

## Dynamics of Strategy Implementation on the Performance of Power Utilities in Zimbabwe: Case of Rural Electrification Fund (REF)

BY

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### Abstract

The study sought to establish how strategy implementation impact on performance of Rural Electrification Fund (REF) in Zimbabwe. The study adopted a quantitative research approach rooted in positivism research philosophy. In this study a simple random sample of 100 managerial respondents were taken as research subjects. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The study employed the cross sectional research design. Data was uploaded on Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed using Chi-Square Test of Independence. The data was presented in form of tables, graphs and pie charts. Findings from the study revealed that there is a relationship between product diversification strategy implementation and service delivery. The study results also indicate a significant positive relationship between location diversification and quality of service delivery and that there is positive relationship between grid extension strategy and availability of electricity. Results indicate that Grid extension strategy implementation is positively correlated to improved health service delivery and increased the livelihood of the communities. The study recommends that REF Zimbabwe should continually enhance its strategy communication process within the organization to assist in effective coordination of strategy implementation in the current turbulent environment. The research also recommends involvement by all stakeholders in strategy formulation, adequate training and development. Lastly, the study recommends that the energy sector must have adequate strategy implementation process that is agile enough to align the organization to its environment. The strategy implementation process must in a way ensure that it takes full advantage of its strength and opportunities in the energy industry in order to gain a competitive edge while mitigating against the effect of its weaknesses and the threats posed by the industry. More studies should be done to examine other factors that may influence performance. Further, future studies should obtain a large population of power utilities to determine whether the results can be generalized as this case only used one rural power utility. The study suggests that a similar study can be done on other energy organizations in Zimbabwe for the purposes of benchmarking.

**Keywords:** Strategy, Implementation, Rural Electrification Fund, Zimbabwe

### Introduction and Background of the Study

Superior business performance results from an organization's ability to have clear and well-defined strategy formulation and implementation. Failure of strategy plans occurs during the implementation stage even though the crafters of the plans are highly qualified. (Ansoff, 1990) postulates that organizations find

strategy implementation difficult. A well-developed strategy properly implemented results in the success of an organization's performance (Johnson et al., 2008). (Thompson, Strickland and Gamble, 2008) postulates that there is no one universal approach to strategy implementation. The authors go on to say that strategy implementation is the beginning of a challenging task where

leaders must be at the forefront in dealing with issues involved in strategy implementation such as resource mobilization, restructuring, culture changes, technological changes, process changes, policy, and leadership changes. This paper thus seeks to assess the effects of strategy implementation on the performance of Rural Electrification Fund (REF) Zimbabwe.

ESMAP (2019) reported that the International Energy Agency's (IEA) World Energy Outlook outlined the three energy global strategies that were crafted in 2011. The strategies were based on the world energy market that defined the overall world energy approach. The (IEA) reported that the development of workable instruments of strategy implementation to enhance organizational performances to achieve their intended goals for rural electrification was put in place. (Akhtar, Arif, Rubi, & Naveed, 2011) reports that in India the rural electrification authorities have enhanced their performance by implementing strategies aimed at increasing stakeholder strategies in their respective markets. This has led to remarkable progress resulting in different technologies for rural electrification being taken into account in two major categories of grid-connected and off-grid systems. Based on sustainable development strategies with an emphasis on environmental consideration, the feasibility of electrification by using different types of renewable energies such as solar, biomass, hydro, wind, and wave have been successfully adopted.

In Africa, rural electrification programs in North Africa reached a 99% electrification rate because of the proper implementation of strategies that take into account the requirements of all stakeholders. (World Energy Outlook, 2013). The Outlook highlighted in the same report that the Government of South Africa, has put in place assessment plans that monitor strategic implementation in rural electrification to achieve their intended results. Similarly, rural electrification in Kenya has invested heavily in strategy implementation through proper mechanisms that aid the attainment of desired goals without arousing significant conflict of interests from the stakeholders involved leading to high organizational performance (Omutoko, 2009).

The Rural Electrification Agency (REF) in Zimbabwe is the statutory body that was established in 2002. It is governed by the Rural Electrification Fund (REF) Act (Chapter 13.20), with the mandate to facilitate rapid and equitable electrification of rural areas of Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe National Energy Policy, launched in 2012, further mandates the Rural Electrification Agency to play a coordinating and facilitator role in research, development, and dissemination of all forms of modern energy

technologies in rural Zimbabwe. Turnaround Strategies have been prepared on the background and realization of the need for REA to come up with strategies that will enable it to turn around its fortunes and effectively contribute towards the Government's efforts to turn around the economy. Specifically, the strategies seek to create an enabling environment for sustainable socio-economic development of rural communities in Zimbabwe, through the provision of sustainable modern energy infrastructure and energy services. A number of studies have been conducted in Zimbabwe on strategy implementation, however, there is no study done particularly on assessing the impact of the strategy implementation phase on REF Zimbabwe outputs. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the strategy implementation at REF Zimbabwe and establish its performance on the utility.

### Statement of the Problem

The successful implementation of corporate strategy is the most difficult issue facing many organizations in the world today (United Nations Development Programm, 2016). Well formulated strategies only produce superior performance for the firm when they are successfully implemented UNDP (2019) asserted that, ninety percent of well-formulated strategies fail at the implementation stage, and that there is no one universal approach to strategy implementation. This research, therefore, seeks to assess the effects of strategy implementation on the performance of Rural Electrification Fund (REF) Zimbabwe.

### Objectives

- 1. To investigate the effects of strategy implementation on the performance of the Rural Electrification Fund in Zimbabwe.

### Hypotheses

- H<sub>1</sub>:** Product diversification strategy positively improves service delivery of REF Zimbabwe.
- H<sub>2</sub>:** Grid extension strategy positively improves quality management of REF Zimbabwe.
- H<sub>3</sub>:** Investment diversification strategy positively improves the productivity of REF Zimbabwe.
- H<sub>4</sub>:** Location diversification strategy positively improves the performance of REF Zimbabwe.

### Conceptual Framework

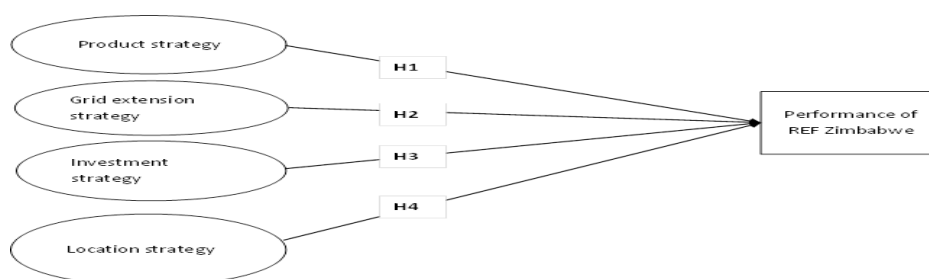


Figure 1: Diversification strategy by REF  
Zimbabwe Source: Survey (2020)

## Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research approach rooted in positivism research philosophy. In this study, a simple random sample of 100 managerial respondents was taken as research subjects. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The study employed a cross-sectional research design. Data was uploaded on Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed using the Chi-Square Test of Independence. The data was presented in form of tables, graphs, and pie charts.

## Theoretical Framework

Various theoretical lenses are relevant in understanding strategy implementation in organizations. The study will discuss Structural Theory by Chandler (1962) as an underpinning theory in this study. According to Chandler (1962) strategy is the determination of long-term goals and objectives and it is a plan for action to achieve one or more of the organization's goals. It is integrating activities and allocating and utilizing resources within the organization so that objectives are met. The strategy takes into consideration the environment under which organizations operate. According to Johnson, Kevan, and Richard (2006), structural fit with strategy suggests that firms consider formal structures important and that firms deliberately seek fit, as defined by current theory, when they change strategies and structures. (Chandler, 1962) concluded that strategy must be adjusted to avert inefficiencies, and change of strategy bring in challenges that may require restructuring to successfully implement new strategies. (Johnson et al. 2008) postulates that strategy is the direction and scope of an organization in the long run and enables the use of resources efficiently in the complex environment resulting in the fulfillment of stakeholder and client expectations. Advantages for the organization through its configuration of resources within a complex environment, to meet the needs of markets and to fulfill stakeholder expectations.

## Review of Related Literature

### 2. Effects of Strategy Implementation on the Performance of Rural Electrification Fund in Zimbabwe

Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington, (2016) define strategy in terms of the scope of an organization's activities, the matching of the organization's activities, and resources capability. They define as the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which activities can be advantageous for the organization through its configuration of resources within a changing environment and to fulfill shareholder expectation. In strategy, therefore, consideration is given to the allocation of resources in the organization resource capability, value expectations, and goals of those influencing strategy which determines the long-term direction of the organization. This definition by Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, (2016) implies that by assessing the organization

as a whole in terms of the activities, capabilities, resources, and direction, it is possible to tell the kind of strategy being pursued.

Good strategy execution requires a team effort. All managers have strategy-executing responsibility in their areas of authority, and all employees are participants in the strategy execution effort. Putting together a talented management team with the right mix of experiences, skills, and abilities to get things done is one of the first strategy-implementing steps (Thompson et al., 2016). Successful strategy implementation requires the organization's configuration to be harmonized with the strategy. (Johnson et al., 2016) is of the view that the organization is made up of structures, processes, and relationships.

Effective strategy implementation requires effective management of operations through identification and adoption of best practices. These are powerful tools for promoting operating excellence. Core competencies and strategic capabilities can be a basis for competitive advantage if they give firm capabilities that rivals cannot match (Porter, 2002). A properly designed reward system aligns the well-being of organization members to competent strategy execution and the achievement of performance targets. The role of the reward system is to align the well-being of organization members with realizing the company's vision, so that organization members benefit by helping the company execute its strategy competently and fully satisfy customers (Thompson et al., 2016).

The corporate culture of the organization needs to be compatible with the strategy being implemented. Organizational leadership and management's role is to align the organization's culture with strategy (Pearce and Robinson, 2017). Positions of authority and responsibility are important in strategy implementation, but also important are the people in those positions. These must be people with leaders who can influence action towards the desired direction. Strategy implementation requires leaders who can influence members of the organization to focus their effort in the same direction (Sababu, 2017).

While implementation of strategy is such an important activity, it is not easy (Johnson et al., 2008). The successful implementation of corporate strategy is the most pressing issue facing many organizations in the world today. Noble (2016) states that well-formulated strategies only produce superior performance for the firm when they are successfully implemented. According to Kaplan and Norton (2016), many factors make it difficult to implement strategy today. The pace of change continues to accelerate, technology changes frequently and mobile than ever before. According to (Pearce and Robinson, 2017) successful strategy implementation mainly depends on the firm's primary organization's structure, leadership, culture, and ultimately an individual organization's members. According to (Koske, 2013) the most common organizational characteristics which constrain strategy implementation concern strategy formulation to implementation, resource allocation, a match between strategy and structure, linking performance and pay packages to strategies, creating strategy supportive culture.

According to (Thompson et al. 2016) there is no one universal way to implement strategies and detailed approaches to strategy implementation must always be unique to the situation at the organization. The authors go on to that despite the differences in organizations' situations and circumstances, successful strategy implementation is dependent on the effective performance of managerial tasks of; building an organization capable of good strategy execution, effective management of internal operations, and instituting strategy-supportive culture and leadership.

Implementing strategies involves the identification of important factors for accomplishing tasks. (Barnet, 2007) brings out important tasks in the implementation of strategies. The authors highlight the need for an organizational structure, resource mobilization, staff motivation, positive culture that fits strategy, and good leadership that is strategic in nature. (Alexander 1985) says that implementation and performance are affected key indicators used by the organization ensuring measurement of individual and organizational outputs.

(Kotler, 2004) stresses the importance of strategy implementation by noting that a great strategy can be sabotaged by poor implementation. According to (Ghosan, 2012) strategy is five percent thinking and ninety-five percent implementation. Poor implementation results in poor performance of the organization. Strategy implementation is the process by which strategies and functional policies are put into action through the development of action plans, goals, programs, budgets, procedures, structures, cultures, motivation, communications, leadership, allocation of resources, working climate, and enforcement. (Pearce and Robinson, 2017).

Human resources are key in strategy implementation; (Gupta 1993) postulated that employees must participate in strategy implementation to ensure that the set objectives are achieved. It is imperative to note the importance of training and motivation of the employees to positively influence business performance. (Kaplan, 2005) further explains that a highly qualified workforce makes it easier to implement strategies in organizations leading to high organizational performance.

According to (Andrews, 2015) strategy implementation activities include the structure and relations, procedure, behavior, and executive leadership. The strategy implementation process broadly involves building a capable organization, managing internal operations and culture and leadership (Thompson et al., 2016). Strategy execution requires managers to build organizations with requisite capabilities. Successful implementation requires organizations with the competencies, capabilities, and resource strengths. It also requires robust policy and actions that facilitate rather than obstruct the implementation of the strategy (Thompson et al., 2016).

Skillful implementation of strategy depends on capable employees. Three key actions of staffing the organization, building core competencies and competitive capabilities, and structuring the organization and work effort (Thompson et al., 2016). The knowledge and experience of people can be the key factors influencing the success of strategies. Creating a climate where

people strive to achieve success is crucial. Human Resource systems and structures should be tailored to the types of strategies being pursued (Mullins, 2015). Training and retraining are important when a company shifts to a strategy requiring different skills, competitive capabilities, managerial approaches, and operating methods (Thompson et al., 2016).

Organizing people and tasks to execute the strategy effectively is critical for successful strategy implementation (Pearce and Robinson, 2017). (Goold and Campbell, 2012) says clarity is essential when organizing people. Successful organizations are consistent in their integration of policies, procedures, organization structure, and human relations. (Mintzberg et al., 2013). Unless structure follows strategy, inefficiency results (Chandler, 2012). An effective organization is one that has blended its structure, management practices, rewards, and people into a package that in turn fits with its strategy (Galbraith, 2013). Each generic strategy implies different skills and requirements for success, which commonly translate into differences in organizational structure and culture (Porter, 2002).

Strategy implementation requires deciding which value chain activities to perform internally and which to outsource. Outsourcing involves obtaining work previously done by employees inside the company from sources outside the company. These are linked to creating a "modular" organization. Outsourcing non-essential occupations normally done within the organization ensures saving of resources and the time of important staff to spend time on activities that are core to the organization's thrust. (Pearce and Robinson, 2017). Successful strategy implementation requires effective and efficient management of the organization's internal operations. Organizations have to perform according to the best standards and ensure continued improvements. Proficient performance of strategic roles by the company personnel requires the organization to install effective and efficient information and operating systems. Strategy execution is only successful if the organization achieves the set strategic and financial targets. The organization's rewards and incentives should be tied directly to the achievement of strategic and financial targets (Thompson et al., 2016).

A company's policies and procedures can either assist the cause of a good strategy execution or be a barrier (Thompson et al. 2016). Policies increase managerial effectiveness by standardizing many routine decisions and clarifying the discretion managers and subordinates can exercise in implementing functional tactics. Communicating policies will help to overcome resistance to strategic change, empower people to act, and foster commitment to successful strategy implementation (Pearce and Robinson, 2017).

Well-conceived state-of-the-art operating systems not only enable better strategy execution but also strengthen organizational capabilities, perhaps enough to provide a competitive edge over rivals (Thompson et al., 2016). Information strategies have a profound influence on creating and destroying the capabilities of an organization and, hence its competitive advantage. Knowledge creation and information management are potential sources of improved competitiveness (Carr, 2005). Accurate and timely



information about daily operations is essential if managers are to gauge how well the strategy execution process is proceeding. (Thompson et al., 2016). There is a need for performance appraisals of employees to see if they are within the set limits. This is an important part of effectively managing and controlling the strategy execution process. It provides checks and balances and therefore mitigates risk to the organization (Thompson et al., 2016). To get employees sustained, energetic commitment, management has to be resourceful in designing and using motivational incentives. A properly designed reward structure is management’s most powerful tool for mobilizing organizational commitment to successful strategy execution (Thompson et al., 2016). Rewards can align manager and employee priorities with organizational objectives and shareholder value; provide very effective direction in strategy implementation (Pearce and Robinson, 2017). Effective strategy execution requires instilling a corporate culture that promotes good strategy execution. Strong leadership is also required to drive strategy implementation forward and attain operating excellence (Thompson et al., 2016).

The first step is for management to communicate the case for organizational change so clearly and persuasively to organizational members that a determined commitment takes hold throughout the organization and motivates. Strategy implementation is successful if and when the company achieves the targeted strategic and financial performance and shows good progress in making its strategic vision a reality (Thompson et al., 2016). Organizations are becoming more open, agile, and boundary-less. This requires able leadership and a strong culture to shape decisions that must be made quickly even when the stakes are big. Every line manager must exercise leadership (Charan, 2018).

According to (Mbithi, 2011) challenges occurring in strategy implementation are important areas of research because even the best strategy will be ineffective if not implemented successfully. The most common organizational characteristics which constrain strategy implementation concern strategy formulation to implementation, resource allocation, a match between strategy and structure, linking performance and pay packages to strategies, creating strategy supportive culture (Mbithi, 2011) According to (Thompson et al., 2016) strategy implementation challenges include weak management role in implementation, lack communication, lack of commitment to strategy, unawareness or misunderstanding of the strategy, unaligned organization systems and resources, poor coordination and sharing of responsibilities, inadequate employee capabilities, competing activities and uncontrollable environmental factors. According to (Sababu, 2017) communication barriers to strategy implementation in an organization arise from individual bias, the status difference in message interpretation, inappropriate channels of communication, too many intermediaries, fear of criticism, selfishness, and poor supervision.

Pride and Ferrell, (2003) highlighted that performance is the process that turns strategies and plans into actions to accomplish organizational objectives. People are key in the implementation of the strategy. David (2003) alluded that there is need for a direct participation in strategy execution decisions and communication which is important in ensuring that the set aims are achieved. David (2003) also was of the opinion that training and motivation are crucial in the implementation of strategies. Assessment of the background and qualifications is also essential in the aspect of human resources. (Kaplan, 2005).

## Results and Discussion Response Rate Analysis

**Table 1: Response Rate Analysis**

Description	Number of questionnaires administered	Number of questionnaires administered and returned	Percentage of response rate
Respondents	100	100	100%

Source: Survey (2020)

Of the one hundred questionnaires administered all were returned. The success of a 100% of response rate was attributed to administering the questionnaires to respondents through email. This was done due to Covid 19 pandemic which prohibited the researcher from self-administering the questionnaires to respondents. The demographic characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 2.

### Demographic characteristics of respondents

Figure 2 shows the gender of respondents. As shown in figure 2 out of the study sample (90%) were males whilst (10%) were females.

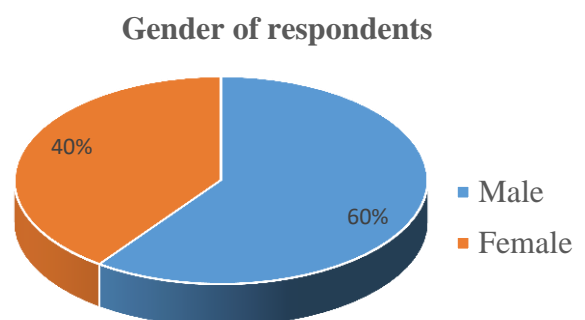


Figure 2: Gender of respondents. Source: Survey (2020)  
 Most respondents in this study were males (60%) comparably to female counterparts (40%) as indicated in Figure 2

### Age Group of Informants

Table 2 shows the age group of informants. This study shows that (10%) of respondents fall below twenty-five age group, (25%) were between twenty-five to thirty-four age group, (40%) were between thirty-five to forty-four age group, (20%) were between forty-five and fifty-four age group and finally (5 %) were fifty years and above (Refer to Table 2).

**Table 2: Age Group of Informants**

Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Below 25	10	10.0
25-34	25	25.0
35-44	40	40.
45-54	20	20.0
55+	5	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Survey (2020)  
 The age group of respondents in this study may imply that REF Zimbabwe was being managed by active individuals who may have a strong influence in decision making. Table 3 shows the level of education of respondents in the organization.

### Level of Education of Respondents

Most of the respondents had acquired some basic education up to Ordinary Level (5%) while (70%) attained undergraduate studies and (25%) attained postgraduate. Table 3 shows the education levels of employees.

**Table 3: Level of Education**

Level Of Education	Frequency	Percent
A-Level and Below	5	5.0
Undergraduate Degree	70	70.0
Postgraduate Degree +	25	25.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5: Correlations of strategy implementation and REF Zimbabwe**

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation (R)	P-Value
Product diversification strategy	Service delivery	0.183 <sup>(**)</sup>	0.000
Investment diversification	Reduces costs	0.557 <sup>(**)</sup>	0.000
Location diversification	Quality	0.173 <sup>(**)</sup>	0.000

Source: Survey (2020)  
 The professional and academic qualifications of the respondents in the study varied noticeably among respondents as indicated in Table 3. The results showed that the informant's understudy had attained a reasonable level of education. Table 4 shows the work experiences of participants.

### Work Experience of Participants

Table 4 shows the work experiences of participants. The results in Table 4 show that respondents below ten years' working experience were (10%), the majority who fall in the ten to 20 years category were (70%), those above twenty years were (20%).

**Table 4: Work Experiences of Respondents**

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent
Below 10 years	10	10.0
10-20 years	70	70.0
Above 20 years	20	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Survey (2020)  
 As indicated in Table 4 the majority of respondents had vast experience in the organization running their business. The results show that (70%) respondents were between 10-20 years of working experience, (20%) were above twenty years of working experience, and (10%) respondents were below 10 years of working experience. This may imply that most employees had vast experience of organizational management policies.

### Correlations of effects of strategy implementation on performance of REF Zimbabwe

Table 5 shows correlations of strategy implementation on performance of REF Zimbabwe. The study results in Table 5 show that there is a significant correlation between product diversification strategy and service delivery ( $r=0.183, p=0.000$ ). This may imply that if product diversification strategies are properly aligned can significantly increase the service delivery of REF Zimbabwe. Investment diversification made it possible for REF Zimbabwe to reduce costs ( $r=0.557, p=0.000$ ) while location diversification may increase the quality of products of REF Zimbabwe ( $r=0.173, p=0.000$ ) (see Table 5).

Grid extension strategy	Availability of electricity	0.193 <sup>**</sup>	0.001
Grid extension strategy	Improved livelihoods	0.025 <sup>**</sup>	0.015
Grid extension strategy	Improved Health delivery	0.028 <sup>**</sup>	0.098
Grid extension strategy	Improved education system	0.447 <sup>**</sup>	0.024

Source: Survey (2020)

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

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

Study results also showed that there is a correlation between grid extension strategy and availability of electricity ( $r=0.193$ ,  $p=0.011$ ) (refer to Table 5). Grid extension strategy is correlated to improved livelihoods ( $r=0.025$ ,  $p=0.015$ ) (see Table 5). In addition, the study results show that grid extension is correlated to improved health delivery ( $r=0.028$ ,  $p=0.098$ ) and that strategy implementation is correlated to the improved education system of Zimbabwe ( $r=0.447$ ,  $p=0.024$ ) (See Table 5). The study results in Table 5 show that there is considerable evidence that strategy implementation is correlated to REF Zimbabwe's performance. Table 6 shows the Chi-Square test of the relationship between strategy implementation and REF Zimbabwe performance.

**Table 6: Chi-Square test of the relationship between strategy implementation and REF Zimbabwe Performance**

Variable 1	Variable 2	Chi-square (x <sup>2</sup> ) Value	DF	P-Value
Product diversification	Service Delivery	39.685	3	0.000 <sup>**</sup>
Investment diversification	Costs Reduction	10.503	4	0.043 <sup>**</sup>
Location diversification	Quality of service delivery	9.462	3	0.021 <sup>*</sup>
Grid extension strategy	Availability of electricity	4.685	3	0.039 <sup>**</sup>
Grid extension strategy	Improved livelihoods	6.559	3	0.019 <sup>**</sup>
Grid extension strategy	Improved Health delivery	3.574	3	0.073 <sup>**</sup>
Grid extension strategy	Improved education system	7.503	4	0.023 <sup>**</sup>

Source: Survey, (2020)

\*Significant at 0.05 level

\*\*Highly significant at 0.01 level

DF=Degrees of Freedom

Chi-square tests revealed that there is a relationship between product diversification strategy implementation and service delivery ( $X^2=39.685$ ,  $DF=3$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) at a 95% confidence level as shown in Table 7. Findings from the study established a relationship between investment diversification strategy and costs reduction of REF Zimbabwe. Using Chi-Square statistics there was a significant positive relationship between investment diversification strategy and costs reduction ( $X^2 = 10.503$ ;  $DF=4$ ;  $p=0.043$ ) at a 95% confidence level (see Table 6). The results indicate that there is evidence to suggest that investment diversification strategy implementation is related to the reduction of organizational costs and subsequently leads to high-profit margins of REF Zimbabwe.

The study also tested the relationship between location diversification strategy implementation and quality. Using the Chi-Square test of a relationship, there was a significant positive

relationship between location diversification and quality ( $X^2 = 9.462$ ;  $DF=4$ ;  $p= 0.021$ ) at a 95% confidence level. Table 6 effects of grid extension turnaround strategy on performance of REF Zimbabwe. The study results also show that there is a positive relationship between grid extension strategy and availability of electricity ( $X^2 = 4.685$ ;  $DF=3$ ;  $p= 0.039$ ) at a 95% confidence level. The results also show that there was a significant positive relation between grid extension strategy and improved livelihoods ( $X^2 = 6.559$ ;  $DF=3$ ;  $p= 0.019$ ) at a 95% confidence level. Grid extension strategy implementation is positively correlated to improved health service delivery ( $X^2 = 7.503$ ;  $DF=4$ ;  $p= 0.023$ ) at 95% confidence level (See Table 6).

### Hypotheses Testing: Chi-square tests of goodness of Fit

**H<sub>1</sub>: Product diversification positively improves service delivery of REF Zimbabwe**

Chi-square tests revealed that there is a relationship between product diversification strategy implementation and service delivery ( $X^2=39.685$ ,  $DF=3$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) at a 95% confidence level as shown in Table 6.

**H<sub>2</sub>: Location diversification positively improves quality delivery of REF Zimbabwe**

The study also tested the relationship between location diversification strategy implementation and quality. Using the Chi-Square test of a relationship, there was a significant positive relationship between location diversification and quality ( $X^2 = 9.462$ ;  $DF=4$ ;  $p= 0.021$ ) at a 95% confidence level (Refer to Table 6).

**H<sub>3</sub>: Grid extension diversification strategy positively improves the availability of electricity**

The study results also show that there is a positive relationship between grid extension strategy and availability of electricity ( $X^2 = 4.685$ ;  $DF=3$ ;  $p= 0.039$ ) at a 95% confidence level. (Refer to Table 6).

**H<sub>4</sub>: Grid extension diversification strategy positively improved health service delivery of communities.**

Grid extension strategy implementation is positively correlated to improved health service delivery ( $X^2 = 7.503$ ;  $DF=4$ ;  $p= 0.023$ ) at 95% confidence level (See Table 6).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The study sought to see how strategy implementation impacts the performance of REF Zimbabwe. Findings from the study revealed that there is a relationship between product diversification strategy implementation and service delivery. The study results also indicate a significant positive relationship between location diversification and quality of service delivery and that there is a positive relationship between grid extension strategy and availability of electricity. Results indicate that Grid extension strategy implementation is positively correlated to improved health service delivery and improved livelihood of rural communities.

The study makes a number of recommendations. First, the study recommends that REF Zimbabwe should continually enhance the strategic communication process within the organization to assist in effective coordination of strategy implementation in the current turbulent environment. The research result shows that high employee performance relates to involvement in strategy formulation, adequate training and development, and adequate incentives and recognition once they effectively and efficiently implement strategies. Lastly, the study recommends that the energy sector have an adequate strategy implementation process that is agile enough to align the organization to its environment in a way that ensures it takes full advantage of its strength and opportunities in the energy industry in order to gain a competitive edge while mitigating against the effect of its weaknesses and the threats posed by the industry. It is recommended that more studies should be undertaken to study other factors that may affect the performance of organizations. Further studies should use a large population of power utilities to determine whether the results can be generalized as this case only used one rural power utility. The study suggests

similar studies to be done on other energy organizations in Zimbabwe for the benchmarks thus allowing generalization of study findings.

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