

TANSFORMATIONAL PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study sought to assess the influence of transformational pastoral leadership in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) on the strategic evangelization of St. Massimo Parish, Mikinduri, in Meru Catholic Diocese.

Methodology: A qualitative research design was used, involving purposive and random sampling of SCC pastoral leaders. Data collection employed guided interviews, semi-structured questionnaires, focus group discussions, and document reviews. Secondary sources included theological libraries and online academic databases.

Results: The study findings revealed that SCC leaders play central roles in driving strategic direction, enhancing communication, and aligning parish goals with diocesan and Church-wide missions. SCCs were found to be vibrant units that bridge faith with daily life and support effective pastoral coordination. Leadership qualities and relational communication emerged as key to successful strategy implementation.

Conclusion: The study concludes that Transformational pastoral leadership within SCCs significantly influences the evangelization strategy of the parish. SCC leaders serve as key communicators and implementers of church objectives.

Recommendations: The parish should strengthen communication structures, provide leadership and finance training for SCC leaders, and support SCC operations financially. It should also revise meeting schedules to improve engagement and offer doctrinal seminars.

Keywords: *Leadership, strategic direction, communication and implementation, Small Christian Communities.*

INTRODUCTION

The origin and development of Small Christian Communities (SCCs), often referred to as *Jumuiya* in East Africa, reflect a return to the early church's grassroots model of communal worship and evangelization (Mahimbali, 2022). As Pope John XXIII noted in the 1960s, the primitive Christian Church gathered in homes, mirroring the itinerant and communal nature of Jesus' ministry with His disciples. This household-based model emphasized personal relationships, equality among believers, and communal support, forming the foundation of the early Christian community structure (Mannion, 2016). SCCs thus emerged as an extension of this philosophy, encouraging believers to integrate Christian living into their daily lives within localized settings.

Proponents of SCCs stress their role in fostering interpersonal fellowship and faith-based solidarity. According to Mamfe Diocese (2015), SCCs are responsive to the life circumstances of believers and serve as a source of hospitality and fraternal care, especially for the marginalized. Kurgat (2009) emphasizes that the intimate and scripture-centered environment within SCCs allows believers to draw closer to God and one another, fulfilling the biblical call to know and love one's neighbor. In this way, SCCs embody the church's presence in neighborhoods, facilitating catechesis, spiritual formation, and community outreach through lay involvement.

SCCs have significantly reshaped the Catholic Church's identity in many parts of Africa. They humanize the church by presenting it as relational, mission-oriented, and spiritually grounded (Ngoyi, 2009). Scholars like Hernandez (2009) and Prior (2010) frame SCCs as spiritually empowering spaces that are distinct yet complementary to traditional ecclesiastical structures. Fraas et al. (2011) highlight their dynamic role in connecting sacraments to everyday life, thus reinforcing the interplay between worship and social engagement. *Jumuiya* communities nurture individual talents among parishioners and encourage active participation, offering both spiritual nourishment and leadership opportunities.

The rise of SCCs is closely linked to broader reforms initiated by Vatican II (1963–1965), which sought to democratize the Church by involving the laity in evangelization and leadership. Pikiti, Healey, and Musimba (2015) underscore this shift, noting the movement away from clergy-dominated models toward inclusive frameworks that empower local Christians. In the African context, especially in East Africa, *Jumuiya* has become a vehicle for renewed evangelism, local leadership, and sustainable parish life. It provides a structure where

lay Christians proclaim the Word, support the church financially, and fill pastoral gaps, continuing the legacy of early missionary work while rooting it in local participation and ownership.

Background to The Study

Leadership is fundamentally a big determinant of the effective running of organizations. Leaders not only manage the affairs of the organization but they also deal with people on a daily basis. Sharma and Jain (2013) define leadership as a process through which one is able to influence others to make certain feats and accomplish specific objectives. Leaders are entrusted with the role of communicating visions, organizational goals, and ideas to the people (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). Antonakis (2012) contends that leaders have to be able to develop a compelling vision and devise strategies to assist others in attaining the vision. Leaders are also mandated with the task of implementing and maintaining key organizational systems and rules and even having an important say in the discipline of those within the organization (Antonakis, 2012). As such, leadership entails a process of social influence through which one can enlist the help of others in attaining a goal.

Incorporating organizational design helps churches align with their mission, vision, and strategic goals, especially as they navigate dynamic internal and external pressures. Nonetheless, many churches resist change, with leaders often holding on to traditional structures instead of adopting modern leadership and grassroots strategies (Ganz, 2010). For churches to grow and sustain their ministry, they must embrace strategy and structural redesign. Wagner (2010) highlights church planting as the most effective evangelization approach, while Pearse (2011) emphasizes the role of strategic leadership during transitions such as shifting to a cell-based model. This approach has been adopted by churches like the Catholic Church through Small Christian Communities (SCCs), where lay leadership plays a central role in evangelization.

Organization within institutions is imperative in order to ensure that the development and implementation of strategy involve all members. The manner of implementation determines the success, and the process involved may vary depending on whether or not an organization uses an external firm, simulation techniques, buggering time, and an incremental approach. The implementation has also been shown to be subject to myriad factors, which attracts the attention of the role of organizational culture in organizations. Turning the spotlight to the

Church as an organization, the SCCs is a strategy and phrase that looms wide on the discourse of many Catholic Christians in Africa, especially in Ghana, South Africa, Cameroon, and Kenya (Wagner, 2010). Other terms used to denote to SCCs subsume the following: Living Base Ecclesial Communities, Basic Christian Communities, Small Church Communities, and Small Faith Communities. The concept ‘base’ denotes from the “grassroots” that is the foundation of the society, the basis where people can exercise real social influence on established order and structures, or where leaders can ignite change. Ecclesial accentuates the notion that the involved communities serve as the ‘Church’ at the grassroots level (Fanwong, 2015). This stresses the Second Vatican Council interpretation of the Church as God’s people.

In the Catholic Church, a parish comprises a community of believers under the pastoral care of a diocesan bishop. Each parish includes a Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), a consultative body led by the pastor and composed of elected grassroots representatives from sub-parishes, SCCs, and ecclesial movements. The PPC Executive—comprising a chairperson, vice chair, secretary, vice secretary, and treasurer—is elected from among these leaders. Globally, the Church is structured hierarchically, with national hierarchies linked to the Vatican under the Pope.

St. Massimo parish is under Tigania deanery which is in the Catholic Diocese of Meru. The diocese has nine deaneries which are; Igembe, Imenti South, Imenti North, Central Imenti, Chuka and Tharaka deanery. Tigania deanery has nine parishes namely; Tigania, Mikinduri, St. Massimo, Baranga, Chiru, Limbine, Cheranga parish. St. Massimo parish has twelve outstations. The parish has a population of 2,000 Christians. The parish is noted as the essential nearness of the congregation in the neighborhoods and it is the place and instrument of Christian life, which can offer opportunities for discussion among individuals, for listening and reporting the expression of God, for natural catechesis, for preparing in noble cause, for prayer, adoration and joyous Eucharistic festivals. All the parishes in Meru Catholic Diocese adhere to these guidelines with a vision to be a witness of love reflecting the Church of Christ that gives dignity to every person with a mission to fulfil the mission of Jesus Christ through evangelization and promotion of integral human development, the guidelines are for all. The target is to present vital interior morals for our faith and lifestyle that serves as a witness also for non-Christians since the mission is to evangelize. As such, the strategy of the Church ought to reflect positive engagements at the family levels in the SCC, but that cannot be done effectively without clear demonstration on the difference that leadership at the SCC can have on the strategy of the Church as a whole. This study will assess the influence of the

transformational pastoral leadership in the SCC in the strategy evangelization of St. Massimo parish, Mikinduri in Meru Catholic Diocese.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical studies on leadership in faith-based settings consistently affirm that effective leadership is central to organizational success, particularly in shaping vision, driving strategy, and sustaining member engagement. In the context of the Catholic Church, research has increasingly focused on the role of transformational and visionary leadership within Small Christian Communities (SCCs), highlighting how lay leaders influence strategic evangelization. These studies examine how leadership styles affect coordination, communication, and implementation of parish objectives, thereby positioning SCCs as vital agents of grassroots pastoral transformation.

Empirical Literature

Leadership is indispensable to the organization and the accomplishment of any association. There is an away from between the limits and execution of the CEO and senior administrative group of an association and the accomplishment of the association. The senior administrative group impacts each stage in the key organization measure. The decisions and exercises of the CEO and senior organization, whether or not it is setting the vital bearing of the association, or abusing the association's inside capacities for competitive advantage. More so on the influence on development and system implementation of the association. There are different significant styles of leadership that senior administration may send, contingent upon their properties and experience. The association and senior organization need to utilize an appropriate balance of activity styles to update the likelihood of longer-term key viability. Rowe would battle that in a perfect world CEO and perhaps other senior organization would utilize a “leadership strategic style”, anyway at any rate Rowe presumes that the senior administrative gathering should search for a harmony between the managerial leadership style and visionary leadership style. Finally, appropriate senior organization authority exercises and activity styles are major to an association’s strategic and long term accomplishment.

Rowe (2001) stresses the need at the head of relationship of what he marks “strategic leadership.” He depicts Strategic Leadership as the "...ability to affect others to intentionally make ordinary decisions that redesign the drawn-out reasonableness of the affiliation while keeping up its temporary financial stability.” A key part of this definition is the equilibrium

between the importances of the long term objectives of the organization, with the comparably critical temporary financial stability. It is basic to see that in this setting Strategic Leadership is certainly not a progressive position, it is an approach, or style that senior organization may use. Lamentably, according to Rowe, the ability to pass on this style is relatively rare. Daft (2014) claims that a fundamental difference between management and leadership lies in focus: whereas management focuses on stability, standards and procedures, leadership deals with driving innovative thinking, future forward outlooks and creativity. Khairuddin (2015) stresses that leadership is about people, impact and objectives; consequently, leadership can be understood as the ability to organize and direct people's work towards a common goal by motivating them with an organization wide purpose. According to Samardžija (2015), leadership is an emergent quality that facilitates organization and goal orientation of a group of people that would in the absence of leadership remain unachieved.

Among many theories of leadership, one that stands out recently is transformational leadership. It was Burns, who in his book *Leadership*, suggested that there is a need for a new type of leader who positively influences others and bring about change (Burns, 1982). This type of leadership connects leaders and followers into a larger purpose, driven by higher levels of motivation and mutual drive towards success. Transformational leadership engages not only the minds of all involved but their hearts as well (Burns, 1982). This type of leadership relies heavily on mutual trust and personality consistency. In their book *Transformational Leadership: Creating Organizations of Meaning*, Hacker and Roberts (2003) explain what makes a great leader today. The characteristics that they focus on, are in synch with the latest theory of the need for a responsible, conscious leader, or, as per Samardžija (2015), a sustainable leader. Hacker and Roberts define a responsible leader as one who helps discover the power within others for their life purpose. Those transformational leaders are asked to create organizations of meaning drawing upon the power each individual has within themselves (Hacker and Roberts, 2003).

According to Bentley (2010), failure to respond to the necessities of church congregation emanates from the leadership issues that is not comprehensive. Effective communication styles and active participation are improved through leadership capability to involve all members of the communities in church activities. Moreover, Jumuiya formation enhance in integrating the faith of people and passing of Word of God to people. Additionally, the duty of communities and associations in the religious domain is that they ought to have the option to help individuals

to manage a definitive issues of life, the distinctions that may exist among the individuals in the congregation, and settle everything according to the capability of the individuals. Grandy (2013) conducted a study on an exploratory study of strategic leadership in churches. The study revealed that communities are significant component and they are identified through the liturgical celebration in small groups, something that is aimed to enhance sensitivity to life events and to celebrate the live events through the involvement of the society in a manner that is prayerful. Every person's capabilities and talents are brought out in stark light through the involvement in small groups. Therefore, through effective communication and active involvement in small groups, call for the strategizing and disposal of all factors in a group, including physical factors, that resonate with participating teams and their commitment to the teams.

This study identifies visionary leadership as the most suitable style for addressing the contemporary challenges facing the Church. According to Nicholas (2007), churches require leaders who can provide direction, sustain programs, reduce reliance on clergy, and counter apathy. Visionary leaders channel the congregation's energy toward a unified purpose. Healey (2012) emphasizes that evangelization within SCCs empowers lay pastoral agents to translate theological goals into tangible grassroots action, embodying practical pastoral ministry.

In Kenya, Nzisi (2017) found that leadership in SCCs significantly influences strategic direction, communication, and implementation within parishes, with most respondents affirming alignment between parish strategies and broader Catholic Church objectives. SCC leaders were particularly instrumental in relaying information and ensuring goal attainment. Similarly, Muthamia, Pierli, and Healey (2020) revealed a strong link between effective pastoral leadership and successful evangelization in SCCs within Tigania Deanery, confirming the critical role of lay leadership in grassroots mission efforts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative research methodology conducted at St. Massimo Parish within the Meru Catholic Diocese, utilizing both primary and secondary data sources to explore the influence of transformational pastoral leadership in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) on parish strategic evangelization. Primary data was gathered from SCC leaders through semi-structured questionnaires and guided interviews, combining both open and closed-ended questions to elicit structured facts as well as in-depth perceptions. Focus group discussions,

document reviews, and audio-visual materials enriched the qualitative depth of the research. Participants were selected using simple random sampling and purposive sampling to ensure relevance and diversity among pastoral leaders.

Secondary data collection was facilitated through extensive library research in Tangaza University, Hekima College, CUEA, and St. Joseph's Seminary, as well as digital bibliographic tools such as Mendeley, JSTOR, and search engines linked to global academic and ecclesial databases, including UN, Sage, Taylor & Francis, and SpringerLink. A total of 124 referenced materials, including blog documentation on the Meru Diocese and Google Scholar sources, supported the review. The research was anchored in visionary and managerial leadership theories to interpret the influence of pastoral leadership within SCCs, addressing a critical gap in literature on the role of SCCs and their leaders in strategic church communication and implementation at both parish and global levels.

FINDINGS

The study findings highlight the critical role of transformational pastoral leadership within Small Christian Communities in shaping the strategic evangelization efforts of St. Massimo Parish. Key themes emerged around strategic direction, communication, and implementation. These dimensions collectively underscore the influence of SCC leaders in aligning parish objectives with broader Church missions.

Strategic Direction in SCCs for Integral Evangelization

The analysis in this study showed that all the SCC Communities and Strategy leaders were in agreement that the role of leadership in the SCCs in the parish was critical in reaching to the members of the church. The results are consistent with the results of the major role of SCCs and leaders in SCCs. For instance, Mwanja (2013) writes on the missionary purpose of the Church and all its elements including the SCC. Importantly, the missionary role or the function of reaching out to the members of the Church attributed to the SCC leaders are pinpointed from the manner in which Jesus led the disciples in reaching out to communities (Mwanja, 2013). Similarly, Healey (2012) presents similar findings agreeing that the SCC have an important role in reaching out to the community. Healey (2012) notes that although the actual term of SCC is not mentioned in Vatican II documents, the work that the leaders in the small cells undertake and the work that lay people in the church undertake is important in reaching out to all members in the broader church community.

According to Rahner (2009), a German theologian writing in *The Shape of the Church*, the future church will be based on communities such as those of the SCCs with leaders who are lay people functioning as links between the members and the leaders (Rahner, 2009). The Number of leaders in SCC are five which include the chairperson and vice chairperson, Secretary and Vice Secretary and Treasurer. St. Massimo Catholic Parish in Meru and the subject of our study has 70 SCCs. With reference to strategy at the local parish, most of the leaders stated that they understood and perceived the strategic direction of the church as being clear. This awareness of the role of SCC in the strategy direction of the church was key and it reflected the overarching need and trend that has led to the formation of more than 120,000 SCCs with 45,000 in Kenya. Healey (2012) notes that the formation of these SCC has been of monumental importance in evangelization.

Strategic Communication in SCCs for Integral Evangelization.

In communication of strategy, the findings of this study showed that the Jumuiya leaders have an important role of communicating to the parishioners who are members of their SCCs. In specific, the study showed that the SCC leaders ensure that there is compliance with requirements that are imposed by the church, follow up communication that is received from the parish as well as the Catholic Church in general, and ensure steady flow of communication across the parish in discharging roles in an effective manner. The above findings are reflected in St. Peter Catholic Community's strategy document whereby the SCC and its leaders are mandated with communicating opportunities to all parishioners, inviting the participation of parishioners, passing important mission and vision statements and other strategies to parishioners (Church, 2017). The gap filled by SCC leaders as far as communication between the church and its members is concerned, the findings in this study are also in agreement with other studies on the role of small groups. They have been noted as model for urban churches that facilitate communication (James, 2014) avenues of communication through groups and discussion processes (Wheelan, 2005) and a place to develop leaders through the demonstration of communication skills (Hargie, 2016).

Olusula (2011) observes that SCCs emerge from small groups within the church, echoing Vatican II's vision of the Church as God's people (Leahy & O'Connell, 2011). SCCs enhance communication between parish and members, linking faith with daily life (Mahogha, 1991). They foster active church communities through liturgy and relational leadership. Matt (2014)

emphasizes varied church leadership roles that facilitate communication. Watt (2014) affirms that face-to-face interaction in small groups is key to sustaining church communication.

Strategic Implementation in SCCs for integral evangelization

In this study, a majority of the respondents consented that coordination is critical in the implementation of parish strategy. Similarly, coordination of activities and streamlining of processes has been shown to be an important element that supports strategy implementation (Rajasekar, 2014). In business, coordination has also been identified as a key component of successful strategy (Riccaboni & Leone, 2010). Other authors such as Menguc (2005), interfunctional coordination and functional diversity are important in top management teams, hence agreeing with this study that coordination is critical in the implementation of strategy. The results of the study showed that the presence of control systems was significant in the implementation of strategy. In the history of Missions in the Catholic Church, there has been evidence of control systems and well worked out methods to spread the mission and attain the goals of the church in general.

According to Mathews (2013), the church has employed aggressive tactics with well laid out systems in its efforts to organize its body of believers and advance its mission workers. Further, the impact of management control systems on performance of family businesses have been assessed. The assessment show that the use of control systems is more common in non-family based businesses than in family based businesses (Duréndez, Ruíz-Palomo, García-Pérez-de-Lema, & Diéguez-Soto, 2016). Hence, control systems are common in bigger more organized systems and organizations such as the case of the SCCs in the parish. There are many other studies that support the positive correlation between control systems and implementation of strategy hence agreeing with the findings of this study. For instance, management control systems have been shown to impact organizational performance along with the strategies in organizations (Peljhan & Tekavcic, 2008). Performance measurement – including control systems – have been linked the success of organizations (Watts & McNair-Connolly, 2012). A paper on the management control systems and its elements show that the use of contingency approaches and elements such as control orientation, performance evaluation, and reward systems contribute towards the success of strategy in general (Smith, 2007). The success of the SCCs in implementation of parish strategy relies on good coordination and management control as highlighted in the study. This is in tandem with findings in literature that show that

evaluation of subordinates, focus on customer relations by executives, and rules and procedures go a long way in giving strategy success (Willert, 2016).

Sandino (2007) identifies cost, risk, and revenue management control systems as crucial to successful strategy implementation. While the SCCs in this study lacked clearly defined control categories, existing literature confirms their importance. The study found minimal coordination issues or conflicting priorities, suggesting a generally stable environment. Nonetheless, Mbaka and Mugambi (2014) warn that unclear vision and poor coordination commonly undermine strategy execution. Kalali et al. (2011) emphasize that successful strategy implementation depends on enablers such as cultural receptivity and realizers like structural facilitation and prioritization.

Advocacy Policy for Strategy Direction, Communication And Implementation In The Sccs For Integral Evangelization.

While this study showed that SCC leaders assist in aligning the parish strategy with that of the Catholic Church, the response on making the strategy clear was low. Hence, there is need for SCC leaders to work out ways to ensure that they serve as the conduit important information regarding the strategy of the parish to the parishioners. The SCC leaders have been shown to be important in implementation of the strategy of the parish as well as that of the church in general and hence increasing the time given to make the strategy clear to the parishioners will serve as important in augmenting the understanding of the strategy by the parishioners. Communication of Strategy in Small Christian Communities is critical, as shown by this and other studies. With the results on the role of the SCC leaders within the SCCs and parish, the significance of the leaders is unequivocal. However, this study shows that external parties do not review or follow up the actions of SCC leaders as far as communication is concerned, there may also not be clear laid out communication strategy that looks into the process including follow up and feedback. Hence, this study recommends collaboration with external parties and a clear documented communication process to enhance monitoring and reviewing of communication of the SCC leaders.

Strategy Implementation in Small Christian Communities recommendations follow the areas that the respondents viewed as imminent in terms of requiring change. Thus, this study recommends that there is need for reviewing meeting time so as to allow more time between SCC leaders and members of the SCCs, inclusion of financial guidelines, maintaining a steady

number of members in the SCCs where most leaders preferred “manageable” numbers per Jumuiya, improving communication, and increasing emphasis to those with needs in the Jumuiyas and well laid communication in reference to what needs and where to seek assistance or guidance. The study also recommends trainings of the SCC leaders in various areas including leadership, communication, strategy and basic finance tips for the leaders to make sure the team is well informed and enhance team work. Other areas may be included to enable to ensure that they have the required qualities that include patience, humility, forgiving spirit, and good communication. Clear understanding of the Catholic Church teachings are key with brief talks and seminars and trainings being vital to enhance proper communication of Goals of the church, together with vision and mission too.

The SCCs also require financial support from the parish to function effectively especially on finance intense activities such as supporting those with needs. Finally, the parish needs to review its strategic direction and relay the same to the SCC leaders so as to consequently reach the parishioners. While this study showed that SCC leaders assist in aligning the parish strategy with that of the Catholic Church, the response on making the strategy clear was low. Hence, there is need for SCC leaders to work out ways to ensure that they serve as the conduit important information regarding the strategy of the parish to the parishioners. The SCC leaders have been shown to be important in implementation of the strategy of the parish as well as that of the church in general and hence increasing the time given to make the strategy clear to the parishioners will serve as important in augmenting the understanding of the strategy by the parishioners, is critical, as shown by this and other studies.

DISCUSSION

This research has brought out significant aspects in the leadership roles of SCC leaders and how they affect strategy of the parish within the Catholic Church. This study sought to answer the question on the impact of the leadership style in the SCCs and it’s the impact on the strategic evangelization of the St. Massimo Parish. The role of the SCC in providing strategy direction was assessed showing that the leader’s main roles were to assist the parish meet its objectives, make the strategy of the parish clear, and most importantly align the strategy of the parish to that of the overall Catholic Church. Further, SCCs leaders served an integral part in solving conflicts, communicating values of the parish, and obtaining resources to support the work of the parish in the SCC. In the communication of strategy, the SCCs leaders were shown to have an important role before, during, and after implementation of activities in the parish and SCCs.

The study suggests that strategy implementation may be the most important role for SCC leaders within their respective SCCs. In terms of areas of improvement for the SCCs, some of the areas mentioned included: Increased Meeting Time, Providing Financial Guidelines, Minimum of 20 to 30 members (or Families) per SCC, Improved communication with Parish and Increased emphasis on less fortunate. According to the SCC leaders the qualities needed to lead were several. These included: Humility, Patience, Good Communication, Strong Prayer Life and Forgiving Spirit. The SCCs leaders listed three main items as the support needed from the parish. These were training and seminars, financial support and better strategic direction from parish.

Strategy Direction in SCCs For Integral Evangelization

The results in this study showed that the SCC leaders have an important role in determining the strategy direction of the parish with specific roles such as assisting the parish in attaining its objectives and aligning with overall Catholic Church strategy. As such, the SCC leaders assist in reaching the members of the church in the community. The results were backed by other findings by other studies in literature including studies within the Catholic Church on Small Christian Communities and their functions. The Number of leaders in SCC are five which include the chairperson and vice chairperson, Secretary and Vice Secretary and Treasurer. St. Massimo Catholic Parish in Meru and the subject of our study has 70 SCCs. With reference to strategy at the local parish, most of the leaders stated that they understood and perceived the strategic direction of the church as being clear. This awareness of the role of SCC in the strategy direction of the church was key and it reflected the overarching need and trend that has led to the formation of more than 120,000 SCCs with 45,000 in Kenya. Healey (2012) notes that the formation of these SCC has been of monumental importance in evangelization.

Communication of Strategy in SCCs for Integral Evangelization

The role of SCC's in communicating the strategy of the parish to the parishioners in the SCC families was monumental as per the findings of this study. Importantly, the SCC leaders elaborated that their presence in the parish assisted in ensuring compliance and monitoring of requirements, relaying information from the parish to the people, and maintaining communication flows across the parish. Similarly, literature verified the role of leaders in small groups and recognized their role in ensuring a continuous link of open communication in the church. The importance of such leaders was further exemplified by the findings from the study that communication is important before, during, and after the implementation of changes in the

parish. With the presence of leaders in the SCCs, thus, communication in the parish is not only flawless, but attains results in an efficient manner. According to Matt (2014), the call to be a leader in the church can take various forms of preacher teacher, pastor, counsellor, small group leader, or any other church related ministry. Like interpersonal communication relational communication in the church through small group leaders assist in ensuring flawless communication between people. It is usually the face to face communication in the small groups that act as vehicles through which the church is able to develop, maintain, and enhance communication in the church.

Strategy Implementation in SCCs for Integral Evangelization

The implementation of strategy is critical as strategies are useless if they are not adequately effected in organizations. In this study, SCC leaders were shown to have an important function in supporting the implementation of parish strategy. According to the results of this study, SCC leaders assist in coordination that is essential in ensuring that parishioners across the SCC know what they need to do and how they should go about to stay focused on the main targets. In querying the areas that require change in order to ensure that the implementation of strategy was smoother, the SCC leaders named aspects such as meeting time, offering financial guidance, maintaining minimum number of leaders to around, improving communication, and focusing attention to those with needs as critical aspects that needed improvement. Qualities that supported SCC leaders in implementing strategy include humility, patience, strong prayer life, good communication, and forgiving spirit. In literature, coordination was shown to be critical and the presence of control systems confirmed the importance of the SCC system and the leaders in the systems as they ensure that the parish is well coordinated.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms the vital role SCC leaders play in shaping, communicating, and implementing parish strategy at St. Massimo Parish. With balanced gender representation among 70 leaders, findings indicate strong alignment between parish and Church-wide objectives. Nonetheless, gaps in strategic clarity and communication were evident. Strengthening SCC leaders' role as information conduits can enhance parishioners' understanding of church direction. While their influence is significant, the absence of structured feedback mechanisms and external oversight limits communication effectiveness. Clearer communication frameworks and continuous support are therefore essential.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends strengthening collaboration with external stakeholders and establishing a clear, documented communication process to enhance monitoring and review of communication among SCC leaders. It calls for a revision of meeting schedules to allow more engagement between leaders and members, inclusion of financial guidelines, and maintaining manageable SCC membership sizes. Improved communication channels, targeted support for members with needs, and clearly defined procedures for accessing assistance are also emphasized. Additionally, the study advocates for training SCC leaders in leadership, communication, strategic planning, and basic financial management to improve effectiveness and teamwork. It highlights the need for developing personal qualities such as patience, humility, and a forgiving spirit, alongside a deeper understanding of Catholic Church teachings through talks and seminars. Financial support from the parish is recommended to facilitate SCC operations, particularly in resource-intensive activities. Lastly, the parish is urged to review and clearly communicate its strategic direction to SCC leaders for effective implementation at the community level.

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