



INFLUENCE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP STYLE ON MANAGEMENT OF CHURCH YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN NYERI TOWN SUB COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was on leadership styles and management of church youth development in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County, Kenya. The study adopted survey research design with target population of 57 church youth officials who were leaders in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County. Questionnaires were used for collecting data from the participants. Data analysis was through descriptive and inferential techniques. The findings revealed that servant leadership style had statistically significance influence on management of church youth development. The implication is that servant leadership style is an important factor in managing the church youth in their development in Nyeri Town Sub County. The study concluded that servant leadership style makes the concerns of others a higher priority than their own by empowering the youth and giving them autonomy to act and make decisions that concerns them as well as by giving them freedom to bring out their abilities and confidence about leadership in a church set up. The study recommendation is that there is a need to bring into the selected Pentecostal churches environment, diversity of youth opinions coupled by church youth participation, cultivating a culture of inclusivity and trust of the youth in the affairs of the church, and managing the church youth development through the persuasion and creating incentives for the youth that will trigger their leadership.

Keywords: Servant leadership style, Pentecostal churches, management of the church youth development

1.1 Introduction

In a global sense and with respect to leadership, every organization has its system of operation. An effective leadership is patterned by its goals and vision which help in achieving positive results. In view of the biblical perspective of leadership, the first thing one should recognize is that, there are prophets, apostles, evangelists, teachers and disciples who have led in the time past, unlike the general view that leadership includes the capacity to influence, inspire, rally, direct, encourage, motivate, induce, move, mobilize and activate others to pursue a common goal or purpose while maintaining commitment, momentum, confidence and courage (Kings, 2014).

Further Northouse (2015) notes that church leadership as the ability of a person to urge other people to co-operate to such an extent that they do the task that is being asked from the leadership with trust and enthusiasm. This gift of leadership allows an organization to march intentionally towards the actualization of its mission. Strategically-oriented leaders form a plan that everybody can understand and participate in. They will also strive to bring the various subgroups of an organization or church into alignment so that, the entire church's energy will be focused towards realizing the vision. Every church and every organization needs someone who provides these critical strategic components to the leadership team.

In the African context, church leadership is the decisive factor in determining the effectiveness of a church and the single most contributing factor that allows a church to develop its full potentials (Myers, 2017). Delbecq (2018) maintains that church leadership is the most important aspect of church functionality and activity. On the other hand, methods and management tools learned from human experience and/or training that are useful in practical and effective management of the organizations and churches constitute secular approaches. The use of right management tools and methods produces motivation, satisfaction, excellence and high productivity. A church organization that correctly utilizes a combination of both spiritual and secular approaches in its management can directly impact individuals' lives, adequately motivating them through service to attain high levels of organizational commitment. The result of high commitment is growth and high performance in the various aspects of personal and church life, (Cameron, 2013).

In the 21st century it is expected that African societies will be confronted with many challenges which will influence the totality of their living experiences and especially the youth. There is a tendency of leaders holding firmly to their position and seeing youth as a great threat instead of bringing them close for mentoring, (Delbecq, 2018). He views this tendency to be found both in public offices and in church leadership; which represent a major cultural and sociological problem, if the church does not change its emphasis to a serious ministry directed towards young people they are going to lose the present generation of youth, if they lose the present generation of youth they are going to lose Africa. Youth should have a significant place in the church. They have talent to be utilized, potential to be directed in the right use (Delbecq, 2018). They also need to be heard and mentored. If Pentecostal set ups lose this generation then the future of the church will not be bright, (Davie, Heelas and Woodhead, 2017).

Adolescent ministry helps and aims at seeing the teens transit into youths and become more committed to Christ hence following the word of God and living as the Word dictates them to. Church leaders handle youths with delicately by treating them with utmost respect. This enables the youth to focus on church and lead as an example. This allows the church leaders to stop been biased hence making broad generalization (Zaki, 2016).

Youth development is a process that prepares a young person to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood and achieve his or her full potential. Youth development is promoted through activities and experiences that help youth gain substantial skills and competencies. Youth leadership is part of the youth development process and supports the young person in developing: the ability to analyze his or her own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem, confidence, motivation, and abilities to carry them out (including the ability to establish support networks in order to fully participate in community life and effect positive social change); and the ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinions and behaviors of others, and serve as a role model (Wehmeyer, Agran, and Hughes, 2008).

According to Kalu (2010) true leaders engage others with their consideration and modesty because they involve themselves in what they are actually doing not for individual gains. Leadership styles should be selected and adapted to fit church, situations, groups, and individuals. It is thus useful to possess a thorough understanding of the different styles as such knowledge increases the tools available to lead effectively. The study will focus on Servant leadership style, Servant leadership style, strategic leadership style and the servant leadership style in Pentecostal churches in Kenya.

The freedom of worship in Kenya has resulted to the emergence of many Pentecostal churches that have been guided by the need to reach the increasing populace with the word of God. The structural set up of the Pentecostal churches has been anchored on the vision carrier directions which have not been fully supported by the whims of leadership principles as depicted in the guiding standards globally. Leadership in Pentecostal churches in Kenya is premised on the ability of the spiritual personalities to intertwine the varied activities within the church and the available resources at their disposal (Gospel Centre International, 2017).

In Nyeri County, the Pentecostal churches design are limited by the scope of their operations thereby putting minimal emphasis on key leadership areas like mentorship programs for youth leaders, delegation of church duties to the youth, robust internet connectivity to reach the youth and the social status dimensions in the church environment that have been built in the church systems from inception, (Gospel Centre International, 2017).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Over the years the Pentecostal churches in Kenya have been run by the house of the clergy who have been trained on pastoral care and less training on leadership dimensions. The reliance on the Holy Spirit ministration has been evident on this type of a model of church administration over the years (Gospel Centre International, 2017). The current times present significant changes and leadership challenges to the Christian church worldwide. Today's churches, including Pentecostal churches in Kenya are struggling to successfully meet the spectrum of leadership styles issues in order to remain relevant and fulfill the great commission given by Jesus Christ. The Pentecostal churches in Kenya inability to attract youth in their numbers in the church systems and actively travail through the church ladder are vital (Crosby and Smith, 2015). Kamau (2014) states that young people are trying to desperately understand themselves and their world and where they can fit in successfully and happily, constantly looking for guidance from their church leaders and parents.

Previous studies on youth development in churches indicate that there is an expression that the church is always one generation to extinction (Joy, 2012). According Mutia (2016) discovered that 60% of young people will leave the church permanently or for an extended period; Kinnaman (2016) discovered one-third call church boring, about one-fourth say faith is irrelevant and Bible teaching is unclear. One-fifth say God is absent from their church

experience. According to Adongo (2016), the urban youth in Kenya have come up with a modern set of church ministry, which many of them contend, should replace the old style and outdated lethargy. From most previous studies, it can be concluded that the success of a church is often tied to the effectiveness of its leaders, especially its stakeholders. Managers continually strive to improve their leadership styles to increase organizational performance and they suppose that employees are accepting them. However, gaps exist in the relationships between leadership theory and practice.

In Kenya the Pentecostal churches major issues that continue to hinder youth from attending church mainly is discontent between generations, one group feels left out while the other age group wonders why things cannot be about them. However, youth commitment in church affairs is causing anxiety among the clergy. This is an issue of great concern to the church as it impacts negatively on the future membership and leadership of the church. The previous studies have shed light on youth retention in churches, organizational performance, and their growth but minimally have they delved on church youth development. .

1.3 Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to establish the influence of servant leadership style on management of church youth development in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County, Kenya.

1.4 Research Question

How does servant leadership style influence management of church youth development in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County, Kenya?

2.0. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Review

2.2.1. Servant Leadership Theory

This theory was developed by Greenleaf (1977). It emphasizes on a leader being intentional about being a steward of his influence so that they are enabled and empowered to achieve the goals of the community in the service to God. It argues that leadership should prioritize the needs of others. Greenleaf enumerates ten principles of servant leadership which are, listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, building community and commitment to the growth of the people. In Pentecostal churches, they believe that the servant leadership helps in dealing with the reality of power in everyday life- its legitimacy, the ethical restraints upon it and the beneficial results that can be attained through the appropriate use of power to the youths.

As Blanchard (2018) puts it, servant leadership is about getting people to a higher level by leading them at a higher level. This means the success of servant leadership would be judged by the level of the people being led. The success and betterment of the people that are led should be evident by all. Every human being has a deep desire to arise above their present circumstances and any leader who appeals to this would be a source of great motivation to the people he leads (Covey, 2012).

The servant leadership approach helps the leader to conceptualize, meaning in order for the pastor to be effective, he should understand the workings of his church and know when something is wrong with the church members (Dennis, Kinzler-Norheim and Bocarnea, 2010).

The church leaders should administer emotional healing which requires one to be sensitive to the issues of the youths. A pastor is basically a therapist at times. They listen to the youths' problems and help to solve their problems or guide them in the direction they need to go. Most of the sometimes the youth just need someone to listen to their issues; which can help them heal emotionally, more so than someone just giving them advice (Parris and Peachey, 2013).

Servant leadership theory would be key and instrumental in ensuring that the youths are well taken care of in Pentecostal churches. It would require that the church leaders at different levels come to the level of the youths and see that they get the best out of them. This would require the practice of the principles of servant leadership. The young adults are a great resource in the church and they should be well taken care of so that there is continuity and posterity in the church.

2.3. Empirical Review

Greenleaf and Spears (2012) describes the servant leadership style as the situation where the leader is the servant to the followers, leads by example and works for the good of the followers by empowering them by putting their interests before his own. This type of leadership is the opposite of the conventional leader, who is seen as the boss and is served by the followers and is driven by his own interest first and the followers second. It promotes a 'bottom-up culture as opposed to the usual 'top-down' culture.

Greenleaf (2010) noted that this is a leadership style that the church esteems in conforming to Christ who is the leader of the church. The servant-leader is servant first by himself. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first; perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possession

Spears (2015) in a study observe that the servant leadership style helps the pastors in making the concerns of others a higher priority than their own. The pastors help the adolescents/teens/youth to grow and succeed since a pastor is a role model for her congregation. Through servant leadership, the leaders can be able to empower the youths by giving them autonomy to act and make decisions on their own when necessary, the freedom given to the youths can bring about confidence in themselves and their abilities

According to Prichard (2013) servant leadership style brings on board diverse opinions by promoting participation, cultivates a culture of trust where people do not thrive on gossip but trust each other; develops other leaders by giving them opportunity to lead and demonstrating by example, helps people with life issues beyond work to develop them, motivates people, sells rather than tells by persuading people rather than commanding and controlling, puts followers benefit before his own, thinks long term by considering future generations, next leader or the next opportunity and acts in humility. This should be the kind of leadership that should be exemplified in church organizations.

Zaiceva and Zimmermann (2014) notes that for the past few years the church has been losing its hold upon youths/teens that are transitioning from childhood to adulthood. While many churches recently have made rather strenuous efforts to build up a membership of the youth, a broad survey indicates that young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty one are quite generally turning their attention away from religion and the church

According to Mwangi (2015) the tendency by leaders holding firmly to their position and seeing the youth as a great threat instead of bringing them close for mentoring has made most youth resent going to church and taking part in any activities that involves the church.

The literature describes the general overview of the leader servant/ follower relationship but fails to explicitly determine the extent of the relationship. This study sought to establish the extent of influence of servant leadership style on the management of youth development in Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is based on the relationship between servant leadership style on management of church youth development in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County, Kenya. Therefore, the relationship between the servant leadership style and management of church youth development is indicated.

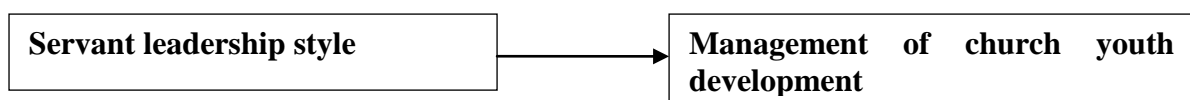


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.0. Research Methodology

This study adopted survey descriptive research design where both quantitative and qualitative data was collected. This design enabled the researcher to fully establish the servant leadership style facing management of church youth development in Nyeri Sub County, Kenya. The target population for this study was 57 church youth officials from 7 selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Sub County. The study utilized a census method of all the 57 church youth officials. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect data from the participants. To test validity, the instruments were forwarded to the supervisor at Management University of Africa for validation. The appropriate modification based on the experts' advice was made on the pre-tested instruments in order capture the relevant information related to the study objectives. Reliability test was carried out through a pilot test and computation of Cronbach's Alpha at 0.7. Data analysis was through descriptive and inferential techniques. Analysis of data was obtained effectively using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme version 23.

4.0. Results and Discussion

4.1.1. Reliability Analysis

Scale reliability for variables was determined by computing the overall Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the items of servant leadership style and management of church youth development. The reliability was demonstrated since the Cronbach's alpha statistic for servant leadership style and management of church youth development was 0.725, which were greater than the threshold value of 0.7 recommended by Sekaran (2009) as a cut off of reliability as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability of study variables

Variables	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Servant leadership style	6	0.725

4.1.2. Correlation Analysis

Servant leadership style had a positive and significant relationship with management of church youth development ($r = 0.642$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.01$) as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation analysis

Correlations			
		Management of church youth development	Servant leadership style
Management of church youth development	Pearson Correlation	1	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	48	48
Servant leadership style	Pearson Correlation	.642**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	48	48

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

4.1.3. Regression Analysis

The R square value in this case is 0.757 which clearly suggests that there is a strong relationship between servant leadership style and management of church youth development as indicated in Table 3. This indicates that servant leadership style shares a variation of 75.7 % of management of church youth development.

Table 3: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.874 ^a	.797	.757	.038

4.1.4. Coefficients analysis

Coefficients analysis on the strength of the predictor variables on the dependent variable was undertaken. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Coefficients analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized t Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	

Servant Leadership Style	1.542	0.590	0.321	1.742	0.92
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Servant leadership style was found to have a positive linearly significant influence on management of church youth development ($\beta=1.542, p=0.92>0.05$). Here one unit change in servant leadership style results in 1.542 unit increase in management of church youth development. These findings differ with (Prichard 2013) who affirmed that servant leadership style brings on board diverse opinions by promoting participation, and cultivates a culture of trust. The implication is that servant leadership style in force selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Sub County doesn't influence the management of church youth development.

5.0 Conclusions

Servant leadership style makes the concerns of others a higher priority than their own by empowering the youth and giving them autonomy to act and make decisions that concerns them as well as by giving them freedom to bring out their abilities and confidence about leadership in a church set up. The study concludes that in the selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County there are motivational avenues for the youth in the church systems, but church leaders has limited trust on the youth, and youths are not persuaded to participate in the church systems. From the study results it is evident that servant leadership style brings the youth close to the leadership arena and thus makes the management of the church youth development easier in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County.

6.0 Recommendations

Servant leadership style calls for demonstrating by example. The study recommends that there is a need to bring into the Pentecostal churches environment diversity of youth opinions coupled by church youth participation, cultivating a culture of inclusivity and trust of the youth in the affairs of the church, and managing the church youth development through the persuasion and creating incentives for the youth that will trigger their leadership in the selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County.

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