

LEADERSHIP ACTION TOWARDS SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN IN NONPROFIT ORGANISATIONS

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Abstract

Strategic implementation has remained a big challenge for leaders in nonprofit organisations. It is easy to draft a strategic document without practical steps to implement the plan. The role of leaders is very crucial in planning how the organisation will succeed through critical engagement with resource personnel in developing a meaningful strategic document that will guide them on a daily basis to accomplish organisational goals. The purpose of this study is to find out the factors that hinder the implementation of the strategic plan among leaders at Karen Community Church Nairobi Kenya. This study identified five hindrances to the implementation of strategic plans. These include having a bad strategic plan, lack of commitment to the strategic plan, lack of communication of strategic objectives, lack of motivation of workers, and a lack of financial mobilisation. Based on this, the bridge gap model was proposed to help local church leaders overcome the challenges faced between what is planned and its implementation. The approach used is a quantitative method using a descriptive survey design to describe the phenomenon under study. Additionally, the regression model was used to test the strength of the relationship between variables. Conversely, a review of the literature was carried out to understand the concept of strategic planning and implementation.

Keywords: Leadership, Strategic plan, Strategic implementation, Situational analysis, Non-profit organisation.

INTRODUCTION

The role of leaders in nonprofit organisations is essential for the accomplishment of organisational goals. The difference between a nonprofit organisation and a profit-oriented organisation is based on profit earning and services. Anthony comments that "a nonprofit organisation exists to render a service; its success is measured primarily by how well it renders this service" (Anthony, 1977, p. 7). To render quality services in nonprofit organisations requires effective planning and successful implementation of a plan. Bryson and Alston (2005) defined a strategic plan as "a way of thinking, acting, and learning which usually takes a comprehensive view by focusing on the big picture, but it also leads to specific targeted action" (p. 3). A good strategic plan gives proper direction to a better future through daily engagement with the strategic document to accomplish organisational goals. Nonprofit organisations offer services to the community to meet the spiritual, social, health and vocational needs of the society. Examples of nonprofit organisations include local churches, charity organisations, and self-help groups.

Purpose of studies

This paper purposefully aimed at finding out the factors that hinder the implementation of the strategic plan at Karen Community Church in Nairobi, Kenya. The bridge gap model was proposed as an effective tool in helping local church leaders overcome the challenges faced in the implementation of a strategic plan.

Research Problem

Many established local churches in Kenya have developed a strategic plan to guide them to accomplish the mission mandate of the church. However, the challenge faced between what is planned and the execution has remained a big challenge for local church leaders. Dym and Hutson note that "there are two crucial challenges to meet in order to move from idea to concrete plans. First, the vision must be turned into a blueprint for future action, from personal discussion to practical plans; second, leaders must emerge to consolidate its role" (Dym and Hutson, 2005, p. 85). The leadership role is very crucial to overcome the challenges faced in the implementation of a strategic plan. A strategic plan takes time and resources to prepare. However, very little of it gets successfully implemented.

The corporate graveyard of strategy implementation is littered with organisations that have failed to make their strategies come alive. Despite the best intention of the leaders and organisations, report shows that 9 out of 10 strategies fail to be implemented successfully (Bridges, 2016).

A strategic plan is an effective tool which gives clear direction to what the organisation stands for and what it set to accomplish within a specific period of time. Planning is part of God's agenda for the church. Thus, leaders are expected to have basic skills in the preparation of strategic plan and implementation.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study.

1. What are the factors that hinder the successful implementation of a strategic plan?
2. What could be done to successfully implement a strategic plan?

Research Hypothesis

H₁ =Bad strategic planning affects the implementation of strategic plans.

H₂=Lack of timely communication of strategic objectives affects the implementation of strategic plans.

H₃=Lack of leadership commitment to strategic planning affects the implementation of strategic plans.

H₄=Lack of motivation of lay workers and staff members affects the implementation of a strategic plan.

H₅=Lack of financial mobilization affects the implementation of a strategic plan.

This study is hoped help local church leaders to identify the factors that affect the implementation of a strategic plan. This will in turn provide adequate information in overcoming the problem of strategic implementation. Subsequently, the study will add knowledge in academia because of the introduction of the bridge gap model. The model is designed to help local church leaders to bridge the gap faced in the implementation of the strategic plan in order to fulfill organisational goals. However, this study having been conducted at Karen Community Church in Kenya in 2016 might lack the strength in generalisation of the results to other nonprofit organisations. Nonetheless, nonprofit organisations with similar characteristics (Church) can benefit from the study.

LITERATURE UNDERPINNING

An overview of the strategic plan and implementation

Malphurs (1999) defined a strategic plan as “envisioning process that a point leader uses with a team of leaders on a regular basis to think and act so as to design and redesign a specific ministry model that accomplishes the great commission in their unique ministry context” (p. 26). A strategic plan requires daily commitment from leaders to succeed. A strategic plan is an effective document that gives a clear description of the mission mandate of the organisation and what it set to accomplish within a specified period. Rumelt observed that:

A good strategy has an essential logical structure that I call the kernel. The kernel of a strategy contains three elements: a diagnosis, a guiding policy, and coherent action. The guiding policy specifies the approach to dealing with obstacles called out in the diagnosis. It is like a signpost, marking the direction forward but not defining the details of the trip. Coherent actions are feasible coordinated policies, resources commitments, and actions designed to carry out the policy (2011, p. 7).

A strategic plan can be implemented successfully. Nevertheless, it requires coherent action by leaders. Coherent action involves logical deliberations on strategic objectives in order to implement a strategic plan. The diagnosis element helps to identify specific needs and challenges within the organisation so that effective measures are outlined in overcoming the problem. Bryson and Alston state that "organisational barriers to success should be identified and evaluated, and a plan or strategy should be developed to address them" (Bryson & Alston, 2005, p. 27). The SWOT analysis is often used to identify specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges within an organisation. This is done through careful investigation. Barry (1997) identified five steps in the development of a strategic plan. These are explained below:

Get Organized: The process includes discerning the right timing to begin the process of strategic plan, identify the right people to engage in the drafting of the strategic document, outline the planning steps and getting approval from members of the organisation to proceed with the drafting of the strategic plan.

Take Stock (Situation Analysis): Taking proper stock of the past and the current situation in the organisation will enable leaders to identify specific needs to include in their plan and critical issues to clarify as they prepare the strategic plan.

Set Direction: Leaders give direction towards the success of the organisation. They envision the future success of the organisation by developing a meaningful strategy in accomplishing their mission mandate.

Refine and Adopt the Plan: Leaders are to give some time off to read through the document to identified areas that needs further clarification and amendment. Subsequently, leaders ensure that the document is available to members of their organisation to assess before calling for the adoption of the drafted strategic plan. This approach enables members of the organisation to earn ownership of the strategic plan. This will play a significant role in the implementation of the strategic plan.

Implement the Plan: The implementation stage involves a periodic evaluation of the document to monitor the progress achieved. It also involves a commitment to the strategic plans by leaders through a progressive report on what has been achieved and the challenges encountered so that appropriate adjustment is made to improve the strategic plan.

The steps outlined above are fundamental in achieving a meaningful strategy. A good strategic plan gives a clear description of the vision, mission, core values, strategic objectives, the internal and external resources, foreseeable threats and how they can be overcome. A strategic plan will fail to be implemented when it is poorly prepared. Hence, the implementation of a strategic plan is determined based on how good the strategy is prepared and how committed leaders are to their strategic plan. The way to get committed to the strategic plan is to monitor the progress by organising a periodic meeting where each departmental leaders give a progressive report on how they have engaged with the document and the successes they have achieved and the challenges encountered.

Strategic Implementation

Strategic implementation “is the process that turns strategies and plans into actions in order to accomplish strategic objectives and goals” (Olsen, 2019). To fulfill organisational goals requires an action plan by leaders. No matter how good a strategy might look, it requires some level of commitment by leaders. Johnson, Scholes and Whittington gave an insightful illustration to explain reasons why strategic plans may fail to be implemented as thus:

The successes or failure of strategies will be related to three main success criteria:

- suitability is concerned with whether a strategy addresses the strategic position of the organisation; it is about the rationale of a strategy.
- The acceptability of a strategy relates to three issues: the expected return from a strategy, the level of risk and likely reactions of stakeholders.
- Feasibility is concerned with whether an organization has or can obtain the capabilities to deliver strategy (2008, p. 383)

A strategic plan will fail to be implemented when the motive behind the development of the strategic plan is wrong or when the strategic objectives are not realistic. This will prevent members of the organisation from working concurrently with their leaders in the implementation of the plan. The purpose of the development of a strategic plan is to give a proper description of what the organisation aims to accomplish within a specific period. Bryson (2011) identified six benefits of strategy as thus:

Promotion of strategic thinking: Strategic thinking helps leaders to think through the process of the strategic plan in order to develop a meaningful document which clarifies the mission mandate of the organisation and the action plan required in the achievement of goals. Strategic thinking involves a thoughtful and comprehensive examination of the internal and external environment to determine what will succeed and the threat that will prevent the achievement of goals. The assessment will help to set priorities for what the organisation desires to achieve within a specific period of time.

Improve decision making: Critical issues facing the success of any organisation are best handled through effective and collective decision making. A strategic plan is beneficial to organisational success because it influences decision-making in different prospects and also enables leaders to focus on set priorities to accomplish organisational goals.

Enhanced organisational effectiveness: A strategic plan helps to give proper direction to what an organisation set to accomplish within a specific period. It helps in the improvement of workers’ effectiveness because it gives detailed information of what is expected from individual members of the organisation to accomplish that period.

Enhanced organisational legitimacy: A strategic plan enables an organisation to attain justification in all it set to achieve based on a clear mission mandate. People want to partner with an organisation whose mission

statement is clearly defined. A good strategic plan specifies the vision of the organisation, the mission statement, and strategic objectives. These elements build confidence among stakeholders without any doubt that the organization has received a legitimate right to operate.

Enhanced effectiveness of broader societal systems: A strategic plan does not focus only on the internal environment but also extends its boundaries to a broader society to render effective services. An organisation exists to offer quality services within its threshold by identifying specific needs within the external environment and then planning on how to address those needs.

A strategic plan can directly benefit the people involved: Working on a strategic plan is a learning experience for people who are privileged to be involved in the planning process. It helps leaders to be aware of their roles and then work more effectively towards the fulfillment of organisational goals.

Many research studies have been conducted in nonprofit organisations to determine the factors that hinder the implementation of a strategic plan. For example, Mutuvi (2013) carried out quantitative research to investigate factors affecting the implementation of the strategic plan among leaders in 186 non-profit organisations operating within Nairobi County, Kenya. The study revealed that lack of organisational skills and capabilities, organisational structure, reward and incentives, policies and procedures, information systems and procedures, budgets and resource allocation, workplace culture, and top management commitment are the factors that affect the successful implementation of a strategic plan. These factors were internal problems that can be solved through effective communication, remuneration packages, staff training, continuous motivation, stakeholder involvement, budget plan, resource mobilisation, recruitment and engaging employees in decision making.

Awuor (2017) conducted a qualitative study at Mercy Corps in Kenya to determine factors influencing strategic implementation. The sample involved leaders from the country office, as well as staff from the logistic and finance departments. In response to the challenges of strategic implementation, the study revealed five factors that hinder the implementation of a strategic plan. These include an unpredictable external environment, poor communication, inadequate resources, lack of ownership of strategy and non-involvement in strategic implementation.

Oyango (2017) conducted mixed-method research to investigate the challenges faced by leaders in the implementation of the strategic plan at All Saints Cathedral Church based on the strategic plans of 2007-2011 and 2012-2016. About 57.1% of employees indicated that the hybrid nature of the church's organisational structure affects the implementation of a strategic plan. Some employees find it difficult to know who they are answerable to since they report to different supervisors. The problem of structure has caused an overly elaborate strategic plan. The elaborate plan requires more people to be employed to actualize the plan but due to financial constraints, the church was not able to hire more employees. Conversely, 71.4% of the respondents confirmed that leadership plays a significant role in the implementation of the strategic plan. The challenge of frequent transition of leadership in the church affects the implementation of the plan. A leader who is not interested in the strategic plan will not be committed to it. About 57.1%, of the respondents denote that lack of interest in the strategic plan and tribal loyalties are the major factors that affect the implementation of the strategic plan.

THE BRIDGE GAP MODEL IN STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

A strategic plan is an effective tool that gives clarity on the mission mandate of an organisation and what the organization aims to achieve within a specific period. Many nonprofit organizations have developed a strategic plan to guide them to accomplish their mission mandate. However, the challenges faced in the implementation of the strategic plan have remained difficult for leaders in nonprofit organisations. A bridge gap model is an effective tool that can be employed within the church context to help church leaders to develop a meaningful strategic plan that can be implemented successfully.

Theoretical conception of the bridge gap model

The bridge gap model describes the processes involved in the strategic plan and implementation. It identifies the various factors that affect the implementation of a strategic plan and the steps that can be taken by church leaders to implement a strategic plan. A strategic plan is developed after the diagnostic of needs is completed. The manner at which a strategic plan is prepared will determine if the strategic plan will be implemented. The implementation stage focuses on the leadership commitment to the strategic plan and leadership skills in motivation, communication, and financial mobilisation. The vetting factor mediates between the strategic planning process and the implementation of the plan. It helps to evaluate the strategic document to identify areas

of weakness in order to review the document. It also helps to monitor the progress of leaders towards the implementation of a strategic plan. Figure 1 describes the different components of the bridge gap model.

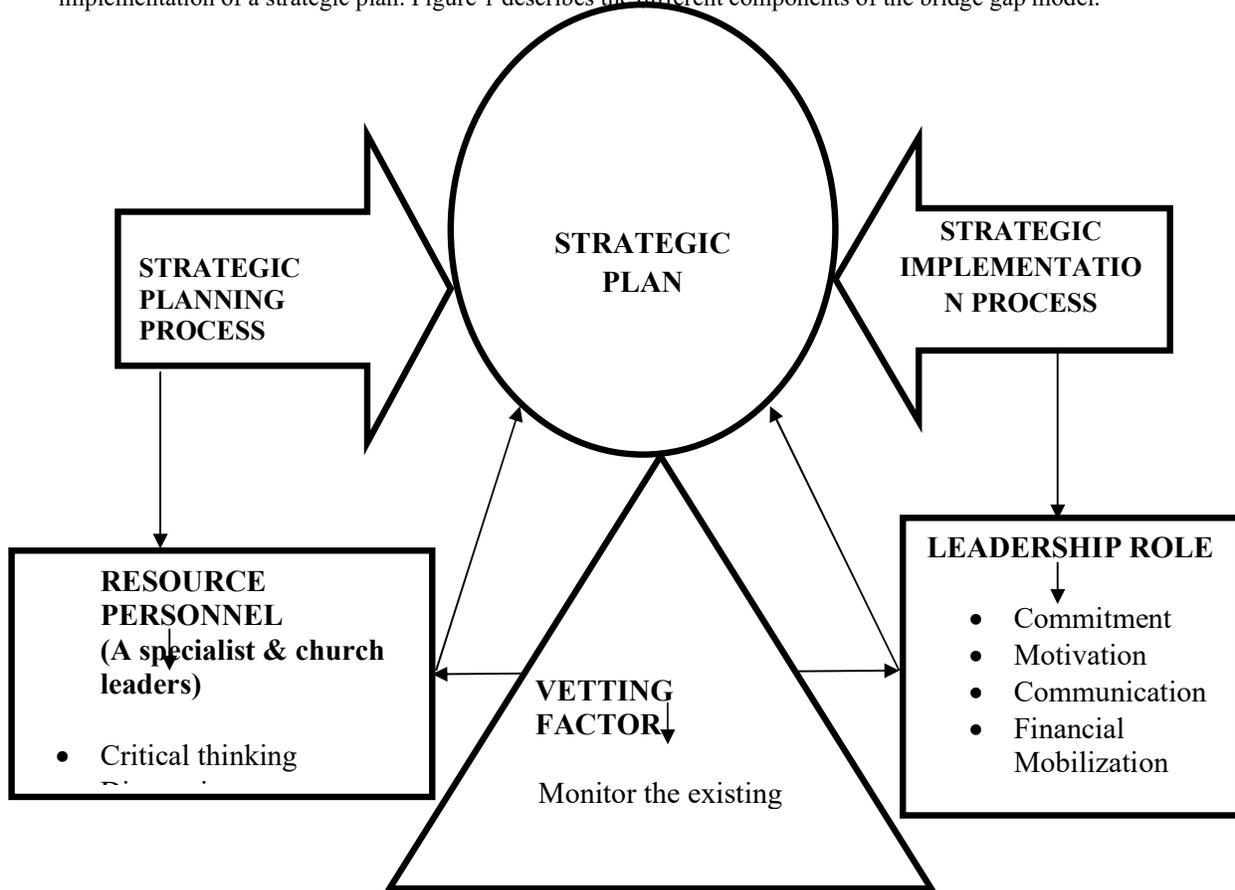


Figure 1. The bridge gap model in strategic planning and implementation
Operational statement of the bridge gap model

The bridge gap model will help church leaders to overcome the challenges faced between what is planned and the implementation. A strategic plan begins with critical thinking through resource personnel who engage in the process of a strategic plan by diagnosing the internal and external situation within the church context to be able to prepare a good strategic plan that will help the church to fulfil its mission on earth. However, the strategic plan remains not only on paper, but requires an action plan to achieve its objectives. The bridge gap model illustrates the various steps to consider before embarking on a strategic plan and the factors required to effectively implement the strategic plan.

Explanation of the components of the bridge gap model

Strategic plan: A strategic plan is a process of planning adequately what to accomplish within a specific time and also making a deliberate effort to implement the plan.

Planning process: The planning process is the preparatory stage which requires an invitation of a strategic specialist and few selected church leaders to participate in the development of a strategic plan. The planning process involves critical thinking to be able to identify specific needs and foreseen challenges. The process helps in the utilisation of resources to fulfill organisational goals. It also helps to offer a solution to the identified problem within the context of the organisation.

Resource personnel: This is the selection of a strategic plan specialist and experienced church leaders to assist in the preparation of the strategic plan.

Diagnosis: This is the point of critical examination of the internal and external factors within the church territory. The internal factors include: The vision, mission, and objective of the church. It answers the question "who we are as a church and what we are called to accomplish on earth." The external factor includes the strength of the church in terms of membership, intellectuals, structure and funds and also the opportunities within the environment and the foreseen threats.

Implementation: This is the action plan required to accomplish set goals. The implementation process consists of the following action plan.

- **Leadership commitment:** Commitment to a church strategic plan is a personal decision a leader makes to offer quality services in the church for God's glory. It requires reading the strategic document constantly and acting by it to accomplish set goals.
- **The motivation of lay workers:** Acquiring basic skills in motivation. Motivation stimulates desire towards the accomplishment of set goals.
- **Communication of strategic objectives:** Acquiring basic skills in communication. Communication helps to remind leaders of what they have planned and to involve members of their congregation to work effectively towards the accomplishment of their strategic plan.
- **Financial mobilization:** Acquiring basic skills in financial mobilisation. Finance is required to execute a planned project.
- **The vetting factor:** The vetting factor evaluates the existing strategic document quarterly to identify areas that need improvement and to examine the progress made so far. The vetting factor answers the question "what shall we include in our plans? And what shall we do to accomplish our plans?"

In response to the planning process, Bishop (1985) infers that situational analysis is an important area to consider before developing a meaningful curriculum design. The process involves a realistic assessment of the situation within the organisational context to identify specific resources that can be utilised and the challenges to confront by devising a possible solution to the problems. Two important areas were considered in situation analysis. 1) The external factors are the assessment of the external environment to identify specific needs in the community such as economic, spiritual, social and political needs. 2) The internal factors are the assessment of the internal environment to identify specific needs. Situation analysis can be applied in a different context to identify specific needs.

A strategic plan is a meaningful document that requires adequate planning in order to achieve a meaningful outcome. According to Bryson, "to respond effectively to changes public and nonprofit organisations must understand their external and internal contexts so they can develop effective strategies" (1988, p. 82). The internal and external factors are determined through SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis techniques. Wijngaarden defined SWOT analysis as "a tool developed for strategic analysis. It consists of a confrontation between external developments and internal capabilities. External developments are identified as either opportunities or threats for the organization; internal capabilities are described as strong or weak points of the organization" (2012, p. 4). The SWOT analysis helps in the process of a strategic plan to identify specific needs and foreseen challenges within the organisation.

In response to strategic implementation, Gleeson (2019) avers that 20-30 percent of the strategic plan in a corporate organisation fails to be implemented. The author, therefore, suggested five ways to implement a strategic plan. 1) Getting started early entails an understanding of the strategic document and to begin the process of implementation immediately after the completion of the strategic document. 2) Commitment and consensus involve leadership and stakeholder commitment to the strategic plan. The most effective way to get people committed to a strategic plan is through effective communication. Communication helps people to understand the strategic document and to work suitably towards the fulfillment of the plan. 3) Reinforcement and incentives are motivational skills applied to ensure that goals are achieved. Meaningful enforcement and incentives strategy can help leaders in an organisation to get people committed to the strategic plan. 4) Paying the costs requires adequate planning to fund the project through budgeting. Strategic planning will fail to be implemented when the financial issue is not deliberated on during the development of the strategic plan. 5) Relation to external conditions should be considered at the early stage of the development of the strategic document. Matters to do with the country's economy, cost, politics and other related matters could affect the implementation of the strategic plan. However, these challenges can be overcome through planning at the early stage of the strategic plan. 6) Establishing benchmarks and oversight practices is a monitoring initiative that helps to keep track of the plan. It requires a progressive report on the strategic plan and deliberations with stakeholders from time to time. 7) Building in updates and revisions calls for a review of the strategic document periodically to address contemporary issues.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study is a quantitative method using a descriptive survey design. Purposive sampling technique was used for the collection of data. According to Kombo and Tromp, "in this sampling method, the researcher purposely targets a group of people believed to be reliable for the study" (2006, p. 82). The target population for this study consists of church pastors, elders, and small group leaders. The sample size was drawn from 58 ministry leaders. Data was collected and analysed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The outcome of the data is represented in percentages, frequencies, tables, and pie-charts. Conversely, regression analysis was used to test the significant relationship between variables at a significant level of 5%.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Factors that Hinder Successful Implementation of a Strategic Plan

The study revealed five factors affecting the implementation of a strategic plan. These include:

A bad strategic plan

Most of the respondents (73.56%) noted that some important elements were not captured in the strategic plan. For instance, the environmental scanning section which clearly explains the strength, weakness, opportunities and foreseen threats within the organisation was missing. The omission of these important parts shows that the strategic plan was poorly prepared.

Hypothesis 1: A bad strategic plan will affect the implementation of the strategic plan.

Table 1: Bad strategic plan

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.033	1	.033	.126	.725 ^b
	Residual	13.213	51	.259		
	Total	13.245	52			

a. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans
b. Predictors: (Constant), Preparation process of KCC strategic plan

The calculated value of the regression analysis shows that the p-value is greater than 5%. ($0.725 > 0.05$). Therefore, we fail to reject Hypothesis 1 and conclude that a bad strategic plan hinders strategic implementation. Rumelt avers that bad strategy fails to recognise or define the challenge. "When you cannot define the challenge, you cannot evaluate a strategy or improve it" (Rumelt, 2011, p. 32). The various components of the strategic plan need to be clearly understood by members of the organisation so that goals are achieved.

Lack of communication of strategic objectives

Almost half of the respondents (41.51%) indicated that a lack of timely communication of strategic objectives affects the implementation of a strategic plan. This was statistically tested through regression analysis. The outcome of the test is shown in the table below.

Hypothesis 2. Lack of timely communication of strategic objectives affects the implementation of a strategic plan.

Table 2: Communication of strategy

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.033	1	.033	.127	.723 ^b
	Residual	13.212	51	.259		
	Total	13.245	52			

a. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans
b. Predictors: (Constant), communication of strategic objectives

The calculated value of the regression analysis shows that the p-value is greater than 5% ($0.723 > 0.05$). Therefore, we fail to reject the second hypothesis and conclude that the lack of timely communication of strategic objectives affects the implementation of a strategic plan. According to Bryson and Alston, “successful organizations transmit clear messages, have well-developed communication networks, and have adequate forums to promote discussion and dialogue” (2005, p. 29). An organisation is made up of people who share a common interest at work. Thus, communication of strategic objectives gives clear direction to what the organisation is set to accomplish within a specific period. Effective communication must be timely and precise for people to take action.

Lack of commitment to a strategic plan

A significant number of the respondents (32.08%) affirm that lack of leadership commitment to strategic plans is one of the hindrances to the implementation process for the said strategic plans. This was statistically confirmed as depicted in Table 3.

Hypothesis 3. *Lack of leadership commitment to strategy will affect the implementation of a strategic plan.*

Table 3: Leadership commitment

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.691	1	.691	2.806	.100 ^b
	Residual	12.554	51	.246		
	Total	13.245	52			

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of strategic plans
b. Predictors: (Constant), level of commitment to a strategic plan

The calculated value of the regression analysis shows that the p-value is greater than 5%. ($0.10 > 0.05$). Therefore, we fail to reject the alternative hypothesis and conclude that the lack of leadership commitment to a strategic plan affects the implementation of a strategic plan. This confirms Floyd and Wooldridge's assertion that “implementation problems are often the result of poor middle management understanding and commitment to strategy” (1992, p. 2). Commitment to a strategic plan means setting an action plan in reaching set objectives. When leaders are committed to their set objectives it builds trust among their followers that the leader is serious and willing to work along with them to accomplish set goals.

Lack of motivation of lay workers

A majority of leaders (50.94%) indicated that they neither visit weekly, monthly or yearly to pray and encourage staff members and lay-workers in the church because of their busy schedule in the workplace. When lay-workers in the church are encouraged through prayer and words of affirmation, it stimulates a desire to work towards the accomplishment of organisational goals. Lack of motivation of lay workers affects the implementation of a strategic plan. This was statically tested in Table 4.

Hypothesis 4. *Lack of motivation of lay workers and staff members will affect the implementation of a strategic plan.*

Table 4: Motivation of lay workers

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.705	1	.705	2.865	.097 ^b
	Residual	12.541	51	.246		
	Total	13.245	52			

a. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plan

b. Predictors: (Constant), visit staff members and lay workers to pray and encourage them.

The calculated value of the regression analysis shows that the p-value is greater than 5% ($0.97 > 0.05$). Therefore, we fail to reject the alternative hypothesis and conclude that the lack of motivation of lay workers and staff members affects the implementation of a strategic plan. In previous studies conducted to determine what motivates lay workers in the church to work effectively, most of the respondents admitted that they feel motivated through verbal appreciation and prayer by their pastor (Chukwuma, 2017). Motivation plays a significant role in the implementation of a strategic plan because it stimulates desire in people towards the goal of the organisation.

Lack of Finances

A significant number of respondents (22.64%) indicated that lack of finance is one of the factors that hinder the implementation of strategic plan. This was statically tested in Table 5.

Table 5: Lack of Finances

ANOVA Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.002	1	.002	.009	.923 ^b
	Residual	13.243	51	.260		
	Total	13.245	52			

a. Dependent Variable: implementation of strategic plans
b. Predictors: (Constant), Lack of Finances

The calculated value of the regression analysis shows that the p-value is greater than 5% ($0.923 > 0.05$). Therefore, we fail to reject the alternative hypothesis and conclude that the lack of financial mobilisation affects the implementation of a strategic plan. Baker and Powel stated that “financial management is an integrated decision-making process concerned with acquiring function and management and managing assets to accomplish some overall goal within a business entity” (Baker and Powel, 2005, p. 4). Finances are required to implement a strategic plan. Decisions are taken by leaders to fundraise for implementation of projects. Therefore, leaders need to ask critical questions such as:

- What assets do we have that can generate funds to implement our strategic plan?
- Do we have enough funds to engage in a different project in the proposed strategic plan?
- How do we mobilize funds to implement our strategic plan?

How to successfully implement a strategic plan

The findings presented in Figure 2 illustrate the ways of implementing a strategic plan. According to the study, proper communication of strategic objective was seen as the most valuable option with the highest number (39.62%) of respondents as suggested ways of successful implementation of a strategic plan. Other suggested ways include leadership commitment to the strategic plan, fundraising, review of the strategic plan, proper coordination represented by (22.64%, 16.98%, 15.09% and 5.66%) respectively.

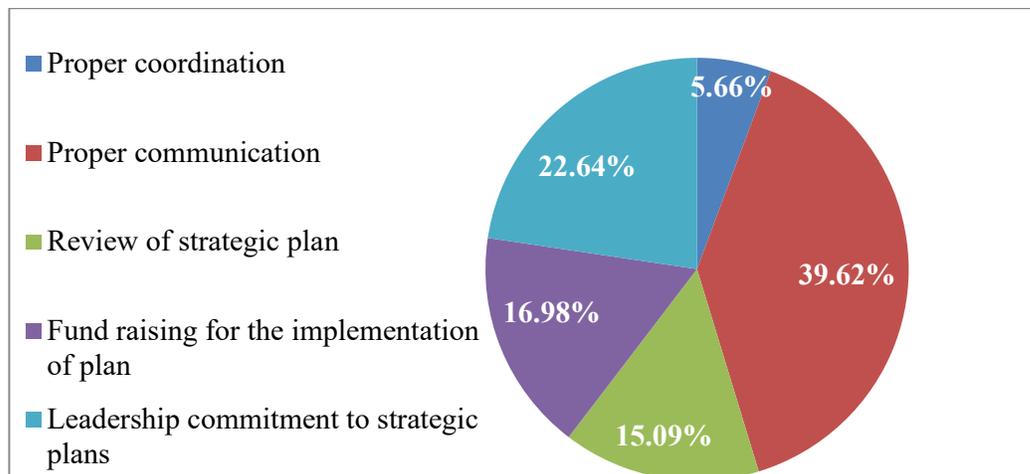


Figure 2: The ways of implementing a strategic plan

CONCLUSION

The implementation of strategic plans is possible. However, a lot of effort is required by leaders to ensure that the plan which costs a lot of time, resources and energy to prepare is subsequently implemented. It is obvious that a bad strategic plan, lack of leadership commitment, lack of communication, lack of motivation of lay-workers and lack of financial mobilisation are main factors that hinder the implementation of a strategic plan. Hence, overcoming these challenges requires leadership action in acquiring basic skills in strategic planning, communicate, motivate and financial mobilization. In addition, being committed to a strategic plan is important. Commitment to a strategic plan is an attitude that does not need training but requires a personal commitment to God and to His service. Leaders in the church should therefore make a personal commitment to God to serve Him with their whole heart.

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