
Original Research

**CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN ON
ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF SELIAN LUTHERAN HOSPITAL
IN ARUSHA DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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Abstract

The study aimed to examine challenges of implementation of strategic plan on organisation performance a case of Selian Lutheran Hospital. The specific objective was to determine whether financial resources hinder strategy plan implementation. Resource-Based Theory was employed. The study adopted a descriptive research design and mixed research approach. The total population was 237 staff while the sample size was 70 staff. A convenient sampling technique was used. Data collection methods involved Interview which involved interviewing 8 Hospital Management Team and Questionnaires for 53 middle-level staff and 9 lower-level staff. Quantitative data was analysed through descriptive statistics elements of frequencies and percentages with the support of SPSS for generating analytical data, while qualitative data was analysed through Thematic Method. The study findings confirm that there is a challenge on the financial aspect and affects performance. The hospital budget depends on unreliable sources. Plans are not sufficiently allocated money, delay of fund for operational activities, the exact budget allocated for operational activities is sometimes not received and delay in payment of staff remunerations. The effects of these challenges on organisation performance are, unattained of some annual plans, re-planning of some activities, inability to purchase and maintain some machines, unsatisfactory quality service to customers in some areas. The researcher recommends the hospital management to increase income generation sources, improve quality of services, have unique services to attract more customers, strengthen and maintain a positive relationship with current donors and well-wishers and increase funding raised from local and international donors.

Keywords: *Strategic Plan, Strategic Plan Implementation, Organisation Performance*

1. Introduction

Managers spend billions of dollars on consulting and training in the hope to create excellent strategies. But all too often excellent strategies do not translate into brilliant performance (Verweire 2018). No matter how excellent the strategy is, it has to be well implemented to achieve the intended result. Effective strategy implementation has a positive contribution to overall organisational performance (Adegbuyi et al 2015). Successful strategy formulation does not guarantee successful strategy implementation. It is always more difficult to do strategy implementation than strategy formulation. Implementing strategy affects an organisation from top to bottom; it affects all the functional and divisional areas of a business (David 2011).

Improving the performance of an organisation is a great interest of all leaders in all organisational, therefore they stress the strong link between business strategies, management activities and organisational performance because often best business strategies produces exceptional organisational performance (Adegbuyi et al 2015). Despite the importance of strategic plan implementations, the execution of strategic plan has been facing different challenges that affect organisation performance.

Various studies globally depict the challenges of implementation of the strategic plan that affects organisation performance. A study conducted in the Netherlands by BrinkSchroder et al. (2014) identifies the following challenges, lack of clear understanding for overall aims and direction, the rivalry of subsidiaries, communication and support. In addition, a study in Colombia by Mosquera et al. (2014) identifies the following challenges lack of a stable funding source, the confusing and rigid guidelines, the high turnover of human resources, the lack of competencies among health workers regarding family focus and community orientation, and the limited involvement of institutions outside the health sector in generating inter-sectoral responses and promoting community participation. Not only that, but also a study in South Africa by Chikandiwa (2016) noted these challenges. Lack of understanding of the municipality strategy and its inextricable link to long-term development and growth also lack skilled human resources; limited financial resources, the ageing skilled workforce, lack of technical capabilities

of the unit; negative political influence. In Kenya also the following challenges are identified, top management support and organisation culture (Imbali 2016)

Strategy Implementation is also a challenge in Tanzania hence affecting the organisation performance. Various studies highlighted the following challenges organisational leadership, organisational culture, resource allocation, the employees' unawareness on the availability of the strategic plan in their organisation, little or no integration of the results of the strategic plan with their day to day activities (Daniel 2019; Aswile 2013)

Studies conducted have revealed that strategic plan implementations have been a global challenge, including in Tanzania. There are different strategies depending on the organisation and strategic implementation challenges differs with the organisation. Therefore, this study sought to examine the challenges of implementing a strategic plan on performance focusing at Selian Lutheran Hospital in Arusha, specifically examining how financial resource is a challenge in the implementations and how it affects performance.

2. Literature Review

2.2.1 Concept of Strategy

The concept of “strategy” comes from the Greek word “Strategos,” meaning “leadership” in the military sense. It concerns planning the deployment of resources to achieve certain objectives. History reveals that many military leaders designed and formulated militarily motivated strategies and each of these military strategies holds true for management by resemblance (Kotler 2016).

A Strategy is an integrated concept with the object of ensuring long-term survival in active interaction with the competition and its inherent opportunities and threats, whereby the systematic realisation of the concept is enabled by having regard to individual strengths and weaknesses (Bickhoff 2016:11). The strategy performs the following functions; It generates greater commitment to achieving objectives. It enhances communication among the employees and managers. It helps to define management problems objectively. It helps to reduce resistance to change. Strategy well-implemented aids improvement in sales, profitability and productivity. It can improve understanding of competitors Strategies. It provides a template for an organisation to coordinate and control its activities (Ajagbe et el 2016).

2.2.2 Features of strategy

Strategy displays five main features: It has an integrated aspect. It is intended. It is activity-oriented It is systematic. It pursues the long-term achievement of objectives (Kotler 2016).

2.2.3 Components of Strategy

Scope; this refers to the breadth of a company’s strategic realm that is the number and types of industries, product lines, and markets it competes in or plans to enter. **Goals and objectives;** these specify desires such as volume growth, profit contribution or return on investment over a specified period. **Resource deployment;** strategy should specify how resources are to be obtained and allocated across businesses, product/markets, financial departments, and activities. **Identification of a sustainable competitive advantage;** it refers to examining the market opportunities in each business and product-market and the firm’s distinctive competencies or strengths relative to competitors.

Synergy; describes the benefits a business experiences by strategically organising itself to maximise cooperation and innovation. In simple terms, a synergistic organisation achieves more as a group than its

parts could in isolation. This exists when the firm's businesses, products, markets, resource deployments and competencies complement one another.

2.2.4 Types of Strategy

i. Corporate strategy

Corporate strategy is one, which decides what business the organisation should be in, and how the overall group of activities should be structured and managed. Corporate strategies regard broad decisions about the organisation's scope, direction, and position in the long term.

ii. Business Strategy

The business strategy focuses on improving a company's competitive position or a business unit's product or service within its industry or within the market segment the company serves. Business strategy can be competitive (battling with all the competitors for advantage) or cooperative (combining with one or two competitors to compete with other competitors).

iii. Functional Strategy

The strategy that is related to each functional area of business such as production, marketing and personnel is called functional strategy. It is designed and managed in a coordinated way so that they interrelate with each other and at the same time collectively allow the competitive strategy to be implemented properly.

2.2.5 Strategy Management

Strategic Management is an art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organisation to achieve its objectives. It involves three stages which are; strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation.

Strategy formulation (strategic planning) involves making strategic decisions about the organisation's mission, philosophy, objectives, policies, and methods of achieving organisational objectives. *Strategy execution* is concerned with making various managerial decisions such as the type of organisational structure, the type and source of information systems, leadership "fit," and the kind of control mechanism that should be employed. *Strategy Evaluation and Control* is concerned with the evaluation systems that are to be used to ensure the operation of strategic planning to effectively attain the organisation's objectives. Evaluation consists of comparing the predicted results to the actual results (David 2011).

2.2.6 Essential issues to Strategy Plan Implementation success

The following are the Essential issues to Strategy Plan Implementation success

Establishing annual objectives based on the strategic plan. Annual objectives serve as guidelines for action; they provide a source of legitimacy in an enterprise by justifying activities to stakeholders, directing and channeling efforts and activities of organisation members, and serving as a standard of performance. Annual objectives are essential for strategy implementation because they are a primary mechanism for evaluating managers, establishing organisational, divisional, and departmental priorities. Represent the basis for allocating resources; are the major instrument for monitoring progress toward achieving long-term objectives.

Establishing Strategy Supportive Policies. Policies are instruments for strategy implementation. Policies set borders, constraints, and limits on the types of administrative actions that can be taken to reward and sanction behaviour; they clarify what can and cannot be done in pursuit of an organisation's objectives. Policies also facilitate solving recurring problems and guide the implementation of the strategy.

Shaping Corporate Culture to Fit Strategy. Corporate culture is the summation of beliefs, expectations, and values learned and shared by members and transmitted from one generation of employees to another. It gives identity; this is who we are; this is what we do and stand for. It reflects the values and includes informal work norms. The right culture supports the mission strategy of the company.

Rewards to Achievement of Key Strategic Targets. Incentives are designed to motivate and reinforce behaviour toward achieving goals but often have unintended consequences, reinforce basic core values and enhance commitment to overall organisational goals and objectives. Correctly identify the goal and reinforce with rewards and incentives. Organisations should not just reward employees; however, the reward should be linked with the performance, and the performance should be linked with the strategic plan of an organisation.

Top Management Support. Top management plays a significant role in facilitating strategy implementations. For a strategy to be successful, it needs the significant involvement of top management. They are responsible for making significant decisions that affect everyone, including the strategic plan of an organisation. They are also concerned with the formulation of supportive policies, developing supportive organisational culture.

Communication of strategy. Communication of strategy plan of an organisation is imperative. Without it, there could be an adverse impact on the implementation. Communications is about building understanding. It is about cultivation change. When an issue is discussed and decided, we are changed. (Patterson and Radtke 2009).

Resource Allocation. Resource allocation is a fundamental management activity that allows for strategy implementation. All organisations have at least four types of resources that can be used to achieve desired objectives: financial resources, physical resources, human resources, and technological resources (David 2011)

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

Various studies have been conducted globally to find the challenges of strategic implementation that different organisations faces. The following are some of the study conducted;

A study conducted in Netherland by Brink Schroder et al (2014) shows that the challenges for strategic implementation are lack of clear understanding for overall aims and direction, the rivalry of subsidiaries, communication and support.

Colombia also encounters strategy implementations challenges. In a study conducted to assess primary health care Strategy implementation challenges by Mosquera et al. (2014), the following challenges were noted; lack of a stable funding source, the confusing and rigid guidelines, the high turnover of human resources, the lack of competencies among health workers regarding family focus and community orientation, and the limited involvement of institutions outside the health sector in generating inter-sectoral responses and promoting community participation.

According to Mkhabela and Chikandiwa (2016), a study conducted in South Africa examines the Insights and challenges of strategy and its financial component execution in the public sector. He found the following challenges in their study; lack of understanding of the municipality strategy and its inextricable link to long-term development and growth, lack of skilled human resources, limited financial resources, the ageing skilled workforce, and lack of technical capabilities unit; negative political influence.

A study by Imbali, et al. (2016) on factors Influencing Strategy Implementation in the Tourism Industry conducted in Maasai Mara National Park in Kenya showed that values held by top management as well as the strength of culture in the organisation involving to the degree of uniformity of values, beliefs, assumptions and practices in the sector were the most dominant to strategy execution

Strategy Implementation is also a challenge in Tanzania. In a study conducted by Daniel (2019), he assessed the factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in Tanzania's local government authorities a case of Mbeya city council. He concluded that organisational leadership, organisational culture, and resource allocation are challenges that hinder strategy implementation.

Another study in Tanzania conducted by Aswile (2013) at Deloitte Company he found the following challenges, the employees' unawareness of the availability of the strategic plan in their organisation, little or no integration of the results of strategic plan with their day to day activities. The strategic plan is also treated as something separate and not directly linked to the daily management of the business. Not all the people charged with executing the plan are involved from the onset only top management. Not only that but also employees are not enlightened as to what is expected of them, so they just do their best to make the job done in any way possible. Lack of accountability in the planning process, which leads to difficulties and occasionally total failures in the plan's implementation was also noted.

2.4 Knowledge Gap

Various studies globally (BrinkSchroder et al, 2014; Mosquera et al, 2014; Mkhabela and Chikandiwa, 2016; and Imbali, et al., 2016;) as well as local studies (Daniel, 2019; Aswile, 2013; and Shilingi. 2019;) have provided the challenges of strategic plan implantations and effects on organisation performance.

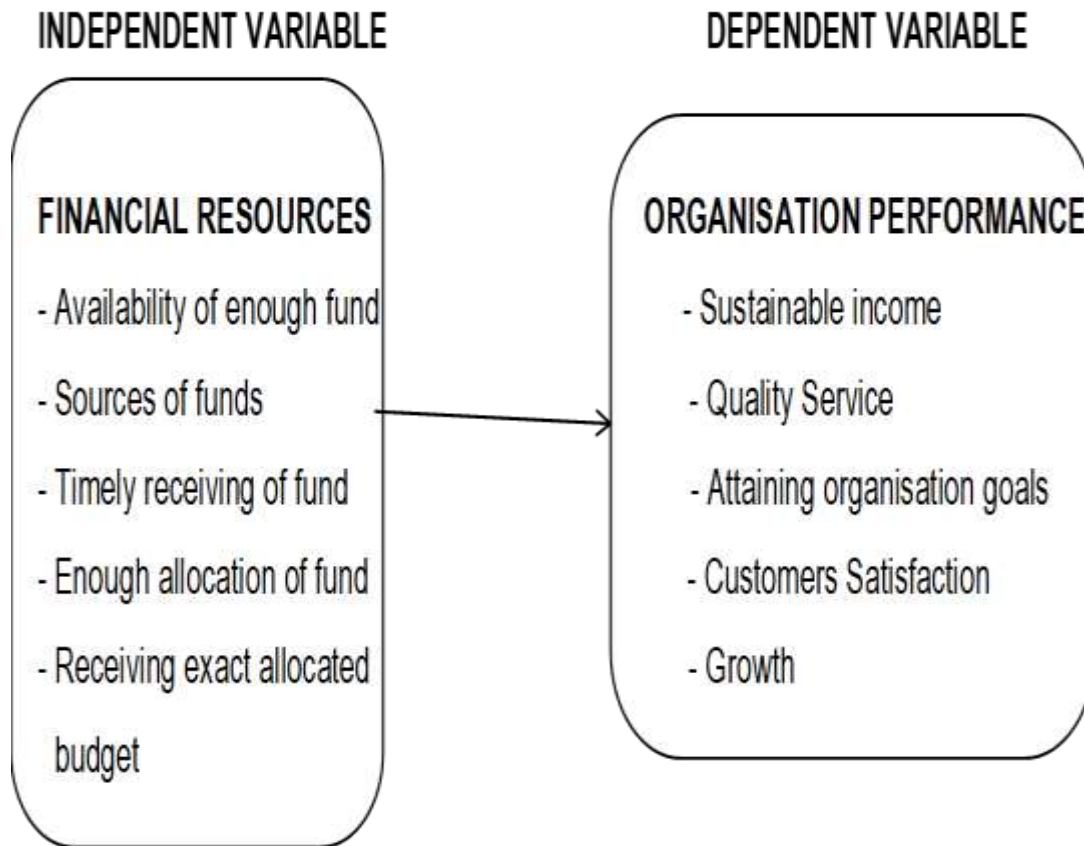
Despite the efforts made by these researchers in researching challenges of strategy implementations in developed and developing nations, as per the knowledge of the researcher, no study that specifically searched challenges of strategic plan implementation on organisation performance in Arusha region as well in Selian Lutheran Hospital. Therefore, data collected from this study, the conclusion and recommendations sought to cover the gap. This study on examining the challenges of strategic plan implementations on organisation performance aimed to identify how financial resource and communication of strategy and top management is a challenge and how it affects the organisation performance.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

According to Sinclair (2007), conceptual framework can be referred to as a visualisation of theoretical threads leading to the diagrammatic representation of inter-relatedness. A conceptual framework therefore, entails the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables

The conceptual framework in Figure 2.1 portrays the conceptualised relationships between independent variables and dependent variables. The independent variable in this study is financial resource on strategy while the dependent variable is Organisation Performance. This means that Organisation Performance depends on availability of financial resources to support the implantation.

Conceptual framework



Source: Researcher (2021) insight from reviewed literatures

2.6 Theoretical Framework

According to Bhagrava (2003), a theory is a set of correlated ideas, propositions, and definitions that present a systematic view of phenomena by indicating the relationship of variables with the intention of predicting or explaining the phenomena. A theoretical framework guides the study by determination of variables which the research will measure and their existing statistical relationship (Zikmund et al. 2010).

2.5.1 The Resource-Based View Theory

The Resource-Based Theory argue that internal resources are vital for a firm achieving and sustaining competitive advantage. The theory affirms that resources are actually what helps a firm exploit opportunities and defuse threats. It further explains that the mix, type, amount, and nature of a firm’s internal resources should be considered first and foremost in devising strategies that can lead to sustainable competitive advantage

3. Methodology

The study was conducted at Selian Lutheran Hospital in Arusha. Descriptive research design was adopted. The design was adopted because it provides a comprehensive outcome and its characteristics at a particular point in time. The deployment of a descriptive research design is suitable (Kumar 2011). Mixed research approach was used. Mixed Research Approach is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. The mixed research method approach smooth the progress of verification of the findings produced by each method through proof generated by the other (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012). The total population was 237 staff, out of which a sample size of 70 was obtained. The sample size include 8 Hospital Management Team, 53 Middle level staff and 9 lower-level staff. Data collection methods involved interview and questionnaire. The interview involved interviewing 8 Hospital Management Team. Questionnaires were distributed to 53 middle level staff and 9 lower-level staff. Quantitative data was analysed through descriptive statistics elements of frequencies and percentages with the support of Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) for generating analytical data, while qualitative data was analysed through Thematic Method.

4. Findings

The research approach used was Mixed Approach. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected. The findings therefore include both quantitative and qualitative.

In determine if financial resource hinder strategic plan implementations

On determining if financial resources hinder strategic plan implementations, the questionnaires focused on the aspect of allocation of funds, enough fund allocation, timely availability of funds, and receiving exact budgets.

i. Allocation of Fund

On the aspect of allocation of funds, findings indicate that, Middle level staff response was, Not at all 0 (0%), Little extent 12 (23%), Moderate 40 (75%), Great extent 1 (2%), Very Great extent 0 (0%). Lower level response, Not at all 0 (0%) Little extent 6 (67%), Moderate 3 (33%). Great extent 0 (0%), Very Great extent 0 (0%).

ii. Enough Fund Allocation.

Basing on the finding, the response was, Middle level staff response was, Not at all 2 (4%), Little extent 40 (75%), Moderate 9 (17%), Great extent 1 (2%), Very great extent 1 (2%). Lower level, Not at all 1 (11%), Little extent 2 (22%), Moderate 6 (67%), Great extent 0 (0%) Very Great extent 0 (0%)

iii. Timely availability of fund

The findings indicated that, Middle level staff, not at all 40 (75%), little extent 7 (13%), moderate 5 (9%), great extent 1 (2%). Lower level staff, Not at all 6 (67%), Little extent 2 (22%), Moderate 1 (11%), Great extent 0 (0%) very great extent 0 (0%).

iv. Receiving Exact Budget.

Middle level staff response was Not at all 37 (70%), Little extent 10 (19%), Moderate 4 (8%), Great extent 2 (4%), very great extent 0 (0%). Lower level response, Not at all 4 (44%), Little extent 3 (33%), Moderate 1 (11%), Great extent 1 (11%), Very Great Extent 0 (0%).

Qualitative findings show that finance is a challenge to strategic plan implementations.

It is a challenge in the following ways; the hospital budget depends on many unreliable sources. Plans are not sufficiently allocated money. There is a delay of funds for operational activities. The exact budget allocated for operational activities is not received. The effect on performance is that, Little plans are achieved in some activities, some activities have been re-planned year by year, hence taking longer to accomplish than expected. It lowers the quality of service delivery due to the unavailability of some important equipment and machines. Absenteeism to some staff hence affecting performance.

5. Discussions

This part presents a discussion of the findings so as to compare and contrast what has been found in relation to other empirical studies. The discussion is guided by the research objective.

In determining if financial resource hinder strategic plan implementations

Research finding on this objective shows that financial resource is a challenge and it affects organisation performance.

Quantitative findings shows that allocated fund is not enough. 75% of middle staff say that it is enough at little extend while 67% of lower-level staff say is moderate. This result to delay in receiving fund for annual operational. 75% of middle-level staff do not receive the allocated budget timely and 67% of lower-level staff too. Financial challenges on strategic plan make the budgeted money not channel to the operational activities as budgeted. Findings show that 70% of middle staff and 44% lower staff do not receive exact budget.

Qualitative findings show that financial constraint has also affected the hospital budget as it depends on many sources. Once not obtained, some activities are little achieved while others are deplaned. Quoting a respondent; *'Our Annual Budget depends on donors' support, government, and income projection. When the expected fund is not received, some plans are little implemented while some are not implemented. For example, the Hospital had a plan of renovating the building; however, due to financial constraints, this was little achieved* Respondent 5

'Another respondent supplemented this by saying that, *'Financial constraints have made some of the activities to be re-planned year by year, this slow attaining of organisations goals'* Respondent 4

Qualitative findings show that financial challenges have affected performance in the following ways: Little plans are achieved in some activities. Some activities have been re-planned year by year, hence taking longer to be accomplished than expected. It lowers the quality of service delivery due to the unavailability of some vital equipment and machines. Absenteeism to some staff hence affecting performance.

The findings are supported by the study conducted by M'mbui (2014) on the Challenges of the Implementation of Strategic Plans at Tana and Athi Rivers Development Authority, Kenya. The study shows that inadequate allocation of funds to activities in the strategic plan hinders the implementations of the strategic, hence affecting performance.

Findings also concur with Kwamboka (2014) study on Challenges of Strategic Plan Implementation at Lang'ata Boys High School, which show that finance is a challenge to strategic plan implementations. The study shows that one of the school's strategic objectives is to give quality and full-time education to all students admitted. However, financial constraints have led to delayed payment of remedial teaching to teachers, hence demotivation to teachers. Difficult in accommodating all students. Inadequate classrooms, absence of library and no proper computer lab. This resulted in unsatisfactory performance among students.

The above observations further correspond with the study findings by Apphia (2016) on why has Plan Implementation been ineffective in Ghana? A Case Study of Planning in Kwabre East District Assembly and Offinso Municipal Assembly shows that both Districts assembly faces a financial crisis in such a way that they depend on the external sources of revenue which in turn limit their discretion on projects to invest and affect the performance.

In addition, a study by Inyangi (2013) showed that lack of funds affected the implementation of the strategic plan. This was in agreement with findings from a 21 survey conducted by Mucai (2013) on walking the talk in strategy and policy implementation in Meru Central District, which found that financial resources had a significant effect on the strategic plan implementation.

6. Conclusions

This research aimed to examine the challenges of implementation of strategic plan on organisation performance at Selian Lutheran Hospital. Specifically to determine if financial resource hinders strategic plan implementations.

The study findings confirm that there is a challenge in the financial aspect. The hospital budget depends on unreliable sources. Plans are not sufficiently allocated money, delay of fund for operational activities, the exact budget allocated for operational activities is sometimes not received and delay in payment of staff remunerations. The effects of these challenges on organisation performance are, unattained of some annual plans, re-planning of some activities, inability to purchase and maintenance of some machines, unsatisfactory quality service to customers in some areas.

The study has therefore provided recommendations to solve the challenge.

7. Recommendations

The researcher recommends the hospital management to increase income generation sources, improve quality of services, have unique services to attract more customers, strengthen and maintain a positive relationship with current donors and well-wishers and increase funding raised from local and international donors.

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