

RUNNING HEAD: ROLE AND PERFORMANCE OF THE AFRICAN UNION

A DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE AND PERFORMANCE OF THE AFRICAN UNION

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ABSTRACT

The research is aimed at discussing the role and performance of African Union. The objectives were focused towards identifying the role of African Union and its core objectives for formulation and examining the performance of African Union over the past two decades since its formation. In this research, the researcher has selected qualitative research design because of its subjective nature of the research in which various realities about African Union's role and performance in social development of Africa. In addition, secondary data has been collected to discuss the role and performance of African Union in the past two decades therefore the data has been analysed by incorporating extended literature review which included information derived on identified aim and objectives of the research. It was found from the extended literature review that African Union has played significant role in the development of the African countries. However, there were some challenges faced by the AU due to the lack of problem and financial assistance available to the African Union.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Contextual Background

The united Africa has a long history including cultural and social attributes of people living in Africa. The regional organization of Africa Union (AU) came into being in 1999 with the consent of 32 independent states of Africa (Mazzeo, 1984). Later, 21 more African countries joined the union making it up to 53 member states regional organization in 2002 whereas South Sudan became the 54th member of union in 2011. The main aim of AU has been to follow the union charter and contribute its role in the solidification and unity of African states. It has been intended to strengthen and organize the collaboration in order to achieve the prosperity of African people by protecting their territorial independence and sovereignty (Boutellis and Williams, 2013). AU is determined to provide measures for political and social development within the continent whereas the decision making process in the union is dependent upon the head of government and states.

AU has a unique “Peer Review Mechanism” on voluntary basis under the member states of the union have agreed upon being assess by expert teams in order to encourage good governance and democracy (Engel, 2015). On the other hand, the observer missions of AU have been sending to member states in order to cover elections and ensure that the proceedings are in accordance with the Charter on Elections and Governance and Charter on Democracy. However, Makinda, Okumu and Mickler (2015) identified that there have been number of hiccups involved in the decision making process of AU such as the action taken by the union in July 2012 to move bi-annual summit from Malawi to Addis Ababa due to the refusal of Malawi on inviting Omar al-Bashir; Sudan’s head of state, where the conviction was made on him by ICC.

Nevertheless, the major issues such as Libyan crises 2011 have been catered by the union by providing support to society and resolve the interstate conflicts (Long and Gibson, 2015, p.830). Through the direct collaboration and contribution of AU in international community, the union has been able to minimize and settle the conflicts in the region's main states including resolving post-election ferocious conflicts in Kenya and Cote d'Ivoire, trouble in Sudan and forced military coup to give back power to civilian regimes so that their economic and social development could be catered.

1.2. Problem Statement

The major challenges in Africa have been resulted in the deterioration of peace which has restricted the growth and development of African continent (Albrecht and Haenlein, 2016, p.50). The AU has been incorporating efforts in providing socio-economic development to the regain as well as sustainable growth. However, there have been number of aspects which are previous researches have not covered. Such as the role and performance of AU has been addressed in the research conducted by Ravenhill (1986) however the study has not catered the role and performance since the past two decades. Therefore, this research has been conducted in order to discuss the role and performance of AU in the past decades in order to highlight recent social developments being made on domestic and international level.

1.3. Aim and Objectives

The research is aimed at discussing the role and performance of African Union. For this purpose, the aim has been broken down into certain objectives which are as follows.

- To identify the role of African Union and its core objectives for formulation

- To examine the performance of African Union over the past two decades since its formation.
- To examine the succession and the outcomes of performance of African Union regarding social development in Africa
- To identify the challenges faced by African Union in the way of social development in Africa.

1.4. Research Questions

The specific research question asked in this context is as follows:

“What is the Role and Performance of African Union since its Formation?”

For this purpose, the research question has been further narrowed down into certain questions that are to be answered through this study and help in answering the core research question. The research sub-questions are as follows:

- What is the role of African Union and its core objectives for formulation?
- How has the African Union performed over the past two decades since its formation?
- What are the succession and the outcomes of performance of African Union regarding social development in Africa?
- What are the challenges faced by African Union in the way of social development in Africa.

1.5. Research Rationale and Significance

The rationale behind this study can be determined by the fact that there have been number of challenges being faced by AU since past few decades. Recently, major states in Africa have been facing socio-economic challenges which have been hindering the success, growth and development of African states (Hutchison, 2015). Amongst many other challenges, the main

challenges have been associated with higher poverty rates, lack of infrastructure, increasing population and social imbalance and discrimination. The major socio-economic challenges have been considered as the reason why there has been pertaining conflicts in the African continent. AU has been focusing on the notion of conflict management so that the mutual interest of the organizations could be catered. However, the mono-cultural economy has been resulted in the social distraught (Badmus, 2015). The major reason behind this notion is that the African boundaries are being stretched out without a single system of command. Along with the issue of peacekeeping there have been number of sociological developments lack in Africa such as larger population and extended families for which the union has been making measures in order to deal with the issues and contribute in socio-economic development of the nations in Africa.

The study has been conducted in order to discuss the role and performance of African Union. This research has been significant in order to construct knowledge about the role and performance of AU in the past few decades. Furthermore, the study has highlighted the core objectives of the formulation of AU as well as the outcomes of its performance which have been significant in identifying the future implication of AU. The study has added in the existing literature and filled the gap in the existing literature regarding the AU and its role since the past two decades.

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