

Strategic Leadership, Organisational Culture, and Growth of the Anglican Church of Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) has encountered various growth challenges, including the sustainability of its programs and the need for technological and spiritual advancement. This study aimed to assess the impact of church strategic leadership and organizational culture on ACK's growth. The specific objectives were to: (1) determine the relationship between strategic leadership and church growth and (2) explore whether organizational culture moderates the relationship between strategic leadership and growth. Informed by Strategic Leadership and Upper Echelons theories, the study utilized correlation research design. The target population comprised 315 church leaders, including members of the Provincial Administration, Archdeaconry/Parochial Leadership, and the Nairobi Diocesan Secretariat. Proportionate stratified sampling was employed to select 176 respondents. Data collection involved a structured questionnaire on a 5-point scale. Linear regression analysis was used to test research hypotheses, with SPSS version 23 aiding quantitative data analysis. Strategic leadership together with organizational culture accounted for 52.8% of the variance in church growth ($R^2=.528$, $DF(3) = 64.257$, $p<.01$). However, the interaction term between strategic leadership and organizational culture did not show evidence of moderation ($\beta=-.038$, $p>.05$). Examination of the regression coefficients revealed that organizational culture had statistically significant predictive power on church growth ($\beta=.757$, $p<.05$) but the effect size of strategic leadership on church growth was insignificant ($\beta=.398$, $p>.05$). It was concluded that organizational culture is ultimately what counts for church growth within the Anglican Church of Kenya, though strategic leadership plays a positive role. Therefore, fostering a strong organizational culture within the Anglican Church of Kenya can significantly contribute to its growth and sustainability, and this can be reinforced by strategic leadership.

Keywords: Church Growth, Organizational Culture, Strategic Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Strategic leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational culture by setting the tone for how change is perceived and embraced (Kabetu&Iravu, 2018). Leaders who possess strategic foresight are essential in fostering a culture that values adaptability and resilience. By empowering individuals within the organization to take strategic actions, leaders promote a culture of ownership and initiative, where employees feel empowered to contribute meaningfully to the organization's sustainability. Moreover, by granting autonomy to innovate and implement ideas, leaders cultivate a culture of creativity and experimentation, where new approaches are encouraged and celebrated. Additionally, strategic leaders, through their influence on policy direction, shape the norms and values that define the organizational culture (Munga&Gakenia, 2022). Their ability to leverage expertise in policy-making ensures that organizational

policies align with strategic objectives and reflect the cultural values of the organization. Finally, the competencies outlined by Mistrarihi (2021) – anticipating, challenging, interpreting, deciding, aligning, and learning – are not only essential for effective strategic leadership but also integral to fostering a culture of strategic thinking, collaboration, and continuous improvement within the organization.

The leadership strategies implemented within a church significantly impact its growth trajectory. Various scholars have emphasized the pivotal role of leadership strategy in fostering church growth. According to Al Khajeh (2018), leadership entails directing people towards achieving organizational objectives. Conversely, Cuong and Minh (2017) define leadership as the qualities exhibited by organizational management or the interplay between a leader's traits and organizational circumstances. Aligning with Cuong and Minh's conceptualization, Setiawan et al. (2019) regard leadership as a collection of personality traits possessed by a leader, which they utilize to influence their subordinates. Therefore, leadership encompasses the attributes, behaviors, characteristics, disposition, and inherent qualities of leaders as they guide their subordinates (Setiawan et al., 2019).

The issue of declining church growth is widespread globally. In the United States, Keita (2020) has documented a decrease in both church membership and attendance levels. Keita (2020) observed that more than half of the churches in the United States have memberships of fewer than 100 individuals. Adding to the discussion in the American context, Jordan (2019) estimates that over four thousand churches shut down annually in the United States, with more than three thousand individuals leaving churches every day in the country. This decline in church growth is not confined to the Western world; it is also evident in African settings. Ezeanyim et al. (2020) observed a decrease in church attendance within the Orthodox Church in the southern regions of Nigeria. Similarly, in Kenya, Kanyuira and Kibuthu (2020) have noted a decline in both church attendance and membership.

The Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) plays a vital role in the community by providing spiritual guidance and contributing to the socio-economic development of its members (Beja et al., 2018; Tsuma et al., 2018). Consequently, the growth of the ACK is of utmost importance to its stakeholders as it enables the church to fulfill its spiritual and socio-economic development objectives. However, various scholars have highlighted challenges related to church growth within the context of the ACK. Regarding the incorporation of Eucharistic symbols into ACK practices, Kiarie (2019) noted that a significant number of Anglicans were unaware of this aspect, indicating obstacles to the spiritual and theological advancement of the church. Conversely, Murage and Ndegwa (2018), discussing the execution of strategic planning within the ACK, expressed concerns about the necessity for effective outreach and the sustainability of the church's programs, both of which serve as indicators of church growth.

The ACK has encountered various obstacles in its growth and evolution over time, serving as the impetus for this research. Tsuma et al. (2020) have documented a range of quality issues associated with ACK-funded projects, including concerns regarding project sustainability. Within this context, Tsuma et al. (2020) observed a 20% increase in projects that failed to meet implementation deadlines in the five years leading up to 2018. Addressing the situation within the Diocese of Embu, Njue (2020) highlighted a variety of human resource challenges. Specifically, Njue (2020) pointed out delays in salary payments to clergy members within the Diocese of Embu, along with instances of salary arrears. These difficulties were attributed to the church's struggles in mobilizing resources and the clergy's inability, particularly in rural areas, to meet their financial obligations to the diocese. Consequently, some clergy members have opted to leave their positions in pursuit of better-paying opportunities.

As evidence of challenges in church growth, Murage and Ndegwa (2018) also note that the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) provincial synod frequently expresses dissatisfaction with unmet targets set forth in the four-year strategic plans devised by the central office. Moreover, Murage and Ndegwa (2018) document a decrease in funding for church initiatives, including the implementation and monitoring of strategic plans,

by entities such as the Church Commissioners for Kenya and other stakeholders. Several scholars, including Ongare (2020), Tsuma et al. (2018), and Wanyoike (2020), have highlighted issues regarding the sustainability and effectiveness of various activities and projects undertaken by the ACK. Within this context, Tsuma et al. (2018) report an increase in challenges related to project sustainability, project quality, and project performance.

Tsuma et al. (2019) examined how strategic leadership influences financial management in the Anglican Church of Mombasa, finding leadership style significantly affects project financial absorption, though the use of non-probability sampling may limit the study's applicability. Alwala (2020) investigated strategies for attracting new members to Pentecostal churches, highlighting their rapid growth in Kenya but suggesting further research to compare strategies with the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK). Munyao et al. (2020) explored the impact of strategic leadership on African Inland Church Kenyan theological colleges, noting challenges like poor financial resources and misaligned curriculum, emphasizing the need for separate studies to understand effective leadership in church (Muriithi, 2021).

The issue of stagnant church growth is a widespread concern, evidenced by findings such as in the United States where approximately half of the churches have fewer than 100 members (Keita, 2020). This trend is also noticeable in specific regions, with reports of declining membership in countries like Uganda and other parts of Africa (McKinnon, 2020). Similarly, the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) has encountered various challenges to its growth, including sustaining its programs and adapting to technological and spiritual advancements. These challenges suggest that followers of the ACK may not fully benefit from the spiritual and socio-economic opportunities associated with the church. Scholars such as Widiyanto et al. (2019), Dejesus (2018), Idowu (2020), and Mpolo (2020) have linked leadership practices to various aspects of church growth globally.

Research on the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) has explored various aspects such as the significance of eucharist symbols (Kiarie, 2019), the church's impact on transforming the Kirinyaga region (Akattu et al., 2020), Salvation within the Anglican context (M'bwangi, 2020), and the contribution of Mother Unions to church development (Beja et al., 2018). However, these studies have not addressed the connection between leadership and church growth. Therefore, this study aimed to bridge this gap by investigating the relationship between strategic leadership and the growth of the ACK, while also considering the moderating role of organizational culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The studies presented offer a rich tapestry of insights into the complex interplay between organizational dynamics and performance outcomes across various sectors and contexts. Through a diverse range of methodologies, researchers have delved into the nuanced relationships between organizational culture, leadership styles, and organizational effectiveness. For instance, Musau (2017) and Khan et al. (2020) employed descriptive research designs to investigate the influence of church governance and leadership styles on giving behavior and organizational performance in churches and higher education institutions, respectively. Their findings underscore the critical role of transparency, integrity, and transformative leadership in fostering organizational development and enhancing staff commitment and performance.

Moreover, studies such as Aichouche et al. (2022) and Reddy and Scheepers (2019) employed qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore the impact of organizational culture on innovation and strategy implementation in diverse organizational contexts. Aichouche et al.'s meta-analysis revealed the significance of adhocracy and market cultures in promoting innovation and adaptability, while Reddy and Scheepers identified various cultural dimensions influencing strategy execution, with implications for organizational design and management practices. These studies highlight the multifaceted nature of

organizational culture and its profound influence on organizational behaviors and outcomes.

Furthermore, researchers like Nurlina (2022) and Okwata et al. (2022) conducted empirical studies to examine the direct impact of organizational culture on performance outcomes in specific sectors, such as agriculture and government institutions. Nurlina's study demonstrated the positive effect of organizational culture on staff motivation and performance in an agricultural setting, while Okwata et al.'s research highlighted the direct and significant impact of culture on the performance of a government agency. These findings underscore the importance of cultivating a conducive organizational culture to enhance employee engagement, productivity, and overall organizational effectiveness.

In addition, studies focusing on specific church contexts, such as Akam (2020) and Nguza (2018), offer valuable insights into how strategic leadership and cultural adaptation can drive church growth and community impact. By examining case studies and qualitative data, these researchers shed light on the strategies adopted by religious leaders to attract believers and foster community engagement. Overall, the collective findings of these studies provide valuable insights and practical implications for organizational practitioners and scholars seeking to understand and navigate the complex dynamics of organizational culture, leadership, and performance across diverse sectors and contexts.

This study is rooted in the foundational concepts of strategic leadership theory, pioneered by James MacGregor Burns in the late 1970s. Strategic leadership encompasses a set of actions and policies undertaken by senior executives to achieve long-term organizational objectives, such as value creation and market dominance (Folan, 2019; Canwell et al., 2018; Pulungan, 2018; Suryaningtyas&Sudiro, 2019). Building upon strategic management principles, strategic leadership draws upon strategic planning as a fundamental tool for guiding organizational growth and sustainability (Smith, 2020). Strategic plans serve as documented roadmaps that align organizational goals with resources and market considerations, providing clarity and focus for leaders and operational managers alike (Smith, 2020; George & Walker, 2019).

While strategic leadership theory has primarily informed secular management practices, its application within the church sector is increasingly gaining prominence (Murage&Ndegwa, 2018). Church leaders, like their secular counterparts, are recognizing the importance of strategic leadership in articulating a clear direction, fostering strategic focus, and driving execution plans (Oosthuizen &Lategan, 2016; Jenssen, 2019).The concept of strategic leadership within the church sector encompasses the ability to anticipate future trends, create a vision, empower others, and adapt flexibly to changing circumstances (Gakenia et al., 2017). Strategic church leaders play a pivotal role in formulating and implementing organizational goals and strategies, shaping the present and future trajectory of the church (Makokha et al., 2018). Elements of strategic leadership include decision-making, empowerment, and benchmarking, all aimed at guiding the organization towards its strategic mission and vision (Palladan et al., 2016). This holistic approach to strategic leadership mirrors the principles of strategic management, which emphasize strategy formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation as integral components of organizational success (Aboramadan&Borgonovi, 2016).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employed a cross-sectional design, which entails data collection and analysis at a single point in time to investigate relationships between variables (Biggs et al., 2021). While a longitudinal study design could track changes over time, the selection of a cross-sectional approach was deemed suitable based on the research questions and underlying assumptions of this study (Nunkoo, 2018). This research design was deemed appropriate for the study's objectives, particularly in utilizing structured questionnaires containing Likert-based items to gather respondents' perspectives on aspects related to strategic leadership,

organizational structure, and church growth (Gathii et al., 2019).

The study focused on the church leadership hierarchy within the Anglican Church of Kenya who possess expertise in strategic leadership, organizational structure, and church growth. The survey aimed to reach a total of 315 church leaders, consisting of 9 members from the provincial administration, 296 members from the archdeacon/parish leadership, and 10 members from the Nairobi Diocesan Secretariat. These leaders were selected from the senior management of the Anglican Church of Kenya's administration based at the head office. Specifically, they included officers from various provincial secretary departments such as the Directorate of Education, Department of Communication, Directorate of Mission, Anglican Development Services, Mother's Union department, and the Director for Finance. Due to the limited size of the staff, this group was relatively small. Additionally, the study targeted another segment of the population from the metropolitan Nairobi Diocese, which encompasses both urban and rural areas. Hence, the study's target population consisted of 315 church leaders categorized as: 9 individuals from the provincial administration, 296 individuals from the archdeacon/parochial leadership, and 10 individuals from the Diocesan Secretariat of Nairobi. From this, a stratified sample of 176 participants were recruited.

The structured questionnaire utilized in this study comprised closed-ended questions designed to collect data on participant demographics, leadership style, organizational culture, and growth initiatives within the church (Bilgin, 2017; Ghauri et al., 2020). It sought to gauge participants' views on the church's strategic direction, vision, goals, and decision-making processes. Additionally, the questionnaire aimed to assess participants' perceptions of the leadership style adopted by the church leadership team (Gakenia, 2017), as well as their views on the values, beliefs, and assumptions shared within the church community (Thiery, 2018).

The data underwent analysis through linear regression analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 25. The quantitative data collected through the questionnaire were subjected to analysis using SPSS, with descriptive statistics utilized to present the data through tables, charts, and graphs. Additionally, inferential statistics, namely linear regression analysis, were employed to test the hypotheses formulated for the study (Brase&Prellillo, 2015). Descriptive statistics serve the purpose of facilitating data visualization and summarization, enabling a clearer understanding of the dataset. Furthermore, inferential statistics were utilized to draw conclusions or inferences regarding the relationships between variables (Warner, 2013). These statistical methods allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the data, providing insights into the associations between different variables examined in the study. Moderation was assessed by evaluating whether the F-test yielded a p-value below 0.05, which represents the level of significance. The moderated multiple linear regression analysis was conducted utilizing the following empirical model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_1 X_1 * \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y=Growth of the ACK

X₁= Strategic Leadership

X₂=Organisational Culture

X₃=Strategic leadership * Organisational culture

Several ethical protocols were observed to maintain integrity of the study. These included obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality of their information through anonymization and secure storage, avoiding coercion in participation, disclosing any conflicts of interest, treating participants with respect, handling data securely in accordance with relevant regulations, providing full disclosure about

the study’s purpose and implications, and striving to maximize benefits and minimize harm to participants and stakeholders. These measures aimed to uphold the rights and well-being of all involved parties while preserving the scientific soundness of the research findings.

RESULTS

Pearson correlation was run to establish the interrelationship between strategic leadership, organizational culture, and church growth composite scores. Table 1 presents the findings. The strongest and statistically significant positive correlation with church growth was observed in the interaction term between strategic leadership and organizational culture ($r=.707, p<.01$). This was followed by organizational culture alone ($r=.705, p<.01$), and then strategic leadership alone ($r=.604, p<.01$). These findings indicate that the combined impact of strategic leadership and a favorable organizational culture has the most substantial influence on church growth. Nevertheless, both strategic leadership and organizational culture, when considered separately, also exhibit positive associations with church growth.

Table 1: Inter-correlation between Strategic Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Church Growth

		1
1. Church Growth	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	176
2. Strategic Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.604**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	176
3. Organizational Culture	Pearson Correlation	.705**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	176
4. Interaction Term	Pearson Correlation	.707**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	176
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

The research proceeded to test the following hypothesis:

H_0 : There is no significant moderating influence of organizational culture on the relationship between strategic leadership and growth of the Anglican Church of Kenya.

H_a : There is significant moderating influence of organizational culture on the relationship between strategic leadership and growth of the Anglican Church of Kenya.

To assess the potential moderating impact of organizational culture on the association between strategic leadership and church growth, an interaction term was formed involving strategic leadership and organizational culture. This interaction term was then subjected to analysis using multiple regression modeling techniques, with the results presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Moderating Effect of Organizational Culture

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.727 ^a	.528	.520	.53323		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Interaction Term, Strategic Leadership, Organizational Culture						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	54.812	3	18.271	64.257	.000 ^b
	Residual	48.906	172	.284		
	Total	103.718	175			
a. Dependent Variable: Church Growth						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Interaction Term, Strategic Leadership, Organizational Culture						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.278	.915		-.304	.761
	Strategic Leadership	.398	.263	.356	1.514	.132
	Organizational Culture	.757	.273	.667	2.773	.006
	Interaction Term	-.038	.072	-.222	-.530	.597
a. Dependent Variable: Church Growth						

The regression model had a statistically significant explanatory power on church growth; $R^2=.528$, $DF(3) = 64.257$, $p<.01$. The main effects of strategic leadership was not statistically significant ($\beta=.356$, $p>.05$) but that of organizational culture was statistically significant ($\beta=.667$, $p<.05$). However, an examination of the regression coefficient and the p-value for the interaction term between strategic leadership and organizational culture suggest that there was no evidence of moderation ($\beta=-.038$, $p>.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis was sustained: There is no significant moderating influence of organizational culture on the relationship between strategic leadership and growth of the Anglican Church of Kenya.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study underscores the importance of considering both strategic leadership and organizational culture in driving church growth. While each factor independently contributes positively to growth, their combined effect is even more pronounced. This highlights the synergistic relationship between leadership practices and the prevailing culture within the organization.

The results indicate that organizational culture has a stronger and more direct influence on church growth compared to strategic leadership alone. This suggests that while strategic leadership is important, the culture within the ACK plays a pivotal role in shaping growth outcomes. This finding underscores the need for leaders to not only focus on strategy but also invest in nurturing a conducive organizational culture.

Contrary to expectations, the study found no significant moderating influence of organizational culture on the relationship between strategic leadership and church growth. This suggests that while organizational culture and strategic leadership both independently contribute to growth, they do not interact significantly to amplify or diminish each other's effects. This finding challenges previous assumptions about the interplay

between leadership and culture in organizational settings.

The lack of evidence for moderation prompts a re-evaluation of the traditional understanding of how leadership and culture interact to influence organizational outcomes. It suggests that while both factors are important, they may operate somewhat independently in their effects on church growth. This calls for a nuanced understanding of the nuanced relationship between leadership and culture and how they collectively shape organizational performance.

For leaders within the ACK and similar religious organizations, these findings highlight the importance of simultaneously focusing on strategic leadership and fostering a positive organizational culture. While strategic leadership provides direction and vision, a supportive culture amplifies the effectiveness of leadership initiatives. However, leaders should also recognize that while culture is influential, it may not necessarily enhance or diminish the impact of strategic leadership in driving growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Senior leaders responsible for governance and oversight should focus on cultivating a balanced organizational culture. This involves nurturing a culture that values both spiritual growth and effective administrative practices. Given the dynamic nature of organizational culture and its interaction with leadership, the senior leaders should engage in continuous monitoring and adaptation. Further, the qualitative findings highlight key elements such as effective governance, Christ-centered transformation, and stewardship as integral to the church's success. Regular assessments of both strategic leadership practices and organizational culture can inform adjustments to ensure alignment with the church's growth objectives.

Future studies could incorporate the perspectives of various stakeholders, including church members, clergy, and community members, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of strategic leadership on different facets of the church. This could involve surveys, focus groups, or interviews to gather diverse viewpoints on the perceived effectiveness of strategic leadership in driving growth and transformation.

Consideration of external factors influencing church growth, such as societal changes, economic conditions, or cultural shifts, could provide a more holistic perspective. Understanding how strategic leadership interacts with external factors can guide leaders in adapting their approaches to navigate challenges and capitalize on opportunities for growth.

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