

# Board Composition: A Catalyst for Innovation and Efficiency in Developing Countries



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## Background

The composition of governing boards of most faith-based medical institutions in developing countries, consist mostly of clerical officers and other members of the denominations. Board members are usually selected based on their relationship with the entities, rather than objective selection criteria. As a result, most of the decision-making processes of these boards are subjective. Structurally this situation poses as barrier towards innovation and efficiency, in the provision of quality services to their underserved populations.

Some major challenges faced by faith-based medical institutions in developing countries include:

- Inadequate provision of quality services
- Changing national and denominational politics
- Poor performance in most metrics
- Deteriorating facilities
- Being located in low income regions
- Lack of funding



## Objective

To describe the opinions and beliefs surrounding governance structures for faith-based medical institutions in developing countries.

## Methodology

- In July 2014, a survey was conducted at a faith-based global health conference in Geneva, Switzerland.
- A self-administered survey was distributed among a purposeful sample (n=335) comprised of diverse professional occupations, including clergy, administrators, academia, and healthcare professionals.
- An oral informed consent was conducted on the respondents before the survey was distributed.
- Survey forms, which included 20 closed-ended questions, were distributed and completed by participants.
- All responses were collected and analyzed using SPSS statistical software.

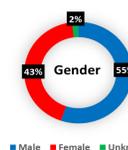
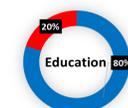
## Literature Review

- Managing Board Diversity (Miller, J. L. 1999).
- The Prevalence of Inclusive Governance Practices in Non-Profit Organizations (Brown).
- Board composition in non-profit faith-based institutions (Eeckloo, K et al, 2004).

## Results

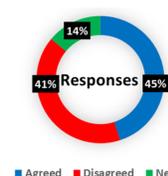
The following results are preliminary findings

### Descriptive



### Statement

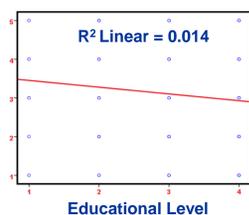
The response to the statement on whether **a board should have more clergy and less of non-clergy professionals** has the following results



### Correlation

$r(335) = -.12, p < .05$

Weak negative correlation with a statistical significance



### Legends

X: 1=Post Secondary, 2=Bachelor, 3=Masters, 4=Doctorate  
Y: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

## Conclusion

Preliminary results suggest that the more educated one is, the less one supports more clergy and less non-clergy professionals on a board. Hence, there is a need for ongoing study and education on the impact of governance structures on organizational performance for faith-based healthcare institutions in developing countries.

## Best Practice

The governing board of the Seventh-day Adventist, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, a faith-based teaching hospital, was restructured in 2006. By 2012, several decisions of the board led to significant improvements in services and capital development within the institution.

### Before 2006

- Dysfunctional management team
- Poor work ethics
- Poor customer service
- High indebtedness
- Poor auditors' report

### 2006 to 2012

- Improved employee engagement
- Increased service delivery
- Increase in clientele
- Capital developments
- 100% settlement of indebtedness

In the summer of 2016, a new board will be established to govern a pilot project in northern Nigeria. One of the intentions of this project, is for the board to serve to as model for faith-based organizations in developing countries.

## Recommendations

In view of preliminary findings, there is a need to offer more education and training during conferences, workshops and other forums in the area of board composition. During these sessions, the impacts and benefits of a well structured board of governance need to be emphasized. These may include:

- A balanced representation on a board encourages wider inclusion in decision making processes.
- Diversity of skills and backgrounds on a board enhances innovation and productivity.



## References

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Photo Credit: (a) Darryl Priester, (b) Ile-Ife Adventist Hospital, Nigeria