

Examining the Innovation Drive for Revenue Collection Purposes: The Case of Zambia Law Development Commission

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Abstract

The public sector plays a very significant role in modern economies. As in the business sector, innovation can be a major source of productivity growth, cost savings, and improvements in service quality; benefits which then also positively affect businesses and citizens who rely on an efficient and effective public sector. The purpose of this research was to examine the innovation drive at ZLDC for revenue increase purposes. The study employed a Census based design. data was collected quantitatively and qualitatively. The sample size of the study was 33: (4) managers, (4) directors and (25) other staff. covering all the workers at ZLDC. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as instruments for data collection. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS 22.0 statistical package while the qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The findings were that the staff at ZLDC had the will power to innovate, that the ZLDC staff do not see themselves developing new products, goods and services, they do not consider exploiting new markets for the existing product, goods and services as well as promoting existing products, goods and services. In conclusion, for innovation to take its course, the commission ought to consider product and product performance innovation and marketing / sales – new channel innovation.

Keywords: Innovation, revenue, collection

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Background

The Zambia Law Development Commission (ZLDC) is a statutory body established under the Zambia Law Development Commission Act No. 11 of 1996, chapter 32 of the laws of Zambia. The commission has for some time experienced a very high attrition rate of staff and has not been performing very well according to the Auditor General's Reports of 2013 to 2017. Insiders attribute the high attrition to low revenues and lack of innovation. Law Association of Zambia shows that the commission is rather too traditional to consider innovating and increase its revenue base. As evidenced by (2008 Scur and de Queiroz, 2017) that any organization may innovate as long as it is capable of using evidence-based business management. For instance, by now, the Commission could have employed any or combinations among the five types of innovations, which include new products, new methods of production, new sources of supply, exploitation of new markets, and new ways to organize business (Szulanski et al., 2004).

The ability of the public sector to innovate is therefore increasingly seen as a critical element of economy-wide performance. However, innovation policies and strategies relating to the public sector are far less developed than those targeting the business sector leading to attitudinal issues with many organizations within the public sectors. It is against this background that this research was done on examining the innovation drive at Zambia Law Development Commission for revenue collection purposes.

Statement of the problem

Even when studies have been done in relation to innovation, there has been no study done on examining the innovation drives at ZLDC for revenue increase purposes hence this study.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the innovation drive at ZLDC for revenue collection purposes
2. To establish the potential ZLDC has for innovation in order to increase the generation of revenue
3. To explore the possible solutions to the challenges ZLDC is facing to realize its full capacity for innovation to increase revenue.

Research Question

1. What is the innovation drive at ZLDC for revenue collection purposes?

2. How much potential does ZLDC have for innovation in order to increase the generation of revenue?
3. What are the possible solutions to the challenges ZLDC is facing to realize its full capacity for innovation to increase revenue?

Theoretical Framework

This study was underpinned to two theories, that of organization theory and the theory of constraints. The organization theory relates research on innovation to the structure of the organization in term of its resources that it possesses, in particular to the resource based theory. According to Bach (2004), an organization may be thought of as a collection of networked resources, whereby development in information technology has increased interactions between these resources for information and knowledge generation. The possibilities of generation of new knowledge and information resources due to these interactions had affected the structure in the organization's attitude towards innovation. Bach further stated that resources for innovation in the form of information and knowledge played an important role in term of its ability to contribute to innovation within firms. It is through the interactions and combinations of resources within the organization that generate more resources that can increase innovative activities. Hence, knowledge is one of the resources that a firm could have in order to embark on innovative activities so as to improve a firm's performance. According to the theory of constraint, there is a bottleneck in every process and that paying concentration on improving that constraint is the fastest and most effective path for expected results. (Goldratt, 1988; Gupta, 2003; Gupta et al., 2004; Davies et al., 2005). The theory brings out three vital dimensions in the quest to reaching the desired profit and there are; Mindset, Measures and Methodology. This theory is related to this study in that the staff at ZLDC need to possess a right mindset, put up the correct measures and use the right methodology in the quest of driving the innovation plan for the purpose of increasing revenue.

Methodology

The study used a census design. A mixed (quantitative and qualitative) approach was employed by the study to collect data for triangulation purposes. Questionnaires were administered as instrument for quantitative data collection while an interview guide was used to collect qualitative data. data was analyzed in two folds; quantitative data was analyzed using a statistical package SPSS 22.0. while qualitative data through themes. Since the questionnaire was designed to measure the innovation drive and constraints based on a five-point scale, it called for the researcher to consider using composite scores. Since scores from the likert scale cannot be analyzed as a single entity, composite scores and indicator scores were used to represent small sets of data points that are highly related to one another, both conceptually and statistically (OESC, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2010). Therefore, combining and presenting these items as a single score reduces the potential for information overload.

Findings

The researcher assessed the construct innovation as the Commission's intention to innovate that would result in the introduction of new goods or services or improvement in offering goods or services. Since this is a question that demanded to measure attitude, seven Likert items were measured on a five-point agreement scale. Using the majority rule principle to determine which side of the ordinal scale weighs more than the other in order to make a decision, the median (SWA) is used to create two polar points of type of agreements when dealing with Likert items. Staff of the commission intend to innovate in six of the seven innovative domains except they do not intend to identify new sources of supply of the current products and goods and services. This is because the sum of agree and strongly agree composite scores outweigh those of disagree and strongly disagree. In terms of ranking are as shown in table below

Table 1. Intention to Innovate

Innovation domains	SDA	DA	SWA	A	SA
1) Developing new products and goods and services	1	5	1	17	9
2) Considering exploitation of new markets for the existing products and goods and services	0	5	2	22	4
3) Considering exploitation of new markets for the existing products and goods and services	3	5	0	15	10
4) Considering promotion of existing products and goods and services	3	2	5	15	8
5) Considering new methods of providing the existing products and goods and services	0	1	12	17	3
6) Considering new methods of production of products and goods and services	3	5	9	11	5
7) Identifying new sources of supply of the current products and goods and services	7	12	6	7	1

A further analysis of the degree of intention to innovate was done using the composite score to determine the level of intention to innovate among staff relative to the population parameter. The table below shows that the population mean or true mean was set to be 17 for purposes of this determination. The computed statistical mean in this study was 24.3 and this was well above the true mean implying that the staff of the commission had intention to innovate (Table 1).

Table 2. Descriptives of Intention to Innovate

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Min	Max
24.3	25	26	3.6	15	29

The researcher further categorized or grouped intention to innovate. In order to create these categories, the researcher used the probability space which ranged from 7 to 35. Three categories or groups were developed with the following probability spaces. (i) A score of 7 to 15 was indicative of low intention to innovate, (ii) a score of 16 to 26 was indicative of moderate intention to innovate and disruption whereas a score of 27 to 35 was indicative of high intention to innovate. Table 2. shows the categories of intention to innovate and n = 24 (72.7%) of the respondents fall in the moderate intention to innovate.

Table 3. Disruption Score statistics

	Frequency	Percent
High intention to innovate	1	3.0
Moderate intention to innovate	24	72.7
Low intention to innovate	8	24.2
Total	33	100.0

The researcher opted to rank the innovative domains by summing up the positive agreement

Composite scores (Agree and strongly agree). The first in ranking is that staff do not see themselves developing new products and goods and services and they do not consider exploiting new markets for the existing products and goods and services as well as promoting existing products and goods and services. The least was identifying new sources of supply of the current products and goods and services (See Table 3). From the table, the results show that the commission is not prepared to innovate.

Table 4. Ranking of area of Intention to Innovate

Innovation domains	SDA	DA	Σ	Ranking
Developing new products and goods and services	17	9	26	1
Considering exploitation of new markets for the existing products and goods and services	22	4	26	1
Considering exploitation of new markets for the existing products and goods and services	15	10	25	2
Considering promotion of existing products and goods and services	15	8	23	2
Considering new methods of providing the existing products and goods and services	17	3	20	3
Considering new methods of production of products and goods and services	11	5	16	4
Identifying new sources of supply of the current products and goods and services	7	1	8	5

With regard to their opinions, the participants spoke about Organizational Innovation, Process innovation and Product innovation. They seemed to innovate only in the process domain and this was the library. They all indicated that they were not involved in the production of products but only provided services in form of access to the library and consultancy. One of the innovation that was spoken about most was scaling. Though there were multiple pathways to scale, the respondents felt that the commission could deploy one or more of the following two innovation strategies to scale their impact, namely: Scaling Up and Scaling Deep. Each of these strategies involves a distinct approach and a unique set of organizational challenges as well as success as shown in Table 4. and could hold the potential to unlock the social and financial value of the commission in different ways.

Table 5. Scaling strategies of social enterprises

Scaling Strategy	Organizational Challenge	Source of Social Value	Source of Financial Value
Scale up	Localizing the business model within the Institution	Number of beneficiaries impacted	Volume of transactions from increased customer base or franchise/license fee
Scaling Deep	Co-opting partners to shape institutions	Number of institutions impacted	Greater efficiency due to Increased partnerships in transactions
Diversification	Synergy between business models	Deeper engagement with beneficiaries to address multiple pain points	Increase in volume of transactions from expanded product portfolio

These two themes emerged regarding innovation are presented later on. The researcher first presents the theme scaling up and this is followed by scaling deep.

Scaling up

In order to demonstrate scaling up as one aspect of innovation, we the expressed opinions. The first two quotes are instructive on innovation related to scaling up.

(Manager 1) had this to say about the possibility of reaching out to customers outside Lusaka.

We do not see ourselves using scaling up of what we are doing as strategy to go to multiple locations with the aim of reaching more beneficiaries.... Replicating what we do in other places will not do... even though this received the most attention from practitioners of innovation in the private sector. We do not see ourselves going that way and I mean change from what we do. What we can do is innovate in the library only...if only we could have a microfiche library, we work on our internet, I see us doing better as more people can have access to our resource...I mean if we can digitalise. In this circumstance, where we find ourselves not contributing to the treasury, the Commission's library can incorporate or link with their similar service providers like mega databases, smart search engines and other information service movements to provide services in co-operate basis as a diversification strategy. I see a possibility where our librarian can amalgamate his service models with other business models to address the different needs of users. To me, such strategies suggest that librarians should think of the diversified service models that users want today.

(Manager 2) saw innovation to be possible by having membership as a way to increase usage

However, we could improve access increasing individual and corporate membership by allowing the public to become members and have e library access are an example of innovation we could consider. These members could pay a small fee for library services. I see law students as potential customers and universities.

(Director 4)

Expanding within Lusaka is reasonably straightforward. This is where we find sponsors of programs and universities where students do law... However, when we get into a new place, we have to hire personnel ...Looking at our funding levels, this is not possible. We do not see ourselves looking further at our processes to innovate as we do see ourselves implementing a new or improved service delivery approach, including changes in operational methods... We do not have any products that we sell and this is a factor.

Innovation and constraints

Eight constraint variables were correlated with each of the seven innovation variables. This was done to determine the statistical dependence between two variables that were measured on an ordinal scale. The Spearman correlation coefficient was used to assess how well the relationship between the variables can be described using a monotonic function. (Main hypothesis - H01: Constraints within ZLDC do not exhibit a monotonic relationship with innovation intention). In the innovation domain, there was a significant statistical dependence only with two pairs (The commission has limited clientele for the quantity of its services and developing new products and goods and services). There was however, a weak negative relationship between policies preventing the system from selling more goods/services and identifying new sources of supply of the current products and goods and services as shown below in Table 6.

Table 6. Innovation and Constraints n = 33

Variable 1	Variable 2	Rs	Sig	
The commission has limited clientele for the quantity of its services	Developing new products and goods and services	.483	0.04	Weak
The policies prevent the system from selling more goods/services;	Identifying new sources of supply of the current products and goods and services	-.357	.031	Weak

Conclusion

The ability of the public sector to innovate is therefore increasingly seen as a critical element of economy-wide performance. However, innovation policies and strategies relating to the public sector are far less developed than those targeting the business sector. It is generally accepted that innovation is at the heart of economic growth and prosperity and that, at least in the private sector, innovation occurs through a process of creative destruction that is driven by entrepreneurial action. It is less clear to what extent entrepreneurial action is possible or advisable in the public sector as a mechanism for driving innovation.

This study leads to the conclusion that a public institutions designed not for profit like the Commission could innovate only than diversify in order to enhance financial sustainability. The study concludes that financial sustainability of this service based institution depends on identifying innovation constraints and addressing each constraint. The researcher therefore recommends that the Commission's board should engage managers of the Commission in the formulation of innovation policy. In this regard, staff agency and the appropriation of policy are key to financial sustainability. The board should evaluate the staff establishment to ensure that it has adequate numbers of professionals with expertise to drive the innovation agenda. These professionals should aspire to translate policy into practice at managerial level.

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