



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

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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 there is a weak positive linear relationship between strategic leadership style and management of church youth development. The implication is that strategic leadership style addresses the development of the church youth in Pentecostal churches by designing a fulfilling mission and vision of the church in Nyeri Town Sub County. The study concluded that strategic leadership style triggers the youth to be future oriented allowing their development on the church affairs which leads to increased management of church youth. The study recommended that for effective strategic leadership style, the church youth leadership needs to organize meetings, gather relevant data on leadership, and participate in designing, implementing and reviewing of church policies in the selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County.

Keywords: Strategic Leadership Style, Pentecostal Churches, Management of the Church Youth Development

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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 Strategic leadership style, Strategic leadership style, strategic leadership style and the strategic 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).

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.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to ascertain the influence of strategic leadership style on management of church youth development in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County, Kenya. The study answered the research question, how does strategic leadership style influence management of church youth development in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County, Kenya?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Strategic Leadership Theory

The strategic leadership theory was developed by Ireland and Hitt (2005). The theory argues that organizational growth is achieved through the configuration of six main activities which include determining the organizational strategic direction which is also the organizations' purpose and vision, exploiting and maintaining the core competencies, developing the human capital, sustaining an effective organizational culture, emphasizing ethical practices and establishing balanced organizational. Strategic leadership theory provides guideline that

focus organizations when they are deciding on their purpose and best business practices that are critical for remaining competitive and relevant. Being able to learn and adapt has become vital for sustainability. Failure to be able to adapt to changing technology, climate change, and economic factors risks the organization becoming obsolete.

Strategic leadership is all about the leaders determining where the organization wants to be in the future and a setting of objectives, and action steps that will move it towards its goals. A good strategy would look into the external and internal environment of the organization. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the leadership of every organization to ensure that all the stakeholders are well taken care of in the strategic plan, (Fry, Vitucci, and Marie, 2015).

Effectiveness of the church in its mission is directly related to the strength and effectiveness of its leaders (Fry, Vitucci, and Marie, 2015). The pastor is responsible for guiding the church strategically to reach God's purpose and vision. In addition, Christian leadership requires the leader to inspire, train, and take others to the service of the kingdom enthusiastically. The effectiveness of the church as a representative of Christ in this world depends on the efficiency of those that have been assigned by Christ as its leaders (McKenna, Yost and Tanya, 2015).

Strategic leadership is all about the leaders determining where the organization wants to be in the future and a setting of objectives, and action steps that will move it towards its goals. A good strategy would look into the external and internal environment of the organization. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the leadership of every organization to ensure that all the stakeholders are well taken care of in the strategic plan. The church's adolescent retention and success in its mission relates directly to its strategic leadership. The mission of a leader in the individual aspect is to inspire, train, and take others into the service of the kingdom enthusiastically, leading them to fulfill their calling. Simultaneously, in the

corporative aspect, leaders are responsible to guide their followers to accomplish the established goals of the group (McKenna, Yost and Tanya, 2015).

This theory is relevant to the study as it gives a greater understanding on the importance of strategic leadership in Pentecostal churches that would foster the development of the youth. This theory is relevant to the youth development in the church as it contributes to effective corporate leadership and management of the church and it helps the church to have an excellent relationship with children, adolescent and youth.

Empirical Review

Strategic leadership style is seen as the vision, direction, the purpose for growth, and context for the success of the organization, strategic leadership also initiates outside-the-box thinking to generate future growth (Nastase, 2010). In addition, Burgelman (2014) stated that, effective strategic leadership results in top management being able to gain and maintain control of the destiny of the organization that is, keep the organization independent over long periods of time and maintain a level of performance that consistently meets and often exceeds the expectations of the majority of its stakeholders. A strategy helps to have focused attention and ensure that the organization is headed towards a common direction with each member contributing towards its mission and vision (Saffold, 2005).

Muriithi (2018) did a study on strategic leadership and its effect on retention of adolescents in the church: a case of the gospel celebration church, Nairobi, Kenya. The study was guided by the following research questions; how do the church programmes, leader competence, ethical practices and adherence affect the retention of adolescents at Gospel Celebration Church, Nairobi, Kenya? The study was guided by the following theories; strategic leadership, strategic leadership and transformational theories. The study adopted descriptive research design. The target population for this study was the urban adolescents of the East lands region of Nairobi County, Census sampling

was adopted where all the population of 32 church leaders and 50 adolescents between the age of 13 and 18 years were included. The study found out that correlation results based on adolescents suggested that church programmes, leader's competence and ethical practices adherence positively influenced adolescent's retention. Based on correlation results of leaders, the study established that church programmes, leader's competence and ethical practices adherence negatively effect to adolescent's retention. The study concludes that church programmes, leader's competence and ethical practices adherence have mixed effect (both positive and negative) on adolescent's retention. The researcher recommends that the church should embrace a mentorship programme for adolescents whose main role and agenda is to retain and absorb more adolescents into fellowshiping with the church. The researcher recommends that church leaders ought to be well trained with relevant skills and competences that enable them to nurture and influence retention of adolescents in the church. The leaders also ought to uphold high Christian Biblical ethics in a manner that the adolescents can emulate since they look up to them as role models.

Strategic planning should be a continuing effort to view the organization as God sees it and in terms of what God wants to accomplish. In formulating a good strategy, an organization would require to look at both the external and internal environments which include macro, industry, competitive, client and internal environments (Saffold, 2005). The members of the church form a critical part of the internal environment. Gitonga (2008) notes that the church should focus on the posterity of its adolescents as there seems to be a decline in the numbers of adolescents that are retained in the church as they mature to adulthood.

There are different schools of thought or approaches that the leadership can adopt in creating their strategic plan. The positioning school is an analytical process which is modeled on the premise that only a few strategies are desirable,

(Saffold, 2005). This concerns the position in the economic market place. These strategies are defended against the future competitors (Porter, 2018).

Porter (2018) enumerated 5 forces of a market that were; threat of new entrant, bargaining power of suppliers, customers, threat of substitute products and intensity of rivalry among competing firms. The church has a product of the word of God, prayer and also spiritual nourishment to its congregants. Some people opt to consult witch doctors at the expense of their faith leading to their dropping out of the church. The main suppliers of the word of God would be the pastors and other ministers of the word of God, (Saffold, 2005).

Gitonga (2008) observes that as part of their strategy, Pentecostal churches primary activities are Pastoral care, Sunday services and fellowships, prayer meetings, conferences and seminars, the television outreach program, mission, the school of ministry, music and worship ministry and support activities. Further he notes that the support activities in the church are finance and administration, media and information technology, operations and logistics and service to the people.

Through these activities the ministers have mentored a lot of people and helped in retaining the young adolescents in the church. These activities have helped in mentoring the young and the mature generation leading to their retention in the church and general spiritual nourishment.

According to Saffold (2005) a strategic leader is one who will focus on the future, capture a vision, devise effective strategies, emphasize action, manage opportunity and threats, anticipate change

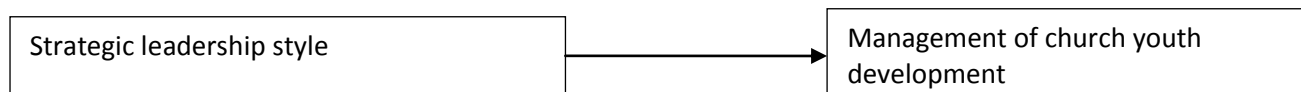


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey descriptive research design where both quantitative and qualitative data

and respond to it and also remain flexible and not rigid. Church leadership should therefore be very strategic in the leadership they offer especially to the adolescents since they are key in fulfilling the mission and vision of the church.

Strategic leadership is multifunctional and involves managing through others by combining managerial and leadership skills to influence those whom they work with and make decisions on a voluntary basis. Leadership is embraced by both the Christian and secular world as a process of social influence and as a state in which a person seeks for support of his followers and rallies them to accomplish a common goal or task. Every church seeks to be at the very best. Strategic leadership is all about the leaders determining where the church wants to be in the future and setting the objectives, and action steps that would move it towards its goals (Saffold, 2005). A good strategy would look into the external and internal environment of the church.

The review puts a lot emphasis on designing of the vision, mission, objectives and strategies which lies on the top managers of the organization thereby leaving out the aspiring managers in the process and their development. This study seeks to determine the extent of influence of strategic leadership style adopted the church leaders on the management of youth development in Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County.

was collected. This design enabled the researcher to fully establish the strategic 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.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reliability Analysis

Scale reliability for variables was determined by computing the overall Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the items of strategic leadership style and management of church youth development. The reliability was demonstrated since the Cronbach's alpha statistic for strategic leadership style and management of church youth development was 0.786, 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
Strategic leadership style	6	0.786

Correlation Analysis

Strategic leadership style had a weak positive and significant relationship with management of church

youth development ($r = 0.117$, $p\text{-value} = 0.035 < 0.05$) as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation analysis

		Correlations	
		Management of church youth development	Strategic leadership style
Management of church youth development	Pearson Correlation	1	.117**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.035
	N	48	48
Strategic leadership style	Pearson Correlation	.117**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	
	N	48	48

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

Regression Analysis

The R square value in this case is 0.757 which clearly suggests that there is a strong relationship between strategic leadership style and

management of church youth development as indicated in Table 3. This indicated that strategic 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

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 Coefficients		t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error	Beta			
Strategic Leadership Style	1.354	0.673	0.427		2.827	0.005

Strategic leadership style was found to have a positive linearly significant influence on management of church youth development ($\beta=1.354$, $p=0.005<0.005$). Here one unit change in strategic leadership style results in 1.542 unit increase in management of church youth development. The findings of this study differs with the past studies extracts from Burgelman (2014) who stated that, effective strategic leadership maintain a level of performance that consistently meets and often exceeds the expectations of the majority of its stakeholders. The implication is that strategic leadership style in force in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Sub County doesn't influence the management of church youth development as the youth are minimally entrenched in planning and participation in implementation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic leadership style addresses the development of the church youth in Pentecostal churches by designing a fulfilling mission and vision of the church. Future management of the church youth development is anchored on robust church

leadership that paves the way for the youth to join through the planning and participation in implementation. The study concludes that the church youth do not organize meetings meantt to chart the way forward, church policies are not updated regularly as they are not written but data on youth views on leadership is collected. From the study results it is evident that strategic leadership style triggers the youth to be future oriented there allowing their development on the church affairs which leads to increased management of church youth.

Strategic leadership style advocate for the paving way for the church youth through planning, implementing and controlling the strategies designed. The selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County should provide an avenue for future church progression that will motivate the youth engagement and development. The study therefore recommends the church youth leadership needs to organize meetings, gather relevant data on leadership, and participate in designing, implementing and reviewing of church policies in the selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County.

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