and implementing decisions to achieve organizational objectives (Olaleye et al. (2024). The effectiveness of these processes is influenced by how authority and responsibility are distributed within organizations. Excessive centralization can restrict participation and delay responses, whereas appropriate delegation enables employees to contribute knowledge and exercise responsibility. Ye et al. (2022) found that participatory decision-making enhances employees' contribution to organizational decisions, while Katebi et al. (2024) established a significant relationship between participatory organizational structures and organizational outcomes.

International evidence further demonstrates the relevance of decentralized authority to organizational decision-making. Suhail and Steen (2021) found that organizational autonomy enhanced middle managers' participation in decision-making and implementation. Similarly, Zhu et al. (2022) established that effective decision-making contributes to organizational performance when decisions are aligned with organizational strategies and changing environmental conditions. These findings suggest that locating decision authority closer to those with relevant knowledge can improve organizational responsiveness.

In Africa, evidence similarly points to the importance of autonomy, participation, and decentralized decision structures. Huettermann et al. (2024) found that shared authority and employee participation contributed to responsive organizational decision-making. In South Africa, Amoa-Gyarteng and Dhliwayo (2024) reported that organizations characterized by autonomy and open communication made more timely decisions than those operating under command-and-control structures. In Nigeria, Olaleye et al. (2024) found that decentralization, collaboration, and employee involvement strengthened organizational resilience and responsiveness. These findings provide support for examining subsidiarity as an organizational principle that connects authority, participation, and responsibility.

In Kenya, inclusive decision-making has also been associated with better organizational and institutional outcomes. Adana et al. (2024) found that decision-making networks incorporating multiple perspectives produced better outcomes than exclusive structures. However, existing Kenyan studies have largely examined participation, leadership, decentralization, and organizational decision-making separately, with limited attention to subsidiarity as a distinct principle governing the allocation of decision-making authority.

The relevance of subsidiarity is particularly evident in faith-based organizations that provide social, health, education, and community services, where appropriate delegation can promote participation, accountability, and responsiveness while maintaining senior management oversight (Wodon, 2022).

The Children of God Relief Institute (COGRI), a faith-based organization in Kitui County, Kenya, operates Nyumbani Village, providing residential care and holistic support to vulnerable children through education, healthcare, psychosocial support, and community-based services, alongside agricultural, livestock, and production activities that support institutional sustainability. The diversity of these activities requires decisions on children's welfare, service delivery, resource allocation, and institutional operations to be made across different organizational levels.

This makes subsidiarity particularly relevant because decisions made by those closest to operational needs may be timelier and more responsive when supported by appropriate authority, competence, resources, and accountability. However, limited empirical evidence exists on how the principle of subsidiarity influences decision-making in Kenyan faith-based organizations, particularly at COGRI.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Children of God Relief Institute in Kitui County undertakes diverse health, education, care, and livelihood activities that require timely and responsive decision-making. Effective coordination of these activities depends on appropriate delegation of authority and participation of staff at different organizational levels. However, limited autonomy and participation in decision-making can constrain organizational responsiveness and staff ownership. Research indicates that empowering decision climates enhance employee contribution to organizational processes (Ye et al., 2022), while participation and organizational climate are associated with organizational effectiveness (Ohana et al., 2013).

The principle of subsidiarity provides a framework for enabling decisions to be made at the lowest competent level while maintaining appropriate oversight and accountability (Melo et al., 2015). Nevertheless, limited empirical evidence exists on how subsidiarity influences decision-making in Kenyan faith-based organizations. Specifically, little is known about how delegation, participation, autonomy, and accountability shape decision-making at COGRI. This study therefore examines the influence of the principle of subsidiarity on decision-making at COGRI in Kitui County, Kenya.

## 1.2 Research Objective

Decision-making is essential for coordinating organizational activities, responding to operational needs, and achieving institutional objectives. The principle of subsidiarity supports effective decision-making by enabling authority to be exercised at the lowest competent level while maintaining appropriate oversight and accountability. Given the diverse activities undertaken by the Children of God Relief Institute, examining the role of subsidiarity is important for understanding how the distribution of authority, participation, and autonomy contributes to effective organizational decision-making. Therefore, the objective of the study was to examine the influence of the principle of subsidiarity on decision-making at the Children of God Relief Institute in Kitui County, Kenya.

# 2. Literature Review

## 2.2 Theoretical Review

The study is guided by Participative Leadership Theory and Institutional Theory. Participative Leadership Theory provides a basis for understanding how employee involvement and shared authority influence organizational decision-making, while Institutional Theory explains how organizational structures and practices are shaped by institutional norms, expectations, and pressures.

### 2.1.1 Participative Leadership Theory

Participative Leadership Theory traces its origin to the early contribution of Lewin (1939), who developed democratic leadership as a style characterized by group participation in decision-making. Contemporary organizational literature has refined the theory to focus on employee empowerment, shared authority, and collaborative management practices (Wang et al., 2022). The underlying assumption of the theory is that decision-making should be distributed and involve employees' participation to enhance leadership effectiveness.

Central to the theory is the notion that employee participation in decision-making leads to higher-quality decisions and organizational innovation because it draws on diverse sources of knowledge, skills, and expertise. Empirical studies support this perspective. For example, Khassawneh and Elrehail (2022) found that participative leadership significantly enhances employee performance and innovative behaviour through psychological empowerment. Javed et al. (2023) established that participative leadership encourages employee creativity by strengthening intrinsic motivation and engagement. Similarly, Arregi et al. (2022) concluded that participative approaches facilitate innovation through greater idea generation and knowledge transfer.

Further empirical evidence indicates that participative leadership contributes to transparency and communication within organizations. According to Wang et al. (2022), participation creates open channels of communication through which constructive feedback is encouraged, fostering continuous improvement and innovation. Studies conducted in Africa also indicate that participative leadership practices promote employee motivation and innovation performance, particularly in organizations that emphasize teamwork and knowledge sharing (Mutonyi et al., 2020).

The theory promotes innovation, creativity, employee motivation, and commitment by recognizing employees' knowledge and perspectives in decision-making. However, participative decision-making can be time-consuming, generate disagreements, and be unsuitable where urgent decisions or specialized expertise are required. Its effectiveness therefore depends on the nature and context of the decision. The theory is relevant to this study because employee participation and shared authority are central to subsidiarity. It explains how involving employees and distributing authority to appropriate organizational levels can enhance decision quality, communication, and organizational effectiveness at COGRI through consultation, teamwork, and shared decision-making.

### 2.1.2 Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory was developed by Meyer and Rowan (1977) and further advanced by DiMaggio and Powell (1983). The theory proposes that organizational behaviour is shaped by formal structures, norms, rules, and external institutional pressures. Organizations adopt and maintain such structures to achieve legitimacy and conform to societal expectations.

A central proposition of Institutional Theory is that organizational structures, hierarchies, and norms shape decision-making by defining authority, participation, and acceptable practices. Rigid and highly centralized structures may constrain employee participation and feedback, whereas flexible and decentralized structures can promote collaboration and innovation. Khassawneh and Elrehail (2022) observed that institutional structures can influence the extent to which participative leadership facilitates employee involvement.

Empirical evidence further demonstrates the influence of organizational structures on employee participation and innovation. Uribetxebarria et al. (2021) found that decentralized and flexible structures enhance employee creativity and innovation, while Martela (2023) reported that bureaucratic structures constrain employee participation in innovation. Similarly, Banwo et al. (2022) found that hierarchical rigidity can limit knowledge sharing and creativity. Organizational structures and communication norms therefore influence the extent to which employees participate, provide feedback, and contribute to organizational decisions.

A key strength of Institutional Theory is its explanation of how organizational structures, rules, hierarchies, and norms shape behaviour and decision-making. However, it may overemphasize conformity while giving limited attention to individual agency and organizational change. These limitations can be addressed by complementing it with Participative Leadership Theory.

Institutional Theory is relevant to this study because it explains how structures, hierarchies, rules, and norms influence decision-making at COGRI. It provides a basis for examining how centralized or decentralized structures affect subsidiarity through authority distribution, participation, communication, and accountability.

## 2.2 Review of Empirical Literature

This section reviews empirical studies on the relationship between the principle of subsidiarity and organizational decision-making.

**2.2.1 The Influence of the Principle of Subsidiarity on Decision-Making**

Ahmed and Hassan et al. (2024) examined the influence of subsidiarity on decision-making efficiency in private organizations in the United Arab Emirates. Using a quantitative cross-sectional design, the study surveyed 275 employees through structured questionnaires measuring decentralization, empowerment, information flow, accountability, and decision-making effectiveness. Multiple regression results showed a significant positive relationship between subsidiarity practices and decision-making efficiency ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.01$). Employee empowerment and individual responsibility enhanced decision ownership and responsiveness, while effective communication improved coordination across management levels. However, the study was conducted in private-sector organizations in an upper-middle-income country, limiting its applicability to faith-based organizations in Kenya.

Similarly, Ye et al. (2022) examined decision-making transparency and employee involvement in technology-based firms in Tokyo and Osaka, Japan. The cross-sectional study involved 310 employees from ICT and manufacturing firms. Using structured questionnaires and regression analysis, the study established a significant relationship between decentralized decision-making, information transparency, employee involvement, and decision responsiveness ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$). Distributed decision authority enabled employees to provide input and act with greater confidence. However, the study was limited by its cross-sectional design and focus on highly structured technology-based firms, creating a contextual gap for faith-based organizations.

Feldhaus et al. (2023) investigated decentralized decision-making and employee empowerment in healthcare organizations in Spain. The study surveyed 220 employees in public hospitals using structured questionnaires measuring autonomy, participation, information flow, coordination, and responsiveness. Regression results indicated a significant positive relationship between decentralized decision-making and decision effectiveness ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$). The study found that employee autonomy enhanced decision speed, service efficiency, and accountability. However, excessive decentralization without adequate coordination could produce inconsistent decisions. Moreover, its focus on public healthcare institutions in Europe limits its applicability to faith-based organizations in developing countries.

In Canada, Svendsen and Jønsson (2022) examined organizational transparency, decentralized participation, and decision-making efficiency in public service organizations. Using a mixed-methods design, the study involved 265 participants and employed questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Regression analysis showed a significant relationship between participatory management, delegation, and decision-making efficiency ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$). The findings indicated that delegation and feedback mechanisms enhanced employee engagement, organizational learning, and adaptive decision-making. However, the study focused on developed public-sector organizations, limiting generalization to faith-based institutions in developing countries.

Morrison (2023) examined decentralized decision-making, transparency, and decision effectiveness in mining and service organizations in Botswana. A cross-sectional survey of 198 employees from five corporations found a significant relationship between decentralization and decision effectiveness ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$). Delegation of authority enhanced decision speed, employee commitment, coordination, and ownership. However, the study focused on corporate organizations and did not incorporate qualitative perspectives, leaving a contextual and methodological gap for faith-based organizations.

Dikaya (2024) investigated decentralization, feedback systems, and decision-making effectiveness in humanitarian NGOs in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Using a mixed-methods design involving 150 participants, the study found that local-level decision-making and employee empowerment enhanced responsiveness, adaptability, and timeliness, particularly in unpredictable environments ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$). Feedback mechanisms also supported organizational learning and improved subsequent decisions. However, the study focused on humanitarian organizations operating in conflict settings, which limits its relevance to faith-based organizations operating in relatively stable contexts.

In Kenya, Kadenyi et al. (2026) examined effect of employee involvement strategies in decision-making on employee performance in level four and three public health facilities in Vihiga County. Using a cross-sectional survey of 342 employees, the study found a significant positive relationship between decentralization, employee participation, accountability, and decision-making effectiveness ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$). The findings showed that delegation and empowerment enhanced employee engagement, decision quality, coordination, and organizational learning. However, the study focused on urban NGOs and community-based organizations and did not specifically examine faith-based institutions. Its reliance on quantitative data also limited understanding of employees' experiences of decentralized decision-making.

Reviewed studies demonstrate that decentralization, delegation, participation, autonomy, information sharing, and accountability are associated with more responsive and effective decision-making. However, most studies were conducted in private, public, corporate, NGO, or technology-oriented organizations outside Kenya. Limited empirical evidence exists on the application of subsidiarity in faith-based organizations, particularly in Kenya. This contextual gap provides a basis for examining the influence of the principle of subsidiarity on decision-making at the Children of God Relief Institute in Kitui County, Kenya.

# 3. Methodology

## 3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach using a convergent parallel design. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently, analysed separately, and integrated during interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021).

## 3.2 Sampling and Sample Size

The study population comprised 172 participants, including 115 employees, 50 caregivers, and 7 managers. Census sampling was used to include all 165 employees and caregivers, while purposive sampling was used to select the seven managers.

## 3.3 Data Collection Tools

Quantitative data were collected using self-administered structured questionnaires administered to employees and caregivers. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interview guides administered to managers. The instruments focused on subsidiarity and decision-making processes. The instruments were pilot-tested with 15 respondents and 2 managers. Validity was established through expert review and pilot testing, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable. Credibility of qualitative data was enhanced through triangulation and member checking.

## 3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from Tangaza University, a NACOSTI research permit was secured, and authorization was obtained from COGRI. The researcher administered questionnaires to employees and caregivers and conducted semi-structured interviews with managers. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before data collection. Completed questionnaires and interview data were securely handled to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

## 3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS Version 25. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the data, while correlation and regression analysis were used to examine the relationship and influence of subsidiarity on decision-making. Qualitative data were analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke (2021). Quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated through triangulation during interpretation.

## 3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study observed the principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and secure data management. Participants were informed of the study purpose, their right to participate voluntarily, and their right to withdraw without penalty. Data were used solely for academic purposes and securely stored to prevent unauthorised access.

# 4. Results and Discussion

A total of 157 of the 165 questionnaires administered to employees and caregivers were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 95.2%. All seven managers participated in the interviews, yielding a 100.0% response rate and an overall response rate of 95.3%. This high response rate provided adequate data for quantitative and qualitative analysis and enhanced the credibility of the findings. Saunders et al., (2023) consider response rates above 70% adequate for social science research.

A pilot study was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the research instrument using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. A coefficient of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable (Kennedy, 2022). The principle of subsidiarity, measured using five items, recorded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.86, indicating good internal consistency. The instrument was therefore considered reliable and suitable for the main study.

Participants were asked to indicate who usually makes operational decisions in their respective department. Findings were presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Person(s) Who Usually Make Operational Decisions in the Department**

n = 157

| Response Category | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Senior Management | 28 | 17.8 |
| Department Head | 64 | 40.8 |
| Team Members Collectively | 21 | 13.4 |
| Joint Decision (Management & Staff) | 44 | 28.0 |
| **Total** | **157** | **100.0** |

Source: Field Data (2026)

As shown in Table 1, department heads were identified by 64 respondents (40.8%) as the persons who usually make operational decisions, followed by joint decisions involving management and staff at 44 (28.0%). Senior management was reported by 28 respondents (17.8%), while 21 (13.4%) indicated that decisions are made collectively by team members. The findings therefore suggest that operational decision-making at COGRI is primarily located at the departmental level, with some decisions made jointly between management and staff.

The quantitative findings were supported by the key informants, who indicated that operational decisions are generally handled by the officers responsible for the respective departments, while matters requiring wider organizational implications are referred to management. One key informant explained that *"most day-to-day decisions are handled within the department, but matters affecting the wider organization are taken to management."* Another noted that *"staff are consulted on issues affecting their work, although the department head remains responsible for the final decision."* These views suggest that COGRI applies a combination of delegated and consultative decision-making.

The predominance of department-level decision-making is consistent with the principle of subsidiarity, which encourages decisions to be made at the lowest competent organizational level while retaining appropriate oversight. The 28.0% reporting joint decision-making further indicates the presence of staff participation in operational decisions. Feldhaus et al. (2023) similarly found that delegated decision-making at lower organizational levels enhances responsiveness and efficiency, while Svendsen and Jønsson (2022) established that shared decision-making promotes collaboration and employee commitment.

However, the relatively low proportion of respondents reporting collective team decision-making (13.4%) indicates that full team autonomy is limited. This suggests that participation largely occurs through consultation and delegated authority rather than complete transfer of decision-making power to teams. From the perspective of Institutional Theory, such arrangements reflect the coexistence of participatory practices with formal organizational hierarchies that define authority and accountability.

Participants were further asked to indicate how much authority staff members have to make decisions related to their own responsibilities, and the findings are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Level of Authority Staff Members Have to Make Decisions Related to Their Responsibilities**

n = 157

| Level of Authority | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Very little | 9 | 5.7 |
| Little | 18 | 11.5 |
| Moderate | 46 | 29.3 |
| High | 61 | 38.9 |
| Very high | 23 | 14.6 |
| **Total** | **157** | **100.0** |

As shown in Table 2, 61 respondents (38.9%) reported a high level of authority, while 23 (14.6%) reported a very high level. A further 46 (29.3%) indicated moderate authority, compared with 18 (11.5%) and 9 (5.7%) who reported little and very little authority, respectively. The findings indicate that most staff perceive themselves as having substantial authority over decisions within their assigned responsibilities. This suggests that COGRI delegates decision-making authority to operational levels, consistent with the principle of subsidiarity. The qualitative findings supported this pattern. One key informant explained that *"staff are given room to make decisions on routine matters within their areas of responsibility."* Another observed that *"departmental staff can make decisions without waiting for management, provided the issue falls within their assigned duties."* Another key informant noted that *"when a decision has financial or wider organizational implications, staff are expected to consult the department head or management."*

These responses indicate that staff autonomy is encouraged for routine operational matters, while managerial oversight is retained for complex or organization-wide decisions. The 29.3% reporting moderate authority similarly suggests that the level of autonomy varies according to the nature of the decision and departmental responsibilities. The relatively small proportion reporting little or very little authority further indicates that restrictions on staff decision-making are not widespread.

The findings are consistent with Dikaya (2024), who found that delegated authority enhances responsiveness and accountability, and Kadenyi et al. (2026), who associated employee autonomy with greater confidence, innovation, and commitment. From an Institutional Theory perspective, the findings suggest that delegated authority is supported by formal roles and established decision-making structures. However, variations in perceived authority indicate that the extent of autonomy may differ across departments, reflecting a balance between delegated authority and managerial oversight.

Respondents were further asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements relating to the application of the principle of subsidiarity at COGRI. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD) to 5 = Strongly Agree (SA). The findings are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Application of the Principle of subsidiarity at COGRI**

n = 157

| Statements | SD F (%) | D F (%) | N F (%) | A F (%) | SA F (%) | Mean | Std Dvt |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decisions are made at the most appropriate level within the organization. | 7 (4.5) | 16 (10.2) | 28 (17.8) | 72 (45.9) | 34 (21.7) | 3.70 | 1.00 |
| Staff members are trusted to make decisions that fall within their roles and responsibilities. | 5 (3.2) | 14 (8.9) | 24 (15.3) | 78 (49.7) | 36 (22.9) | 3.81 | 0.92 |
| Decision-making authority is effectively delegated to the relevant staff members. | 9 (5.7) | 21 (13.4) | 31 (19.7) | 68 (43.3) | 28 (17.8) | 3.47 | 1.08 |
| Decisions made at lower levels are respected and upheld by management. | 10 (6.4) | 24 (15.3) | 35 (22.3) | 60 (38.2) | 28 (17.8) | 3.46 | 1.11 |
| Delegation of decision-making authority improves service delivery at COGRI. | 4 (2.5) | 8 (5.1) | 19 (12.1) | 81 (51.6) | 45 (28.7) | 3.97 | 0.84 |
| Composite mean | | | | | | 3.68 | 0.99 |

The findings in Table 3 indicate an overall composite mean of 3.68 (SD = 0.99), suggesting general agreement that the principle of subsidiarity is applied at COGRI. The highest-rated statement was that delegation of decision-making authority improves service delivery (M = 3.97, SD = 0.84), followed by staff being trusted to make decisions within their responsibilities (M = 3.81, SD = 0.92) and decisions being made at the most appropriate organizational level (M = 3.70, SD = 1.00).

The qualitative findings reinforced these results. One key informant stated that "staff are given authority to handle matters within their areas of responsibility," while another noted that "most routine decisions are made within the department without waiting for senior management." These responses indicate that decision-making is generally delegated to operational levels where relevant knowledge and expertise are available.

Specifically, 72 respondents (45.9%) agreed and 34 (21.7%) strongly agreed that decisions are made at the most appropriate level, while 78 (49.7%) agreed and 36 (22.9%) strongly agreed that staff are trusted to make decisions within their roles. The findings therefore suggest that COGRI provides staff with reasonable decision-making discretion, consistent with the principle of subsidiarity.

Hassan et al. (2024) similarly found that decentralization enhances coordination and responsiveness in organizational decision-making.

However, lower ratings were recorded for effective delegation of authority (M = 3.47, SD = 1.08) and management's respect for decisions made at lower levels (M = 3.46, SD = 1.11). The qualitative responses help explain this variation. One key informant observed that *“staff can make routine decisions, but matters involving significant resources require approval from management.”* Another explained that *“the level of authority depends on the department and the type of decision being made.”* A further informant noted that *“sometimes decisions made at departmental level have to be reviewed by management before they are implemented.”* These responses suggest that COGRI combines delegated authority with managerial oversight, particularly for complex, financial, or organization-wide decisions.

Regarding management's support for lower-level decisions, 88 respondents (56.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that such decisions are respected and upheld, while 34 (21.7%) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 35 (22.3%) were neutral. This variation suggests that staff experiences of delegated authority are not uniform across the organization. Feldhaus et al. (2023) similarly found that inconsistent delegation can create uncertainty regarding decision-making responsibilities and limit the effectiveness of decentralized management.

The highest-rated finding, that delegation improves service delivery (M = 3.97, SD = 0.84), demonstrates strong recognition of the practical value of subsidiarity. This was supported by the key informants, with one stating that “when staff are allowed to make decisions within their roles, issues are resolved more quickly,” while another indicated that *“delegating decisions to the people handling the work helps us respond to service needs on time.”* These views reinforce the quantitative finding that delegated authority can enhance responsiveness and service delivery. Feldhaus et al. (2023) similarly established that decentralized decision-making promotes quicker responses and strengthens accountability.

Findings indicate that subsidiarity is evident at COGRI through delegated authority, staff trust, and decision-making at appropriate organizational levels. However, variations in delegation and management support indicate the need for greater consistency in the exercise and recognition of lower-level authority. From the perspective of Institutional Theory, subsidiarity operates within formal organizational structures that define authority, accountability, and managerial oversight.

## Inferential Statistics

Inferential analysis examined the influence of the principle of subsidiarity on decision-making at COGRI. Pearson correlation and simple linear regression were used. The analysis was based on 157 completed questionnaires and a significance level of 0.05.

## Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis established a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between the principle of subsidiarity and decision-making, $r = .734$, $p < .001$, $n = 157$. This indicates that stronger application of subsidiarity was associated with improved decision-making.

## Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression was conducted to determine the influence of the principle of subsidiarity on decision-making. The model was statistically significant, $F(1,155) = 181.05$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .539$. Thus, the principle of subsidiarity explained 53.9% of the variation in decision-making.

The regression equation was:

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon$

where Y represents decision-making and X represents the principle of subsidiarity.

The results indicate a statistically significant positive influence of subsidiarity on decision-making ($\beta = .734$, $t = 13.46$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that the principle of subsidiarity has no significant influence on decision-making at COGRI was rejected.

## Hypothesis Testing

$H_0$: The principle of subsidiarity has no statistically significant influence on decision-making at COGRI in Kitui County, Kenya. The hypothesis was rejected because the relationship was statistically significant ($\beta = .734$, $t = 13.46$, $p < .001$). The findings therefore demonstrate that the application of the principle of subsidiarity significantly and positively influences decision-making at COGRI.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that the principle of subsidiarity significantly and positively influences decision-making at COGRI in Kitui County. The findings show that decision-making is largely delegated to departmental and operational levels, with staff exercising authority within their assigned responsibilities, while major or resource-intensive decisions remain subject to management oversight.

The application of subsidiarity was generally favourable, with a composite mean of 3.68 (SD = 0.99). Inferential results established a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between subsidiarity and decision-making ($r = .734$, $p < .001$). Regression analysis further showed that subsidiarity significantly predicted decision-making ($\beta = .734$, $p < .001$) and explained 53.9% of its variation. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Findings therefore, demonstrate that appropriate delegation of authority, staff autonomy, and decision-making at the lowest competent level are important for effective and responsive decision-making at Children of God Relief Institute in Kitui County, while maintaining appropriate managerial accountability and oversight.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

**1. Strengthen and institutionalize delegated decision-making.**
COGRI management should strengthen and institutionalize the delegation of decision-making authority to departmental and operational levels. Staff should be empowered to make routine decisions within clearly defined roles and responsibilities while maintaining appropriate managerial oversight. This would enhance responsiveness, staff autonomy, and effectiveness in organisational decision-making.

**2. Establish clear guidelines for decision-making authority.**
COGRI should establish clear guidelines specifying decisions that can be made at departmental and lower operational levels and those requiring management approval. Clear authority structures would reduce unnecessary centralisation, minimise delays, and promote accountability in decision-making.

**3. Strengthen staff participation and management support.**
COGRI management should strengthen staff participation in decision-making through regular consultation, feedback, and recognition of decisions made at appropriate lower levels. This would promote confidence among staff, improve ownership of decisions, and enhance responsive service delivery.

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