

Factors Affecting the Implementation of Self Sustenance Strategic Plans by Seventh Day Adventist Churches in Kenya

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Abstract: *Strategy implementation involves converting strategic alternatives into operating plans. The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that affecting the implementation of self-sustenance strategic plans by Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Kenya. The study was guided by three theories: leadership theory, organizational culture theory and resource allocation theory. The study used a descriptive research design. The target population of this study was Board members of SDA churches in Nkoroi District of the SDA Church. The sample size of this study was 30 board members from Nkoroi District of the SDA Church. The findings of this study show that there is complementarity among the structures of the church, the Union conference does not interfere with strategy execution process in the church, there is a specific budget allocated for strategy implementation and the church has improved on technology to be more creative in strategy implementation. The study recommended that the organization should come up with an effective system of internal communication. SDA churches in Kenya should conduct a research on its culture. SDA churches leaders should consider motivating board members. Further studies should be conducted to identify other key factors affecting the successful implementation of strategy within SDA churches in Kenya*

Keywords: Strategy, Strategy implementation, Leadership, Organizational Culture, Resource Allocation

1. Introduction

The practice of strategic management has been adopted globally, and specifically in the religious sector, because of its supposed influence to organizational performance. According to Miller (2002), organisations fail to implement more than Seventy percent of their strategic initiatives.

Bridging the gap between strategy formulation and implementation has since long been experienced as challenging. Several studies have been done on challenges in strategy implementation in Kenya, the objective being to guide managers in avoiding these pitfalls.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Strategic management has itself been a challenge for Non-profit making organisations. The fact that multiple sources of funding are likely to exist, linked to the different objectives and expectations of the funding bodies, might also lead to a high incidence of political lobbying, difficulties in clear strategic planning, and a requirement to hold decision making and responsibility at the centre, where it is answerable to external influences, rather than delegate it within the organisation. (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2005)

Studies on religious institutions include Kakui (2010), who discovered that Christ is the Answer Ministries has adopted a formal strategic planning process. He however notes that factors influencing these strategic plans have not been studied. Kinyoe (2012) postulated that insufficient funding and staff motivation and retention are the major factors affecting strategy implementation challenges at Christian Health Association of Kenya. Kung'u (2007) researched on strategy implementation challenges in the main stream churches in Kenya. She concluded that organizational culture

not supporting strategy implementation, communication of problems to top management, as well as competing activities distracting attention from the intended strategy are the main factors affecting strategy implementation in mainstream churches in Nairobi.

Of all the studies done, none has specifically addressed the challenges likely to affect strategy implementation in Seventh day Adventist churches. This study therefore seeks to establish those factors that would promote successful implementation of strategic plans in Seventh-day Adventist churches in Kenya.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Resource Based View Theory

The Resource Based View developed as a complement to the industrial organization view with Bain (1968) and Porter (1985) as some of its main proponents. The industrial organization view put the determinants of firm performance outside the firm, in its industry's structure. This model underlines the importance of a firm's internal resources in gaining competitive advantage. Different resources, such as, physical resources, human resources, organizational resources give various contributions to the achievement of sustained competitive advantage. A holder of a resource is able to maintain a relative position vis-à-vis other holders as long as these act rationally (Wernerfelt, 1984).

SDA churches should be able to run all their activities by developing unique strategy and implement it while paying particular attention to resources within the institution. These strategies could include focus strategy, differentiation strategy among others to allow them to remain relevant in this competitive world as far as churches are concerned.

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2.2 Organizational Culture Theory

Organizational culture is the behaviour of humans within an organization and the meaning that people attach to those behaviours (Mintzberg, 2003). The theory further, indicates that organizational culture represents the collective values, beliefs and principles of organizational members. Organizations often have very differing cultures as well as subcultures. Although a company may have its "own unique culture", in larger organizations there are sometimes co-existing or conflicting subcultures because each subculture is linked to a different management team.

Schein (2005) stated that culture is the most difficult organizational attribute to change, outlasting organizational products, services, founders and leadership and all other physical attributes of the organization. His organizational model illuminates culture from the standpoint of the observer, described at three levels: artefacts, espoused values and basic underlying assumptions.

This theory could help our study, to value the board members in SDA churches, who are always ready to implement a strategy in the church on benevolent level. This would allow the management team of the church to set aside something as allowance, gift, to give the board members once they sit for a meeting of implementation of a strategy in the church.

2.3 Contingency Theory

This is one of the leadership theories. Contingency theory is a class of behavioural theory that claims that there is no best way to organize a firm, to lead a company, or to make decisions. Instead, the optimal course of action is contingent (dependent) upon the internal and external situations. Contingency theory (Johnsen, 2005) states that complex organizations use performance measurement to reduce uncertainty and for legitimacy. Historically, contingency theory has sought to formulate broad generalizations about the formal structures that are typically associated with or best fit the use of different technologies.

The perspective argued that technologies directly determine differences in such organizational attributes as span of control, centralization of authority, and the formalization of rules and procedures.

This theory argues that the best way to organize depends on the nature of the environment to which the organization must relate. Organizations are open systems that need careful management to satisfy and balance internal needs and to adapt to environmental circumstances. There is no one best way of organizing. The appropriate form depends on the kind of task or environment one is dealing with. Management must therefore be concerned, above all else, with achieving alignments and good fits. Different types of organizations are needed in different types of environments. In the current study, contingency theory is applicable in emphasizing on the leadership in implementation of strategy in the organization.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The study adopted the following conceptual framework:

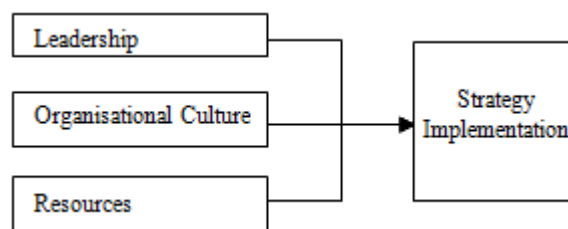


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Research Methodology

To develop an understanding of what challenges are faced in the implementation of strategic plans by Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Kenya, this study adopted both a descriptive and correlational research design. Correlational design entails reporting on condition of relationships as they exist. The approach explains the uniqueness of a particular individual or group. In this type of research design, the researcher has no control over the variables; they can only report on the occurrence (Kothari, 2004).

Hopkins (2000) elucidates that correlational research mainly establishes the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent or outcome in a population, ascertaining the correlations and causality between variables. This explains majorly why this design was employed: the fact that it facilitated an assessment of how each individual factor of the three considered in this study; leadership style, organizational culture and resource allocation contribute towards the Implementation of strategic plan in SDA Kenya. This research also consisted of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. While the qualitative approach involves subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour, the quantitative technique is used in presenting numerical information.

A sampling frame is a comprehensive list of all sampling units, which a sample can be selected, (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The sampling frame is the list of the board members of SDA churches in Nkoroi District found in the District Clerk's office. Through this list the researcher was able to get the board members who are involved in implementing strategic plan in SDA churches.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define population as a whole group of persons or individuals, events or objects with common observable characteristics. On the other hand, target population implies to the population which a researcher intends to generalize the study findings (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The population of the study was the seven SDA churches of Nkoroi District. The five churches were selected by use of convenience sampling method. Kombo & Tromp (2006) defined convenience sampling as a method which is based on the people who were a captive audience. This is the use of the people who are readily available and willing to give information concerning the research. The sampling frame was the board members and the sample size for the

study was 30 board members which was sufficient for the study.

Table 2.1: Board Members Nkoroi District 2016

<i>Churches</i>	<i>Board Members</i>
Rimpa	6
Kiserian South	6
Kandisi	6
Kiserian Central	6
Nkoroi SDA church	6
Total	30

This section examined the sampling technique and sample size. The study utilized a sample size of 30 respondents which involved in implementation of a strategic plan in SDA Nkoroi District. The study adopted the proportionate stratified sampling method. The stratified sampling method measures the overall population parameters with greater precision and ensures an extraction of a representative sample from a relatively homogenous population (Kothari, 2004).

The stratified sampling also reduces the standard errors through having a greater control over the variance. On the other hand, the proportionate stratification ensures that the sample size of each stratum is proportionate to the population size of the stratum (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The proportionate stratified sampling was adopted because it provides a better precision than a simple random sampling of the same size.

For primary data, in this study, questionnaires were used to collect data. The questionnaires comprised of both open and closed ended questions. The choice of this method of data collection was based on the fact that questionnaires are low cost even when the population is large; it is free from the bias of the interviewer (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The use of questionnaires in this case was important so as to be able to obtain personal data from the respondents that would be otherwise impossible to collect by other means.

This study collected primary data. Structured questionnaire comprising of close-ended questions was used to collect data. The questionnaires was administered using the drop and pick later method. The data collected was both qualitative and quantitative in nature.

The questionnaires had four sections; Part A on demographic information and the others the factors that affect strategy implementation.

Data was analysed quantitatively. Quantitative analysis was the use of numeric measures to the scores of various responses on the factors affecting strategy implementation. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 for analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse quantitative data. In descriptive statistics, the study used frequency, mean, standard deviation and percentages. The analysed information was then presented in tables and figures.

4. Summary of Findings

The study established that there is a strategic plan at all churches in Nkoroi district of the SDA Church. The implementation of this strategy is guided by the mission, vision, goals and objectives. However, there are some challenges to implement it such as poor communication between the chairperson and board members, board members lacking sufficient time to evaluate the strategic plan and poor monitoring on projects progress or challenges.

The study sought to assess whether organizational structure influences implementation of strategic management plans in the SDA church. The findings of this study show that there is complementarity among the structures of the church which is centered on effective communication between local church and local conference as far as strategy implementation is concerned. The Union conference does not interfere with strategy execution process in the church. This confirmed by the active participation of pastors to implement the strategic plan of the church. The study found that the limitation of the structure is that the believers are not direct involved in strategy implementation and the board members do not have sufficient skills and knowledge to implement a strategy.

The study sought to assess whether resource allocation influences implementation of strategic management plans in the SDA church. The findings show that there is a specific budget allocated for strategy implementation and the church has improved on technology to be more creative in strategy implementation. There are enough facilities like offices to help the board members to use during the meetings of strategy implementation. The study found that there is a challenge in human resources, whereby board members are not given salary to motivate them in their everyday activities of the church. They work as volunteers. They are not also sent for further studies to improve their skills and knowledge in strategy implementation.

Lastly the study sought to determine the influence of organizational culture to strategic plan implementation in the SDA church. The findings of the study show that there is positive relationship between organizational culture and strategy implementation but not significant. The church is committed to the welfare of believers, because of the family spirit. This brings out the strong sense of shared values, cohesions, team work among other values. The structured rules and policies govern the believers to actively implement a strategy where are involved. This shows that the church has a high adaptability culture as the believers are willing to take risks and open to the new ideas. However, many do's and don'ts can influence strategy implementation in one way or another.

5. Recommendations

The study further revealed that efficient communication should give comprehensible explanations of new duties, responsibilities and obligations. In this regard, the study

recommends that the organization should come up with an effective system of internal communication that will ensure that new duties, responsibilities and obligations are well communicated within the organization. The system should be timely and should offer both significant and valid information to the members of the organization.

The study established that the do's and don'ts affected the strategy implementation. Therefore, the study recommends that SDA churches in Kenya conduct research on its culture to identify it and to come up with a set of do's and don'ts which do not hinder strategy implementation. This will help the planning department to guard against the possible adverse effects of organizational culture on strategy implementation.

The study established that the human resource is not fully taken care of. The board members are not sent for further studies and are not given a salary for their everyday activities done for the church. Therefore, SDA churches leaders need to come up with a strategy which will help the board members of the church to attend that the board members should be given a salary. This will help them to work hard in planning the activities of the implementation strategy.

The study was based on SDA churches in Kenya, and specifically Nkoroi SDA church. Therefore, the study recommends further study can be done in other major SDA churches. Further, the study focused on three variables namely: Leadership, organizational culture and resources allocation. Further studies should be conducted to identify other key factors affecting the successful implementation of strategy within SDA churches in Kenya. Finally the same study can be conducted to the other churches like Roman Catholic, Islam, among others.

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