

## **Strategic Management Practices and Sustainability of Faith Based Organisations: An Empirical Study of Anglican, Diocese of Thika**

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HD333- 1084/2015

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### **Abstract**

*Anglican Diocese of Thika was established in 1<sup>st</sup> July 1998, and covers the administrative boundaries of Kiambu and Muranga Counties respectively. The church has taken up responsibility of providing social amenities to the society in an attempt to supplement government efforts. It is for this reason that the church established institutions like Christian Industrial Training College, Namratta Shah Children's Home, St Luke's Bookshop and St. Augustine Boys Secondary School and with the assistance from CCS, the diocese opened health centres at Giachuki, Thare and Kiarutara (Synod, 2007).*

*The main aim of this study was to investigate strategic management practices used by the church and how they affect sustainability of projects in the Anglican Dioceses of Thika. The study was guided by the following specific objectives, to establish the competitive strategies adapted by the church and to establish the relationship between the competitive strategies used by the church and its performance. A review of the relevant literature was undertaken in order to eliminate duplication of what has been done and provide a clear understanding of existing knowledge base in the problem area. The literature review is based on authoritative, recent, and original sources such as journals, books, thesis and dissertations. A case study design was used to undertake the study. The population comprised Postbank top revenue drivers, namely operations and marketing/customer service departments, which are divided into regions covering the whole country. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the respondents. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 19.0 was used as an aid in the analysis. Data pertaining to the profile of respondents were analyzed by employing content analysis while determining the link between the competitive strategies and organizational performance; the strategy related items were subjected to a factor analysis to test whether the strategic practices were naturally grouped into the various competitive strategies. The findings show that the strategies adopted by the Anglican Diocese of Thika so as to cope with the competitive environment include vigorous pursuit of cost reductions, providing outstanding customer service, improving operational efficiency, controlling quality of products/services, intense supervision of frontline personnel, developing brand or company name identification, targeting a specific market niche or segment, and providing specialty*

*products/services. The findings also show a significant relationship between the strategies adopted by the Anglican Church of Kenya and their respective performances with respect to the following objective performance indicators: total revenue growth, total asset growth, net income growth, market share growth and overall performance or growth.*

### **Background of the Study**

Strategic management is a continuous process that involves attempt to match or fit the organization with its changing environment in the most advantageous way possible (Pearce and Robinson, 2010). Strategies are the means by which long-term objectives will be achieved. "A strategy is a unified, comprehensive and integrated plan that relates the strategic advantages of the firm to the challenges of the environment. It is designed to ensure that the basic objectives of the enterprise are achieved through proper execution by the organization" (Pearce and Robinson, 2011; Johnson and Scholes, 2013). The role of strategy is to identify the general approaches that the organization utilize to achieve its organizational objectives. Therefore, the choice of strategy is so central to the study and understanding of strategic management.

The challenges of the business environment today, characterised by fragmented markets, increased competition, rapid technological changes, shifting regulatory frameworks, and a growing dependence on non-price competition have forced many businesses to more closely scrutinize their competitive strategy. Porter (2010) argues that firms create competitive advantage by conceiving new ways to deliver superior value of their products and services to their customers. Innovation is a key source of competitive advantage and can occur at any stage of the value chain. However, the literature and research in this regard was biased towards technological innovation and staff performance.

The increased competition was further fuelled by communication and liberalisation of the major world economies. This has reduced the world into a global village as far as business transactions are concerned. As a result, organisations (including Faith Based ones) are facing stiff competition from both local and foreign competitors. In order to compete and survive in the competitive environment, different organizations are therefore adopting different strategies. Organisations are therefore implementing various competitive strategies to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage and enhance their survival in an industry.

Anglican Diocese of Thika was established in 1<sup>st</sup> July 1998, and covers the administrative boundaries of Kiambu and Muranga Counties respectively. The Diocese is headed by the Bishop who is the Chief Executive Officer and is assisted by an Administrative Secretary who doubles as the principle secretary to the Bishop as well as the human resource officer (Synod, 2007). The church has taken up responsibility of providing social amenities to the society in an attempt to supplement government efforts. It is for this reason that the church established institutions like CITC, Namratta Shah Children's Home, St Luke's Bookshop and St. Augustine Boys Secondary School and with the assistance from CCS, the diocese opened health centres at Giachuki, Thare and Kiarutara (Synod, 2007).

In the year 2007, the diocesan synod closed down two of the three health centres (Kiarutara and Giachuki), while Thare health centres management was reverted to the Thare Parish, after they were unable to pay their staffs and their suppliers of drugs, Meds. In the year 2014, the diocese closed down St Augustine Boys Secondary School after its enrolment declined to five students in that year. The staffs who were laid off so far sued the diocese for the salary arrears and non-remittance of their statutory deductions amounting to Ksh. 6 million. In the year 2001, the major development partner, ICCO pulled out after funding Ksh. 15 million projects to upgrade CITC, but instead the money was used to put up a new building which has never been completed to date.

Currently the enrolment at CITC stands at 60 students studying artisan and the institution has not paid its staff for the last six months and is in debt of Ksh. 7 million to Gatsby (Synod, 2014). During diocesan Board of Finance meeting held in March 2015, recommended to the Standing Committee of Synod, the formation a task force to investigate the viability of the institution (BOF Minutes, March 2015). St Luke's Bookshop on the other hand, is currently struggling even to pay the staff and the rent and it has a debt of Ksh. 4 million. Because of the above reasons, it is deemed necessary to carry out this research. The collapse of these projects was associated with poor management practices by the church.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The business environment in which today's organizations operate is dynamic and turbulent with constant and fast paced changes that often render yesterday's strategies irrelevant. Top management and decision makers of various organizations, must constantly think strategically about the future of their organisations. The environment turbulence necessities and equal need for rapid recognition of appropriate strengths, opportunities to be exploited, threats to be countered and weakness to be overcome (Pearce and Robinson, 2010). Strategic planning calls for the determination of the basic long term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of courses of action and allocation of resources necessary to carry out the goals. Planning is a conscious systematic process during which decisions are made about mission, values, goals, strategies, priorities and activities that an organization and by extension industry players will pursue if they are to survive and remain relevant in the future, amidst a constantly volatile environment. Strategic planning therefore is not a matter of coming up with a detailed plan or program but it is a "unifying theme that gives coherence and direction to actions and decisions" (Grant, 2014).

The use of strategic management enables an organization define their strategies which provide a central purpose and direction to its activities to people who work in it and often to the outside world. Strategic planning and implementation enables organizations to adapt under conditions of external pressure cause by changes in the environment. Organization can and often do create their environment besides reacting to it. Strategic planning and management helps organizations develop competitive strategies (Johnson and Scholes, 2013).

In developing strategy, organizations carry out an analysis of their environment, their industry and competitors and gauge how they can outperform their competitors. Strategic planning also helps organizations to focus their efforts and resources on their key success factors and cultivate a culture of being proactive. By implementing strategic plans, organizations are able to respond to the turbulent environment in an appropriate manner, to ensure their continued survival and profitability hence providing the shareholders with value for money invested (Porter, 2010).

Institutions and projects established in the Anglican Diocese of Thika have been faced with sustainability because of the strategic management practices used by the management. Due to these, there has been high rate of staff turnover, conflicts among employees, bad working habits and attitudes among the employees, poor service delivery, low quality products and services as well as high financial implications incurred as a result of numerous industrial court cases awards that has been awarded to the laid off employees and unpaid suppliers. This can be attributed to poor strategies adopted by the church that makes their projects and institutions unable to cope with the competitive environment they are operating on.

The purpose of this study was to investigate strategic management practices such as staff/firm performance, cost leadership, focus combination, diversification, market penetration, market development, outstanding customer service delivery, improved operational efficiency, quality

product development, intense supervision of the staff and provision of speciality products / services and sustainability of Faith Based projects and how they affect sustainability of projects in the Anglican Diocese of Thika.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study specifically aimed at achieving the following objectives;

- i. To examine how firm and staff operations affect sustainability of projects
- ii. To investigate how competitive strategies affect sustainability of projects
- iii. To examine how cost leadership affect sustainability of projects
- iv. To establish whether product differentiation and diversification affect sustainability of projects
- v. To find out how market penetration and product development affect sustainability of projects.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study was mainly concerned with the strategic management practices and sustainability of projects based on projects owned and managed by Anglican Diocese of Thika within its administrative boundaries. The key respondents were the staff and the management boards of these institutions. These comprised of the following, at CITC, we have 10 teaching staffs, 5 non-teaching staffs and 12 management board members, at Namrata Shah Children's Home, there are 5 staff and 10 management board members and at St Luke's Bookshop, we have three staff and 9 members of the management board. Other respondents included the Diocesan Bishop, the Administrative Secretary and the Diocesan Finance Officer who are part of the board of management in the said institutions.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study aimed at bringing out to light strategic management practices and sustainability of projects. This is because strategic management practices position an organization for success. Organizations, in order to achieve their goals of providing quality products and services, profitability and competitive advantage over their rivals, they must practice strategic planning. The study therefore was of great importance because of the following reasons;

The management; the Anglican Diocese of Thika which owns these institutions gained an understanding of the competitive strategies the organization has adopted, the relationship between competitive strategies used by the institution and performance, and the challenges faced by the said institutions in implementing the adopted strategies. On the basis of this finding of this study, the management will implement corporate strategies from an informed position.

The information obtained was useful to the staff of these institutions because it enabled them to embrace change, give contributions towards effective running of the institutions and help them achieve their goals. The finding of this study was used by any other organization that runs such or any other institutions.

The symbiotic relationship between competitive strategies and organizational performance is an explored concept and especially in Faith Based Organizations. The academic world will definitely consider the enormous potential of this strategic intersection. This study will make a significant contribution to the growing body of research on competitive strategies. The findings may be used as a source of reference for other researchers. In addition, academic researchers may need the study

findings to stimulate further research in this area and as such form a basis of good background for further researches.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Competitive Strategies**

It is discussed by Porter (1983) that every company has a competitive strategy; either it is official or unofficial to the market. It is a plan for how a firm will compete, and how it will be formulated after evaluating how its strengths and weaknesses compare to those of its competitors; this must lead to a sustainable competitive advantage. A competitive advantage exists when the firm is able to deliver the same benefits as competitors but at a lower cost (cost advantage) or deliver benefits that exceed those of competing products (differentiation advantage), thus a competitive advantage enables the firm to create superior value for its customers and superior profits for itself (Porter, 1985). Competitive advantage becomes core when it is sustainable and thus the realization of sustainable competitive advantage. Sustainable competitive advantage is an advantage that enables business to survive against its competition over a long period of time.

Research by Kim et al. (2004) found that firms employing only one of Porter's generic strategies outperformed companies that applied elements from different strategies into their company. Companies who tried to achieve two or more different strategies at the same time also failed to perform at their best. They concluded that integrated strategies combining elements of cost leadership and differentiation will result in higher performance than cost leadership or differentiation do individually. But still, as Porter wrote, stuck-in-the-middle has to be avoided; the integrated strategy is to be seen as a new generic strategy.

### **Firm Performance**

Powers and Hahn (2004) looked into whether or not there are any links between competitive methods, generic strategies and firm's performance. Their article showed that in any businesses, a cost leadership strategy did perform better than differentiation and focus. However, those, which have chosen differentiation and focus, performed better than the company that was stuck-in-the-middle. Day and Wensley (1998) also say that choosing a strategy based on the positional advantage in the market will make a firm successful, because it is dependent upon which resources are available to them.

The focus of this study is to look into what strategies the Anglican Diocese of Thika is implementing in order to enhance its performance. The study seeks to investigate if competitive strategies, among them are the generic strategies which Porter developed, are applicable in such an industry as the financial services sector. The analysis for the study was based on work done by other strategists who can help get a broader picture of the theories on the subject to complement Porter and also criticize his strategies.

### **Competitive strategies**

#### *Porter's five forces model*

In his book, "Competitive Advantage", Porter claims that companies competing in a given industry must fulfill many different activities that form cost and create value for the buyers. By using the competitive strategy, a company targets to position itself in a sustainable and profitable position against the forces shaping the industry (Porter, 1985).

### *The structural analysis of industries*

The main variable determining a firm's profitability and competitiveness is the attractiveness of an industry. There are five forces defining the rules of the competition in an industry: the entry of new competitors, the threat of substitutes, the bargaining power of buyers, the bargaining power of suppliers, and the rivalry among the existing competitors. Since those affect the prices, costs, and investments required, the industry profitability is a total function of them. The constitution of the industry may change as the change in the structure converts the overall and relative importance of the forces. (Porter, 1985)

### *Intensity of rivalry*

It has been claimed that rivalry depends on more than one factor; one of them is industry concentration. A larger number of firms will enhance the rivalry as firms will struggle to capture market share to be leader serving the same customers and resources. Slow market growth induces firms to fight for expanding market share aggressively; "High fixed costs" is another factor that leads to increase in rivalry; thus firms endeavour to sell large quantity of product or service with lowest unit of costs; "Low switching costs" is the paramount element to increase rivalry, as if a customer freely switches from one product to another; it shows that there is a greater struggle to capture customers. A low level of product differentiation is associated with higher levels of rivalry. High exit barriers head pressure on firms to enter in and exit due to high cost on abandoning the product (Porter, 1985).

### *Pressure from Substitute Products*

In Porter's model, the price change of substitute products immensely affects the demand on the product. In addition, if the product is price-sensitive, switching to other products is expected to be fast. Therefore, the threat of substitute products restrains the profit generated from industry by putting a lid on the prices for which the product/service in the industry is available (Porter, 1985).

### *Potential of New Entrants*

The potential entrants in an industry enhance the level of competition for capturing market share, thus creating threats for existing companies. Strength and effect of threat is closely related to the entry barriers for a given industry as increase of entry barriers will induce the decrease in the threat coming from new entrants. The roots of entry barriers are required capital investments for initiating a business, accessibility of raw materials and distribution channels, requirements posed by economies of scale and product/service differentiation (Porter, 1985)

### *The Buyer Bargaining Power*

The buyer bargaining power improves if many suppliers are competing for the same product and therefore buyers can switch from one supplier to another easily, especially for the undifferentiated products. Another factor that enhances the buyer power is to purchase the products in large quantities from one supplier. Thereby, buyers with strong bargaining power can ask for suppliers to reduce the price, raising service or goods quality with better terms and conditions (Porter, 1985).

### *Supplier Bargaining Power*

The supplier bargaining power exists if the demand for product is higher than the supply, also the existence of fewer suppliers in certain industry triggers more power to exert over buyers. However, availability of substitutes for the suppliers' products immensely affects the supplier power. Suppliers can gain and enhance their power through offering highly differentiated products, or creating unique products (Porter, 1985).

### *Cost leadership*

One of Porter's generic strategies is cost leadership (Malburg, 2000). This strategy focuses on gaining competitive advantage by having the lowest cost in the industry (Porter, 1987). In order to achieve a low-cost advantage, an organization must have a low-cost leadership strategy, low-cost

manufacturing, and a workforce committed to the low-cost strategy (Malburg, 2000). The organization must be willing to discontinue any activities in which they do not have a cost advantage and should consider outsourcing activities to other organizations with a cost advantage (Malburg, 2000). For an effective cost leadership strategy, a firm must have a large market share (Porter (1985) purports only one firm in an industry can be the cost leader and if this is the only difference between a firm and competitors, the best strategic choice is the low cost leadership role (Malburg, 2000). As a low cost leader, an organization can present barriers against new market entrants who would need large amounts of capital to enter the market (Hyatt, 2001). The leader then is somewhat insulated from industry wide price reductions (Malburg, 2000). The cost leadership strategy does have disadvantages. It creates little customer loyalty.

#### *Differentiation*

Differentiation is also one of Porter's key business strategies. When using this strategy, a company focuses its efforts on providing a unique product or service (Porter, 1996). Since the product or service is unique, this strategy provides high customer loyalty. Product differentiation fulfills a customer need and involves tailoring the product or service to the customer. This allows organizations to charge a premium price to capture market share. Aaker (1984) further argues that a differentiation strategy is often but not always associated with a higher price because it usually makes price less critical.

#### *Focus*

The focuser firm chooses a specific segment or group of segments in the industry. A firm that does not have an overall competitive advantage optimizes its strategy in order to serve the needs of the target segments and achieve a competitive advantage in them. Cost focus and differentiation focus rely on the differences of the given segment from the other segments in the industry, that is, differences in cost behavior or the unique needs of a segment. It means that tailoring the activities to a specific segment exclusively which is not served properly by broadly-targeted competitors. However, sometimes firms choose to create separate business units under the same corporate entity (Porter, 1985).

#### *Combination*

An organization may also choose a combination strategy by mixing of the aforementioned generic strategies. For example, a firm may choose to have a focused differentiation strategy. This means the organization has a unique product offered to a targeted market segment. An organization may also choose to have a focused cost-leadership strategy. In this instance, an organization would use a cost leadership strategy targeted to a specific market segment. There is much debate as to whether or not a company can have a differentiation and low-cost leadership strategy at the same time (Helms et al., 1997). Porter felt differentiation and cost-leadership were mutually exclusive.

### **Ansoff Growth Strategies**

The Ansoff Product/Market Growth Matrix is a marketing tool created by Igor Ansoff and first published in his article "Strategies for Diversification" in the Harvard Business Review (1957). The matrix allows marketers to consider ways to grow the business via existing and/or new products, in existing and/or new markets. There are four possible product/market combinations and this matrix helps companies decide what course of action should be taken given the current performance.

### **Competitive Strategies and Firm Performance**

There are several researchers who have empirically investigated the impact of Porter's generic strategies on the performance of companies. Dess and Davis (1984) examined the performance effects of generic strategies based on a sample of non-diversified manufacturing firms. They found

that those firms can be classified into four clusters based on the strategies they adopt: cost leadership, stuck in the middle, focus, and differentiation. In terms of sales growth, the four groups were found to be significantly different from one another. The focus cluster was found to have the highest sales growth, followed by cost leadership, differentiation, and stuck in the middle clusters. In terms of return on total assets, the performance difference was not significant among the four groups. While the highest return was evident in the cost leadership group, the lowest was evident in the focus groups.

### **Firm Performance Measures**

While researchers may not always agree on the best strategy, or strategy combination, most if not all, support the long-term benefits of strategic planning for the successful performance of an organization or business unit. However, measuring the performance of a company is challenging. Researchers (Day and Wensley, 1988) disagree about how to both define and operationalize performance. Most studies on organizational performance use a variety of financial and non-financial success measures.

#### *Financial Measures*

Researchers employ financial measures such as profit, turnover, return on investment (Hooley and Lynch, 1985), return on capital employed (Baker et al., 1988), and inventory turnover (Frazier and Howell, 1983).

#### *Bench marking*

Benchmarking is the process of comparing one's business processes and performance metrics to industry bests and/or best practices from other industries. Dimensions typically measured are quality, time, and cost. Improvements from learning mean doing things better, faster, and cheaper. It involves management identifying the best firms in their industry, or any other industry where similar processes exist, and comparing the results and processes of those studied (the "targets") to one's own results and processes to learn how well the targets perform and, more importantly, how they do it.

#### *The Balanced Score Card*

The balanced scorecard is a strategic planning and management system that is used extensively in business and industry, government, and non-profit organizations worldwide to align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organization, improve internal and external communications, and monitor organization performance against strategic goals.

### **The learning and growth perspective**

In the current climate of rapid technological change, knowledge workers must be in a continuous learning mode. Metrics can be put into place to guide managers in focusing training funds where they can help the most. In any case, learning and growth constitute the essential foundation for success of any knowledge-worker organization. Kaplan and Norton emphasize that "learning" is more than "training"; it also includes things like mentors and tutors within the organization, as well as that ease of communication among workers that allows them to readily get help on a problem when it is needed.

### **The customer perspective**

Customer focus and customer satisfaction are important in any business. These are leading indicators: if customers are not satisfied, they will eventually find other suppliers that will meet their needs. Poor performance from this perspective is thus a leading indicator of future decline,



even though the current financial picture may look good. In developing metrics for satisfaction, customers should be analyzed in terms of kinds of customers and the kinds of processes for which we are providing a product or service to those customer groups.

### **The financial perspective**

Timely and accurate funding data will always be a priority, and managers will do whatever necessary to provide it. But the point is that the current emphasis on financials leads to the “unbalanced” situation with regard to other perspectives. There is perhaps a need to include additional financial-related data, such as risk assessment and cost-benefit data, in this category. In conclusion, even though the impact of competitive strategies on firm performance has been discussed for a long time, empirical tests in this regard are scarce. Most of the past literature presents conceptual arguments and statistical evidence to describe the impact of competitive strategies on financial services providers, its potential to revolutionize business activities, benefits achieved by organizations, and barriers faced by organizations in implementing competitive strategies into organizations.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

#### **Data Collection**

Primary data was collected using a questionnaire with both closed and open ended questions. The questionnaires were self-administered through personal interviews with the CEO, Head of Departments, Board members, Staff and customers. Personal interviews was preferred because of having the potential to yield the highest quality and quantity of data compared to other methods since supplementary information can be collected in the course of the interview (Parasulaman, 1986). Closed ended questions were presented on a Likert type scale. The Likert type scale, commonly used in business research was applied because it allows participants to provide their perceptions and opinions both in terms of direction (positive or negative) and intensity (degree of agreement or disagreement). The ratings were done on a scale of 1 (lowest or least important) to 5 (highest or most important). Additionally, secondary data related to the institutions was also explored namely the financial results.

In order to satisfy the first objective of the study, a listing of the various possible generic strategy practices were provided and the respondents asked to tick (√) as appropriate, the extent to which they have adopted each of the strategies along a five-point scale (Kothari, 2005). In order to satisfy the second objective, the respondents were provided with performance indicators and asked to indicate along a five point scale, into which category their regions fall as far as performance is concerned.

#### **Data Collection Procedure**

The questionnaires were pre-tested on a small number of respondents who will be selected on a judgmental basis. The researcher emailed the questionnaires to the managers with a letter of introduction, explaining the purpose of the study. In addition, the researcher made telephone calls to the respective respondents to further explain the purpose of the study and set a time frame for the completion of the questionnaires. The respondents were given a period of one week to complete and return the questionnaires.

### Data Analysis and Presentation

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used as an aid in the analysis. The researcher preferred SPSS because of its ability to cover a wide range of the most common statistical and graphical data analysis (Kothari, 2014). The collected data from the questionnaire and secondary sources was systematically organized in a manner to facilitate analysis. The data pertaining to profile of the respondents and the organizations was analyzed using content analysis. Cooper and Schindler (2005) stated that content analysis may be used to analyze written data from experiments, observations, surveys and secondary sources.

For purposes of the proposed study, descriptive statistics was used in the analysis of the data. In order to determine the relationship between Porter's Generic Strategies and firm performance, correlation and regression analyses was undertaken. Measures of central tendency (mean scores and percentages) and measures of dispersion (range, variance and standard deviation) were computed as appropriate. In addition, bar charts, pie charts and graphs were also used. (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003)

### Demographic Data

#### *Period respondent had been in current position*

The respondents were asked to indicate the period of time they had worked in their current positions. The responses are summarized here below. Period respondents had been in the current position;

10 years and above - 0% respondents

6 to 10 years- 3.2% respondents

1 to 5 years – 80.6% respondents

Less than one year- 16.1 % respondents

The findings in Figure 3 show that 16.1% of the respondents had been in their current positions for less than 1 year, 80.6% of the respondents had been in their current positions for a period of between 1 and 5 years, and only 3.2% of the respondents had been in their current positions for between 6 and 10 years. The responses show that majority of the respondents (83.8%) had been in their current positions for at least 1 year. The responses were thus expected to be objective.

**Table 1.** Period worked in the organization.

Period worked in organization	frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Less than 1 year	1	3.2	3.2		
Between 1 and 5 years	18	58.1	61.3		
Between 6 and 10 years	12	38.7	100.0	2.42	0.551
Total	31	100.0		2.35	0.551

#### **Figure 4: Number of full time employees**

The number of full time employees was as follows;

Less than 25 had 41.9 % respondents

26 to 50 had 25.8 % respondents

51 to 75 had 0% respondents

101 and above had 25.8 % respondents

**Number of full time employees**

The respondents were asked to indicate the number of full time employees in their respective work stations. The researcher sought to determine the size of the work stations by establishing the number of full time employees. The higher the number of full time employees, considering that all operations of the organization are automated, the more the operations and hence the bigger the size of the work stations.

The responses are summarized and presented in Figure 4. The findings in Figure 4 show that whereas 41.9% of the respondents indicated having less than 25 full time employees in their respective work stations, 25.8% of the respondents indicated that their respective work stations had between 26 and 50 full time employees, 6.5% of the respondents indicated that they had between 51 and 75 full time employees while 25.8% of the respondents indicated that they had 101 full time employees and above. The mean score was 2.42.

**Period worked in the organization**

The respondents were asked to indicate the period of time they had worked in their respective organizations. It is assumed that the longer one worked in an organization, the more they understood the organization and hence the higher the ability to articulate issues pertaining to the organization. The responses are summarized and presented in Table 1. Findings in Table 1 show that while 3.2% of the respondents had worked in the organization for less than 1 year, 58.1% of the respondents had worked in the organization for between 1 and 5 years, and 38.7% of the respondents had worked in the organization for between 6 and 10 years. The findings show that majority of the respondents (78%) had worked in their respective organizations for more than 5 years, a period long enough to understand operations of the organization. The responses were thus expected to be objective.

**Table 2. Vigorous Pursuit in cost reduction**

Response	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Somehow	7	22.6	22.6		
Much	12	38.7	38.7		
Very much	12	38.7	100.0		
Total	31	100.0		4.16	0.779

**Table 3. Providing outstanding customer service**

Response	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Very little	1	3.2	3.2		
Somehow	1	3.2	6.5		
Much	4	12.9	19.4		
Very much	25	80.6	100.0		
Total	31	100.0		4.71	0.693

**Table 4. Improving Operational efficiency**

Response	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Very little	1	3.2	3.2		
Somehow	3	9.7	12.9		
Much	11	35.5	48.4		
Very much	16	51.6	100.0		
Total	31	100.0		4.35	0.798

**The impact of competitive strategies adopted by Anglican Diocese of Thika**

In order to meet the first objective of this study, “to determine the competitive strategies adopted by Anglican Diocese of Thika in managing and running its projects”, the respondents were provided with a listing of possible strategic practices used by organizations and asked to indicate the extent to which their respective work stations used each of the listed strategic practices. The responses are summarized and presented in Table 2.

The findings in Table 2 show that vigorous pursuit of cost reductions is one of the competitive strategies used by Anglican Diocese of Thika. This is confirmed as 22.6% of the respondents indicated “somehow”, 38.7% of the respondents indicated “much” and 38.7% of the respondents indicated “very much”. The findings in Table 3 indicate that provision of outstanding customer service is one of the competitive strategies adopted by Anglican Diocese of Thika. This finding is confirmed as 3.2% of the respondents indicated “somehow”, 12.9% of the respondents indicated “much” and 80.6% of the respondents indicated “very much”.

**Table 5. Controlling quality of products and services**

Response	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Very little	1	3.2	3.2		
Somehow	1	3.2	6.5		
Much	14	45.2	51.6		
Very much	15	48.4	100.0		
Total	31	100.0		4.39	0.715

**Table 6. Intense supervision of the personnel**

Response	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Somehow	7	22.6	22.6		
Much	18	58.1	80.6		
Very much	6	19.4	100.0		
Total	31	100.0		3.97	0.657

**Table 7. Developing brand or organizational name**

Response	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Very little	2	6.5	6.5		
Somehow	2	6.5	12.9		
Much	7	22.6	35.5		
Very much	20	64.5	100.0		
Total	31	100.0		4.45	0.888

**Table 8. Targeting a specific market niche or segment**

Response	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Very little	3	9.7	9.7		
Somehow	7	22.6	32.3		
Much	12	38.7	71.0		
Very much	9	29.0	100.0		
Total	31	100.0		3.87	0.957

**Table 9. Providing speciality products or services**

Response	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Very little	1	3.2	3.2		
Somehow	2	6.5	9.7		
Much	15	48.4	58.1		
Very much	13	41.9	100.0		
Total	31	100.0		4.29	0.739

Findings in Table 4 show that improving operational efficiency is one of the competitive strategies adopted by Anglican Diocese of Thika. This finding is confirmed as 9.7% of the respondents indicated “somehow”, 35.5% of the respondents indicated “much” and 51.6% of the respondents indicated “very much”. Findings in Table 5 show that controlling quality of products/services is one of the strategies adopted by Faith Based Projects to remain competitive, as indicated by 3.2, 45.2 and 48.4% of the respondents, whose response was “somehow”, “much” and “very much” respectively. The findings in Table 6 show that intense supervision of frontline personnel is one of the strategies adopted by Anglican Diocese of Thika, as indicated by 22.6, 58.1 and 19.4% of the respondents who indicated “somehow”, “much” and “very much” respectively. Findings in Table 7 show that developing brand or company name identification was adopted by Postbank, as indicated by 6.5, 22.6 and 64.5% of the respondents whose response was “somehow”, “much” and “very much” respectively. Findings in Table 8 show that Postbank adopted the targeting of specific market niche or segment in order to remain competitive, as indicated by 22.6, 38.7 and 29% of the respondents whose response was “somehow”, “much”, and “very much” respectively. The findings in Table 9 show that provision of specialty products/services is one of the strategies adopted by the Faith based projects in a bid to remain competitive. The responses show that whereas 6.5% of the respondents indicated “somehow”, 48.4% indicated “much” and 41.9% indicated “very much”.

**Table 10. Total revenue growth**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid %</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Lowest (1-20%)	8	25.8	25.8		
Lower (21-40%)	5	16.1	41.9		
Middle (41-60%)	2	6.5	48.4		
Next 61-80%)	3	9.7	58.1		
Top (81-100%)	123	41.9	100.0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>		<b>3.32</b>	<b>1.69</b>

**Table 11. Total Asset Growth**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid %</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Lowest (1-20%)	1	3.2	3.2		
Lower (21-41%)	5	16.1	19.3		
Middle (41-60%)	6	19.4	38.7		
Next 61-80%)	7	22.6	61.3		
Top (81-100%)	12	38.7	100.0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>		<b>3.69</b>	<b>1.24</b>

**Table 12. Net Income growth**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid %</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Lowest (1-20%)	2	6.5	6.5		
Lower (21-40%)	2	6.5	13.0		
Middle 41-60%	5	16.1	29.1		
Next (61-80.0 %)	8	25.8	54.9		
Top (81-100%)	14	45.1	100.0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>		<b>4.00</b>	<b>1.17</b>

**The relationship between the competitive strategies used by Anglican Diocese of Thika in the management of its projects and their performances.**

In order to meet the second objective of the study, “to establish the relationship between the competitive strategies used by the Anglican Diocese of Thika and organizational performance”, the respondents were asked to rate how the organization compared with competitors on the basis of listed performance indicators over the most recent three year period. The responses are summarized and presented as follows:

With respect to total revenue growth (Table 10), 25.8% of the respondents indicated that their organization belonged to the lowest bracket (1 - 20%), 16.1% of the respondents indicated that their respective organizations belonged to the lower bracket (21 - 40%), 6.5% of the respondents indicated that the staff belonged to the middle bracket (41 - 60%), 9.7% of the respondents indicated that staff belonged to the next bracket (61 - 80%) and 41.9% of the respondents indicated that staff belonged to the top bracket (81 - 100%).

With respect to total asset growth (Table 11), the responses show that 3.2% of the respondents indicated that the projects owned and run by Anglican Diocese of Thika belonged to the lowest bracket (1 - 20%), 16.1% of the respondents indicated that the projects belonged to the lower bracket (21 - 40%), 19.4% of the respondents indicated that the projects belonged to the middle bracket (41 - 60%), 22.6% of the respondents indicated that the projects belonged to the next bracket (61 - 80%) and 38.7% indicated that the projects belonged to the top bracket (81 - 100%).

With respect to net income growth (Table 12), the findings show that 6.5% of the respondents indicated that the Anglican Diocese of Thika projects belonged to the lowest bracket (1 - 20%), 6.5% of the respondents indicated that the staff belonged to the lower bracket (21 - 40%), 16.1% of the respondents indicated that staff belonged to the middle bracket (41 - 60%), 25.8% of the respondents indicated that staff belonged to the next bracket (61 - 80%) and 45.1% of the respondents indicated that staff belonged to the top bracket (81 - 100%).

**Table 13.** Market Share growth

Response	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Lowest (1-20%)	7	22.6	22.6		
Lower (21-40%)	4	12.9	35.5		
Middle 41-60%	7	22.6	58.1		
Next (61-80.0 %)	3	9.7	67.8		
Top (81-100%)	10	32.2	100.0		
Total	31	100.0		3.14	1.55

**Table 14. Overall Performance or Growth**

Response	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Lowest (1-20%)	2	6.5	6.5		
Lower (21-40%)	3	9.7	16.2		
Middle 41-60%	10	32.2	48.4		
Next (61-80.0 %)	3	9.7	58.1		
Top (81-100%)	13	41.9	100.0		
Total	31	100.0		3.61	1.34

Findings in Table 13 show that with respect to market share growth, 22.6% of the respondents indicated that Anglican Diocese of Thika staff belonged to the lowest bracket (1 - 20%), 12.9% of the respondents indicated that staff belonged to the lower bracket (21 - 40%), 22.6% of the respondents indicated that staff belonged to the middle bracket (41 - 60%), 9.7% of the respondents indicated that staff belonged to the next bracket (61 - 80%) and 32.2% of the respondents indicated that staff belonged to the top bracket (81 - 100%).

With respect to overall performance and growth, findings of this study in Table 14 show that 6.5% of the respondents belonged to the lowest bracket (1 - 20%), 9.7% of the respondents belonged to the lower bracket (21 - 40%), 32.2% of the respondents belonged to the middle bracket (41 - 60%), 9.7% of the respondents belonged to the next bracket (61 - 80%) and 41.9% of the respondents belonged to the top bracket (81 - 100%).

### Conclusion

Findings of the study show that the strategies adopted by Anglican Diocese of Thika so as to cope with the competitive environment include vigorous pursuit of cost reductions, providing outstanding customer service, improving operational efficiency, controlling quality of products/services, intense supervision of frontline personnel, developing brand or company name identification, targeting a specific market niche or segment, and providing specialty products/services. The findings also show a significant relationship between the strategies adopted by Anglican Diocese of Thika and the organization's performances with respect to the following objective performance indicators: total revenue growth, total asset growth, net income growth, market share growth and overall performance or growth.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study, the following strategies were recommended for adoption by Anglican Diocese of Thika in order to cope with the competition: Adoption of vigorous pursuit of cost reductions, provision of outstanding customer service, improving operational efficiency, controlling quality of products/services, intense supervision of frontline personnel, development of brand or company name identification, targeting a specific market niche or segment, and providing specialty products/services. The more of the stated strategies the faith based organizations adopt, the more competitive they will be.



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