

## **Influence of Strategic Leadership Factors on Implementation of Covid-19 Government Guidelines in Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County, Kenya**

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**How to cite this article: Kiniti, D. V. N., Onjure, C. O. & Kibanga, J. K. (2023). Influence of Strategic Leadership Factors on Implementation of Covid-19 Government Guidelines in Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County, Kenya. *Journal of Human Resource & Leadership*, 3(2), 1-24.**

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### **Abstract**

The introduction and enforcement of the COVID-19 guidelines by the government of Kenya adversely affected the church due to its social nature of existence and operation. The leadership of the church is expected to play a key role in effecting the implementation of government guidelines to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this is beside the core spiritual mandate of the church. The implementation of these guidelines is a significant addition of responsibilities to the church leadership which has adversely affected the operations of the church in delivering services to the members. The study sought to establish the influence of strategic leadership factors on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines in evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by Evangelical Alliance of Kenya. This research adopted a descriptive research design and the target population was 500 evangelical churches. The study results showed that strategic leadership factors have a significant influence on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. However, the study established that there is an insignificant influence of strategic planning on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. Organizational culture, human resource development, and organizational communication had a significant influence on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. The study concluded that strategic leadership factors were very important for the achievement of proper implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. The study recommended that church leaders should involve the congregants in the strategic planning process. The church should also gather data on the pandemic and other external factors affecting members to inform the strategic planning process. Further, the church should inculcate a culture of recognizing and rewarding best performance to motivate the staff. The church should carry out a periodical needs assessment to make strategic decisions on staff development. In addition, partnerships with the government and other stakeholders in the health sector should be sought to develop a training program that will meet the needs identified from the needs assessment. Further, the church leaders should review and improve the turn-around –time of communicating with the congregants on all matters concerning the implementation of the guidelines.

**Keywords:** *Strategic planning, organizational culture, human resource development, organizational Communication, Covid-19 Government Guidelines*

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## 1.0 Introduction

Globally, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Church of England, through her website, gave guidance to the church on a wide range of church programs through the Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for churches. These guidelines were regularly updated to keep up with the government regulations given from time to time. The guidance covered among others: implications of the government guidelines on church activities and the congregants; frequently asked questions on matters related to liturgy; prayer and worship both for individuals and corporate; life events like funerals, weddings, baptisms, ordinations, among others; community support; fabric and building maintenance; finance and governance; schools, nurseries, and youth provision; and general provisions on various measures in response to any potential risk to the church, congregants and the community (The Church of England, 2020).

The closure of places of worship caught both the worshippers and the religious leaders by surprise. According to (Kahura, 2020), following this closure, the church as has been known over the years will never be the same again. The threat of congregants not coming back to church or even clergy not coming back to church is real. He further observes that there is so much disruption in matters of church including relationships between clergy and laity, a shift in loyalty, economic impact on the church, as well as the realization that after all, going to church or not is not the ultimate measure of spirituality. The new measures imposed by the government would prove to be a big challenge to many churches. Some of the immediate reactions included defiance by some of the churches. This was met with a swift response by the authorities.

In Bungoma County of the Western region of Kenya for instance, police raided churches and arrested a priest, several nuns, and over forty congregants. These arrests were made at St. Paul's Kanduyi Parish and Christ the King Catholic Church (Wasike, 2020). Even though those arrested in Bugoma were freed without pressing charges, it was not so for Father Richard Onyango Oduor. According to a report by Reuters (2020), the priest was charged with negligence, leading to the spread of an infectious disease. Though the priest denied the charges, the court freed him by imposing a hefty bond and ordering that he spends another 14 days in quarantine before reappearing in court for the case to continue. The church was not the only one on the receiving end following the confusion brought about by the government's COVID-19 guidelines. According to a news report (Kakah, 2020), three pastors had succeeded in having the High Court of Kenya certify it as urgent, a case in which the three were seeking to have the government compelled to lift the ban on congregational gatherings while advocating for measures to be put in place to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Other churches tried to go around the order prohibiting religious gatherings by implementing other requirements like hand hygiene, checking the temperature of the congregants before admission to the church, wearing face masks, and observation of social distancing. The implementation of the COVID-19 guidelines by the government remained a challenge to the church.

Several studies have shown failure in strategy implementation worldwide. Some studies suggest that as high as 90% of developed strategies are not implemented, yet strategy implementation is the most important stage and it's also the most complicated and time-consuming part of strategic management (Mwanje, 2016; Kagumu, 2018). Strategy implementation is critical for organizations to achieve the desired goals and realize the envisioned future. Most studies on strategic management have been carried out on strategy formulation but less attention has been given to strategy implementation (Amrule, 2018; Okwach, 2019). Where available, most studies have focused on strategy implementation in the

Western developed countries and less on the developing and least developed countries such as Kenya.

The call by the Kenyan president for a national prayer day led by the religious leaders set the stage for the engagement of the church as a response to the pandemic (Lang'at, 2020). During his eighth presidential address on coronavirus pandemic, president (Kenyatta, 2020b), directed the Ministries of Interior and Health to constitute, within seven days, an Inter-Faith Council. The key mandate of this Council was to work out modalities and protocols that would enable the re-opening of places of worship. Through a Gazette notice number 3976 of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020, a nineteen-member Inter-Faith Council was appointed jointly by the Cabinet Secretaries for Interior and Co-ordination of National Government and Health (Matiang'i & Kagwe, 2020). This Council drew representatives from several Church umbrella bodies which included: Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK), National Council of Churches (NCCCK), Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA), Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) and General Conference of Akurinu Churches Assembly (GECACA), (Inter-Faith Council on the National Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, 2020). It is through this Council that the church and other religious communities were guided on general principles of implementing the COVID-19 government guidelines.

### ***1.1 Research Problem***

The implementation of the COVID-19 government guidelines has generally posed challenges to individuals and organizations alike. The complexity of these guidelines, consequences of not adhering to them, cost implications and the level of disruption to normalcy are among the factors that individuals and organizations must grapple with to keep both the virus and the enforcement officers at bay. The church has adversely been affected by these guidelines due to its social nature of existence and operation. To remain relevant and effectively discharge vital ministry to congregants in a time of dire need, the church must raise to the occasion to maneuver through this season. Considering the need to ensure the safety of the congregants while at the same time effectively meeting their needs, the church cannot operate on business-as-usual terms.

To implement the guidelines, churches have had to adjust several “normals” like controlling the number of congregants attending services in person at a given time, to the suspension of some of the key religious rites like baptism. Installation of hand washing stations and monitoring of the body temperature of congregants as well as enforcing the proper wearing of facemasks throughout the worship service are among other measures taken by churches to remain compliant. Many of these guidelines are not within the simple way churches have operated before. Besides the core spiritual mandate that the church exists for, the COVID-19 government guidelines have added more responsibilities and duties to the church leadership. The implementation of these guidelines has also added a strain on the already stretched resources, both human and financial, of the church. This has affected the operations of the church and disrupted normalcy. Therefore, more needs to be done since the nature of this pandemic calls for short-term, mid-term, and long-term strategies to be put in place for the long haul. Besides divine intervention, other interventions like leadership, planning, policy formulation, implementation, and review are among other strategic leadership competencies required to navigate the church through the pandemic. This study, therefore, sought to ascertain the extent to which strategic leadership factors have influenced the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines in evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya.

## ***1.2 Research Objectives***

- i. To investigate the influence of strategic planning on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.
- ii. To examine the influence of organizational culture on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.
- iii. To determine the influence of human resource development on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.
- iv. To assess the influence of organizational communication on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.

## **2.0 Theoretical Review**

### ***2.1 Contingency Theory on Strategic Planning***

This Contingency theory proposed by Fiedler (1958) states that there is no best way to organize an organization. The optimal course of action that is contingent is dependent upon the internal and external situation. Immediate environments create requirements for organizations and thus appropriate strategies need to be implemented. These strategies in turn create contingencies such as size, technology, and level of diversification, for which some organizational structures are better suited than others. When managers of an organization find themselves with a structure that does not match its contingencies, for example, because these contingencies have changed, their organization's performance suffers, and they endeavor to change its structure to one with a better fit to improve performance (Fiedler, 1958).

This theory applies to the current study in that churches are open systems that need to strategically plan to satisfy and balance internal needs and adapt to environmental circumstances. There is no one best way of planning. The appropriate strategy depends on the kind of task or environment one is dealing with. In churches, management must be concerned with achieving alignments and good fits. They need to realize that different types of strategies are needed in different types of environments.

### ***2.2 Schein's Theory of Organizational Culture***

Schein's Theory of organizational culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid. Edgar Schein realized that the culture of an organization affects how the people involved in it feel in the organization and how they perform for the organization. According to Schein, organizational culture is the learned result of group experiences, and it is largely unconscious (Schein, 1992). Schein considers culture to be a three-layer phenomenon.

The first level of culture consists of visible organizational processes and various artifacts. For example, dress codes and the general tidiness of the workplace are artifacts that tell something about the organization's culture. The first level, according to Schein, is difficult to interpret, however, because it represents the most superficial cultural phenomena, i.e., only reflections of the true corporate culture. For example, behavior which is a cultural artifact is also influenced by countless factors other than a company's culture (Schein, 1992).

The second cultural level in the Schein model consists of the organization's espoused values. These are apparent in, for example, the organization's official objectives, declared norms, and

operating philosophy. Espoused values, however, do not always reflect a company's everyday operations. The third cultural level and most important in terms of operations is the culture's deepest level, namely its underlying assumptions. These are the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, though taken for granted, that inform actions and values (Schein, 1999).

Schein (2014), defined culture as both a dynamic phenomenon that always surrounds us, being constantly enacted, and created by our interactions with others and shaped by leadership behavior, and a set of structures, routines, rules, and norms that guide and constrain behavior. When one brings culture to the level of the organization and even down to groups within the organization, one can see clearly how culture is created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately manipulated. At the same time, how culture constrains, stabilizes, and provides structure and meaning to the group members.

Sorensen (2012), stated that we should be able to perceive and decipher the cultural forces that operate in groups, organizations, and occupations. Once we learn to see the world through cultural lenses, all kinds of things begin to make senses that initially were mysterious, frustrating, or seemingly stupid. Researchers have supported some of these views by reporting findings on cultural- strength or certain kinds of cultures' correlation with economic performance (Sorensen, 2012).

The theory of organizational culture underpins this study as it explains how organizations plan, incorporate, and execute their competitive strategies in highly competitive and dynamic environments through the factors of structure, resources, strategic leadership, and culture.

### ***2.3 Resource-Based View Theory***

This theory posits that the competitive advantage of a firm is determined by resource uniqueness (Carpela & Gordon, 2011). Hence, the starting point is to review the resources at the disposal of an organization. Wang, (2009) defines resources to mean both tangible and intangible assets that an organization uses to choose and implement its strategies. Tangible resources include financial, technological, physical, and organizational resources while intangible resources include human, reputation, and innovation (Carpela & Gordon, 2011). The theory focuses on the value, rarity, imitability, and church aspects of resources and capabilities. According to the framework, value-adding processes give a firm a competitive edge whereas there are those processes that do not add value and impact negatively on the organization's competitiveness as they lead to unnecessary distractions (Carpela & Gordon, 2011).

Where resources are not adding value, they should be purposefully abandoned (Swaim, 2011). Rarity is a competitive advantage that arises where the firm can provide services or a product in the market that no other or few firms have. If resources are valuable and rare, then it can be a source of competitive advantage. The inability of competitors to copy or replicate the services or products is referred to as imitability. Importantly, the organization should be able to organize value-adding, rare and imitable resources to achieve a competitive edge (Porter, 1990). Consequently, the theory is concerned with the resources the organization has and how it can utilize them to get a competitive advantage.

The theory makes two assumptions in analyzing competitive advantage (Barney, 2017). The first assumption is that firms within a certain industry are unique with respect to the resources that they control. The second assumption is that resources giving a competitive edge are not easily mobile across the industry and cannot be traded. A unique resource is considered an essential condition for a bundle of resources to attain a competitive advantage. Hence, Cool, Costa, and Dierickx, (2002) argue that if there was the same stock of resources in all firms in an industry, then there would be no strategy available to one firm that cannot be available to



the other firms. This theory has its critics. Foss (1998), argues that it does not provide any unit for analysis. Since the individual resources form a cog of this theory, it can only provide a unit for analysis only if individual resources are identifiable and well-defined. Secondly, the value ignores the exogenous nature of value as well as the environment (Barney, 2017).

This theory of resource-based view is of great importance to the churches in the view of managing the resources that they get in an efficient manner and for the management to ensure better planning is made on the developments made and the expenditures of the church. That way, it will mean that the church will never get to a point of not operating due to a lack of resources since proper plans are made regarding the resources available. Human resource is a very integral part of the success of any organization including the churches. Appreciating, managing, and developing this resource positions the church strategically during unprecedented times like the ones caused by COVID-19 global pandemic.

#### ***2.4 Interactional View Theory***

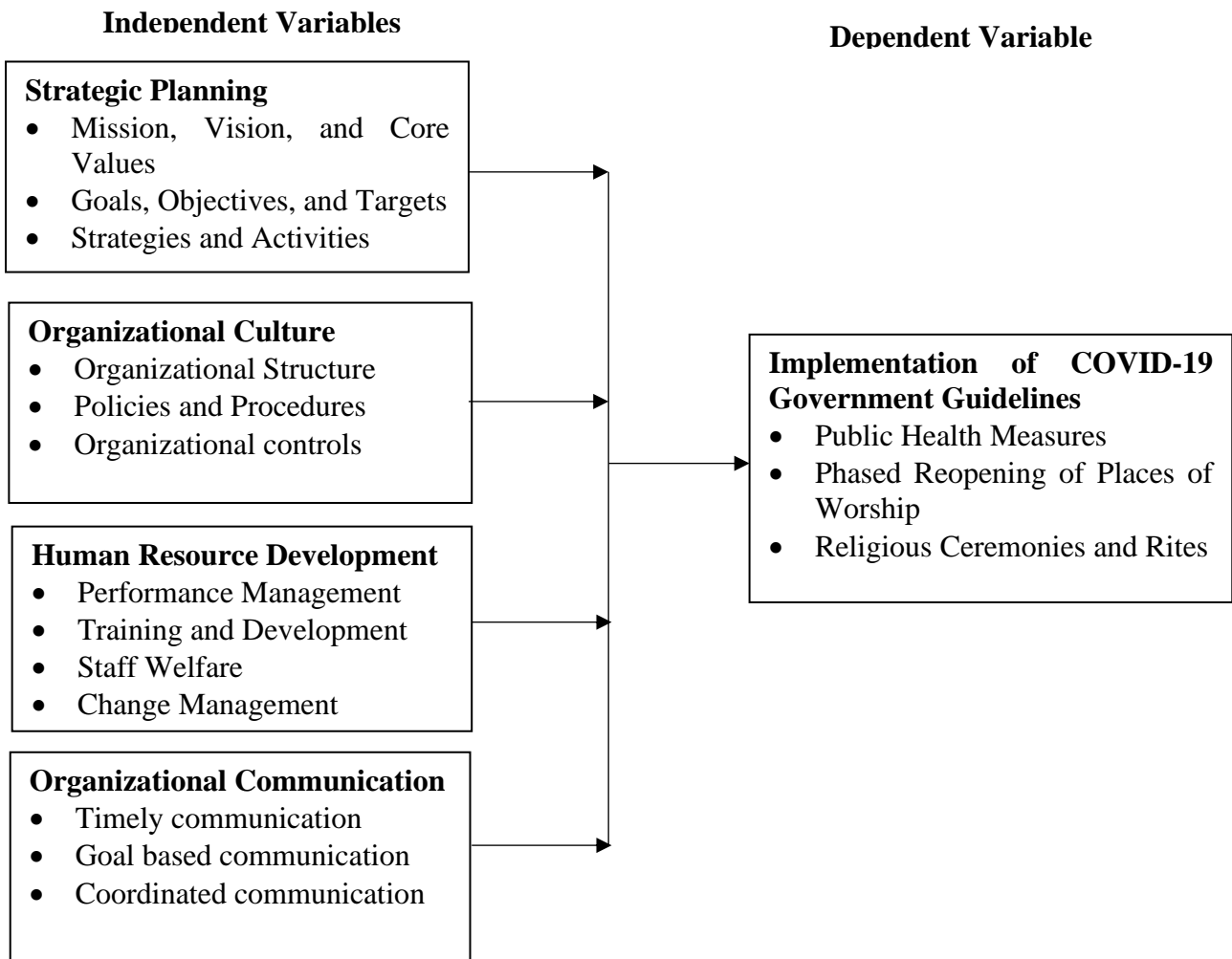
The Interactional View theory is an interpretive theory developed by Paul Watzlawick (Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2011). According to this theory, interpersonal communication is based on five axioms. First, every behavior is a form of communication and since behavior does not have a counterpart (there is no anti-behavior), it is impossible not to communicate. Secondly, every communication has a content and relationship aspect based on how the speaker wants to be understood and how he sees his relation to the receiver of information. Thirdly, the nature of the relationship depends on how both parties punctuate the communication sequence and therefore interpret their behavior during communication as merely a reaction to the other's behavior. Fourthly, human beings communicate both digitally and analogically, and lastly, communication is simultaneously based on equal power and differences in power.

Fruitful strategy formulation and effective strategy implementation require the coordination of multiple actors and their activities (Heide, Grønhaug, & Johannessen, 2017). Whereas top management is responsible for the strategic and organizational decisions that affect the organization, line managers operate as an intermediary between strategic and operational organizational activities (Helfat, Harris, & Wolfson, 2016; McCarthy, *et al.*, 2015). The interaction between these two key actors to minimize the gap between strategies is essential. They must coordinate their actions and cooperate to achieve the main goals of the organization (Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2011).

The Interactional View theory is relevant as it elaborates on how persons charged with policy implementations in the churches spread information through communication, ask for proposals from everybody including senior and junior members, to discuss the ideas, draw conclusions based upon the brainstorm and implement decisions that are agreed upon.

#### ***2.5 Conceptual Framework***

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 shows the relationship between strategic leadership factors and implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

### 3.0 Methodology

The research adopted a descriptive research design. The target population of this study was 500 evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by Evangelical Alliance of Kenya. The sample size for the study was 222 respondents, which was 44.4% of the total target population. Random sampling was used for the study. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Quantitative data was analyzed using a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software, Version 23. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and correlation analysis.

### 4.0 Results and Discussion

#### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis

##### 4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics for Strategic Planning

The respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agree with statements regarding strategic planning and its influence on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by evangelical churches in Nairobi. This sought to establish the extent to which strategic planning was engaged in implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. The results were tabulated as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Strategic Planning**

|   | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|------|----------------|
| Top leaders champion the Church's strategic planning on COVID-19 government guidelines implementation                 | 160 | 4.06 | 1.095          |
| Strategic planning is a top-priority activity   | 160 | 3.70 | 1.354          |
| Church members are involved in strategic planning   | 160 | 3.04 | 1.112          |
| The church periodically gathers data about the COVID-19 pandemic and other external factors which affect the members. | 160 | 3.11 | 1.153          |
| Valid N (listwise)  | 160 |      |                |

The findings as presented in Table 1 indicate that top leaders champion the church's strategic planning on COVID-19 government guidelines implementation. The findings further indicate that strategic planning is a top priority activity in evangelical churches. However, the findings indicate that the church does not periodically gather data about the COVID-19 pandemic and other external factors which affect the members. Further, the findings indicate that church members are not involved in strategic planning. These findings indicate a disconnect in the influence of strategic planning on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines in the evangelical churches in Nairobi. The top leadership champions and projects strategic planning as a priority activity of the church and yet does not involve the congregants in the process. Lack of information on COVID-19 and other external factors hinders informed strategic planning.

The church requires not only spiritual nourishment but leadership as well. Malphurs, (2013) argues that in a world that is experiencing what he refers to as mega change, pastoring a church is a leadership-intensive enterprise. This calls for the pastor not only to have the skills to preach, but additionally to possess leadership gifts and abilities, people skills, and strategic thinking and doing. The study findings established that church members are not involved in strategic planning. This is a hindrance since the success of a strategic plan is primarily dependent on strategic leadership and engaged followership. Strategic planning should not be an event left for annual retreats. It should not be mysterious and complicated. Instead, by developing a culture of strategic thinking, any organization including the church, can easily integrate strategic planning as part of daily decision-making at all levels (Olsen, 2007). However, this requires the involvement of all stakeholders in order to achieve success. The study concludes that though the church leadership champions strategic planning as a priority, the lack of involvement of the congregants as well as lack of periodic gathering of data and other external factors affecting the members, hinders the success of strategic planning in the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.



#### 4.1.2 Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Culture

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which organizational culture informed behavior, attitudes, and actions in implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. The results were tabulated as indicated in Table 2.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Culture**

|  | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-----|------|----------------|
| We have embraced practices and behaviors that enable COVID-19 government guidelines execution.                               | 160 | 3.70 | 1.191          |
| We have shared values that affect the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines.                                      | 160 | 3.54 | 1.115          |
| The culture of accepting divergent views from all stakeholders affects the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. | 160 | 3.53 | 1.233          |
| We have a culture of rewarding best performance which affects the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines.          | 160 | 2.78 | 1.325          |
| Valid N (listwise)   | 160 |      |                |

The findings as presented in Table 2 indicate that the evangelical churches have embraced practices and behaviors that enable COVID-19 government guidelines execution. The findings also indicate that the evangelical churches have shared values that affect the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. Further, the findings indicate that the culture of accepting divergent views from all stakeholders affects the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. However, the findings indicate that there is no culture of rewarding best performance which affects the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines.

Behavior change requires time. However, the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow for time to adjust. The shift was drastic and shocking to existent organizational culture. Embracing the shift in organizational culture supports the implementation of the COVID-19 guidelines. Shared values help in creating synergy. Hartnell, (2016), while commenting on leadership as the starting point of strategy referred to organizational culture as a set of shared mental assumptions that guide the interpretation and action in organizations by defining appropriate behavior for various situations. This ensures that there is maximum energy geared toward achieving the intended goal. Where there are no shared values, it becomes very difficult to unite. Ehtesham, Muhammad and Muhammad, (2016), opine that organizational culture is the patterns of shared values and beliefs over time, which produces behavioral norms that are adopted in solving problems. Any shift that threatens this pattern of behaviors and values would greatly hinder the group from achieving its intended goals.

On the other hand, encouraging divergent views aimed at building consensus is a very healthy culture in an organization. With most of the churches being led by a small group of people, the existence of divergent views is limited. Furthermore, there is a hierarchical structure for decision-making that church members hold in high esteem. Building an evaluative culture has

three main components: leadership, organizational support structure, and learning focus (Mayne, 2018). Leadership entails demonstrated senior management leadership and commitment to organizational culture, regularly informed demand for results, building results measurement and results management capacity, establishing and communicating a clear role, and establishing responsibilities for results management. Without deliberate efforts, the church leadership will not have enough support from the members since the members' views are left out in decision-making.

An organizational culture that does not recognize and reward best performance risks not achieving its goals. Recognition and reward for best performance are a source of motivation. Employees who perform well and are recognized tend to perform even better. The rest of the employees are motivated to improve their performance aiming at that reward or recognition. All human beings thrive on recognition.

During a time of crisis as presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, a lot would be happening that would hinder employee performance. Under such circumstances, employees need a lot of encouragement and motivation. For an organization that has upheld a culture of recognizing employees for their performance, this culture will play a key role in keeping every hand on deck during such a crucial time. Therefore, such an organizational culture has a negative impact on the performance of employees while implementing COVID-19 government guidelines by evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.

The study concluded that evangelical churches consider that organizational culture has influence on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. Organizational culture influences performance, it cannot be ignored when it comes to implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. However, a culture that does not recognize and reward best performance is a setback in the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.

#### **4.1.3 Descriptive Statistics for Human Resource Development**

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which human resource development was engaged in implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. The results were tabulated as indicated in Table 3.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Human Resource Development**

|   | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|------|----------------|
| The church ensures that enough human resource is employed to cater to its member's needs adhering to COVID-19 government guidelines | 160 | 3.19 | 1.117          |
| Employees are sponsored by the church to undertake training on the COVID-19 government guidelines                                   | 160 | 2.81 | 1.226          |
| Training needs assessment is frequently done in my church.  | 160 | 2.90 | 1.167          |
| Guidance and counseling services are provided to members on COVID-19 matters.   | 160 | 3.18 | 1.341          |
| Valid N (listwise)  | 160 |      |                |

The findings as presented in Table 3 indicate that the church does not ensure enough human resource is employed to cater to its members' needs adhering to COVID-19 government guidelines. Further, the findings indicate that employees are not sponsored by the church to undertake training on COVID-19 government guidelines. On the question of training, the findings indicate that the church does not carry out training needs assessment frequently. When asked about guidance and counseling services, the respondents indicated that the church does not provide guidance and counseling services to members on COVID-19 matters.

Sponsoring employees to undergo training is a motivational factor. Lack of this investment in staff in the wake of a novel pandemic greatly reduces the capacity of the staff to adequately respond to the pandemic. Santo and Stuart (2013) observed that there is a lack of support from top management and line managers towards training and development of employees. The extent to which training skills and learning are transferred to the job and workplace is strongly motivated by the immediate supervisor's support in the transfer of learning process. However, the lack of support from top management and line managers' commitment, involvement, and cooperation in the development of human resources has greatly affected the efficiency of human resource development systems. This has also affected the effective development of employees' learning and motivation (Gilley & Maycunich, 2015).

Lack of regular training needs assessments hinders the leadership from making strategic decisions on human resources training. McLagan and -Suhadu (2019), Wilson (2015), and Saleem (2017) established that human resource development is an integrated use of training and development, career development, and organization development to improve individual and organizational effectiveness. Training and development are important but are not enough for an organization to tap into the increase in human knowledge or talent capital. This being a novel virus, there was little to no information at all on its nature and how to respond to mitigate its effect. This greatly hindered the churches from building capacity for their employees to adequately respond to the pandemic.

Lack of adequate knowledge and skills poses a great risk to the employees and the members of the church while implementing COVID-19 government guidelines. The absence of guidance and counseling means that employees are not adequately supported for them to optimally implement the COVID-19 government guidelines. This being a pandemic, the stress and

anxiety levels can be beyond what one can handle. This greatly impacts the staff performance in pursuing the goal of implementing the COVID-19 government guidelines.

Discussing the analysis above, employees are not sponsored by the church to undertake training on COVID-19 government guidelines. Churches run like any other organizations when it comes to human resource development thus the need for constant training aimed at fostering employees with multi-dimensional skills and knowledge that can infuse into organizational capacity and competitiveness.

It can be concluded that the staff capacity of the churches in implementing COVID-19 government guidelines is right at the edge. The churches are operating with the minimum possible staff while serving the members in implementing the COVID-19 government guidelines. A lean staff can be stretched beyond limit because of the risk of part of the staff being affected directly or indirectly by the pandemic. A lot of pressure exerted on the lean staff can greatly affect the staff performance by causing burnout on the employees. Amin et al. (2019), in an interview of 300 employees from a public university, found out that human resource practices like recruitment, training, implementation of strategies appraisal, career planning, employee participation, job definition, and compensation have a significant relationship with implementation of strategies in an organization. His findings confirmed an earlier study by Beh and Loo (2018) who found out that best practices in human resources like implementation of strategies appraisals, internal communications, career planning, training and development, recruitment and selection and strategic human resource alignment in the organization positively affect implementation of strategies. Sponsoring employees to undergo training is a motivational factor.

Lack of this investment in staff in the wake of a novel pandemic greatly reduces the capacity of the staff to adequately respond to the pandemic. Teece (2019) observed that a dynamic capability in people can be developed by injecting new knowledge and skills and continuous improvement in human resources through training and development initiatives. This being a novel virus, there was little to no information at all on its nature and how to respond to mitigate its effect. This greatly hindered the churches from building capacity for their employees to adequately respond to the pandemic. According to Huselid (2020), and Becker and Gerhart (2016), there is a significant relationship between human resources development and implementation of strategies. The study indicates that the attention to human resource requirements in the Church is significant and positively influences the implementation of strategies. Okumu's (2018) observed that people are required to drive the process of strategy implementation to success. Although human resource is not a dynamic capability that gives firms a direct advantage and uniqueness in the industry, the Church can perform well in strategy implementation by building strong guidance and counseling to its staff which will ensure that their welfare is well taken care of and this will see them exerting high performance levels.

#### **4.1.4 Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Communication**

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which effective and timely organizational communication was engaged in implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. The results were tabulated as indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Communication**

|   | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|------|----------------|
| We have a well elaborate information chain of command in Evangelical Churches in Nairobi. | 160 | 3.66 | 1.254          |
| We always communicate timely on all matters of COVID-19 government guidelines.            | 160 | 3.43 | 1.301          |
| Our staff is well trained in use of communication channels.                               | 160 | 3.51 | 1.234          |
| We use simple language in communicating COVID-19 government guidelines matters            | 160 | 3.88 | 1.129          |

The findings as presented in Table 4 indicate that the churches use simple language in communicating COVID-19 government guidelines matters. The findings also indicate that there is a well elaborate information chain of command in evangelical churches in Nairobi. Further, the findings indicate that the staff are well trained in the use of communication channels. However, the findings indicate that the evangelical churches in Nairobi do not always communicate timely on all matters COVID-19 government guidelines.

Simple language can effectively be used to communicate complex matters to the benefit of a majority. The novel COVID-19 pandemic is a health-related pandemic with medical language being the main language used to explain the phenomenal. This language poses a big challenge to the majority without a medical background. Noting that there was very limited information concerning the novel COVID-19, use of simple language aided effective communication of the limited information at the time. Organizations that have a higher level of technology have better efficiency of communication in terms of speed and accuracy (Hargie, 2015).

Effective communication requires an elaborate yet simple-to-understand system. An elaborate chain of command, greatly enhances communication and reduces, miscommunication. Knowledge of where to get information and whom to pass what information to ensures timeliness and accurate flow of information. The involvement of workers in organizational issues is a very critical way of solving organizational problems. The workers, though subordinates, may have significant and innovative ideas that may be of great benefit to the organization once given the opportunity (King, 2015). The absence of a clear chain of command during a crisis situation with little to no information is a recipe for chaos. Whichever type of communication used is not an issue so long as the information gets to the right recipient and at the correct time (Kondrat, 2014).

When asked whether the staff in the church were well trained in the use of communication channels, the respondents indicated that the staff are sufficiently trained. Training enhances efficiency. The comprehensive nature of communication that was required to ensure a smooth implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines called for continuous training. Investment in communication equipment and technology, especially the use of the virtual space, called for the retraining of staff. The evangelical churches prioritized training of staff in the use of communication channels to achieve positive results in the fight against COVID-19. Effective strategy formulation and implementation requires the coordination of multiple actors and their activities, and interpersonal communication among actors is paramount (Heide *et al.*, 2017).

Lack of timeliness in communicating all matters COVID-19 implementation guidelines, greatly hinders timely and informed interventions. Church leaders need to identify the means of communication already prevalent in their communities and harness those to share the messages efficiently and effectively. While the use of social media and online technologies is



extensive to spread the message, many isolated populations require other means of communication. For example, in many countries in southern Africa, less than half of the population has access to the internet. In 2017, the World Bank estimated that internet coverage only reached 19% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa. Respondents from a recent World Vision child consultancy study shared that they did not have access to the Internet or phones with Internet connectivity. Like in the Central African Republic, 60% of participants said they did not have access to the internet at all. Thus, while in many communities it is still safe, faith leaders must use alternative and effective means of communication to spread messages on various interventions to the pandemic in a timely manner (Le Roux & Kramm, 2016).

The study concluded that though the church leaders use simple language in communicating the government guidelines on COVID-19, the lack of timeliness in the dissemination of this information greatly hinders successful implementation.

#### 4.1.5 Descriptive statistics for Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines

The study sought to establish the influence of strategic leadership factors on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines in evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which strategic leadership factors have enabled the church leadership to effectively and efficiently implement COVID-19 government guidelines. The results were tabulated as indicated in Table 5.

**Table 5: Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines**

|  | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-----|------|----------------|
| Our County has achieved most of its set targets.   | 160 | 3.24 | .974           |
| There is harmonious working relations in the evangelical churches in our County on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines.       | 160 | 3.35 | 1.167          |
| We have improved members' morale/motivation in the evangelical churches in our County on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. | 160 | 3.56 | 1.109          |
| We have recorded minimal complaints in the past 1 year on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines.                                | 160 | 3.52 | 1.239          |
| Valid N (listwise)   | 160 |      |                |

The findings as presented in Table 5, indicate that the evangelical churches in Nairobi have improved members' moral/motivation on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. The findings also indicate that the churches had recorded minimal complaints in the past 1 year on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. However, the findings indicate that there lack of harmonious working relations in the evangelical churches in Nairobi County on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. Further, the findings indicate that Nairobi County had not achieved most of its set targets.

Strategic leadership is essential in the implementation of the COVID-19 government guidelines. Being strategic in approach includes the act of setting formal performance goals

which in turn converts the church’s mission and direction into specific performance targets to be achieved and protects against drift confusion over what to accomplish (Arthur, 2014). The nature of the novel COVID-19 pandemic required that the church sets both short- and long-range goals. The church can draw short-range goals, which draws attention to what immediate results to achieve. The long-range goals consider what to do now to have the church in position to produce results later. The institution then evaluates the difference between its current position and the desired future through gap analysis. To close the gap and achieve its desired state, the institution must develop specific strategies.

The study concludes that though the church leadership has improved the morale among the congregants and maintained low complaints through the past year, the lack of a harmonious working relationship in tackling the implementation of the COVID-19 government guidelines continues to be a great hindrance to achieving of most of the set goals, both short and long range.

#### 4.2 Regression Analysis

The multiple linear regression techniques were used with the following model being tested:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y = Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines: (dependent variable),  $\beta_0$  = Constant Term;  $\beta$  (1,2,3,4) = Beta coefficients., X1 = Strategic Planning (independent variable), X2 = Organizational Culture (independent variable), X3 = Human Resource Development (independent variable), X4 = Organizational communication (independent variable) and E = Residual value

**Table 6: Model Summary for Linear Relationship**

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .990 <sup>a</sup> | .979     | .979              | .15873                     |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Communication, Human Resource Development, Strategic Planning, Organizational Culture

Table 6 shows the model summary of the regression analysis for strategic leadership factors that is; strategic planning, organizational culture, human resource development, and organizational communication, on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. The findings of the model summary indicate that the strategic leadership factors explained about 97.93% of the variability in the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines ( $R^2 = 0.9793$ ). According to Toole, (2013), a model that yields an R Square of above 0.25 is considered to be a fit in social science research.

This is an indication that despite strategic leadership factors' influence on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines, other factors affect the implementation of the guidelines which may include political instability, poor health environment, lack of effective network, and poor management of resources, representing 2.07%.

**Table 7: ANOVA Analysis**

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F        | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 184.456        | 4   | 46.114      | 1830.216 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 3.905          | 155 | .025        |          |                   |
|       | Total      | 188.361        | 159 |             |          |                   |

b. Predictors: (Constant), organizational communication, human resource development, strategic planning, organization culture

The linear regression F statistics shown in Table 7 shows that there was a statistical and significant linear relationship between strategic leadership factors and implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines in evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK, ( $F(1, 160) = 1830.216 > F_{sig.} = 0.000$ ).

The statistical significance of the regression model is 0.000 which is much lower than the study's level of significance of 0.05. This implies that the overall regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable which is the effects of strategic leadership factors in implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. This means that strategic planning, organizational culture, human resource development, and organizational communication greatly influence implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines in evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.

**Table 8: Regression Coefficients for Linear Relationship**

| Model |                    | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients |       | Sig. |
|-------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|       |                    | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      | T     |      |
| 1     | (Constant)         | .322                        | .044       |                           | 7.337 | .000 |
|       | Strategic Planning | .061                        | .051       | .064                      | 1.200 | .232 |
|       | Organization       | .353                        | .053       | .379                      | 6.658 | .000 |
|       | Culture            | .293                        | .040       | .317                      | 7.313 | .000 |
|       | Human Resource     | .222                        | .054       | .245                      | 4.117 | .000 |
|       | Development        |                             |            |                           |       |      |
|       | Organization       |                             |            |                           |       |      |
|       | Communication      |                             |            |                           |       |      |

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines

The regression coefficients presented in Table 8 show that strategic leadership factors can statistically and significantly influence implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. The table examines the significance of the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables by comparing the predicting power of the model with that of the intercept model.

#### 4.2.1 Strategic Planning on Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines

The first objective of the study was to investigate the influence of strategic planning on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi. As indicated in Table 4.14, the t-test for strategic planning was 1.2 and the p-value was 0.222.

Since the p-value was greater than the confidence interval of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant relationship between strategic planning and the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. Holding all the other independent variables constant, strategic planning affects the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches by 0.061. This means that a unit change in strategic planning affects the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches by 0.061.

Although planning has been considered an instrument of success in other organizations in the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines, in the evangelical churches it is concluded to have less significance. The findings have been consistent with the study done by (Thiessen 2009; Avis 2018). They noted that during the pandemic, strategic planning has not been significantly effective due to changes in government directives for a church to follow and varying changes of direction by church leadership informed by severity of the virus. This meant that there was confusion and uncertainty in terms of planning church activities, thus inconsistent communication to the congregants within that period. The results were also noted on Contingent theory of strategic planning as proposed by Fiedler (1958). There is no one best way of planning. The appropriate strategy depends on the kind of task or environment one is dealing with. In churches, management must be concerned with achieving set targets. They need to realize that different types of strategies are needed in different types of environments.

#### **4.2.2 Organization Culture on Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines**

The second objective of the study was to examine the influence of organizational culture on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines adopted by the evangelical churches in Nairobi. According to Table 4.14, a unit change in organizational culture influences the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches by 0.353. The t-test for organizational culture is 6.658 and the p-value is given by 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis which states that organizational culture has no impact on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches. Therefore, this implies that organizational culture in evangelical churches has a positive and significant influence on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. According to an analysis conducted by Musyoka, (2016), Resolution Health's organizational culture has been found to positively affect the worker's attitudes as well as employee behaviors, which contribute to the success or failure of an organization despite the strategies that the organization puts in place.

#### **4.2.3 Human Resource Development on Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines**

The third objective was to determine the influence of human resource development on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. This objective was used to determine the effects of skills and knowledge of staff in the evangelical churches on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. According to Table 4.11, the t statistics was indicated by 7.313 and the p-value was indicated by 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis which states that human resource development has no significance on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines in evangelical churches. The coefficient for human resource development was 0.293 which can be explained that a unit change in human resource development affects the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by 0.293. According to the analysis, human resource development influences the implementation of

COVID-19 government guidelines more compared to the other independent variables since it has the highest beta coefficients. According to (Cummings, 2015) when the recruitment of staff is poor there is always a long-term negative effect which may include many errors committed due to lack of knowledge and skills among staff.

This ultimately leads to high costs incurred in training and development, aimed to minimize poor performance, disciplinary issues, absenteeism, disputes, poor service delivery to clients, high turnover, and low productivity which impacts staff morale. The findings are consistent with the study of (Loshali & Krishnan, 2013) which noted that strategic human resource management as a factor of transformational leadership has a positive effect on the firm's success.

#### **4.2.4 Organizational Communication on Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines**

The fourth objective was to assess the influence of organizational communication on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. This objective was used to evaluate the need for communication and its significance in evangelical churches. The *t*-statistic was 4.117 and the *p*-value was 0.000. According to the analysis, since the *p*-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis which states that organization communication has no positive and significant influence on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. A unit change in organizational communication influences the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by 0.222. This explains the significance of communication in evangelical churches. According to Boyaci, (2007), due to the existence of human resources in an organization, communication is a very important element to fulfil the organization's objectives. People must communicate with each other to ensure a smooth running of the operations and fulfilment of organizational goals and objectives. In an unprecedented era of misinformation, disinformation, conspiracies, and confusion, faith leaders including church leaders in the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK, play a pivotal role in leveraging their platforms to share accurate, fact-based information about COVID-19 (World Vision International, 2020).

Based on Table 4.14, the estimated regression equation:

$$Y = 0.322 + 0.06X_1 + 0.353X_2 + 0.293X_3 + 0.222X_4 + 0.044$$

The equation indicates that holding all the independent variables (strategic planning, organizational culture, human resource development, and organizational communication) constant, strategic leadership as a base factor influences the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by 0.322. This indicates that strategic leadership factors as a leadership strategy have less effect on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines.

The equation indicates that strategic planning has the least effect on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines with a coefficient of 0.061. If strategic planning is improved by one unit, the level of implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines will increase by 0.061. Organizational culture had the highest influence on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines with a coefficient of 0.353. This can be explained that a unit change in organizational culture leads to a change in the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by 0.353. The coefficient for human resource development was 0.293 which explains that an increase in one unit of human resource development leads to an increase in the level of implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines with 0.293. For organizational communication, it had a coefficient of 0.222 which explains that a unit increase



in the organizational communication will increase the level of implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by 0.222.

### **5.0 Summary of Findings**

In summary, the correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength of association between the independent variables of strategic leadership factors and their effect on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines in evangelical churches. Organizational culture has the strongest positive and significant relationship as indicated by  $r = 0.9790$ . It can be concluded that there is a significantly strong and positive relationship between the variables indicating that strategic leadership factors positively influence implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines in evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.

Strategic planning had a strong positive relationship with all the other variables, with the highest relationship being with organizational culture (0.970) and the lowest being with human resource development (0.943). The order of significance in terms of influence of the factors of strategic leadership on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK is; organizational culture, organizational communication, human resource development, and strategic planning which has the least significance. The findings of the model summary indicated that the strategic leadership factors explained about 97.93% of the variability in the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines ( $R^2 = 0.9793$ ).

The linear regression F statistics showed that there was a statistical and significant linear relationship between strategic leadership factors and implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines in evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK, ( $F(1, 160) = 1830.216 > F_{sig} = 0.000$ ). The overall regression model statistically and significantly predicts the outcome variable which is the effects of strategic leadership factors in implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.

#### ***5.1 Influence of Strategic Planning on the Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines in Evangelical churches in Nairobi Registered by EAK***

The study established that the top leadership of the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK champions the churches' strategic planning. This finding is further confirmed by the finding that strategic planning is a top priority activity in evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.

However, the study also established that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK did not periodically gather data about COVID-19 pandemic and other external factors which affect members. Furthermore, the study established that church members are not involved in strategic planning.

From the findings of the study variable influence of strategic planning on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines, the study establishes that there is a positive but not statistically significant relationship between strategic planning and the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. Strategic planning has the least influence on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines compared to the other independent variables since it has the lowest beta coefficients at 0.064.

### ***5.2 Influence of Organization Culture on the Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines in Evangelical churches in Nairobi Registered by the EAK***

According to the findings, evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK have embraced practices and behaviors that enable COVID-19 government guidelines implementation. Further, the findings establish that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK have shared values that affect the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. The study also established that the culture of accepting divergent views from all stakeholders affects the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. However, the study also established that there is no culture of rewarding best performance in the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK which affects the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines.

From the findings of the study variable influence of organizational culture on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines, the study establishes that there is a statistically significant relationship between organizational culture and implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. Organizational Culture influences the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines more compared to the other independent variables since it has the highest beta coefficient at 0.379.

### ***5.3 Influence of Human Resource Development on the Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines in Evangelical Churches in Nairobi Registered by the EAK***

According to findings, the study establishes that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK do not ensure enough human resource is employed to cater to its members' needs in adhering to the COVID-19 government guidelines. Further, the study established that employees in the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK are not sponsored by the church to undertake training on COVID-19 government guidelines. From the findings, the study establishes that the church does not carry out training needs assessments frequently. It was further established from the findings that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK do not provide guidance and counseling services to members on COVID-19 matters.

From the findings of the study variable influence of human resource development on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines, the study establishes that there is a statistically significant relationship between human resource development and implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.

### ***5.4 Influence of Organizational Communication on the Implementation of COVID-19 Government Guidelines in Evangelical Churches in Nairobi Registered by the EAK***

The study findings establish that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK use simple language in communicating COVID-19 government guidelines matters to the members. The findings also establish that there is a well elaborate information chain of command in the evangelical churches in Nairobi. Further, the study establishes that the staff of the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK are well-trained in the use of communication channels. However, from the findings, the study establishes that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK do not always communicate on a timely basis, all matters concerning COVID-19 government guidelines.

From the findings of the study variable influence of organizational communication on implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines, the study establishes that there is a

statistically significant relationship between organizational communication and the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

From the research findings, the study concludes that though strategic planning is championed as a priority activity by the top leadership, the church members are not involved in the strategic planning process. Further, the church does not periodically gather data about the COVID-19 pandemic and other external factors which affect the members. This greatly weakens the influence of strategic planning on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines hence the least influence compared to the other independent variables.

From the findings, the study concludes that organizational culture has the strongest influence on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK. The study concludes that the swift embrace of practices and behaviours that enable the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines as well as the shared values and the acceptance of divergent views from all stakeholders have greatly contributed to the influence of organizational culture on the implementation of COVID-19 government guidelines. However, the study also concludes that lack of a rewarding system for best performance within the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK has a negative impact on the influence of organizational culture in the implementation of the COVID-19 government guidelines.

From the findings, the study concluded that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK do not have enough human resources deployed to cater to the diverse and pressing needs of the members occasioned by the novel COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the study concludes that the employees' capacity to handle these needs is unreliable since the churches do not sponsor the employees to receive training on COVID-19 government guidelines. The study concludes that the lack of periodic assessment of the training needs amongst the employees can be attributed as part of the reason why the employees are not sponsored for training. The study also concludes that the church does not provide guidance and counseling to the employees who are the first responders to the members' needs occasioned by the novel COVID-19 pandemic. This lack of counseling services weakens the capability of the employees to efficiently and effectively implement the COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.

From the findings, the study concludes that the use of simple language by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK has influenced the implementation of the COVID-19 government guidelines. Accordingly, the elaborate information chain of command employed facilitates ease of communication. The study further concludes that the training of staff on the use of communication channels plays a key role in eliminating potential communication barriers. However, the study also concludes that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK do not always communicate timely on all matters COVID-19 government guidelines. This lack of timely communication jeopardizes the fight against the virus and threatens the effectiveness of the implementation of the COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

The study recommends that the leaders of the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK should adopt, as a matter of practice, strategic planning. The leaders should adopt the use of strategic planning as a day to day management tool in order to improve on implementation.

Mechanism should be put in place to ensure that data about the pandemic and other external factors affecting members is gathered periodically. The involvement of members as key stakeholders to planning will greatly improve efficiency in implementation of the COVID-19 government guidelines.

The study recommends that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK inculcate a culture of acknowledging and rewarding best performance amongst the employees. This serves not only as a gesture of appreciation but also as a motivation and a challenge to the rest of the employees on their performance. A tap at the back of an employee who is giving their best at a time of great crisis would go a long way to strengthen their resolve to do even better. This does not have to be an expensive affair. Rather it should be driven by compassion and a humane spirit.

Human resource plays a key role in the success of any organization. This study recommends that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK recognize the contribution of human resources in the success they hope to achieve in the fight against the novel COVID-19. The study recommends that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK deploy more resources in increasing their human resource capacity. The study further recommends that a training needs assessment be carried out to ascertain the training needs of the staff regarding the novel COVID-19 pandemic. Further, the study recommends that through a partnership with the government and other stakeholders in the health sector, the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK develop a training program that will meet the needs identified from the needs assessment. As for the personal welfare of the staff and members, the study recommends that guidance and counseling services be availed to help the employees and members to navigate through this time of crisis. With strong social support availed to members, the implementation of the COVID-19 government guidelines will be more effective and successful.

The study recommends that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK review the turn-around time in communicating to the members on all matters COVID-19 government guidelines. The use of technology that is available to a vast majority should aid the timely communication of all matters COVID-19 government guidelines to the members. The communication should also be factual and useful in the fight against the novel COVID-19. A communication strategy should also be put in place so as to receive feedback from the members. The study also recommends that the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK should establish a hotline that can aid members to get timely and factual information on the COVID-19 government guidelines. This will greatly improve the effectiveness of the implementation of the COVID-19 government guidelines by the evangelical churches in Nairobi registered by the EAK.

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