

## STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF PARISHES IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NYAHURURU

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### Abstract

Strategic management plays a vital role in the performance of organizations, including religious institutions. This research thesis explores the relationship between strategic management practices and the performance of the Parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu. The study's general objective was to assess how strategic management practices influences the overall performance of the diocese. The research employed five theories namely, resource-based theory, dynamic capabilities theory, institutional theory, transaction cost theory, and balanced scorecard theory in. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The target population was 222 participants comprising of 185 parish pastoral council executive members and the 37 parish priests. The sample size was 66 participants covering 30% of the target population. Simple random sampling procedure was used. The unit of analysis was the parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu whereas the unit of observation was the parish pastoral council executive members and the parish priests. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Secondary data collected using a document analysis guide helped to check on the performance of the parishes. The study established that strategic analysis ( $b=.078$ ,  $p=0.048<0.05$ ), Strategic formulation ( $b=0.640$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ ), Strategic implementation ( $b=0.410$ ,  $p=0.002<0.05$ ), and strategic evaluation ( $b=0.516$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ ) had a statistically significant relationship with the performance of the parishes. The study concluded that strategic management practices significantly influenced the performance of the parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu. The study's results contribute to a deeper understanding of how strategic management practices enhance the overall performance of the diocese, thus providing valuable insights for church leaders and practitioners. These insights can potentially guide improvements in parish management and effectiveness within the diocese, and also in enriching knowledge on strategic management in religious organizations.

**Keywords:** *Strategic Management Practices, Performance of Parishes, Strategic Analysis, Strategic Formulation, Strategic Implementation, Strategic Evaluation, Parishes, Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu*

### INTRODUCTION

Having a strategic plan in place is one of the most important aspects in supporting the survival and growth of any given organization. Strategic management is not just a theory but a real-life practice that can be adopted by organizations for their survival and performance (Ndirangu, 2013). A number of scholars (Onyekwelu, 2020; Ali & Qun, 2019) assert that strategic analysis, strategic planning, strategy creation, execution, and assessment are the main elements of strategic management practices. Additionally, the authors have discovered that they have a

beneficial impact on how well firms operate across a range of sectors. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to investigate how strategic management practices affect Catholic parish performance.

Over recent years, churches have been experiencing a lot of challenges with regard to their performance. For instance, during the period of Covid 19, the attendance of congregants in churches reduced. Notably, Blevins (2024) indicated that majority of the church lost 10-15% of their attenders annually. Furthermore, according to Barna (2022), 16% of Christians who had previously regularly attended church services no longer do so. Remarkably, Boomers had the greatest dropout rate; 22% of them said that they no longer attended live or virtual church sessions. This also translated to the decrease in the contributions made by the members to the church. Such cases were experienced all over the globe including the local churches in the country (Kithure, 2022). Additionally, there have been several cases of poor management in the church which has also contributed to lack of trust in the church by the community as well as changes in attitudes among church members. Wrangles within the church management are also affecting the performance of churches in the country. Research conducted by Thiga, Pam, and Nkansah-Obrempong (2021) revealed that several churches have been facing internal conflicts among their senior leaders at the national level, as they vie for control over the church and its resources. There are also internal disputes within the church including conflicts between pastors and other leaders, as well as conflicts among different leaders due to the church resources (Muchui, & Vugutsa, 2023). Overall, internal disputes within the church administration have a detrimental impact on the church's expansion, leading to a loss of members who seek refuge in other churches (Gathuki, 2015). With such challenges in place, it is important for the church leaders to devise strategies and mechanisms that they can use in order to improve the performance and attendance. Therefore, this study hypothesized that adopting strategic management practices such as strategy analysis, formulation, implementation, and evaluation could help the parishes to address the performance challenges that were being experienced.

Nevertheless, research conducted by Kitoo (2016) revealed that while church leaders in Kenya had a comprehensive understanding of strategic planning concepts, they seldom used strategic planning in reality. Additionally, a survey by Kagumu (2016) concluded that Kirinyaga diocese did not have any written strategic plan. This clearly demonstrates that despite there being challenges affecting the performance of the churches; the leaders are yet to embrace fully strategic management practices to address their cases. This research was motivated by the observation that led to an interest in investigating the influence of strategic management methods on the performance of parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu.

There are several empirical gaps that have been identified. For instance, the studies done in the churches have focused on different institutions such as Methodist Church (Kithure, 2022), evangelical churches within Nairobi County (Timbomei & Bett, 2019), churches in general (Karoki, 2016) and Archdiocese of Kisumu (Kerubo, 2019). By investigating the influence that strategic management practices have on the overall performance of Parishes within the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu, the purpose of this research was to fill the void that had been identified.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks including as resource-based theory, dynamic capabilities theory, balanced scorecard theory, transaction cost theory, and institutional theory served as inspiration for this investigation. The resource-based theory forms a foundational pillar of the theoretical framework for this study. This theory, as proposed by Barney (1995), emphasizes that an organization's competitive advantage and performance are intrinsically tied to its internal resources. These resources encompass a wide array of assets, encompassing but not limited to human capital, physical assets, and financial resources. In the Catholic parishes' context, resource-based theory is crucial for understanding the impact of strategic analysis on performance. Like any other organization, Catholic parishes rely on diverse internal resources to execute their mission effectively.

Dynamic capabilities theory is primarily advanced by Teece (1997). The capacity of an organization to modify its competences and resources in order to successfully react to a continuously changing environment is known as its dynamic capabilities. The dynamic capabilities theory was relevant in addressing the effect of strategy formulation on performance in the context of Catholic parishes.

Meyer and Rowan (1977) formulated institutional theory, focusing on how organizations adopt and conform to institutional norms and practices. This theory is pertinent to the third research goal of this study which assesses how the performance of parishes is significantly influenced by institutional pressures and norms within the Catholic Church. By considering institutional theory, the research examined how Catholic parishes align their strategic management practices with the expectations and standards of the broader religious institution.

Williamson's transaction cost theory (1979) focuses on the role of transaction costs in shaping organizational boundaries and governance structures. This theory is pertinent to the fourth research objective, which investigates the role of strategic evaluation in enhancing performance. Strategic evaluation involves the assessment of monitoring and feedback mechanisms, which play a significant role in managing organizational transaction costs. Considering this theory, the research explores how Catholic parishes can minimize transaction costs through efficient strategic evaluation. Reducing transaction costs is critical in enhancing the performance and resource allocation of the parishes, and the transaction cost theory contributes to understanding how strategic evaluation can contribute to this efficiency. Kaplan and Norton (1992) created the balanced scorecard model, which provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating organizational performance in a number of areas. It goes beyond traditional financial metrics to include non-financial aspects. The balanced scorecard model is highly relevant in evaluating the overall performance of the Parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu.

### Empirical Review of Literature

Kozłowska (2021) conducted research in Poland that looked at how strategic analysis, namely what methodologies and tools are used, affects the servitization of manufacturing enterprises. Using a survey research design, the study focused on the Polish machinery manufacturing sector. Primary data was collected from 150 management representatives from the manufacturing companies using questionnaires. In order to investigate the nature of the connection that exists between the variables, the Chi-square test and correspondence analysis were used in the research.

The research was able to demonstrate that there was a positive correlation ( $r= 18.0735$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) between the level of service revenue in the organizations and the process of performing strategy analysis within the framework of product-service activity. Furthermore, it was determined that when the organization conducted an analysis of service-related business areas in addition to product-related business areas, it demonstrated a significant rise in service income ( $r=35.922$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). This study has been able to show that strategic analysis enables organizations to develop strategies that can propel their service to the next level and hence influence overall performance.

Mashingaidze, Phiri, and Bomani (2021) conducted a study in Zimbabwe with the objective of determining the influence that strategy formulation has on the perceived financial performance of SMEs in Harare. Using a case study methodology, the researcher gathered information from small and medium-sized manufacturing businesses for the study. Stratified random sampling was used in order to choose 368 individuals to fill out the questionnaire. These individuals were drawn from the five manufacturing classes that occurred within the population. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used in the analysis of the data. The research found that small and SMEs in Zimbabwe had a somewhat high prevalence of strategy formulation. It has been shown that small and SMEs in Zimbabwe engage in the five activities that are proposed by the theory. According to the findings, the creation of strategies has a substantial impact on the perceived financial success of small and SMEs in Zimbabwe, both in the short term and over the long term ( $b=0.658$ ,  $p=0.002<0.05$ ).

Kariuki, Kitonga, and Arasa (2023) while focusing on Kenya's religious institutions aimed to determine the extent to which the creation of strategies had an impact on the effectiveness of Catholic parishes in Kenya. To be more specific, the Resource Based View theory, the Dynamic Capabilities theory, and the Balanced Scorecard model were the foundations around which this inquiry was built. To conduct the study, a mixed methods technique was used, and convergent design was utilized. For the purpose of gathering quantitative data, a survey questionnaire was used, whilst interviews were utilized for the purpose of gathering qualitative data. The demographic that was intended to be targeted consisted of ninety members of the parish pastoral council and nine parish priests from nine different parishes that were applied the strategic plan. Descriptive methods were used in the process of evaluating and interpreting the quantitative data. In order to look at the qualitative data, theme analysis was performed. Findings from the research pointed to a positive correlation between parish performance and strategy design. Among the parish priests polled, 89% indicated the strategic plan gave the parishes a feeling of purpose, and 79% indicated it facilitated more ministry partnerships between clergy and laity Christians. The study found that Catholic parishes in Kenya may greatly benefit from strategy formulation when it comes to increasing their performance.

Timbomei and Bett (2019) investigated the impact that certain strategies and execution techniques had on the overall performance of a selection of evangelical congregations. To be more specific, the research investigated the ways in which the performance of a selection of evangelical churches in Nairobi City County was affected by organizational culture, resource allocation, managerial commitment, and organizational structure. This analysis was based on the Seven-S Model and the Burke and Litwin causal model. Using a descriptive research strategy, the study surveyed members of several evangelical churches in Nairobi City County to get a feel

for the demographics of the area. Nairobi Baptist Church, Christ is the Answer Ministries, Parklands Baptist Church, and Nairobi Chapel Ministries were among these churches. Participants in the research included pastors, employees, church leaders, volunteers, and members. The total population included in the study was 400 people. The data was collected via the use of both open-ended and closed-ended questions, and a sample size of eighty was generated by applying a sample size of twenty percent. An explanation of the information that was gathered from the empirical literature was necessary for qualitative data analysis, and the application of numerical measures to the respective scores of the individual replies was also required. This was accomplished with the assistance of SPSS. Based on the findings of the research, it was determined that the performance of evangelical churches is significantly impacted by many factors. These factors include organizational structure ( $\beta = 0.332$ ,  $p = 0.025$ ), resource allocation ( $\beta = 0.433$ ,  $p = 0.025$ ), top management commitment ( $\beta = 0.248$ ,  $p = 0.032$ ), and organizational culture ( $\beta = 0.142$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ).

Kerubo (2019) explored the link between the strategy execution and the performance of faith-based organizations in the Archdiocese of Kisumu. Specifically, the research investigated the impact of strategic resources, organizational structure, and operational processes on the performance of faith-based organizations. Okumu's key variables framework and Higgin's aligned 8Ss model of strategy execution served were adopted. Specifically, a descriptive case study research approach was used. Questionnaires were sent to all 86 administrators of faith-based organizations that are located inside the archdiocese. A total of 86 institutions, including parishes, hospitals, health facilities, and other establishments, that are owned by the Archdiocese of Kisumu were the focus of the research. Means and standard deviations were used in the processing of the data in order to perform descriptive statistics analysis. Utilizing the dimensions of strategy implementation, a multiple regression analysis was carried out in order to make a prediction about the performance of faith-based organizations. It was discovered that there was a significant regression ( $F(3, 66) = 52.646$ ,  $P \leq 0.000$ ), and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was determined to be 0.647. In terms of predictive power, strategic resources were found to be the most accurate ( $\beta = 0.411$ ), followed by operational procedures ( $\beta = 0.302$ ), while organization structure was found to be the least accurate ( $\beta = 0.202$ ). The reason for this is because the null hypotheses were not supported. After doing the research, the researchers came to the conclusion that there is a strong and favorable connection between the execution of strategy and the performance of faith-based organizations.

Kitonga, Bichanga, and Muema (2016) sought to identify the factors that influence the relationship between strategic assessment and organizational performance in non-profit organizations. Leadership theories such as the Traits Theory, the Path-Goal Theory, the Transformational Theory, and the Upper Echelon Theory were adopted. The study's population of interest was 1,475 nonprofits operating in Nairobi County, and the research methodology utilized was a convergent mixed-method research design. A total of 305 influential NGOs' leaders in Nairobi County were chosen at random using a simple random selection procedure, and their responses were collected using survey questionnaires. All of the components of strategic assessment were shown to have a positive correlation with organizational performance, as evidenced by the findings of the regression analysis ( $\beta = 0.191$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Furthermore, the findings of the study demonstrated that there is a substantial correlation between strategic decision ( $\beta = 0.615$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and human capital ( $\beta = 0.531$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and the performance of

the company. It was concluded that there was a favorable and substantial association between strategic assessment and organizational performance.

### **Knowledge Gap**

From the literature review, the identifiable gaps ranged from the conceptual, contextual, geographical, to methodological gaps. Regarding the contextual gaps, some of the studies and literature reviewed focused on other industries such as manufacturing industry (Kozłowska, 2021), financial institutions (Mashingaidze *et al.*, 2021; Nwachukwu, *et al.*, 2017), and NGOs (Kitonga, *et al.*, 2016). However, this study focused on performance of religious institutions. In terms of conceptual and geographical gaps, various authors reviewed in the study have utilized different concept in explaining the different study variables. For instance, the study by Kozłowska (2021) focused on the servitization of manufacturing companies as its dependent variable whereas the study by Mashingaidze, *et al.* (2021) concentrated on the financial performance. Additionally, another study by Nwachukwu, *et al.* (2017) also looked at strategy formulation in the context of innovation performance. More closely, studies done in relation to the performance of religious institutions also had their limitations whereby they were done in other institutions such as the Catholic parishes in Kenya (Kariuki *et al.*, 2023), evangelical churches within Nairobi County (Timbomei & Bett, 2019), and Archdiocese of Kisumu (Kerubo, 2019). However, this study focused on the performance of parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu where there was little attention paid to.

Regarding the methodological gap, previous studies exploring strategic management's impact on organizational performance rely on mixed methods adopting both qualitative and quantitative approaches which at times become a challenge in verifying the findings. This research aims to address this methodological gap by adopting a descriptive method as its research design. Through quantitative approach method, this research sought to use the information from data collected in developing themes that would contribute towards the existing body of knowledge in strategic management. Furthermore, this approach enabled a more comprehensive exploration of the research objectives, providing numerical evidence and rich insights into the relationship between strategic management and the performance of the diocese.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

A descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. This design was vital in describing and analyzing the diocese's present strategic management practices and how they impact performance. In order to determine the connections between strategic management practices and the diocese's performance, the quantitative technique was used to gather numerical data from different parishes within the diocese.

### **Target Population**

The target population for this study comprised the parish priests and the parish pastoral council members (PPC) from all 37 parishes in the catholic diocese of Nyahururu. In total therefore, the targeted population size was 222 participants comprising of 185 parish pastoral council executive members (5 PPC members per parish) and the 37 parish priests. The chosen people gave insightful explanations of strategic management practices and how they affect parish performance.

### Sample Size Determination

A sample size of 10 to 30 percent of the target population is deemed sufficient for research, according to Mugenda (2003), as it permits generalization from the sample to the population and helps to prevent biases or mistakes in sampling. Moreover, Nardi (2003) indicated that a minimum ratio of 30% is advisable for populations below 1000 whereas 10% is advisable for populations above 1000. Considering that the targeted population of this study is below 1000, 30% was fit. Therefore, out of the 222 targeted population, a sample size of 66 was representative. This sample size was selected using stratified random sampling method.

### Data Collection Instruments

Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires. The questionnaire included a combination of closed-ended and Likert scale questions to assess specific aspects of strategic management practices, such as the level of strategic planning, resource allocation strategies, leadership styles, and performance measurement techniques. In addition to primary data, secondary data was gathered about the financial status of the parishes. Triangulation was made easier with the use of secondary data, which also provided support for the original data.

### Piloting

A pilot study was conducted in order to check the validity and reliability of the questionnaires. For the piloting purposes, 20 respondents were selected from one of the parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahuru. Using SPSS and Cronbach Alpha method of reliability analysis, a value of 0.786 was obtained for the overall questionnaire and hence they were considered reliable. This is based on George and Mallery's (2019) recommendation that a Cronbach alpha value between 0.6 and 0.9 is considered reliable.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

This study's data analysis and interpretation stage involved summarizing the collected data and deriving meaningful insights to address the research questions. Various analytical methods were employed to analyze the quantitative data, thus enabling a comprehensive understanding of the research findings. Quantitative data collected through the questionnaires were analyzed using statistical techniques such as descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive data was presented using percentages, means and standard deviation with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software version 26. Inferential statistics, such as correlation analysis and regression analysis, were employed to explore relationships between variables and test hypotheses. The predictive analysis would forecast future events or trends based on historical data and other relevant information. Statistical models, such as regression model analysis were employed to identify patterns and trends in the data and predict the parish's performance based on strategic management practices. In interpreting the correlations and regressions statistics, statements or variables with a p value that is greater than 0.05 were considered as to have no relationship whereas those that had a p value less than the standard value of 0.05 were considered as to have a positive relationship with the dependent variable. In conducting the multiple linear regression analysis, the following model was adopted;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Performance of Parishes, X<sub>1</sub> = Strategic Analysis, X<sub>2</sub> = Strategy Formulation  
X<sub>3</sub> = Strategic Implementation, X<sub>4</sub> = Strategic Evaluation

$B_0$  is constant and  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$  are coefficients of variables.  
 $\varepsilon$  = Error term

## RESULTS

### Response Rate

Data collection instruments were distributed to 66 respondents in the different parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu. Only 62 were collected back for analysis. This translates to a response rate of 93.9%. The reason for this response rate is because some of the priests were not able to respond to the instruments on time because they had travelled for official duties.

### Demographic Information

The demographic information that was examined in this study was the role that the parish played in the diocese. This was categorized into either the parish pastoral council member or parish priests. Figure 4.1 shows the responses provided. Slightly more than half (55%) of the respondents were parish priests whereas the remaining 45% were parish pastoral council members. Notably, the roles executed by the parish priests as a pastor include administration of sacraments, administration of temporal goods of the church, offering mass *pro populo* on Sundays and holy days of obligation, legal representative of the parish in all juridical affairs, and performing funeral rights for the Christians. On the other hand, parish pastoral council members are involved in advising the pastor on pastoral matters, have a consultative vote on pastoral matters in the parish, plan pastoral programs under the guidance of the pastor, draw visions and missions of the church, and divulging the deliberations of the council to the community. Therefore, the involvement of these two groups of respondents was essential and vital in answering the main research questions of this study on the influence of strategic management practices on the performance of Parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu.

### Descriptive Analysis

#### Influence of Strategic Analysis on Performance of Parishes

As shown in Table 1, the statements evaluating the impact of strategic analysis on parish performance obtained a mean score of 2.21 and a standard deviation of 0.392. This suggests that most research participants believed that the parish's success was affected by frequent examination of the external environment (91.9% agreement rate) and doing internal analysis (89.9% agreement rate). Plus, with an average score of 1.92 and 2.05, respectively, these two claims were further backed up.

**Table 1: Influence of Strategic Analysis on the Performance of the Parishes**

Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD	M	Std.
a. Conducting internal analysis has influenced the performance of the parish positively.	8.1%	89.9%	0	0	0	1.92	.274
b. Regular analysis of the external environment has influenced the performance of the parish.	1.6%	91.9%	6.5%	0	0	2.05	.282
c. Overall, strategic analysis has improved the performance of the parish.	8.1%	16.1%	75.8%	0	0	2.67	.621
<b>Average</b>						<b>2.21</b>	<b>.392</b>

Key: SD- Strongly Disagree, UD- Undecided, A- Agree, A- Strongly Agree, M- Mean, Std.- Standard Deviation



### Influence of Strategy Formulation on the Performance of Parishes

When asked to indicate whether strategies formulated by the parish are aligned with its unique mission and values, 88.7% and 11.3% agreed and strongly agreed respectively. This statement was further supported with a mean score of 1.89 and standard deviation of 0.319. This implies that within the parishes, the respective groups involved in the strategy formulation strive to ensure that the strategies formulated are able to address the vision and mission of their respective parishes.

The statement that the proper allocation of resources in the strategy formulation stage has influenced the performance of the parish had a mean score of 1.98 and standard deviation of 0.461. This means that within the surveyed parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu were strategic in allocating their resources in the strategy formulation stage and this has positively influenced the performance of the parishes. Regarding stakeholder engagement, 72.6% were undecided on the statement that the involvement and engagement of stakeholders in the formulation of strategies has influenced the performance of the parish. The remaining 14.5% and 12.9% strongly agreed and agreed respectively. This statement had a mean score of 2.58 and standard deviation of 0.736. This means that the respondents moderately agreed with the statement.

**Table 2: Influence of Strategic Formulation on the Performance of Parishes**

Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD	M	Std.
a. The strategies formulated by the parish are aligned with its unique mission and values.	11.3%	88.7%	0	0	0	1.89	.319
b. The proper allocation of resources in the strategy formulation stage has influenced the performance of the parish.	8.1%	88.7%	0	3.2%	0	1.98	.461
c. The involvement and engagement of stakeholders in the formulation of strategies has influenced the performance of the parish.	14.5%	12.9%	72.6%	0	0	2.58	.736
<b>Average</b>						<b>2.15</b>	<b>.505</b>

Key: SD- Strongly Disagree, UD- Undecided, A- Agree, A- Strongly Agree, M- Mean, Std.- Standard Deviation

### Influence of Strategy Implementation on the Performance of Parishes

The statements that evaluated the influence of strategy execution on parish performance had an average mean score of 2.30 and a standard deviation of 0.479, as indicated in Table 3. This indicates that the majority of people who took the survey agreed with what was said. As an example, 87.1% of parishioners think the leadership does a good job of putting plans into action. A mean score of 1.97 and a standard deviation of 0.477 provided more evidence for this proposition. This shows that within the parish, most of the leaders were considered to be effective in executing their duties in relation to the implementation of strategies and this to some extent could be a contributory factor to the performance.

Additionally, another 87.1% also agreed that proper communications during the implementation of strategies has influenced the performance of the parish. This implies that with proper communications put in place during the implementation of strategies, the parishes are able to perform well as compared to situations where there are no proper communications put in place.

The statement that the parish does not organize its resources, structures, and processes properly to support strategy implementation had a mean score of 3.06 and standard deviation of 0.479. This means that majority of the respondents were undecided regarding the organization of resources, structures and processes towards strategy implementation. This could have an effect on the success of the strategy implementation process as well as overall performance of the parish.

**Table 3: Influence of Strategic Implementation on the Performance of Parishes**

Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD	M	Std.
a. The leadership in the parish is effective when implementing strategies.	9.7%	87.1%	0	3.2%	0	1.97	.477
b. Proper communications during the implementation of strategies has influenced the performance of the parish.	12.9%	87.1%	0	0	0	1.87	.337
c. The parish does not organize its resources, structures, and processes properly to support strategy implementation.	3.2%	3.2%	80.6%	9.7%	3.2%	3.06	.623
<b>Average</b>						<b>2.30</b>	<b>.479</b>

Key: SD- Strongly Disagree, UD- Undecided, A- Agree, A- Strongly Agree, M- Mean, Std.- Standard Deviation

### Influence of Strategic Evaluation on the Performance of Parishes

An overwhelming majority (90.3%) of the participants agreed that strategic evaluation process in the parish involves assessing and measuring the achievement of the strategic objectives. The remaining 9.6% were undecided, strongly disagreed or strongly agreed. The statement had a mean score of 2.09 and standard deviation of 0.592 implying that majority of respondents agreed with the statement. The statement that the parish frequently collects and analyses data on the implemented strategies in order to evaluate their outcomes had a mean score of 2.23 and standard deviation of 0.756. This means majority of the priests which is 83.9% agreed that their parishes utilized the information they collected and analysed with an aim of evaluating their outcomes and how they influence the operations of the parish.

When asked to indicate whether the parish continuously uses the evaluation results to improve its design and operations, 85.5% were undecided, 8.1% agreed, 3.2% strongly agreed and the remaining 3.2% strongly disagreed. This statement was further supported with a mean score of 2.92 and standard deviation of 0.643. This implies that majority of the respondents moderately agreed with the statement. Moreover, from the findings, it can also be implied that the respondents are not really sure whether the parishes are using the evaluation results to support the design and operations of the parishes.

**Table 4: Influence of Strategic Evaluation on the Performance of Parishes**

Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD	M	Std.
a. The parish Involves herself in assessing and measuring the achievement of the strategic objectives	3.2%	90.4%	3.2%	0	3.2%	2.09	.592
b. The parish frequently collects and analyses data on the implemented strategies in order to evaluate their outcomes.	3.2%	83.9%	3.2%	6.5	3.2%	2.23	.756
c. The parish continuously uses the evaluation results to improve its design and operations.	3.2%	8.1%	85.5%	0	3.2%	2.92	.581
<b>Average</b>						<b>2.41</b>	<b>.643</b>

Key: SD- Strongly Disagree, UD- Undecided, A- Agree, A- Strongly Agree, M- Mean, Std.- Standard Deviation

### Inferential Analysis

Further inferential analyses were conducted in order to assess the strengths of association and relationship between the study variables. For the strengths of association between variables, the study used the correlation analysis whereas the regression analysis was utilized for the purposes of assessing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study.

### Correlation Analysis

In conducting the correlation analysis, the Pearson correlation coefficient was utilized in reflecting the strength of the linear link between the study variables. The result of Correlation is shown in Table 5. The correlation between strategic analysis ( $r=.414$ ,  $p=.001<0.05$ ), strategic formulation ( $r=.277$ ,  $p=.029<0.05$ ), strategic implementation ( $r=.100$ ,  $p=.040<0.05$ ), strategic evaluation ( $r=.711$ ,  $p=.000<0.05$ ) and performance of parishes were found to be positive and significant.

**Table 5: Correlations**

		Strategic Analysis	Strategic Formulation	Strategic Implementation	Strategic Evaluation	Performance of Parishes
Strategic Analysis	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Strategic Formulation	Pearson Correlation	.277*	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.029				
Strategic Implementation	Pearson Correlation	.298*	.463**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.000			
Strategic Evaluation	Pearson Correlation	.425**	.149	.095	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.249	.462		
Performance of Parishes	Pearson Correlation	.414**	.277*	.100	.711**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.029	.440	.000	
	N	62	62	62	62	62

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Overall Linear Regression Analysis

In addition, regression analysis was carried out in order to determine the statistical degree of significance of the link that exists between the strategic management practices and the performance of parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu. In order to portray the outcomes of the association, the multiple linear regression technique was used, and the outcomes were shown by means of the model summary, the analysis of variance, and the coefficient tables, respectively. According to Table 6, R-squared is 0.712. This means that strategic management practices highlighted in this study explained 71.2% variations in performance of parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu. The remaining 28.8% were explained by the error term.

**Table 6: Model Summary for the Overall Linear Regression Model**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.844 <sup>a</sup>	.712	.692	1.18550

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Evaluation, Strategic Implementation, Strategic Formulation, Strategic Analysis

The F-statistic that was computed is 35.251, and the crucial F value that was tabulated was 2.53 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This information is shown in Table 7. Due to the fact that the estimated F value was higher than the crucial F value that was tabulated, the alternative hypothesis was chosen to be implemented instead of the null hypothesis. This further suggests that the regression model was significant, and that the t-statistics and p-values may be utilized in a reliable manner to evaluate the significance of the coefficients in the model.

**Table 7: ANOVA for the Overall Linear Regression Model**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	198.166	4	49.542	35.251	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	80.108	57	1.405		
	Total	278.274	61			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Parishes

b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Evaluation, Strategic Implementation, Strategic Formulation, Strategic Analysis

According to the data presented in Table 8, the unstandardized beta coefficient for strategic analysis and performance of parishes was 0.078, and the p value for this investigation was 0.048. As a result, assuming that all other aspects remain same, it is possible that an increase in strategic analysis might result in a 0.078-unit improvement in the overall performance of parishes within the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu.

A favorable and statistically significant relationship ( $b=0.640$ ,  $p=0.000$  or less than 0.05) was found between the strategic formulation and performance of parishes. It can be deduced from this that if all other parameters remain same, a one-unit increase in strategy formulation might result in a 0.640-unit improvement in the overall performance of parishes within the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu.

Significantly, a positive relationship ( $b=0.410$ ) was also discovered for the parishes' strategic implementation and performance ( $p=0.002 < 0.05$ ). This means that the performance of parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu might improve by 0.410 units with an additional unit of strategy implementation, everything else being equal. There was a strong and positive correlation

between the parishes' performance and their strategy evaluation ( $b=0.516$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ ). The performance of parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu increases by 0.516 units for every one unit rise in strategic assessment, assuming all other factors stay the same. Therefore, as a summary, the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study could be summarized as follows;

$$\text{Performance of Parishes} = 2.734 + .640X_1 + 0.516X_2 + 0.410X_3 + 0.078X_4 + 2.842$$

Whereby:

$X_1$ = Strategic Formulation

$X_2$ = Strategic Evaluation

$X_3$ = Strategy Implementation

$X_4$ = Strategic Analysis

**Table 8: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> for the Overall Linear Regression Model**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.734	2.842		.962	.340
1 Strategic Analysis	.078	.170	.040	.459	.048
1 Strategic Formulation	.640	.106	.503	6.031	.000
1 Strategy Implementation	.410	.124	.274	3.310	.002
1 Strategic Evaluation	.516	.058	.743	8.909	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Parishes

## DISCUSSION

From the correlation analysis, this study was able to highlight that there was a substantial and positive correlation between the strategic management practices and performance of parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu. Converging within these results, such as the one that was discovered by Issack and Muathe (2017), it was discovered that strategic assessment has an effect on the performance of companies. Furthermore, it was discovered that there is a positive and substantial association between strategy appraisal and performance. This correlation was very significant. Additionally, Iyobhebhe, Sharon, and Fowosere (2023) proved that there was a statistically significant association between strategic management practices (strategy development, implementation, and assessment) and organizational performance. This correlation was shown to exist between the three activities.

From the overall regression model, it was noted that strategic management practices examined in this study addressed the performance of parishes by 71.2%. In line with this finding, a previous study by Gakure and Karugu (2018) showed that the components of strategic management practices explained 85.11% of changes in organizational performance. In converging with the findings of this study on strategic analysis variable, a study by Abu Bakir (2023) came to the conclusion that strategic analysis has a statistically significant influence on performance ( $p$  value = 0.000), which is in agreement with the findings that were discovered in this research. Over the same time period, Nwakoby, Ejiofor, and Kanu (2018) conducted research in Nigeria to investigate the link between SWOT analysis and the performance of a selection of manufacturing businesses. They found that SWOT analysis had a substantial impact on the performance of business organizations ( $p=0.01$ ).

Consistent with the findings of this study, Mashingaidze, Phiri, and Bomani (2021) investigated the effect of strategy development on the perceived short- and long-term financial performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Zimbabwe. Moreover, it was found by Nwachukwu, Chladkova, and Fadeyi (2017) that the strategy formulation process positively impacts the performance of process innovation ( $\beta=.505$ ,  $p=.000$ ), product innovation ( $\beta=.395$ ,  $p=.000$ ), and marketing innovation ( $\beta=.376$ ,  $p=.000$ ). The results of this study were corroborated by another research conducted by Okwemba and Njuguna (2021). The authors proved that there is a strong and positive correlation between strategy design and performance ( $\beta=.689$ ,  $t=.774$ ,  $p=.046$ ).

According to a study conducted by Onyegbula, Nwoye, and Daniel (2023), which supports this conclusion, various aspects of strategy implementation, including leadership, communication, resource availability, and organizational structure, all had a positive and statistically significant (at 5%) correlation with organizational performance. There is a statistically significant link between strategy implementation and organizational performance, according to Abass, Munga, and Were (2017). Timbomei and Bett (2019) found that evangelical churches' performance is significantly impacted by the strategic implementation components studied in this study, including organizational structure ( $\beta = 0.332$ ,  $p= 0.025$ ), resource allocation ( $\beta = 0.433$ ,  $p= 0.025$ ), and top management commitment ( $\beta = 0.248$ ,  $p= 0.032$ ).

The observation that was made in this study is that the implementation of strategic management methods had a statistically significant influence on the overall performance of parishes within the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu. The observations of this study were supported by Gakure and Karugu (2018), who indicated that strategic management methods had a considerable effect on the performance of companies. Specifically, the research conducted by Nkemchor and Ezeanolue (2021) in Nigeria came to the conclusion that strategic management has a large and favorable impact on the performance of organizations. A similar finding was reached by Kasera (2017), who conducted research inside healthcare companies in Kenya and came to the conclusion that strategic management methods had a substantial impact on the success of these organizations. The conclusions of this research were further supported by the findings of Nnia et al. (2023), who verified that strategic management practices (including strategy creation, strategy execution, and strategy assessment) had a substantial impact on the performance of businesses.

In further converging with the findings of this study, the financial performance of SMEs in Juba, South Sudan was shown to be significantly and positively impacted by the strategic evaluation approach, according to a study by Sylvia (2021) on the subject ( $\beta = 0.597$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Juba, South Sudan should anticipate a 68.0% boost in financial performance if the author's prediction about improving the strategic evaluation approach by one unit is correct. Similarly, Kitonga, Bichanga, and Muema (2016) found that with a  $\beta = 0.191$  and a  $p = 0.000$ , all components of strategic evaluation are positively correlated with organizational performance. The results also showed that there is a strong relationship between organizational performance, human capital, and strategic decisions ( $\beta = 0.531$ ,  $p= 0.000$ ). Strategic evaluation is favorably and strongly associated with organizational performance, according to their overall result.

A study conducted by Sophia, Kipchumba, and Chepkilot (2021) investigated the connection between the evaluation of human resource strategy and the performance of human resources in

Kenyan universities. The findings revealed a strong and statistically significant positive correlation ( $r = .60$ ,  $p \{0.000\} < 0.05$ ) between strategy evaluation and performance. The research found a strong and statistically significant correlation between the use of strategy review and performance. Based on the t-statistics, it was clear that strategy review had a more significant influence on the performance of parishes compared to strategic formulation and execution, in that order. Strategic analysis had a low influence on the performance of parishes. Contrary to this observation, a previous study by Nnia et al. (2023) established that strategy implementation ( $t=4.720$ ) had a stronger influence on performance followed by strategy formulation ( $t=0.404$ ). Strategy evaluation had a t-statistics of 3.420.

### CONCLUSION

This study concluded that strategic management components such as strategic analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation had a statistically significant effect on the performance functioning of parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu. The parishes have become vigilant and strategic in enhancing their performances by doing both internal and external environment analyses. It can be inferred that the process of developing a plan has a statistically significant influence on the performance of parishes within the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu. The congruence between created strategies and the distinctive purpose and values, as well as the effective allocation of resources throughout the strategy development phase, had a substantial impact on the performance of the parishes. However, a minor difficulty arises when stakeholders are not completely included in the formulation process, which hampers the effectiveness of the plans in parishes. Consequently, it may be inferred that the execution of a plan has a substantial impact on the success of parishes. Furthermore, enhancing strategic leadership, communication, and organizational structure leads to a 0.410-unit improvement in parish performance. Finally, the study concluded that strategic evaluation significantly influenced and increased the performance of parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu by 0.516 units. Additionally, it is concluded that continuous performance measurement, performance analysis, and utilization of evaluation results have significantly contributed to the performance of the parishes.

From the analysis, it was noted that strategic analysis had the least influence on the performance of parishes. Therefore, this study recommends that the administration of the parishes should pay less attention and resources towards strategic analysis but rather focus on strategy formulation, evaluation and implementation respectively. Focusing attention and resources in these areas could have significant boost on the overall performance of the parishes. Since the study established that stakeholder involvement and engagement in strategy formulation was a challenge among most of the parishes despite it having a significant impact, it was recommended that the church authorities should endeavor in ensuring that all the stakeholder in the parishes who are directly affected by the strategies should be 100% involved in the formulation process. This will help to increase the effect of the formulated strategies on the financial performance, membership growth and mission fulfilment of the parishes.

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