



**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MISSION OF THE
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ABSTRACT

This study was about assessing the relationship between women leadership and implementation of the mission of the Methodist church in Kenya. Missiology has remained a male dominated field, although the majority of workers are women. Female missionaries have profound, unique intuitions especially in the context of women issues. This study was guided by the following objectives; to determine the extent to which women have contributed to the mission of the Methodist Church in Kenya; to examine the influence of women leadership in the great mandate of the Methodist Church in Kenya and to assess to what extent women work has been documented in Methodist church in Kenya. The study was a cross-section survey guided by phenomenological and mixed design. The study population included women from 3 synods from Coast region. From the total population of 100, a target population of 34 was selected from which the sample size of 25 was arrived at using purposive sampling method. A total of 25 Open ended questionnaires were administered to the women in the coast synods. Data was cleaned and coded thematically hence deriving the major categories and themes that informed this study. Data was presented in form of pie graphs, percentages as well as major themes derived from the categories of the responses. The study found that women leaders significantly contributed to the integrity, stewardship and excellence in the implementation of mission of the Methodist church in Kenya. The study found that women leaders were influential in discipleship, church growth through preaching, bible studies, and workshop trainings. The study concluded that there was need to increase opportunities for women at the top positions of leadership in the Methodist church since their impact in church growth is immense. Finally, the study found the gap in documentation of the work of women leaders in the mission of the Methodist church in Kenya. The study recommended regular conferences to enhance unity of purpose among women, endorsing more women to higher top leadership opportunities, to support economic empowerment project and programs at the synod's, circuits and church level as well as documentation of the policy guides, constitution and standing orders, new mission and leadership positions for women in the Methodist church.

Key Words: Women in Mission, Women in Leadership, Women Empowerment

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INTRODUCTION

From history following back from the bible is a call instituted by Jesus Christ Himself in Mathew 28:19 where in Matthew 28:19 he commissions the disciples; *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* New International Version (NIV) (Adeney Frances, 2005) notes that women have been offered the positions of learner and follower while men take the highest mission positions which eventually reduces the impact of the women participation in s. Despite having so many women missionaries the field of missiology has been largely dominated by men. Women have remained a muted group even with their mission expertise and ability due to gender bias (Warner, Dzubinski, Wood, & Martin, 2017). According to (BBC, 2011) The Methodist church has its roots From an England minister in eighteenth century, John Wesley (1703-1791), who sought to challenge the religious assumptions of the day. John Wesley’s group had a goal of meeting sharing the word of God, communion charity work and praying and were therefore called “holy club” or Methodist due to their methodical way of carrying out biblical holiness (Nthamburi, 1985). According, MCK, (2019) The Methodist church grew from the united Methodist s which reached East Africa 1860 through and in Kenya through Mombasa in 1862.

The Methodist Church is the fourth largest Christian Church in Britain, after the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches and the Church of Scotland. It has more than six thousand churches and a total membership of approximately 330 000 people. There are Methodist Churches in nearly every country in the world and global membership numbers some 70 million people (BBC, 2011).

By 1912 when the Methodist church finally reached Meru region and established its first upcountry station in Kaaga, this paved way for the establishment of many projects that were aimed at improving the spiritual and social economic wellbeing of the community. The moved to Meru in 1912, where it established the first station at

Kaaga (Nthamburi, 1985). Notable of these projects were the Maua Hospital, Kaaga schools, Kaaga rural training center which eventually converted to university Kenya Methodist University to mention but a few (Nthamburi, 1985). Women mission has remained a contentious issue where women struggle to be heard and find equal mission rights. About the s background women have been perceived as helpers rather than leaders. Over the year’s women have played unclear roles rendering their active participation in mission’s work without much impact. Recently, men in the Methodist Church in Kenya have enjoyed increased access to pastoral and mission positions such as bishops, superintendent ministers and Church executives among others (Adasi, Abdulai, & Churchill, 2013). Despite such progress, there continues to be lamentations about women underrepresentation in top church mission particularly given that since its autonomy in 1967, the Methodist Church in Kenya has only managed to have two female bishops and no woman ever since has managed to become either the Conference secretary or Presiding Bishop of the Church, which is the top most position. Nonetheless, this development that was influenced by the missionaries at that time did little to address the issue of gender discrepancies when it came to empowerment and inclusivity of the community in decision making (Ojong, 2017). The church became independent from the British rule in 1967. In 1967 Methodist Church in Kenya became autonomous from the British Methodist Church. The Methodist church in Kenya is connectional and follows the hierarchy from above as follows; conference headed by presiding bishop where the church has had 6 presiding bishops but none has been a woman (Nthamburi, 1985). This is followed by synod with a total of 13 synods namely Nairobi, Kaaga, Nkubu, Miathene, Nyambene, Tharaka, Kajiado, Mombasa, Singwaya, Kilifi and Western Kenya; and two mission synods in Tanzania and Uganda. This is followed by circuits headed by the Superintendent Minister and local churches (Linguli, 2017). Since 1956 the Methodist church allowed the mission by women following the policy on

licensing and ordination of women as full leaders. The church believes in the Body of Christ the Holy Communion and apostolic faith (MCK, 2019). Therefore, study using gender and empowerment theory (United Nations, 2010); aims at examining the contentment and/or the discontentment of the extent to which women's voice has so far reached in the church and also explore what may need to be done at empowering female members so as to reach the top pastoral and mission positions of the church.

According to Verster, (2017) the discussion of the task of still continues today. The post-modern trend is to allow a very wide scope. Similarly, it seems as if missiology has become *all-inclusive* in Transforming lives. In his previous works Bosch defined missiology as the total task which God sets the church for the salvation of the world (Livingston, 1990:3). It is clear that Bosch, at that stage defended the position that missiology has a definite goal in proclaiming salvation to people. In *Transforming this* point of view still exists, but the spectrum of in *die Skriflig 31(3) 1997:251-266* Is Tis seen as very broad: it is regarded in the light of the church in combination with other aspects: *missio Dei*, mediating salvation, quest for justice, evangelism, contextualization, liberation, inculturation, common witness, ministry of the people of God, witness to people from other faiths, even theology in action and in hope (Bosch, 1991:368-510). All these aspects contribute to a very broad Spectrum. This is therefore regarded as all-inclusive mission. Although Bosch has an eye for the traditional paradigms among the Evangelicals, he is inclined to the view that includes much more than evangelism and salvation only. Especially in *Hail vir die wêreld* (Bosch, 1979:198-201) he makes it clear that the existence of the church in this world always has a missionary dimension, although everything does not have a missionary focus. He thus carefully steers clear of a reduced gospel as understood by the Evangelicals, and also the watered-down gospel of the ecumenicals. He wishes to make it quite Clear that the *missio Dei* is

all-inclusive, however not in the sense that everything becomes. According to his theology, it is clear from Luke and other passages in Scripture that God's mission in the world includes social and other aspects of Christian witness.

One of the main challenges experienced by women in the MCK is getting access to top decision making arrangements of the church such as the Presiding Bishop and the Conference Secretary and even as Bishops or even Superintendent Ministers (Clark, 1997). In as much as Methodist church in Kenya (MCK) has more women than men in its membership however, when it comes to, men have been at advantage. Throughout the history of the Methodist Church, only two women recently have managed to rise to the positions of being synod bishops out of the twelve possible (Linguli, 2017). The standing order of the MCK stipulates that any ordained pastor, man or woman may contest for any elective position of the church. In this, all things being equal and the voting ground being level ground, when it comes to voting the cultural mindset and gender politics in the MCK make it an easy run for the male contestants (Linguli, 2017). Therefore the status of women mission has remained inferior compared those of men due to such gender based conceptions hence suppressing women from top mission roles (Aune, 2008). This study therefore examines retrieval of the voice of women in the of the Methodist church in Kenya employing gender empowerment theory (Agadjanian, 2015). Missiology is the meditative discipline that spearheads the Churches direction enabling growth to the full knowledge of the gospel to all people of the nations (Newell, 2019). Women played a great role from the early Christian religion, specifically in the intimate world of Jesus, with examples like Mary Magdalene (Ademiluka, 2017a; Kohlenberger, 2008; Ojong, 2017). Women's mission styles have been shown to be more transformational, participative, and inclusive than the mission styles of their male counterparts (Petties & Va, 2008). Women are rated five-to-one in the top eight mission

characteristics, including honesty and intelligence in a study by (Chandler, 2011). Nell, (2015) revealed women in mission in Africa is referred to as "mission labyrinth" meaning the unseen hindrances preventing women from rising to the top mission positions. Men are said to be the riders of glass escalator to the top positions. The study by (Linguli, 2017) citing Augustine of Hippo showed that even if a woman can attain salvation; she still remains inferior being prone to sin. Augustine of Hippo indicates that a woman is only secondary in the image of God whereas the man normatively possesses the image of God. Further (Adasi et al., 2013) argues that the patriarchal system upheld in Africa subjects women to suppression and oppression by men since men are supported by cultures and religions thus empowering men and disempowering women. However, women see Christianity as empowering giving them a place on which to stand and from which they can bypass the challenge male-dominated sacred worlds. This study therefore revealed the extent to which women have been excluded, showed the consequences of exclusion as well as proposed modalities for including women in MCK missionary endeavors.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that few women have had a chance to lead as bishops in different synods of the Methodist church in Kenya; there is very scanty data and information about their leadership and success of the implementation of the mission of the Methodist church in Kenya. This study sought to assess the relationship between women leadership and implementation of the mission of the Methodist church in Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The study major objective was to assess the relationship between women leadership and Successful implementation of the mission of the Methodist in Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- To determine the extent to which women have contributed to the implementation mission of Methodist Church in Kenya
- To examine the influence of women leadership in implementation great mission mandate of Methodist Church in Kenya
- To assess the extent to which women's work and leadership have been documented in the Methodist Church in Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women contributions to the implementation of the mission of the Methodist church in Kenya

There are great contributions of women in s have been documented in the bible. God used a number of females in missiology including; Miriam - note especially Micah 6:4 that makes a point to underline her missionary contribution (Durham, 2016). Deborah - Judges 4-5. As a prophetess she led and delivered Israel without even a hint of dishonor from the scripture. Huldah - 2 Kings 22:14-20. King Josiah sends the priest and royal cabinet to meet with her to hear God's word for Israel. Phoebe - Romans 16:13-14. Phoebe was mentioned first in Paul's list, a deacon [ess] and a helper of many, even Paul. Priscilla - Romans 16:3. She is mentioned before her husband which is odd in that culture unless she was the more active leader. In Acts 18:26 she is used to teach Apollos, a great leader in the church. Junia - Romans 16:7 - A disputed name (whether it is male or female) but evidence exists that Junia was female and an apostle. Some traditionalists would say that these examples are exceptions and/or concessions due to men's failure to lead well. But it would rather seem that these women are precedent setters, the first fruit of things to come as the culture becomes more open to women leaders (Goh, 2011).

Similarly, Odendaal (1994:256) points out remarkable instances in the Old Testament where women undertook responsibility for themselves and for the nation, even though the tales were told in male contexts. Examples such as Ruth, Esther and Deborah, among others. However, with the

introduction of male-controlled institutions such as the monarchy and the Jerusalem temple, female visibility and impact receded (Walker, 1999). During the monarchy, the female activities of the patriarchal household became less and devalued as compared with the male activities of the public male-operated sphere. Women were excluded from significant temple duties, as the Israelite cult was an essentially male institution, which explains the employment of only male priests (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014).

Influence of women leadership in the implementation of great mission mandate

Paustian-Underdahl et al., (2014) noted that, despite evidence that men are typically perceived as more appropriate and effective than women in mission positions; a recent debate has emerged in the popular press and academic literature over the potential existence of a female mission advantage (Clark, 1997). It is clear in the review of literature that women, including clergywomen, have historically not been given a voice in society. Kramarae's muted group theory states that women's words are discounted, and their thoughts are devalued. Griffin (1994) explains this as "When women try to overcome this inequity, the masculine control of communication places them at a tremendous disadvantage (Ganter & Grimshaw, 2015). Man-made language 'aids in Female Clergy defining, depreciating, and excluding women'" (p. 441). The result of this process is women becoming a muted group. It is clear that women have been involved in the church for centuries, yet their voices have been muted as the result of their gender. According to Littlejohn (1996), one the assumptions of the muted group theory developed by Kramerae reveals that "Women must translate their own ways of understanding into the terms of the male worldview in order to participate in public life" (p. 239). This is consistent with the role of female clergy who are struggling to find their own voice in the traditionally male-dominated organization (Durham, 2016).

Extent to which women leadership have been documented

From the above feminists' views on women positions in church, this study derived that the manner a church interprets biblical texts regarding women positions in church, cultural influences on gender perception and perception on the role of the Holy Spirit in biblical interpretation could affect women positioning (Durham, 2016).

This reiterates how the socio-cultural opinion on women shapes the debate on the inclusion of women in mission of the Methodist Church in Kenya. Adeoti, 1998 observes that in many societies be it in Africa or elsewhere, a woman is perceived as a burden bearer with no rights whatsoever to equality with man (Monroe, 1987a). Worse even, as an absurd being incapable of reasoning thus, she is to be seen and not to be heard. She argues that the ancient world was predominantly a man's world (Adeoti, 1998, p.107). Religion and religious traditions comprise of a multifaceted set of social elements such as symbols, rituals, myths and stories, concepts and claims which to some societies give the ultimate meaning to life and connects their religious adherence to a transcendent (Runzo & Martin, 2001:19). Nonetheless, such traditions discriminate against certain groups among their believers. Reuther observes that in Christianity, the most discriminated group has been women due to the influence of the patriarchal systems in the church (Ruther, 1983:94). Patriarchal Christianity subjugated the Christian church in classical orthodoxy. A patriarchal organization absolutely denies women's participation in the image of God because women are deemed to be bearers of sin and thus less-spiritual (Ojong, 2017). Reuther points at Augustine as the classical source of patriarchy noting that he held the view that though a woman can attain salvation; she still remains inferior being prone to sin (Adasi et al., 2013). Augustine of Hippo indicates that a woman is only secondary in the image of God whereas the man normatively possesses the image of God (Linguli, 2017).

Factors affecting women in missions

Socialization: According to the socialization concept, children are exposed to models within their community that guides them on how to think, talk, feel and act in an appropriate way. As children grow up these views are reinforced with the people they interact with such as their siblings, parents, teachers and peers (Iannaccone, 2000). Consequently, each gender becomes familiarized to the roles assigned to them based on what society expects of them. Jianling (2000) suggests that females internalize the roles assigned to their gender and later use them to inform their choices in life.

Africa cultural traditions: Most women have encountered some considerable amount of resistance from the church backgrounds within which they grew and in particular those from rural backgrounds that were typically conservative in conformity to the African traditions [Atr] that relegated the woman's position to the domestic realm and not in the public domain (Njoroge, 2000:58). This is in contrast to the special treatment given to a young man joining ministry, they are usually received with a passionate backing. There are also those women who have experienced problems in their placement or stationing and most of women attribute this to the dominated male personnel that are insensitive to the needs of women in ministry.

Personal issues and Relationships: Women ministers not only struggle with interpersonal relationships but also with their inner feelings. This makes the women ministers susceptible to doubts, fears and personal problems and usually accompanied by certain kind of isolation in the ministry. Another aspect of relationships that affect the women in church mission is on how to deal with their male colleagues who seemed to be programmed to relate to women with sexual flirtation (Goh, 2011).

Patriarchal nature of the ministry: This has been responsible to the low number of women seeking

the Ordination in the church ministry. Thus few women joining full time ministry is evidence of resistant stand of Christians in the church that still holds that maleness represents a higher order of creation at local societal level. My own experience while seeking ordination best illustrates the challenges women face in pursuit to ordination (Durham, 2016).

Bureaucracy: On the other hand Objections to have more women serving in key local positions of the church such as superintendent ministers and synod secretaries have been both fierce and intransigent (Nthamburi, 1985; Omotoyosi, 2019). For instance, out of 11 sampled circuit in Nairobi no single woman serves as a superintendent minister. This applies to the office of the synod secretary and circuit stewards which are all dominated by male servant and the office of the presiding bishop and conference secretary that has never been occupied by a female minister since the church became autonomous in 1967. In addition, out of the 410 ministers serving with the church in 2018 only 75 were women (Linguli, 2017).

Gender Politics: This trouble on women participation in mission is not only as a result of the church unwillingness to grant women equality and instead continue gives more concessions to male but the discrepancies can be attributed to the harsh reality of gender inequality in the church system. Where the few women in mission have not used their positions effectively towards promoting the inclusivity of women in church mission and instead found comfort in the male dominated spheres of influence within the church corridors (Adasi et al., 2013).

Motivation for power: Unlike women, men tend to be mission for power accumulation. Women on the other hand will not aspire to "lord" it over men in the church, nor do they want to scramble for position, instead they will want to be accepted as full participants in God's work, sharing in kingdom tasks in ways that use their gifts appropriately (Agadjanian, 2015).

Traditional view of a Woman in the Kenyan Context and Gender beliefs noticeable in the MCK

In African traditional society and in specific the Kenyan context, women have been used and handled like personal property of men, oppressed, subjugated and dishonored. According to Oduyoye, M (1990) in her book, "Women Tradition and the Church in Africa" she exposes this problem by stating that "I did study some proverbs (attempting) to demonstrate that women fall victim of linguistic imagery that socializes them to accept "their place" in society and to view with caution any call for more space" (Marumo, 2016). Thus Oduyoye observes that in the traditional communities where gender socialization is the norm, the strategy has distorted the quality of human relations and it continues to deny the equivalence between women and men or to accept female and male as equivalent expressions of human being. Oduyoye's study leads her to wrap up that making chauvinism is a problem in Africa (Agadjanian, 2015). Women in general have been made to believe that being born a female means to be born inherently inferior. Most of the African women regard themselves as just mothers, caretakers, cheap laborers in the field and factories. Owing to women's low self-esteem they under rate themselves and leave mission role to men (Agadjanian, 2015). The traditional way is that women in Kenya do most of the work in the church and in the society in general and men hold most of the mission. Women's role has been reduced to children bearers and little else and at worst to domestic workers (Adasi et al., 2013). It is sad to note that even in today's world; women are prevented from occupying certain positions in the church because of their sex. The position of women in today's African society and religious communities is usually prearranged by what is estimated to be valuable to the wellbeing of the whole community of women and men (Oduyoye, 2002).

Status of women in the early Methodist church Movement

According to Chilcote (2001), the Wesleyan Revival under direction of the Wesley brothers arose as a

renewal movement within the Church of England and the heartbeat of the whole movement was personal religious experience and its power to transform both the individual and society (BBC, 2011). This revival of essential Christianity involved a rediscovery of the Bible, an emphasis on the experience of conversion or saving faith, and a vision of activity in the life of the world as women and men together participated in God's (Ganter & Grimshaw, 2015). Despite the cultural context in which it emerged, women were embraced and elevated in the Methodist movement. As such, scripture was liberating for the women and the Methodist movement defense for the ministry of women, for example, ran counter to the accepted social and ecclesial norms of their day and required great courage (Clark, 1997).

Feminist theory

McAfee, (2018), notes that feminism is both an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and the end of sexism in all forms. Motivated by the quest for social justice, feminist inquiry provides a wide range of perspectives on social, cultural, economic, and political phenomena. It aims to understand the nature of gender inequality. 6 1) How do the views and discourse proposed by the Worthy Women Movement contribute to, maintain and promote a context in which the female body "is inscribed by patriarchal culture"?

How can a feminist theological perspective on the female body and sexuality contribute to the deconstruction of the views and discourse proposed by the Worthy Women Movement?

According to Stander, (2016) A feminist discursive analysis draws on critical discourse studies and feminist theory and deals with a critique of a hierarchically gendered social order that is maintained through a particular discourse, or „language realized in speech or writing" (Thompson 1984:133 in Nadar & Potgieter 2010b:144-145). The term „feminist theory" emerged in the 1970's as part of the larger field of Women's Studies in North American Universities. It

refers to texts with common objectives, practices and norms. Despite focusing mainly on texts, feminist theory also focuses on the individual women whose conversations give life to texts. Although feminist theory can be applied to most academic fields, it is not limited to the academic sphere and can be practiced by anyone, anywhere (Jones 2000: Chapter 1 at “What is feminist theory?”).

Gender and empowerment

According to Webster dictionary, Empowerment definition is - the act or action of empowering someone or something. As the mission desk of the Methodist Church in Kenya affirms, the church is not only to preach the good news but also to help people interpret the gospel in the context of their life situations. It is without doubt evident that the new roles that women take part in the society affect church work (Agadjanian, 2015). Gender on the other side as defined by the oxford online dictionary refers to the “state of being male or female (typically used in reference to socio-cultural differences rather than biological ones)”. This simply put means that gender as understood in

this research refers to the way people organize their lives, responsibilities and roles as males and females (Durham, 2016).

This research therefore seeks to address the theoretical and practical tools of women empowerment in the MCK s. By doing so, I will seek to analyze how empowerment boosts the natural gifts and dignity of women (Ham, 2014) in the s work of the Methodist Church in Kenya. In addition, I will explore aspects on how positions of influence are shared within the Methodist Church in Kenya and the mutuality between women and their male counterparts. Ham (Ham, 2014) writes that empowerment lifts the natural gifts and dignity of human beings taking into place mutuality, in partnership, and in spirit of power sharing. Empowerment points to the process of reaching out to “the other” with love of the triune God affirming the power-service in Christ’s way so as to seek transformative justice as part of God’s. On the other hand, Wanda (1997:49) writes that women are expected to act according to certain norms defined earlier by another culture in another time.

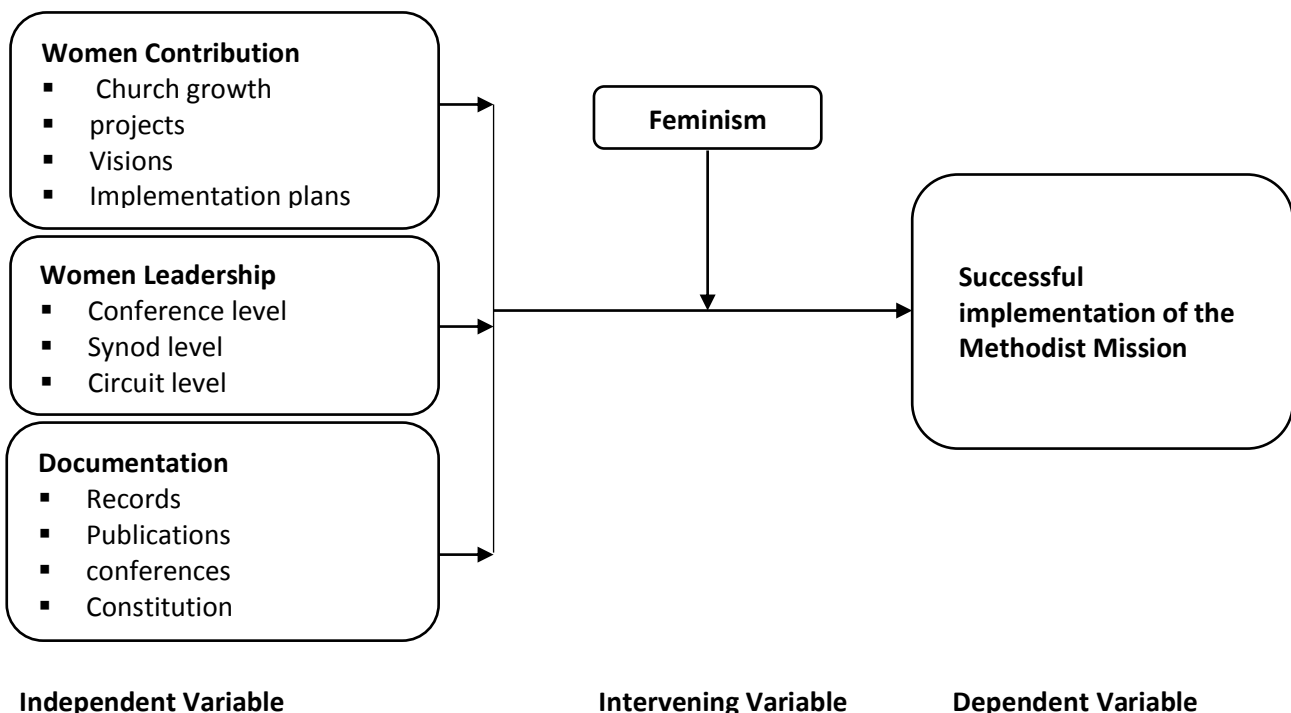


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study design used was a cross-sectional survey. The study target population included women in the mission’s work within the three Synods in the coast region. The study total population was 100. Qualitative data was collected by use by use of open-ended questionnaire to enable the participants to give their insights and deeper response views without being limited. The Church’s Standing Orders and the Deed of the Church Order that outlines the rules, procedures and legislations was used to paint a picture of the church’s structural organization and governance. Qualitative data analysis was employed after the collection of the data. This was done through classification of information relevant to the research question and objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Women contribution to the mission of the Methodist Church in Kenya

The respondents were asked the year in which they joined ministry, among the participants the year in

which they joined ministry were normally distributed from year 1986, to 2017. This implied that the fact that they had served in different capacities of leadership they were in a position to answer the research questions. Further the study sought to find out the extent in which women leaders or ministers contributed to achievement of different objectives of the Methodist church in Kenya. The responses were given in a 5 Likert scale in order of very high extent, high extent low extent, very low extent and not at all. Majority of the respondents 10(40) indicated that they had contributed to a very high extent to empowering believers into faith and freedom through God’s word while 6(24) indicated they had contributed to very high extent in achievement of that objective. This meant that women leaders were capable of bringing more people into faith through reaching out to the people in their area of jurisdiction and far and wide.

Table 1: Empowerment of believers into faith

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very low	2	8.0	8.0	8.0
low	7	28.0	28.0	36.0
high	10	40.0	40.0	76.0
very high	6	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Further, in regard to what extent the women had contributed to promote social holiness through the spirit of Methodism, majority of the respondents 13(52) indicated high extent, followed by 5 who indicated very high extent. This implies that in different capacities of leadership women were capable of achieving the mission of the Methodist church during their tenure of service.

Further, the women asked to what extent that they inspired and mentored excellence in church leadership and management. The indicators of the women performance were shown by the growth in women church membership and mentoring young

women in leadership. Majority of the participants in this study 12(48) indicated and 4(16) indicated very high. Excellence in leadership means a holistic approach to influencing people’s mental, health, spiritual health, financial health among other parameters of growth among the congregation. This implied that most women are interested in building others in order to disciple more people into the knowledge and service of the kingdom of God. Through mentorship of young leaders, it implied that there would be sustainability in the church and growth of both membership and spiritual growth.

Further, in regard to enhancing continued membership growth and church sustainability, most women leaders indicated that they had contributed high extent 16(64), this implied that despite fewer positions of top leadership positions in the Methodist church in Kenya women had brought a significant mass of people to join the mission through outreach. This implies that given more top positions would mean continued impact and change in leadership and management of the Methodist church in Kenya.

Moreover, the participants were asked how has God used them in witnessing for Christ in transforming lives and to preach good news, set liberty the afflicted and equip believers. This was an open ended question and it received diverse responses. The responses were categorized and the major themes identified. From the selected responses *"I have been a steward of God's flock. my position has provided me with a platform to reach*

many new believers" ,*"by God's grace I have set an example of how a Christian woman should live and I have mentored many"* ,*"I have mostly been involved in rearing out and sharing by witnessing"* *"being a transformative leader"* *" I am a lay preacher in the church"* *"I have preached in many conferences and women organized forums"* *"through visitation and preaching"* *"in my position as a clergy I have disciplined and mentored people both in church and outside who preach the Gospel, I also preaching church and in conferences and many other platforms"* from the responses the study confirmed that preaching, leading, training, mentoring and stewardship emerged as the main themes. This implied that during the tenure of their positions, women in their different capacities of leadership have been used by God to preach the Gospel to the lost. Further, they have been instrumental in training and mentoring others for the work of Christ as well as acted as caretakers of God's flock that is through shepherding.

Table 2: Membership Growth

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid low	9	36.0	36.0	36.0
high	6	24.0	24.0	60.0
very high	10	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Further the women were asked some of the challenges they faced in implementation of the mission of the Methodist church in Kenya. Among the responses given were, *"opposition from some males who see women as an inferior species"* *"limited finances and materials"*. *"Lack of role models and lack of opportunities for ministry"* *"financial challenges and leadership politics"* *"lack of unity"*, *"domination of males in church leadership"*, *"disunity among women"*, *"financial challenges"*, *"lack of proper involvement in ministry"*, *"financial sources"*, *"Limited resources and resource materials"*. *"Overcoming cultural barriers"*. All the responses were analyzed through category forming and thematic analysis. It was found that male domination, disunity among

women and financial challenges emerged as the main themes explaining the challenges quoted in the study as challenges that women leaders face in implementation of the mission of the Methodist church in Kenya.

Women leadership and successful implementation of the mission of the Methodist church in Kenya.

Women leadership and mission of mck implementation

The study sought to find out how women leadership influenced the successful implementation of the mission of the Methodist church in Kenya. The respondents were required to tick to what extent women leadership had influenced accomplishment of the different core values of the Methodist church in Kenya. In a Likert

scale of where 5 represented very high, while 4 represented high, 3 low, and 2 very low and 1 not at all. Under, Discipleship, majority of the respondents 10(40) indicated high and 4(16)

indicated very high. This implied that women at different leadership positions influenced the church leadership through discipling other people to witnessing and the knowledge of Christ.

Table 3: Discipleship

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very low	2	8.0	8.0	8.0
low	9	36.0	36.0	44.0
high	10	40.0	40.0	84.0
very high	4	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Further, in regard to the extent in which women leadership influenced accomplishment of servant leadership as a core value majority of women 13(52) indicated high extent and 4(16) indicated very high. This implies that women leadership can steer up accountability and transparency of the management of the kingdom resources including time, word of God, financial resources among other mission resources at their disposal. Servant leadership is likely to cause transformation and growth in the church rather than a situation where most people wait to be served. Jesus Himself addressing the disciples indicated that the greatest among you is the servant of all. (Matthew 23:14). Embracing this form of leadership can increase the

church growth and create more admirable leaders leaving a greatest legacy among those who practice it.

In regard to accomplishment of stewardship core value in the Methodist church majority of the participants 14(56) noted they influenced it in a high extent followed by 5(20) who indicted high extent. This means that women in leadership were significantly influential as stewards in accomplishing the mission of the Methodist church. In this case the women act as the stewards of God’s property which has been placed in their hands. It implies that the women are likely to handle leadership matters placed under their care with a lot of diligence.

Table 4: stewardship

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very low	2	8.0	8.0	8.0
low	4	16.0	16.0	24.0
high	14	56.0	56.0	80.0
very high	5	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Further in regard to the extent to accomplishment of the Methodist core value of integrity, women 14(56) indicated high extent. This was followed by 6(24) very high. This implied that women in leadership to a high extent more likely to shun corruption and ensure that the mission of God placed in their hands is achieved. That is why it is essential to provide more demanding and challenging leadership positions to the women in

the Methodist church of Kenya in order to ensure that their full participation in accomplishment of the Methodist church in Kenya.

In regard to the extent in which women leadership had influenced the contribution excellence, majority of women, 14(56) indicated high and 2(8) very high. This implied that women were very influential in accomplishing excellence during the term of their services.

The respondents were asked how else has women voices influenced the great mission of MCK? Among the responses received were; The following responses were received, *“they have reached the less fortunate in the society and helped them” “through seminars, workshops and trainings” “through missions to the less privileged in the society” “women have been on the fore front of leading in the support of the less fortunate” “women have been on the frontline to reach those who have not been reached by civilization” “through missions to the less privileged in the society”*. From the responses that were categorized and analyzed thematically, reaching out to the less fortunate, seminars, conferences, workshops trainings emerged as major themes. This indicate the very important role of women in empowering to the less fortunate or privileged in the society as well as enhancing sustainability and excellence in church missions through workshops and conferences.

Further the participants were required to state whether a relationship exist between women leadership and implementation of the mission of the Methodist church in Kenya. Majority of the participants 17(68) indicated yes followed by 8(32) who indicated no. Perhaps this implies that the women believed in successful implementation of the mission of the Methodist church in Kenya if given a chance.

Documentation of work of women in the MCK

This study sought to assess the extent to which women’s work and leadership have been documented in the Methodist Church in Kenya. The participants were asked whether there are records

stating roles, responsibilities and guidelines of the of their current position of leadership. Majority of the respondents 14(56) stated no. This implied that perhaps monitoring and evaluation of the work of women was lacking. What cannot be measured cannot easily be achieved therefore this meant that despite the great contribution of women in the implementation of the Methodist church mission; due to lack of documentations it went unseen or unnoticed. The few documentations available mostly are those relating to conferences which may not touch much of the work that women have contributed. This bias therefore might have led to suppression of the women work in the missions.

Further the participants were asked whether they have attended any conferences on leadership. Majority 22(88) stated yes while 3(12) stated no. most women participated in the mission work through teaching, preaching and training on Methodist church workshops however though most of their contributions went unrecorded. This meant that the impact of their effort was unrecognized and underestimated due such oversights.

Women were asked whether there was a policy guideline on women leadership. Majority of them 18(72) indicated no. Lack of a constitution or policy guide implies that though most women might rise to power they might not retain those positions in the long-term due to lack supporting documentations on their positions of leadership. Further it might also imply lack of aspiration to leadership position as there’s no such framework to support the existence of certain positions in the future.

Table 5: Policy Guides

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	7	28.0	28.0	28.0
no	18	72.0	72.0	100.0
Total	25	100.0	100.0	

The study sought to find out the extent which the work of the church had been recorded. The majority of the respondents 18(72) indicated low extent while 7(28) indicated very low extent. This

did not imply that the Methodist church does not involve in the fields of health, education, community development, social justice and technology. It is only that the work of women in the

mission field especially in the field of community development and social justice has not received a lot of concern despite its significant impact on the recipient communities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's major objective was to assess the relationship between women leadership and the successful implementation of the mission of the Methodist Church in Kenya. Therefore, it was concluded that women leaders need to be financially empowered as well as be offered jobs and rank that are equivalent to their education level and performance based. Further, it was found that women leaders significantly contributed to the integrity, stewardship and excellence in the implementation of the mission of the Methodist Church in Kenya. The women are great stewards who steered integrity and excellence in their capacity of leadership in the implementation of the mission of the Methodist Church of Kenya. The study found that women leaders were influential in discipleship, church growth through preaching, bible study, and workshop trainings. The study concluded that there was a need to increase opportunities for women at the top positions of leadership in the Methodist Church since their impact on church growth is immense. This would therefore see a sustainable growth of the Methodist Church in Kenya. Additionally, women played a great role as mentors and role models in the church to the younger aspiring leaders. Finally, the study found the gap in documentation of the work of women leaders in the mission of the Methodist Church in Kenya. The gap was further worsened by lack of constitutions and policy guidelines on women leadership at different levels. The study therefore concluded that a relationship existed between lack of documentation on mission work of women and specific guidelines or policy on leadership; with suppression of women voices in implementation of the mission of the Methodist Church in Kenya.

The study recommended the MCK to regularly organize conferences that bring women of all levels and areas together in order to mentor and empower more women and enhance unity of purpose among them.

Since women were found to enhance integrity and excellence in the mission of Christ; the study recommended the need for endorsing more women to higher top leadership opportunities in order to express their faithful servant's work thus bringing multiplication to the Kingdom of God. Mathew 25:20.

The study recommended the connectional women fellowship leadership team to initiate, organize, mobilize and support economic empowerment projects and programs at the synod's, circuits and church level in order to holistically accomplish the implementation of the Methodist Church of Kenya at the grassroots level.

The study recommended the Methodist Church to document in policy guides, constitution and standing orders; about new mission and leadership positions for women in the Methodist Church since their impact on church growth is immense.

The study recommended the Methodist Church in Kenya and elsewhere in the world to document in publications, magazines, print media and electronic media on the policy documents and the work of women in missional leadership in order to raise support, increase awareness as well as provide a basis for higher positions.

Recommendations for further study

The study recommended the Methodist Church of Kenya in partnerships with the Kenya Methodist University to fund and support research on women leadership and mission work in order to increase documentation and publication and visibility of women in mission's work.

The study recommended that further research be carried on Missional projects and programs that attract growth of men's fellowship in the Methodist Church of Kenya.

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