

Leadership Styles in Church Growth: Examining their Role in Societal Transformation and Church Commitment

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Abstract

The study examined kind of leadership style exhibited by church leaders in transforming society and church growth, and the relationship between leadership style and organisational/church commitment. With a sample size of 384 church members and a quantitative research approach, the findings of the study revealed that most church leaders tend to exhibit a servant leadership style, followed by transformational and then transactional leadership style. The argument that churches leaders tend to exhibit more of servant leadership can be based on the assertion that there is a strong resonance between the concept of servant leadership and the concepts of humility and service, which are often emphasised in religious teachings. Also, there is a positive and significant relationship between church commitment and various leadership styles such as servant and transactional but insignificant relationship between church commitment and transformational leadership style. The study therefore recommends that church leaders should always see themselves as servant leaders and adopt rewards and motivation system to boost their subordinate's commitment other than only compelling their subordinates to move along with their vision.

Keywords: Church, Commitment, Development, Growth, Leadership, Society, Servant, Transformation.

Introduction

The concept of leadership is quite essential because leaders are significant in successes of any goal. This has practically triggered a number of researches to be conducted on the subject of leadership in diverse research areas. The impact is that a myriad of discoveries and theories not to mention definitions of leadership have emerged in the occurrence of researching the concept of leadership. [1] extends leadership as the desire to bring potential of the personnel to grow through the application of leading strategies. Moreover, whenever a person attempts to influence the emotions or views of a person, it is said that

leadership has occurred [2]. Similarly, [3] view leadership as convincing individuals to attain something. Although the number of views presented under the umbrella concept of leadership is multifold, all the views assume that leadership is directed towards the realization of an objective. In addition, leadership is perceived to be a mechanism of improving performance in an organization. In an organizational setting, leaders with a vision will embrace the notion of trust, unity, consistency and motivations as a way of attaining their goals. According to [4], the extent to which leadership traits are revealed of an individual does not solely rely on the properties of that individual and his/her

personal skills but also on the properties of the situation and the environment the person is placed. It is also indicated that top-tier leaders can influence the organizations and employees with the help of strategic decision-making.

In addition, each leader takes a certain style in leading. The style of leadership might be directive in nature or facilitative though there are numerous theories of leadership that explain the variations in different leadership styles [5]. All leadership styles are reported to have a different influence on the productivity, performance and job satisfaction of the employees. Leadership can never be compromised in any organization such as churches in turning the society and church development. The church is regarded as a place of consolation and solace that they will always fall back on during their times of need and this necessitates a leader who will be a grassroot leader who will be in a position to carry the masses with him, he will be able to know their feelings and cater to their needs.

The institution of the church over the years has been a major factor in reshaping societies and it can be seen in the numerous social intervention policies and developmental programs that the church has engaged in over the years [6]. Nevertheless, the current literature on the topic of leadership examined the leadership style and task performance in the context of the banking industry [7], health industry [8], university [9] and in general literature on the influence of leadership style type on job satisfaction. The research about leadership within the church context has been based on transformational leadership style within churches in UK and Canada and the degradation of church growth under the patriarchal style of leadership in Russia [10]. In addition, little can be known on the leadership styles within the church

environment and its influence on the commitment of the church and social transformation in Sub-Saharan Africa and Ghana in particular. The current study thus aims at determining the leadership approach that church leaders adopt and how it has affected the commitment to the church and transformation of the society.

Literature Review

Transformational Leadership Style

As postulated by [11] transformational leadership style is the brainchild of the works of Weber-1947. The transformational leadership style is one that can be applied to the religious teachings of many religions because of the visionary and inspirational aspects of this style of leadership. On most occasions, church leaders attempt to influence and mobilise their congregations to strive towards a shared objective that is based on their religion and personal ideology. Transformational leaders tend to be empathetic and compassionate, and thus they often strive to build a bond between themselves and their followers and feelings and principles [12]. The emotional attachment could be particularly relevant in the case of religious scenarios.

Ref. [13] postulate that, transformational leaders are identified to be leaders or agents of change, intelligent to be imitated, as they will deliver and communicate a clear vision to a corporation, as they are capable of empowering their subjects to achieve greater heights, and they can also take action to develop others to trust in them. More so, transformational leaders adopt an energetic learning environment, thereby an environment which promotes individual accountability and creativity. By the time the followers reach the self-actualization concept phase, this facilitates interest of the organization and even an avenue of establishing trust and confidence to the organization. The creation of trust by

empowering followers so that they can showcase their talents can force them to develop new skills in addition to dealing with the unpredictable contingencies.

Transactional Leadership Style

Transactional leaders are the ones who achieve good and consistent performance that achieves approved objectives. Ref. [14] stated that, transactional leaders provide rewards and punishments to motivate performance, by establishing the leader relationship mainly on the economic trading. The major three characteristics of transactional leaders according to [15] are: First, transactional leaders collaborate with their team members to set specific and clear objectives and ensure that, staff receive rewards guaranteed by the achievement of the targets. Secondly, they trade gifts and promises of gifts towards the effort of the employees, and thirdly, transactional leaders are sensitive to the short-term self-interests of employees, should their needs be fulfilled. Transactional leadership promotes certain exchanges and elaborate affiliation between objectives and rewards. Hence, employees are not willing to do any job that is not indicated in their contract. This becomes a challenge to the workers who are educated and wish to venture beyond their particular responsibility. These leaders are not accustomed to change and as indicated by [14], they are less innovative, creative and conventional. Transactional leaders are reported to be risk averse as well as working in a given system.

As suggested in [14], transactional leadership is divided into two contingent reward and management-by-exception. The contingent reward is very effective when it is connected to transformational factors. It is concerned with the demarcation of roles and task demands as well as emphasizes on rewarding on the outcome basis. This aspect derives its hypothetical stimulation

to the path-goal leadership theory which perceives contingent reward as an efficient leadership strategy.

The management-by-exception is also part of the transactional leadership and is regarded as a less productive leadership style. In this case, the leader is concerned with negative response through imposition of sanctions on the basis of meeting regulations or otherwise. These sanctions may be of reprimands, disapproval, penal or the worst punishment. This is a highly unproductive type of leadership and it may instill fear, hatred or remorse among the followers.

Transactional Leadership is concerned with the aspect of monitoring performance in an organization and cluster. The leader encourages obedience of his subjects by rewarding and punishing them. Unlike the transformational leadership model, transactional leaders are not interested in varying in the long term, but they only seek to ensure that things remain the same. Such leadership works well at the time of crisis and emergencies. The sphere of transactional leadership is most effective at the lowest tier of the Maslows hierarchy of needs, the most reliable of the pathways in which such leaders care about the fundamental needs and emphasize the achievement of particular tasks performance [16]. In most cases, there is a reward versus positive outcome and vice versa where the poor outcome might lead to punishments. This form of leadership is very efficient in cases where a leader requires a particular task accomplished.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a holistic approach to leadership that engages followers in various aspects (including relationships, ethics, emotions and spirituality) so that they grow and have a full potential [17]. The major goal is to develop a team of

followers according to the selfless and moral orientations of the leaders. This can be achieved by putting the interest and development of the followers at the forefront thus making them more active and effective in their work. Servant leaders view themselves as custodians of the organisations and they seek to increase resources, including financial and non-financial resources, that are entrusted on them [17]. Although servant leaders are concerned with the personal development of his or her followers, they maintain performance requirements. Servant leaders focus on long-term sustainable performance unlike leadership techniques that focus on attaining performance at the cost of people.

Servant leadership is a leadership thought process that focuses on the role of the leader as a servant to the followers whereby the needs and well-being of the subordinates come first before the leaders. It focuses on the growth of the staff member in the form of his/her greatest capacity in the effectual task, community stewardship, inner propulsion and future leadership ability [18]. Servant leadership is a concept of understanding and applying leadership whereby the interests and concerns of the followers are given priority over the interests of the leader. The servant leader provides opportunities to his/her followers to improve their personal growth [19]. This is achieved through developing self-confidence, being a role model, inculcates confidence and provides knowledge, assessment, and resources. Compared to the traditional bureaucratic and mechanistic styles of leadership, servant leaders do not use their position to attain goals. Rather, they use individualised communication and persuasion methods in order to understand the needs, wants, abilities, ambitions, and capacity of their followers.

Servant leaders portray the qualities of selflessness, humility, hope, honesty, vision, concern of others, trust worthiness and interpersonal acceptance. According to [20], servant leadership can be exhibited by encouraging followers to grow and empower them, being genuine, modest, tolerant, and concerned with their well-being. Through provision of direction, subordinates will feel more empowered. With power and authority, the subordinates will show increased confidence and more confidence in their capability to positively influence their workplace.

Organizational Commitment

Organisational commitment has received considerable interest among leaders and human resources departments in most organisations [21]. Understanding the factors that lead to the commitment of employees and then applying the same to improve retention and performance is one of the key tasks that human resource managers perform. Organisational commitment (OC) is the degree to which an individual identifies with an organisation and engages in it [22]. Meyer and Allen have found out three different types of organisational commitment, namely normative, affective, and continuance (as cited in [23]). Normative commitment refers to the feeling of being obliged to the organization by the employee [24]. Affective commitment is developed when an employee forms emotional attachment to the business due to a pleasant working experience. Continuance commitment concerns the choice of workers to remain in the firm due to the associated ill effects of leaving the firm. Continuance commitment summarizes lack of alternative employment and is the cost of investment of quitting as perceived.

Methods

Research Approach

To do research, one can apply a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method. Quantitative data is focused on the use of numerical data, and the qualitative data is focused on non-numerical data [25]. The concept of quantitative data relies on the fact that human visible facts might be explored objectively. It is commonly adopted to either accept or reject a hypothesis. This research took a quantitative research methodology in determining the answer to the different research questions because this research aims at establishing a correlation between leadership styles and church commitment.

Population and Sample Size

Simple random sampling method was used in the sampling of members of the church that formed the population of this study. This left space to be able to pick all the members of the research population. Another theory that is postulated in [26] is that an investigation having a very large sample size will guarantee more precise outcomes. The estimated sample size of the study was determined using [27] sample size formula. This can be calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \times p \times (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

Where n = required sample size for sufficiency,

z = z-score per the confidence level,

N = population size,

e = margin of error, and

p = sample proportion expected.

Given the formula above, n = 384. Thus, the minimum number required to have a sufficient, representative sample size is 384.

Computations are performed assuming the following as proposed by Cochran (2007):

- Confidence level of 95%,
- p = 0.5,
- Error = 0.05

Instrument of Data Collection

The questionnaires that employed are the Multi Factor Leadership Questionnaires (MLQ). The MLQ is a standard tool that is typically employed in the measurement of transformational and transactional style of leadership [28]. Many researchers and practitioners throughout the world have used it. Transformational leadership scale has inspirational motivation, idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behaviour), intellectual stimulation and individual consideration. The contingent, management-by-exception and management-by-exception passive transactional leadership scales are contingent. Also, the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) by [29] measuring seven key dimensions of servant leadership, namely conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating value to the community was embraced as opposed to the Likert scale questionnaire on organizational questionnaire developed by [22] which was embraced in this study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher personalized the distribution and collection of the questionnaires and it amounted to 384. The researcher then collected the questionnaires and analyzed them. Moreover, an SPSS software was used in the analysis of the data and the mean, standard deviation, Relative Importance Index, the correlation analysis and regression analysis were employed in the analyzing of data.

Ethical Consideration

Ethics were observed in terms of using human beings as a respondent. Issues related to ethics are very important to note in order to make sure that the interest of the respondent is not violated. The participants were made aware of the purpose of the study and had the opportunity to withdraw out of the study anytime they wished. Once,

again, the respondent identity was not reported.

Results

Demographics

Table 1 illustrates the demographic characteristics of the respondents including gender, age group, level of education, marital status, and years of service in the church.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	200	52
Female	184	48
Age Group		
20-29	70	18.2
30-39	120	31.3
40-49	110	28.6
50-59	72	18.8
60 and above	12	3.1
Level of Education		
PhD	1	0.26
Masters	86	22.4
Bachelor Degree	102	26.6
Diploma/Certificate	106	27.6
Senior High School	72	18.8
Junior High School	17	4.4
Marital Status		
Single	152	40
Married	221	60
Years of Service in Church		
Below 1 year	37	9.6
1-10 years	164	42.7
11-20 years	138	36
21 years and above	45	11.7
Total	384	100

Reliability Index

The coefficient of Cronbach alpha measures the level of inter-consistency and reliability of a set of survey questions. Cronbach alpha is used to determine the

level of agreement on a standardised scale of between 0 and 1. When the value of Cronbachs alpha is high, then the answers of the participants to a set of questions are highly consistent. A Cronbach alpha that

exceeds 0.5 is considered to be acceptable [30] and based on the outcome of the study,

the Cronbach alpha was greater than 0.5. This is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability Index

Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership Style	0.9	Strong
Transactional Leadership Style	0.9	Strong
Servant Leadership Style	0.9	Strong
Organizational Commitment	0.6	Acceptable

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Table 3. The Overall Mean Performance of Leadership Styles

Leadership Styles	Mean	Rank
Servant	4.12	1 st
Transformational	4.07	2 nd
Transactional	3.87	3 rd

As seen in Table 3, of the three leadership styles, which have been explored in this paper, church leaders are more likely to practice servant leadership style, then the transformational and transactional leadership style. This can be asserted by the fact that servant leadership style had registered a mean of 4.12, transformational leadership style registered a mean of 4.07 and transactional leadership style registered a mean of 3.87.

Relationship between Leadership Styles and Church Commitment

The paper investigated the relationship between leadership styles (servant, transformational and transactional leadership style) and church commitment. The correlation matrix is explained in Table 3 and its use in the process of ensuring that the variables are not multicollinear.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) Transformational leadership	1.000			
(2) Transactional leadership	0.594	1.000		
(3) Servant leadership	0.749	0.718	1.000	
(4) Organisational Commitment	0.352	0.488	0.453	1.000

Correlation coefficient indicates the relationship and direction that is between variables. Thus, the correlation matrix helps in knowing whether multicollinearity exist among independent variables. “Multicollinearity is whereby some variables appear to be highly correlated with each other making it complex to find

out which variable influences the dependent variable.” [31] posit that the threshold for the existence of multicollinearity is 0.80. From the Table 3 there is no multicollinearity.

Regression Results

Table 4. Regression Output

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)		0.776	0.261		2.973	0.003
Transactional leadership style		0.434	0.079	0.347	5.485	0.000
Servant leadership style		0.349	0.101	0.267	3.466	0.001
Transformational leadership style		-0.029	0.088	-0.022	-0.332	0.740
a. Dependent Variable: Church Commitment						

In Table 4, transactional leadership style is a strong predictor of church commitment, as shown by the t-value of 5.485 and the p-value of 0.000 which are both positive values and statistically significant. The findings of this study implies that there is a significant positive relationship between transactional leadership style and church commitment. Therefore, congregants' level of commitment may be enhanced when leaders demonstrate transactional behaviours, such as establishing explicit expectations and offering incentives and motivation.

The standard error for the servant leadership style is 0.101, its coefficient is 0.349. Given that the standardised coefficient (Beta) is 0.267, it can be deduced that a change of one unit change in servant leadership is linked with a change of 0.267 standard deviations in church commitment. The servant leadership style is a strong predictor of church commitment, as shown by the t-value of 3.466 and the p-value of 0.001 which are both positive values and statistically significant

The result of the study also revealed that transformational leadership style has a coefficient of -0.029 and a standard error of 0.088 and a standardized coefficient of -0.022. Besides the p-value has a score of

0.740 which implies that the relationship between transformational leadership style and church commitment is insignificant.

Discussion

Leadership Styles Exhibited by Church Leaders in Transforming Society and Church Growth

The argument that church leaders tend to exhibit more of servant leadership can be based on the assertion that there is a strong resonance between the concept of servant leadership and the concepts of humility and service, which are often emphasised in religious teachings. Leaders who put the needs of others ahead of their own work and endeavour to serve the greater good are servant leaders. This approach places an emphasis on the duty of the leader in providing for and catering to the requirements of their followers [31]. This technique might be used by church leaders to assist the spiritual well-being of the people who attend their congregations. Additionally, they give priority to the requirements of other people, foster a sense of community, and demonstrate compassion; these are all characteristics that contribute to the formation of a congregation that is cohesive and supportive [32]. Both the teachings of many

different religious traditions and the emphasis placed on compassion and service to others are consistent with one another. Those who are considered to be servant leaders put the welfare of others ahead of their own and try to relieve suffering within the society.

Transactional Leadership and Church Commitment

Transactional leaders are those who consistently achieve satisfactory performance that aligns with established objectives. Transactional leaders also collaborate with their team members to establish unambiguous and precise objectives, ensuring that personnel get the benefits promised for achieving these goals [33]. Furthermore, transactional leaders engage in the trade of incentives and assurances in return for employee work. The existing studies on transactional leadership style and organizational commitment has provided a multiplicity of findings. Studies have shown a positive relationship [34] whereas others have shown a negative [33]. Some sources stress the possible pitfalls of transactional leadership in a church setting; others explore the impact that it has on commitment and the need for pastors to engage people and ensure their loyalty. The findings of this study conform to the literature that postulate that when people are motivated and are given realistic targets it can enhance their commitment to a goal [35]. This finding also conforms to the findings of [36] who looked at how transactional leadership style impact on organizational commitment with a mediating role of employee trust.

Servant Leadership and Church Commitment

The goal of the servant leader is to put the needs of others before of their own by

creating an atmosphere in which followers are given the opportunity to develop their skills and become more knowledgeable and healthier. The statistically significant positive relationship found in this study on the nexus between servant leadership and commitment align with existing studies. Studies have shown a positive and statistically significant relationship between servant leadership style and organizational commitment in various sectors. A study conducted by [36] on the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment in the banking industry revealed that servant leadership tends to accelerate the commitment of employees in the banking sector. These findings also conform to the findings of [37] who intimated that servant leadership plays a substantial role in the enhancement of people's level of commitment. [38] also found that there is a positive and statistically significant positive relationship between servant leadership style and organizational commitment. They also revealed that this tends to improve organizational performance. On the premises of harnessing organizational commitment, the study postulates that servant leadership is very important and there is a need for all leaders to embrace such leadership traits.

Transformational leadership style and Church Commitment

Transformational leadership is a type of leadership that is well-suited to the visionary and inspirational traits that are present in a variety of different religious teachings. Many times, the leaders of churches make an effort to urge and motivate their congregations to strive towards a shared objective that is centred on their own beliefs and the religion that they practise. The insignificant relationship found in the study can be based on the

argument that, a subordinate who have a particular expectation concerning the vision of a transformational leader will not be committed in offering their all. The disconnection between the leaders' vision and the subordinate expectation can wane the subordinate's commitment. The findings of this study align with the findings of [38] who looked at how transformational leadership style impact the level of employees commitment. Their findings revealed that there is a statistically insignificant relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational commitment. Again, on a study conducted by [39] among contract employees of government, the findings of the study also revealed that there is a weak and statistically insignificant relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational commitment. Their findings revealed that there is a weak statistically insignificant relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational commitment and this conforms to the findings of this study.

Conclusion

The study touched on the connection between the styles of leadership and the commitment of the church, which uncovered detailed information about how various leadership approaches influence the engagement of an organization. The paper investigated three primary leadership styles, such as servant, transformational, and transactional, and discovered that there are some intriguing facts regarding the complicated mechanisms of leadership in religious organizations. The findings indicated that servant leadership was the most prevalent among the servant leaders with the mean scores of 4.12, transformational leadership with the mean scores of 4.07 and transactional leadership with the mean scores of 3.87. The

regression analysis outcome also indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between servant and transactional leadership style on church commitment and an insignificant result between transformational leadership and church commitment. The study illustrates the unique features of contextual elements within faith-based institutions and the need for nuanced leadership strategies that balance foresight, compassion, and hands-on involvement. This study offers valuable perspectives on effective style of leadership within the religious sphere, with consideration of action to take in advancing church leadership.

Recommendation

Focus on Servant Leadership

Church leaders should ensure that they practice servant leadership styles which include; dedication to meeting the needs of the congregants, help the congregants to grow individually and as a group, and ensure that the church creates an environment that is conducive for spiritual and personal growth of the congregants.

Improve the Personal Connection

Church leaders should participate in interpersonal communication because it aids in knowing the specific needs, goals and organizational issues of each member of the congregation and increase affective commitment.

Promote Ethical Standards

Leadership development program that focuses on high ethical standard, communication and cultivating values that display commitment and trust from the church members should be embraced.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this

study. No financial, personal or professional affiliations have influenced the research findings and all efforts have been made to ensure objectivity and integrity in the conduct and reporting of this study.

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Ethical Approval Statement

Ethical clearance for this study was granted before collecting the data. An introductory letter was sent to leadership of the participating congregations to ask permission to do the study. Upon receiving formal approval, questionnaires were given to members of the congregations who voluntarily agreed to participate. Participation was completely voluntary, and respondents were given assurances of anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. No identifying personal information was collected and the

participants were told that they could withdraw from the study at any point without any consequence. The study followed standard ethical guidelines for conducting research with human participants.

Data Availability

The data used in support of the findings of this study were collected from members of participating congregations under conditions of confidentiality. Due to the data and the ethical agreement with the participants, the datasets are not available in the public domain. However, anonymized data may be released from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Author Contribution

The author alone conceived, designed, and conducted the study including data collection and analysis and interpretation of results. The author also prepared, revised and approved the final manuscript to be submitted.

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