THE ROLES OF POLICY DOCUMENTS, GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY WITHIN THE NON-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR: A CASE OF CHURCHES

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Abstract

In recent times, nonprofit organisations (NPOs) have been compelled to run their affairs professionally. Consistent with management theory a manager ought to plan, organise, lead and exercise control. The process of professionalisation, governance and strategy implementation could be enhanced using policy documents (such as constitutions, church orders, canos and manuals). Policies serve as key instruments in enabling a strategy agenda for such organisations. Policies articulate governance principles and align with the strategic imperatives. This paper explored the role of policies as instruments of strategic agenda enablement in church settings as NPOs. Qualitative research methods, in the form of semi-structured interviews and document analysis, were employed in conducting research among churches in the Gauteng province, South Africa. A total of 26 church managers were interviewed, and 12 policy documents from participating churches were analysed using ATLAS.ti software. As findings, policies ought to be better aligned to the governance architecture, vision, and strategic agenda of the organisation. This will make policies become proper instruments of governance and strategy implementation. Policy documents analysed entailed inferences of all four principles of management theory. A contribution is made in the areas of the aforementioned theory in a nonprofit context.

Keywords: Church Denominations, Governance, NPOs, Policy, South Africa, Strategic Agenda, Strategy Implementation Instruments

1. INTRODUCTION

In every task undertaken in an organisation, guidelines are required to help employees, and more specifically managers, act in accordance with the strategy. Ramadan (2015) points out that instruments such as policies play a vital role in enabling managers to work together in implementing the strategy. Thus, organisations rely on action policies and operationalise their visions, plans, tactics and ultimately, their strategies (Blitt, 2011). Policy documents are meant to provide ideological clarity and outline the strategic position of an organisation and its leadership. The purpose of

policies is to provide guidelines to all affected role-players on the process to be followed when implementing a chosen direction or strategy (Hecker et al., 2019). While policies are often associated with business laws and the corporate sector, scholarly work on policies within the context of nonprofit organisations (NPOs) is still developmental (Bracci et al., 2022). Corporate governance is widely researched, but little is explored in terms of governance within the not-for-profit sector (Gratton, 2018). Thus, this presents myriads of research opportunities which this paper seeks to contribute towards. For this reason, this article explores what role policies play in the governance and strategy implementation of NPOs in general, and churches in particular. The exploratory research entails both document analysis and structured interviews and these will be discussed in the subsequent sections. All organisations, whether corporate, small or NPOs, require a guiding instrument that enables them to work towards achieving their vision and implementing their strategies, which is the role of policies. As Grant (2021) notes, all modern organisations — churches included — must strategise, if they are to achieve specific, predetermined objectives. While the need for policy documents is evident in corporate contexts, little is known about how policy documents enable churches to achieve their objectives, implement their strategic agenda, and propel them towards a realisation of their ideal vision. The exploration of such policy documents gains credence from research advanced by Nyarugwe et al. (2022) that credits policies as enablers of institutional effectiveness. With this in mind, this research sought to address the following questions:

RQ1: Which policy document(s) do(es) your church utilise as part of the governance process?

RQ2: How is the policy document useful in achieving your church's strategic agenda?

RQ3: Other than the policy document, what other strategy implementation instrument(s) does your church employ?

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature. Section 3 analyses the methodology that has been used to conduct empirical research on policies and their roles in advancing sound governance and strategic agendas of NPOs. Section 4 presents the results. Section 5 discusses the findings and Section 6 concludes wherein the implications and future studies are proposed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will discuss policy documents and the strategic agenda of churches.

2.1. Policy documents, and agency and management theories

"Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do".
— *Joshua 1:8, Holy Bible, New Living Translation [NLT], 1996/2015*

Policies serve to guide institutions in making both one-time and repetitive decisions, during their existence. According to Martin et al. (2023), policies always have implications on strategy implementation and practice within organisations. As a norm, almost all role players are compelled to abide by their institutional policy directives, which makes policies key instruments in the implementation of strategy. Viennet and Pont (2017) credit policy documents with assisting in clarifying processes in complex environments, while Tazin and Yaakop (2015) regard policies as documents that manage the expectations of various stakeholders.

Notably, organisations depend on policies when settling disputes, and providing strategic direction, especially in the midst of uncertainty (Nieboer, 2011). Thus, Ortega-Rodríguez et al. (2020) refer to the antecedents of transparency and accountability as clear policies. Martin et al. (2023) further acclaim policies as enablers of openness for decision-makers involved in critical deliberations. In their observations, Oulis et al. (2010) mention that policies avail useful information about organisations, allowing them to manage relations amicably and affably with stakeholders such as the state and/or its agencies.

In addition, policies are valuable for affording office bearers the requisite institutional memory base to guide an organisation's future trajectory (King Committee on Governance, 2016). This makes policies almost indispensable instruments for strategy implementation. This brings to the fore questions on the applicability of policies in a church context and whether policy documents would assist churches in dealing with complex situations. From the discussions on strategy implementation, it is apparent that the theory thereof is also built on management theory whose principles infer that organisations need to plan, organise, lead and control (Drucker, 1964). Church managers, among other things, are responsible for leading and putting to use the organisation's resources in an optimal manner (Koontz, 1980). For this to be realised, policy documents provide such guidelines on how leadership should be assumed by managers The next section discusses churches as NPOs.

2.2. Churches as nonprofit organisations (NPOs)

Historically, churches served as places of worship for people of the Christian faith (South African Council of Churches [SACC], 2017). Over time, and due to environmental changes, their scope has evolved to the extent that churches find themselves doing more charitable, social agency and social justice work than before (Alieva & Davronova, 2023). This reality requires greater conceptual and organisational skills from church managers and members at large (Nieboer, 2011). Scholars such as Grant (2021) and Gratton (2018) confirm that in a rapidly changing world, all organisations (including churches) need to strategise. During strategy implementation, policies act as drivers of strategy implementation. NPOs such as churches depend on policies to articulate and instil their often-rich culture and procedures. While corporates and small enterprises seek to maximise profits and wealth, modern churches are more interested in creating social value through innovation and improving

the quality of life of those within their confines (Antonites et al., 2019). Thus, church policies are crucial for achieving such objectives.

To realise their strategic objectives, churches usually depend on policy documents such as canons, church orders, and constitutions (see Table 1). This reality is based on what church managers and policy documents as units seemed to suggest.

2.3. Strategic agenda and governance

"Strategy" stems from the Greek word "*strategio*" which loosely means "the art of war" (Louw & Venter, 2019). Thus, the notion of a strategy was initially employed by the military fraternity in a quest to outperform adversaries. Over the years, the strategy began to be incorporated in the discipline of management (Mintzberg et al., 2005), before being adopted within NPO settings, including churches (Gratton, 2018). Strategy-related scholars such as Porter (1979) have investigated how strategy is employed in church contexts since churches are now in a position to be involved in their own strategic planning, implementation and evaluation. While few organisations struggle to put together (strategic) planning documents, more often than not they fall short in terms of operationalising and actioning such plans successfully. Among the challenges to successful strategy implementation are issues related to an entity's vision and ideological clarity (Grainger et al., 2009). Strategy implementation requires both drivers and instruments, to action a chosen strategy. With implementation drivers, organisations need to take into account aspects such as culture, resource allocation and structure, to mention but a few (Lynch, 2019). These drivers require strategic leadership which must not only be put in place but also use such instruments. Ramos-Monge et al. (2019) warn that proper engagement on the part of leadership (as drivers of strategic implementation) is vital for eliminating possible barriers to execution. Ramadan (2015) affirms that the identified strategy implementation drivers (leadership, culture, structure and resource allocation) play a major role in NPOs are effective in achieving predetermined outcomes. Williams et al. (2020) concur, submitting that leadership must show traits such as being proactive, knowledgeable, supportive and persevering when actioning strategy. According to Tazin and Yaakop (2015), strategy implementation instruments could include short-term objectives, functional tactics and reward systems. The ethical posture of the organisation's strategic agenda ought to be conspicuous. This means that the agenda must pass the litmus test of the triple bottom line of economic, social and ecological considerations (Marren, 2021). Among the other instruments of strategy implementation are policies, which are key in providing guidelines aimed at actioning the vision and plans of any entity. This research is focused more on policy implementation in churches by exploring how managers deal with policies to better their entities.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research method, employing document analysis and interviews, was undertaken. A total of 12 policy documents were solicited and analysed, and 26 church managers participated in this research. Churches affiliated with the SACC were chosen as NPOs of focus. The participants were sourced from the SACC denominations list in the five Gauteng regions in South Africa. The churches were from both adherents and protestant denominations. A certain criterion had to be adhered to.

3.1. Selection criteria

This was done to protect participants and ensure that minors do not participate:
- domiciled within any of the Gauteng regions;
- over the age of 18 years old;
- a manager of a church (preferably a chairperson of the church);
- part of a recognised and formalised church denomination (preferably SACC or Baptist affiliate);
- a willing participant.

Documents and interviews were the only two qualitative research instruments employed to collect data. While there are other methods that are quantitative in nature where statistical inferences are relied upon, qualitative research affords the researcher opportunities to delve deeper into sense-making (Henning et al., 2004). From the two research instruments, data was analysed using thematic analysis and ATLAS.ti. software where codes and categories were derived (Tracy, 2020). These were compared with what literature suggested on governance and strategy in the NPO context.

3.2. Ethical considerations

Prior to commencing this investigation, the author had to obtain permission (ethical clearance certificate) from a committee on ethics at his academic institution. The participants had to first consent in writing to be part of the research. They were also given the liberty of withdrawing from the interview at any point if they wished to do so.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section highlights the type of policy documents analysed, church managers who participated in the research, and the interview records on church policies (discussed in terms of certain patterns, from which conclusions could be drawn). The document analysis is discussed next.

4.1. Document analysis

This section chiefly focuses on the policy documents received from the participants and analysed. This is succinctly summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Documents used for analysis

Document number	Participant involved	Document type	Rationale
Document 01	Participant 02	Constitution	To explore the church's history, policies and procedures
Document 02	Participant 03	Church membership manual	To explore the church's policies and procedures
Document 03	Participant 03	Constitution	To explore the church's policies and procedures
Document 04	Participant 07	Situational analysis on boundaries and membership structure	To explore the church's strategic plan, membership pool, policies and procedures
Document 05	Participant 08	Administrative management manual	To explore the church's strategic plan, financial prudence, policies and procedures
Document 06	Participant 08	Pastoral manual	To explore the church's doctrine, customs, policies and procedures
Document 07	Participant 09	General norms manual	To explore the church's doctrine, policies and procedures
Document 08	Participant 12	Constitution	To explore the church's history, policies and procedures
Document 09	Participant 18	Church order	To explore the church's history, doctrine and procedures
Document 10	Participant 20	Church history reflection	To explore the church's history, doctrine and procedures
Document 11	Participant 20	Church doctrine	To explore the church's history, doctrine and perspective
Document 12	Participant 20	Church circular	To explore the church's doctrine, history and contemporary Christian issues

Source: Data from the fieldwork carried out by the Author in 2021.

The 12 documents analysed dealt with each church's policy position. The majority were received from Protestant denominations and ranged from church orders, canons, church manuals, constitutions, circulars, situational analyses, administrative and pastoral manuals to general norms manuals. Of all these documents, church manuals, orders and constitutions dealt directly with the church's policy matters and were the subject of the main document analysis. Importantly, while other churches and denominations made use of policy documents such as canons and cardinal laws (all of which are available in the public domain), the researcher only explored documents which he had been explicitly permitted to peruse. This was done for reasons of ethics and integrity. Inference to planning, organising, leading and control, which are the basic principles of management were apparent. In terms of overall governance, there were few disputes among church managers as agents, stewards, and custodians of church policies (Koontz, 1980). What was unclear was the roles of such policy documents in ensuring that the strategic agenda of churches as NPOs was fulfilled in the best way possible (Nyarugwe et al., 2022). Admittedly, some churches used more than one policy document. It was, however, uncertain whether this reality had a bearing on the governance architecture or any strategic advantage. Beyond document analysis, interviews also took place. Table 2 provides the participants' demographic information, shedding light on the calibre of the individuals who participated in the research.

Table 2. Participants' demographic information (Part 1)

P	Gender	Race	Region	Managerial experience, in years	Qualification(s)	Major denomination
1	Male	White	Tshwane	2	Master of Science, Bachelor of Theology	Protestant
2	Female	African	Tshwane	10	Master of Art	Protestant
3	Male	African	Johannesburg	13	Doctor of Philosophy (theological)	Protestant
4	Male	African	Sedibeng	10	Diploma in Theology, Diploma in Project Management	Adherent
5	Male	White	Sedibeng	8	B-Tech in Marketing	Adherent
6	Male	White	Sedibeng	20	Doctor of Philosophy (theological), BA in Psychology	Protestant
7	Female	African	Sedibeng	30	Master of Education	Protestant
8	Male	African	Sedibeng	3	Bachelor of Theology	Adherent
9	Male	African	Sedibeng	5	Bachelor of Theology	Adherent
10	Male	Asian	Johannesburg	4	Master of Theology, MBA	Adherent
11	Female	White	Sedibeng	Undisclosed	Bachelor of Theology	Adherent
12	Male	White	Ekurhuleni	20	Diploma in Business Studies, BA in Biblical Studies (current)	Protestant
13	Male	African	Ekurhuleni	8	Honours Bachelor of Theology	Adherent
14*	Male	African	Ekurhuleni	33	Master of Theology	Protestant
15*	Male	African	Tshwane	27	Sales and Marketing Certificate	Protestant
16	Male	African	Tshwane	2.5	Honours Bachelor of Theology, Honours BA Ancient History, Diploma in Organisational Development	Protestant
17	Male	African	Tshwane	17	Doctor of Philosophy (religious studies), Church Development and Leadership, Short Business Programme	Protestant
18*	Male	White	West Rand	38	Doctor of Philosophy (theological) x 2	Protestant
19*	Male	White	West Rand	10	Studied Music (unconfirmed)	Protestant

Table 2. Participants' demographic information (Part 2)

P	Gender	Race	Region	Managerial experience, in years	Qualification(s)	Major denomination
20	Male	White	Tshwane	21	Bachelor of Practical Theology, Diploma in Building a Local Church	Protestant
21*	Male	White	West Rand	10	Undisclosed	Protestant
22*	Male	African	West Rand	1 year and 2 months	Matric, 2nd year student Bachelor of Theology	Protestant
23	Male	African	West Rand	7	Degree in Public Management	Protestant
24	Male	White	West Rand	38	BA in Church History, Bachelor of Theology	Protestant
25*	Male	African	Tshwane	5	Matric	Protestant
26*	Female	African	Tshwane	1	Administration Diploma	Protestant

*Note: P — Participant. * Participated in the interview along with a colleague.*
Source: Data from the fieldwork carried out by the Author in 2021.

Table 2 offers information on the 26 participants interviewed in the course of this research, amongst whom only four were women. All races were equitably represented. Tshwane and Sedibeng had the most participants, and Johannesburg the least. Most participants had held managerial positions in the church for several years, with the least experienced having a year of experience, and the most experienced, 38 years. Most participants had tertiary qualifications, some as far as doctorate level. The majority held theological qualifications, and only a few had formal managerial qualifications. Both adherents and Protestants participated in the research, with the latter constituting the majority; this was never a result of any bias.

This research was conducted under difficult circumstances; the research depended on whoever was interested, available and suitable to participate. The author depended on what was available before him to collect data. The next section deals with the research question and the participants' responses.

4.2. Research questions and quotations

4.2.1. Which policy document(s) do(es) your church utilise as part of the governance process?

This question required the participants to clearly state the type of policy document that their church used to make decisions while running the organisation/entity. In that regard, one participant had this to say: *"If you want to run a church as a business […] the church has always been running this way. The same constitution that people are always fighting, is the constitution that was developed in the 1960s or the 1950s"* (P2, personal communication, March 23, 2020).

The participant referred to the constitution as a type of policy document, in use at her church. In her description, she indicated that the constitution had been in use for more than 60 years, which apparently made it a reliable policy document. However, there was some dissent from certain sectors within the church, as indicated in the use of the word "fighting".

"We have the constitution and then they let us take the small groups every time we have a vision that we want to cast. They lead us, without the ones who spearheaded the vision, for two hours in small groups, and then we also do it through Bible studies" (P3, personal communication, July 06, 2020).

The participant alluded to his church having a constitution, on which congregants are educated.

This is a sign of a learning organisation and speaks to the church's culture, leadership and type of government.

4.2.2. How is the policy document useful in achieving your church's strategic agenda?

This question required participants to indicate how they viewed policy documents in terms of enabling their church to achieve its strategic objectives. Here is how one participant responded:

"If I'm not wrong […] a lot is centred on the constitution, but it doesn't fit with the mission and vision of the church" (P2, personal communication, March 23, 2020).

This participant alluded to a mismatch between what her church sought to achieve (vision and mission), and its constitution. If this inconsistency is left unattended, it may lead to fragmented and unrealised strategic objectives.

"I think our role as the management of the church is clearly prescribed in the canons and constitution of the church" (P4, personal communication, July 07, 2020).

This participant mentioned both the canon and constitution being utilised as policy documents, but it was unclear how the documents complemented each other.

"We are having a constitution which guides us […] but you know what, our chairman is an attorney, so he was part of writing the constitution, so we use him for anything. A lot of the committee members are not aware, not […] educated in our constitution's write-ups" (P5, personal communication, July 07, 2020).

This participant confirmed the use of the constitution, adding that the management team reverted to the chairman, who happened to be an attorney. While the services of a knowledgeable person were commendable, the church may run the risk of "key man dependency".

"We're talking, [in] *Afrikaans,* [about] *die Kerkorde* [church order]. *Yes, the church order looks like this, that tells us what is the mission, why are we here, why we wanna do it, and then once again they give you. So, if you're really a reformed priest, this is one of the books that* [should] *really* [lie] *near, because it gives the margins* [of what] *you have to do"* (P6, personal communication, July 07, 2020).

Contrary to P2, and in addressing the significance of church policy documents for strategy, P6 praised his church order for offering strategic clarity in the form of its mission, the objectives that needed to be achieved, and how to achieve them.

Thus, strategy benefits from policy. This is consistent with the literature on strategy implementation instruments (Nieboer, 2011).

"I said we've got policies in place, because it can't be [a] *church without policies, and when coming to the treasurers in all our churches, we do not elect treasurers. They are recommended by the superintendent after looking at* [a] *person. In our church we don't look at the qualifications that much, we look at the skills that a person has, and they go for training. There is a policy, there's a church constitution. The church uses policies, and they will deal with you accordingly"* (P7, personal communication, July 07, 2020).

This participant highlighted the role of policy in the making of critical church-related decisions. For instance, she demonstrated how her church used prudence, with existing policies from the constitution guiding them in managing the treasury of the church. This has a bearing on budgets and the ability to meet the strategic objectives of the church.

"[We rely on] the constitution […] so that when we lead, we make sure that you understand and you rule as an elder, what is expected from you as an elder because, remember, we do not have a hierarchy, the minister and the elders are [held] in high regard. We are the moral compass if you are managing the church or if you are ruling the church, you are a moral compass, so if you are a minister and you do things that are disgraceful there should be something about consequences or repercussions" (P16, personal communication, July 21, 2020).

The participant credited the constitution of the church with instilling ethical conduct in office bearers. The literature suggests that ethics and governance are key aspects of successful strategic planning implementation and evaluation (King Committee on Governance, 2016). Thus, the constitution of his church protected that entity from appointing unethical managers who might derail the church's strategic trajectory and/or taint its moral capital.

"We have approved policies, finance policies […] ye[s], *I said policies, and we have the constitution that assists us to manage the church and* […] *reach our goals, but with the church, you know, things actually sometimes get out of hand. People may say now "Let's be biblical, we are biblical people. Let the policy wait, let the constitution wait, and let's use the Bible, the Word of God, what does the Word of God say?". But we do have policies and we do have the constitution, and then we also use them with most of the missions that we are doing"* (P17, personal communication, July 23, 2020).

This participant raised concerns about policies contradicting what the Bible represents and stands for. While his church has a constitution, its effectiveness is thus rendered inefficient in instances where it is perceived to misalign with the law of God.

In this instance, decisive leadership on the part of church managers is required to protect the integrity of the constitution and its role in the successful implementation of the strategy being pursued. Also noteworthy, it would appear that there are stand-alone policies that are independent of the constitution.

"There was no proper procedure in following the church order, but now we have been trained and given workshops. This is different from what happened before, in terms of the external environment and how it affects the church and the chang[ing] *surrounding*[s]. *There is no influence of the external environment and church council because we follow the church order"* (P25, personal communication, November 01, 2020).

This participant credited the church order with providing his congregation with a proper procedure to follow. The literature suggests that policies are supposed to provide clarity and complement the chosen strategy (Hecker et al., 2019). P25 further alluded to training being offered so as to disseminate knowledge on how the church and its policies must align with changes in the external environment.

4.2.3. Other than the policy document, what other strategy implementation instrument(s) does your church employ?

In this section, the participants had to describe other possible strategy implementation instruments. As one participant noted:

"We should assist people who are volunteering sometimes in the church" (P2, personal communication, March 23, 2020).

This participant suggested that incentives should be made available to church volunteers, for instance, a transport allowance. The literature suggests that incentives also understood to form part of a reward system, constitute part of the strategy implementation instruments (Lynch, 2019).

"You know what the short term is, we have to come up with our own, but the long term and procedures there are there, so I think" (P16, personal communication, July 21, 2020).

This participant suggested converting long-term plans into short-term measurable objectives. That approach is consistent with the literature on strategy implementation instruments (Ramadan, 2015).

"What I think [is it] *also makes it difficult for us to live because when you need volunteers, you depend on encouragement. Not doing so,* [is not] *like in a business where you have to give money and other incentives"* (P17, personal communication, July 23, 2020).

This participant acknowledged the reality of having to offer incentives to encourage those who were volunteering their services, to give their best. This is consistent with strategy implementation instruments in the form of reward systems (Ramadan, 2015).

"[The] ministry has a treasurer, people with knowledge in finances are co-opted to strengthen the Finance Committee. Before [an] *audit is done externally, fundraising and entrepreneurial initiatives by the Women's Guild play a major role in the fundraisings for the church"* (P23, personal communication, July 30, 2020).

This participant mentioned that the female congregants were responsible for initiatives such as fundraising and social entrepreneurial initiatives. This aligns with the findings reported in the literature on adopting a functional approach and tactics as instruments of strategy implementation (Lynch, 2019).

5. DISCUSSION

The analysis of the church documents comprised manuals, church orders and constitutions, but excluded cardinal laws and canons, which were not made available for analysis except as discussion points during the participant interviews with the church managers. In the main, all the church documents covered the strategic direction (vision and mission); church history and background; legal status; procedures of church operations, statutory meetings, different holy church services; office bearers' rights and responsibilities (also those of church members); church properties, membership, finances, and dissolution protocols. These policy documents were supposed to support the churches' strategic agendas and align with the Bible's expectations for Christian conduct. This is consistent with what extant literature notes regarding policies as enablers and instruments of strategy implementation (Hecker et al., 2019). During the interviews, the participants referred to the types of church documents they consulted or referred to, on a regular basis. Some participants mentioned the use of more than one policy document, which was not an unusual occurrence. For instance, some texts were deemed to be canons/constitutions, others church manuals/constitutions, church orders/constitutions or even (separate) policy documents/constitutions (see interview responses). In most instances, the constitution was the common denominator and a widely used church policy document, as confirmed by the study participants.

6. CONCLUSION

Most participants credited church policies with being enablers, in the sense of serving as instruments in the process of fulfilling a strategic agenda (Williams et al., 2020), making their existence all but indispensable. Notably, church policy documents alone cannot provide the requisite outcomes, unless used in combination with other strategy implementation instruments such as reward systems, functional tactics and short-term objectives. Over and above the instruments, strategy implementation drivers (leadership, culture, structure and optimal resource allocation) may serve as useful enablers alongside policies in successfully articulating a church's strategic agenda (Ramadan, 2015). Agility in management style is imperative, while the core and central mission of the organisation is maintained. Although this may be a difficult balancing act, modern organisations and their volatile environment ask as such from their managers and agents of progress and able stewards. In this research, the role of policy documents, as they pertain to a church's strategy implementation, was explored. Based on the data analysed through document analysis and from the interviews conducted, it became clear that aligning church policies with the strategic trajectory of the church is imperative. The church is burdened with employing policy documents that are alive to the current reality, while at the same time guarding against compromising fundamental biblical principles. Managers ought to strike a balance between the Bible and the strategy in place — something which can be achieved through the policy document(s) that the church prepares and implements. Impact studies on the role of policies in churches, and other NPOs' strategic agendas, may need revisiting. This research contributes in terms of how NPOs, such as churches, can employ policies and other strategy-related documents to fulfil their core mission. Furthermore, both agency and management theories were highlighted in terms of enlisting managers who are dedicated to employing policies and enabling strategy implementation. As part of the limitations, methodological aspects were confined to qualitative research only, and it could have strengthened the outcomes had quantitative research been incorporated. While qualitative research is more exploratory, quantitative research is much more explanatory and calculative. Thus, follow-up research in a mixed-method format is ideal and envisaged. This also deepens the position held by Grant (2021) that all organisations — including churches and other NPOs — ought to strategise.

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