



**INFLUENCE OF DEMOCRATIC 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 democratic leadership style do not have a significant influence on management of church youth development in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County. The implication is that democratic leadership style is one of the significant avenues for managing the youth officials in their development in Nyeri Town Sub County. The study concluded that the youth officials have the requisite skills for management of church systems but their capacity is not embraced in church activities by the selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County. The study recommended that for the management of the church youth development to be effective in the selected Pentecostal churches there has to be skills impartation avenues, capacity building programmes for the youth and inclusion of the youth in church decision making.

Keywords: *Democratic 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. Democratically-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 democratic 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 democratic leadership style, democratic leadership style, democratic 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).

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 establish the influence of democratic leadership style on management of church youth development in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County, Kenya. The study answered the following research question, in what ways does democratic leadership style influence management of church youth development in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County, Kenya?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership theory was introduced by Burns in 1978. According to Burns transforming leadership is a process where leaders and followers help each other to advance to higher level of morale and motivation. Burns related to the difficulty in differentiation between management and leadership and claimed that the differences are in the characteristics and behaviors, (Burns, 1978).

Transformational leadership is a theory of leadership where a leader works with teams to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide

the change through inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of a group (Turner, 2012). Yulk (2012) argued that although transformational leadership is expected to improve organizational performance, it does not address the effect a transformational leader has on organizational processes that are key to organizational performance. He argues that past studies have not sufficiently discussed the causal effect of transformational leadership on the processes that lead to the effectiveness of organizations such as structure, culture, strategy and technology. Another weakness of the transformational theory is its tendency to address only the effect of a transformational leader on individual behaviour and not on the group or organization (Yulk, 2012). He posits that the high inter-correlation of the transformational leader behaviours raises questions on the construct validity of the measurement instrument as well as the omission of other leadership behaviours which contribute to leadership efficiency like delegating, coordinating, networking with peers and promoting organizational learning.

Kouzes and Posner, (2010) acknowledge the fact that transformational leaders do not operate in a vacuum and therefore situations like unfavourable environmental conditions, different organizational structures may impact the effectiveness of a transformational leader. It has also been pointed out that the theory does not identify situations when transformational leadership is detrimental. According to Harrison (2017) followers of transformational leaders can be so motivated such that they experience burn out.

Transformational leadership theory fits in this study as it's the behavior that describes the leaders (pastors, church elders) as role models to the followers (members – youth women, men), encouraging them to share common visions and goals by providing a clear vision and a strong sense of purpose. Church youth development in Pentecostal churches emanates from the notion of being guided by the actions of their pastors and

church leaders, which translates to their leadership charisma.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Democratic leadership style can be called participative leadership (Dogra, 2010). This system of leadership leads to the development of trust and loyalty among the subordinates. The leader takes his followers into full consideration, utilizes their skills and knowledge and takes their inputs before arriving at a decision. In a democratic leadership, there is always a rapport between the leader and the subordinate.

Iginu (2014), points out that democratic leadership is warm, understanding but firm. Decisions are taken jointly, while the leader guides the subordinates to determine how to function. It operates an open policy. They share decisions and this allows the subordinates the opportunity to criticize and appraise objectively.

Cherry (2013), also views democratic leadership, as participative leadership, is a type of leadership style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision-making process. Researchers have found that this leadership style is usually one of the most effective and lead to higher productivity, better contributions from group members, and increased group morale.

Some of the primary characteristics of democratic leadership according to Cherry (2013) include; group members are encouraged to share ideas and opinions, even though the leader retains the final say over decisions, members of the group feel more engaged in the process, creativity is encouraged and rewarded. Because group members are encouraged to share their thoughts, democratic leadership can lead to better ideas and more creative solutions to problems. Group members also feel more involved and committed to projects, making them more likely to care about the end results.

While democratic leadership has been described as the most effective leadership style, it does have some potential downsides. In situations where roles

are unclear or time is of essence, democratic leadership can lead to communication failures and uncompleted projects. In some cases, group members may not have the necessary knowledge or expertise to make quality contributions to the decision-making process. Cherry (2013) stated that democratic leadership works best in situations where group members are skilled and eager to share their knowledge. It is also important to have plenty of time to allow people to contribute, develop a plan and then vote on the best course of action.

In African community for instance, traditionally, young people were denied participation in decision making with the assumption that they did not have enough experience to make good decisions. Age was a source of intimidation and old people were always considered wise because of their rich experiences. Participation of the youth was not much appreciated as it showed lack of respect for the old. The church had the same patterns where the pastor and priests almost acted infallible without any question from the members; this can be seen as lack of democracy, (Dogra, 2010). The youth all over the world today are fighting for democracy and participation. Human rights among other movements are calling upon old people to give young people space to express themselves and participate in decisions affecting them, (Ross, Capra, Carpenter, Hubbell and Walker, 2015).

Successful church leaders are authentic and behave with consistency, can read the emotions of youths, and attend to the emotional aspects of the youths (Johnson, 2015). Along with authenticity, other qualities of effective church leaders can also be found in Watt's (2014) on commonalities in church leadership. He indicates that majority of the youths aspire and do as per their leaders, therefore, church leaders should be good role models to the young youths to set a good example on the lifestyles they choose to live hence retaining them to church.

Schoemaker, Krupp and Howland (2013) established that whether a lay person or a hired staff person (lay or clergy), a successful youth

program in church must have someone willing to devote time and energy to organize fellowship and teaching time as well opportunities for service for the youth. Someone willing to share God's love and the message of the Gospel with the youth of the church is obviously vital. There is not one perfect type of personality for a successful youth worker, but a genuine and sincere interest in youth is an obvious must.

Dreyer (2015) established that it's the leaders' role to keep the youth and youths coming back in the church and attending the church programmes. He observed that democratic leaders allows the young people to be involved in the organization spectrum of activities, processes and systems in order for them to acquire the much needed know how in measuring their performance. Further he noted that letting the young people possess a sense of belonging to the organization system, makes them to learn and acquit themselves with leadership dimensions for increased growth and development.

Ngasura (2013) investigated the key strategies in effective pastoral leadership competency. The study indicated that democratic leaders encourages the youths to determine their giftedness and calling, as well as their ability to act on the roles given to them. Youths are able to grow in their own skill acquisition to enhance their strengths and improve upon their weaknesses and they discover their giftedness and callings which then can be utilized in ministry. The researcher also found out that democratic leadership is a significant in helping youths where leaders are working with and lead youths (both individually and corporately) who have a variety of gifts, personalities and experiences. They are able to help the group move toward a common goal and vision. The researcher also found out that the democratic leaders put personal desires aside for the sake of the youths' group and the larger mission of the congregation.

A study done by Chen and Yang (2012) indicates that democratic leaders significantly influence retention of the adolescent in the church by being their spiritual and emotional guides. Therefore, the

ability of democratic leaders to deal with setbacks, rejection, and failure to a certain degree and the goal-orientation does not get lost as it's a characteristic for democratic leaders. This shows that democratic leaders have scored higher in regard to mission orientation, team-orientation, and training of the youths in the community.

Church leaders have developed understanding identities, roles, gender and race, critical thinking, and learning on youths. Effective leadership, now and into the future, relies on authentic insights that come from critical reflection about and deep understanding of youths (Farah, 2016). However, personal reflection, self-development, journaling, and examining one's emotions can be uncomfortable and difficult; leadership research suggests that successful church leaders are in touch with their emotions (Johnson, 2015).

According to Yi (2013), churches have adopted democratic leadership style through the retention youths especially girls in church due to the sense of belonging. Furthermore, women in church have continued to gain presence. Watt (2014), on a study of business organizations, considered a variety of underlying traits that contribute to potential leadership when considering male against female job candidates. He identified potential differences in the following areas: verbal and nonverbal communication skills; cognitive skills; differences in personality, values, and interests; reactions to conflict; sex-role identification and stereotype; and differences in self-confidence. The method used in the teaching of life skills builds upon what is known of how young people learn from their own experiences and from the people around them, from observing how others behave and what consequences arise from behaviour.

The literature brings out the general view of democratic leadership style but does not tell the extent of participation and decision making of the subordinates. This study seeks to bring out the extent of influence of democratic leadership style on the management of church youth development in Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County.

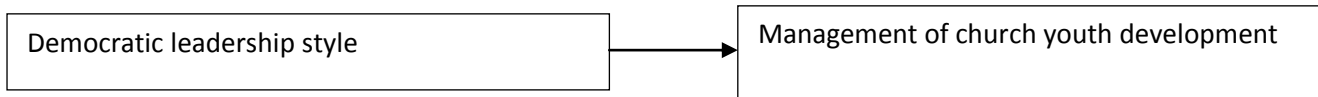


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

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 democratic leadership style facing management of church youth development in Nyeri Sub County, Kenya. The target population for the 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 democratic leadership style and management of church youth development. The reliability was demonstrated since the Cronbach's alpha statistic for democratic leadership style and management of church youth development was 0.741, 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
Democratic leadership style	6	0.741

Correlation Analysis

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

youth development ($r = 0.553$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$) as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

		Correlations	
		Management of church youth development	Democratic leadership style
Management of church youth development	Pearson Correlation	1	.553**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	48	48
Democratic leadership style	Pearson Correlation	.553**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	48	48

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

Regression Analysis

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

management of church youth development as indicated in Table 3. This indicated that democratic 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 B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
Democratic leadership style	0.624	0.852	0.316	0.652	0.024

Democratic leadership style was found to have a positive linearly significant influence on management of church youth development ($\beta=0.624$, $p=0.024<0.05$). Here one unit change in democratic leadership style results in 0.624 unit increase in management of church youth development. These findings concurred with Chen and Yang (2012) who found out that democratic leaders significantly influence retention of the adolescent in the church by being their spiritual and emotional guides. But these findings differ with the past studies by Cherry (2013) who stated that democratic leadership works best in situations where group members are skilled and eager to share their knowledge.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Democratic leadership style relies on good communication platforms on the roles of each player in the church system. The church youth requires the necessary knowledge and expertise to make quality contributions to the decision making process of their churches. The study concluded that

the youth officials have the requisite skills for management of church systems but their capacity is not embraced in church activities by the selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County. Further the study concluded that the youth officials in the selected Pentecostal churches are involved in the church decision making, particularly in matters that concerns them. From study findings it was conclusive that management of church youth development in selected Pentecostal churches in Nyeri Town Sub County requires good information flow for them to be acquainted to the church leadership culture adequately.

Democratic leadership style relies on existence of necessary skills which the needs to be nurtured in the church youth for the leadership environment. The study recommended that for the management of the church youth development to be effective in the Pentecostal churches there has to be skills impartation avenues, capacity building programmes for the youth and inclusion of the youth in church decision making.

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