LEADERSHIP and GOVERNANCE

**Moderating Effect of Empowerment on Servant
Leadership and Church Spiritual Growth**

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Abstract

Purpose: This study entailed assessing moderating effect of empowerment on servant leadership and church spiritual growth. The general objective of the study was to establish how empowerment moderates the relationship between servant leadership and church spiritual growth in Pentecostal Churches in Kenya within the Nairobi metropolitan counties. The study delved on Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship of Africa (PEFA); Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG), and Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK), all under the umbrella of National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK). The study was guided by servant leadership, empowerment and spiritual leadership theories which all indicate that servant leaders play a crucial role in empowerment of church members and consequently causing effect on church growth.

Materials and Methods: Descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used for the study and pragmatism was employed as a philosophical framework for the research. The study employed a mixed method approach with both quantitative and qualitative research methods in use and data collection undertaken through, questionnaires and interview guides. The target population constituted 2000 church pastors, elders as well as members from which a sample of 333 was obtained through purposive and stratified random sampling techniques in selected Pentecostal churches within Nairobi, Machakos, Muranga, Kiambu and Kajiado counties. The total response rate was 304 (91%). Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis, where Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29 was used. On qualitative data, thematic analysis was carried out on two focus discussions groups to determine views of participants.

Findings: Church members' empowerment has no significant moderating effect in the relationship between servant leadership and church spiritual growth of Pentecostal Churches within Nairobi metropolitan counties of Kenya. The linearity test results for the relationship between spiritual growth and empowerment suggest a significant linear association, as indicated by the low p-values (all p-values are less than 0.05). The high F-value (197.904) and low p-value (0.000) suggest a highly significant linear relationship between Spiritual Growth and Empowerment. The Pearson's correlation coefficient (R) of 0.609 signifies a moderately strong positive relationship between spiritual growth and empowerment, indicating that as one variable increases, the other tends to increase as well. There is therefore a significant moderating effect of empowerment on servant leadership and church spiritual growth. On the research question that stated: "To what extent does Church members' empowerment moderate the relationship between servant leadership and church spiritual growth of Pentecostal Churches within Nairobi metropolitan counties in Kenya?" Majority of participants agreed that church members' empowerment moderated relationship between servant leadership and church spiritual growth pointing that training, involvement and sharing of responsibilities with church members by their leaders positively affected church growth both spiritually and numerically.

Implications to theory, practice and Policy: The study supported servant leadership, empowerment and spiritual leadership theories. In addition, the study bridged a number of research gaps in area of servant leadership, empowerment and church spiritual growth indicated in the statement of the problem. The most noticeable gap is the contextual gap where many studies on church growth only delved on numerical growth and leaving out spiritual growth of which this study addressed. The study recommended that the church should put more emphasis on active participation of church members in decision making processes especially on provision of suggestion boxes within the church premises for this triggers church spiritual growth. The church was recommended to adopt servant leadership style and endeavor to empower the membership so as to realize church spiritual growth.

Keywords: *Servant Leadership, Empowerment, Church Spiritual Growth*

Shaasha, *et al.* (2024)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Empowerment entails providing followers with authority, freedom, and independence in decision making (Bercerra, 2017). In this study, empowerment of church members is the moderator variable. According to Creswell and Clark (2018), the moderator variable plays a role of changing relationships between one variable and another. Servant leadership on the other hand gives life to people, sets their minds free, and unlocks their potential as long as they are treated with dignity and respect (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2021). Leaders are expected by the followership to direct them in the right way as mentors so as to avoid detrimental collapse of their organizations. In the Christian context, church leaders should be servant leaders who emulate Jesus Christ and His Apostles as narrated in the book of Acts 2:40-42. Servant leaders can serve as a remedy for poor leadership in Africa where servanthood attitude of humility and service for others should replace self-serving governance. Servant leadership is viewed as a remedy to confusion and disunity in society and church today (Ishola & Ayangbekun, 2018). Mbogori (2020) asserts that servant leadership in organizational perspective underscores development of employees and taking care of their welfare.

Church spiritual growth, is maturity in Christian faith demonstrated by church practices including: worship, fellowship, sharing the Word of God and sharing of material possessions (Acts chapters 2 & 4) and Christian qualitative growth in faith resulting in positive impact on society (Bariu, 2017). This study sought to assess moderating effect of empowerment on servant leadership and church spiritual growth within Pentecostal Churches in Kenya. The study findings revealed that both servant leadership and empowerment constructs affect church spiritual growth. When church members are empowered through training, involvement in decision making and sharing of responsibilities, church spiritual growth in aspects of worship, evangelism as well as sharing of possessions would be manifested. For instance, it was noted that church spiritual practice of worship emerged the most practiced indicator of church spiritual growth when the church leadership empowered their followers. This revelation is key for it means churches can leverage on church member's empowerment as a way to spur church spiritual growth.

Statement of the Problem

There are a number of research gaps in the area of servant leadership, empowerment and church spiritual growth that prompted the need for further research. A number of researchers who explored servant leadership and church growth for instance Nzeng'e (2021), Thiga et al (2021), and Matisi (2020) focused mainly on numerical church growth. Church spiritual growth is therefore a grey area that required further research. Contextually, many studies on leadership, servant leadership, empowerment, and church growth in the Western countries like De Jesus (2018), Lawton (2022), and Tate (2023) focused more on secular entities as opposed to religious organizations as well as on western as opposed to African cultural context. Methodologically, a number of studies on servant leadership and church growth in Kenya such as Mwangi (2019) and Mbogori (2020) utilized quantitative research approach as opposed to mixed method. In the foregoing, it was pertinent to assess how servant leadership and empowerment affect spiritual church growth not only to fill the research gap but also to develop a theoretical model that could assist church organizations in improving their performance and growth.

Pentecostal churches in Kenya were involved in conflicts that resulted to decline, among them being PEFA and FGCK which experienced a succession conflict (Thiga et al, 2021). Following

the conflict in FGCK, a splinter group referred to as Worldwide Full Gospel Churches was born. Thiga (2021) further points out that the Assemblies of God church also faced a challenge of decline where in 2008 the Karen branch was shut down. The study by Muthuku et al, (2023) revealed that spiritual health and maturity is the most crucial factor in church growth. Church conflicts and divisions do affect church health and growth.

Study by Matisi (2020) delved on effects of leadership styles in growth and development of PEFA churches in Bungoma County in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design and examined various styles of leadership including participatory and dictatorial. Constructivism and instrumentalism theories were used. It was established that leadership styles do affect church spiritual growth. The respondents for instance preferred participatory as opposed to dictatorial leadership style. Deacons preferred delegated and strategic leadership styles. Findings further indicated that church leaders should demonstrate love, prayerful and visionary life as well as being inclusive and accountable in financial matters to affect unity and growth of the church. In addition, the study uncovered that successful leadership is anchored on vision bearers, believer's prayers and delegation of duties that all help to curb conflicts and trigger church growth in all dimensions. However, various gaps are noticeable in this study. It lacks a wider scope since there exists 47 counties in Kenya. There should be a representative sample of at least 10% of all counties. This study also did not focus on one leadership style that could enable detailed understanding for choice of it as a preferable style.

Thiga et al. (2021) explored effect of Pentecostal church conflicts on church growth in Nairobi, Kenya. The conflict was an indicator of spiritual immaturity, an issue that this study purposed to address. The study employed a qualitative approach and conflict resolution theory. Through the study, it was established that there exists a practice where church leadership in some Pentecostal churches did not involve their members on training programs or in decision making processes. This means servant leadership principal of empowering followers lacks in some of the churches. Training is a crucial way of empowering church members to mature spiritually.

Studies by Nzeng'e (2021) on empowerment and church growth within selected Pentecostal churches in Kenya pointed out that previous studies on employee empowerment focused on education and health sector as opposed to the church perspective. The findings of the study revealed that church members' empowerment had a significant relationship with church growth. The study however only focused on numerical church growth but did not explore the aspect of spiritual growth. This study therefore added more value on contextually by exploring the spiritual aspect of church growth.

All these studies pointed out research gaps that this study endeavored to bridge. In this regard, there was a need for a study to be carried out in the Nairobi metropolis to establish the trigger of such monumental drop in church membership, attendance, and maturity. This study sought to establish whether it is related to servant leadership and empowerment in the stated region. Church spiritual decline was manifested in the metropolis unlike in other regions where there was a substantial growth of the same churches. Reduced fellowships, worship services, and evangelism as pointed out by Thiga (2021) needed research to establish causality of the phenomena. This study further sought to propose ways in which church organizations' performance and growth could be improved through leveraging on best servant leadership and empowerment practices. This would

in turn propel church spiritual growth exhibited by commitment to fellowship, worship, evangelism, and sharing of possessions among believers.

Research Objectives and Hypothesis

The research objective was to establish how church members' empowerment moderates the relationship between servant leadership and church spiritual growth of Pentecostal Churches within Nairobi metropolitan counties in Kenya. The hypothesis tested was: H_{04}- Church members' empowerment has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between servant leadership and church spiritual growth of Pentecostal Churches within Nairobi metropolitan counties of Kenya.

Scope, Limitation and Delimitation of the Study

The study was undertaken among church leaders and members within three major Pentecostal denominations under the umbrella of National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK): Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship of Africa (PEFA); Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG), and Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK). The focus of the study was on local churches within the three Pentecostal denominations spread across Nairobi, Kiambu, Kajiado, Machakos and Muranga counties in the Nairobi Metropolitan region.

There was an assumption for honest reporting by respondents and research assistance to enable valid data to be obtained. Existence of invalid information obtained through self-reporting creates subjectivity and interferes with accuracy of information. This causes a challenge of validity of data collected from respondents. Besides, challenge of inadequate feedback from respondents was noted in some instances. There was no response from some respondents due to busy schedules. Some respondents took too long to give feedback leading delay in data collection and analysis. Further, long distance covered across the five counties (Nairobi, Machakos, Muranga, Kajiado and Kiambu) overstretched time and financial resources.

In order to address the limitation of subjectivity and potential dishonesty among the respondents, the study engaged experienced research assistants to pre-test the data collection instruments in a professional manner. This helped in providing clarity on the contents of the instruments for respondents to understand and provide more accurate information. Respondents were also briefed on the purpose, importance, and need to provide candid information. Delays in respondent's feedback was addressed by ensuring consistent follow-ups through research assistants and making telephone calls to the respective respondents. On the gaps of the study, further research was recommended on numerical and financial growth of the church. Research in other counties and countries on the same subject matter is also prudent in bridging the scope gap.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Empowerment

Empowerment is generally leaders giving followers freedom to make decisions independently without interference. When leaders give freedom of choice, authority and self determination to their subordinates, it results to higher work productivity (Bercerra, 2017). In this study, an assessment was done to establish how empowerment moderates the relationship between servant

leadership and church spiritual growth. The moderating variable is empowerment of church members through training, involvement and sharing responsibilities by church leaders.

Empowerment by training. Rocha's theory of empowerment (1997) underscored the need for individual self-development by acquisition of knowledge. Skills, competencies and knowledge acquired by an individual improves efficacy and satisfaction. Servant leaders do endeavor to support their followers to grow through training on new relevant skills.

Empowerment by involvement. Involvement entail a deliberate action by leaders to delegate authority, provide freedom and self determination to their followers in discharge of their duties (Becerra, 2017). It is worthwhile to note that when leaders provide their followers with opportunity to air their views during decision making forums, such practice forms part of empowerment.

Empowerment by sharing of responsibilities. Study by Andrews (2020) revealed that servant leaders who empower their followers enhance organizational trust and efficiency. In the biblical perspective, sharing of responsibilities entail leaders action of delegating roles and responsibilities to their juniors as long as they are capable and qualified to performed such roles (Exodus18). Effective leaders do share roles and responsibilities with their followership. According to Chauhan (2017) employees in an organization would work harder and perform better when they know they are empowered by the leadership and their actions rewarded. Organizational leaders are therefore obliged to delegate roles, share power and resources to their followership to effectively realize their goals.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership revolves around individual support of people or community building within the organizational context (Sousa & Dierendonck, 2021). The church is a servant community, a source of encouragement that acts as a catalyst of community empowerment in a holistic paradigm (Msabah, 2016). A servant leader is expected to inspire people to grow through modelling integrity, developing and influencing followers. It is against this premise that the study purposes to assess moderating effect of empowerment on servant leadership and church spiritual growth so as to suggest solutions to church spiritual decline witnessed globally.

Church Spiritual Growth

According to the Old Testament of the Bible, the church stands for "gathering", "congregation or "assembly" (Deuteronomy 9:10 and 1 Samuel 17:47, NIV). In the New Testament it is viewed as the body of Christ or congregation of believers of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28, NIV). In contrary to what many people believe, a church is not a building but an assembly of "called out" believers of Christ. The word "church" It is derived from Greek words *ek* meaning 'out of' and *kaleo* meaning 'to call' (Okendo, 2018). According to the New Testament, the church means the body of Christ and also believers of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28, NIV). The church is therefore a congregation of Jesus Christ believers. The purpose of the church is to grow through making disciples and evangelists who spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world (Mathew 28:19-20). The church's responsibilities that affects spiritual growth include; worship, evangelism, sharing possessions with the needy and equipping of Gospel workers (Worancha, 2012). Decline in spiritual growth could be pointed out by a drop in faith, prayers, and Bible study (Thiga et al., (2021).

Empirical Review

Bureaucratic systems affect effective discharge of tasks in an organization (Becerra, 2017). There is need of servant leadership style in organizations to give way for empowerment of employees. In this study, empowerment is the moderator variable. The moderator variable according to (Creswell & Clark, 2018) plays a role of changing relationships between one variable and another. In this study, empowerment is assessed to establish whether it has any moderating effect between servant leadership and church spiritual growth.

Andrew (2020) did a study in the department of defense in the United States of America on servant leadership effect on employee empowerment. The study used descriptive research design and servant leadership theory. The study revealed that servant leadership positively affects employee empowerment by enhancing trust and efficiency within an organization. However, the study depicted a narrow focus by only using one research question: How does servant leadership affect employee empowerment? It only utilized one theory - servant leadership. Contextually, the quantitative research only delved on one government department (Defense) therefore leaving conspicuous research gaps. This study intended to fill such gaps by enlarging the research scope and theories as well as approach to include not only quantitative but also qualitative.

In the Kenyan context, Mbogori (2020) explored performance of Full Gospel Churches in Meru region in Kenya and how servant leadership and internal environment influence church performance. The study took a quantitative approach with a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. It used servant leadership, contingency, stewardship and institutional theories. The study established a positive effect of servant leadership and internal environment on church performance. The contextual gap observed on the study is that it limited itself to Meru County leaving out cosmopolitan counties like Nairobi. Selecting a sample from Nairobi ensures diverse races and ethnicities perspectives are well represented.

The study by Nzeng'e (2019) that assessed effect of shared leadership and emotional intelligence upon Pentecostal churches in Kenya focused more on how the church grows quantitatively without addressing the spiritual growth depicted by member views and perspectives that could be derived from their views and perceptions. The same case applies to Thiga (2021) of which the study was based on Nairobi churches giving a narrow quantitative scope. In a nutshell, a number of studies on leadership and church growth in Kenya including Nzeng'e (2019); Thiga (2021), Mbogori (2020), Matisi (2020) and Nzeng'e (2021) focused more on church numerical growth as opposed to spiritual growth. This leaves behind a contextual gap that needs to be filled by this study. In a nutshell, there are research gaps noted in the previous studies that the current study sought to address. These gaps also point out grey areas that warrant for further research.

Theoretical Framework

This study employed empowerment theory. It has been argued that empowerment is a construct that forms a suitable framework and theory when using a mixed method research design (Joseph, 2020). Rocha Elizabeth coined an empowerment model referred to as "A ladder of empowerment" in the year 1997. In the theory, each empowerment is located in a ladder depending on their emphasis. There are five ladders of empowerment starting from individual to community: atomistic individual empowerment, embedded individual empowerment, mediated empowerment, socio-political empowerment and political empowerment. Rocha's empowerment theory is

applicable on the mediating variable that delves on empowerment of church members through training, involvement and sharing of responsibilities. Embedded individual empowerment can be enhanced by servant leaders empowering their followers through professional training to improve their efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. In this case, the church is expected to provide relevant training to its pastors, elders, other leaders as well as members as a way of empowerment that in turn enhances growth. Empowerment is crucial in church spiritual growth and development.

There is an interrelationship between empowerment, servant leadership and church spioritual growth where servant leadership affect church spiritual growth whereas empowerment strengthens the effect. The theories in the study agree that there is a moderating effect that empowerment infuses on the relationship between servant leadership and church spiritual growth. Figure 1 below summarizes the relationship between study theories and the main constructs of the study (servant leadership, empowerment and church spiritual growth).
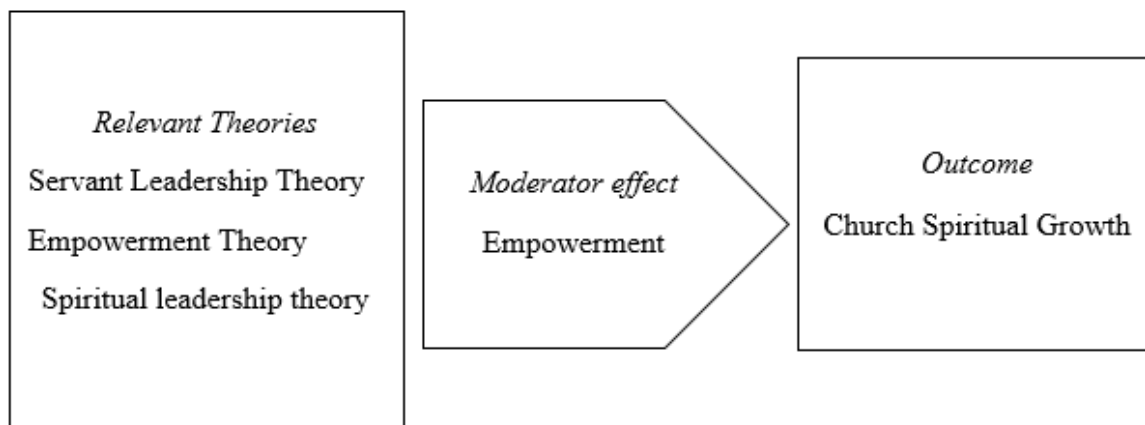

Figure 1: A Theoretical Framework of the Study

Source: Author (2024)

Theories of servant leadership, empowerment and spiritual leadership work together to trigger church spiritual growth. Dirk Van Dierendock's (2011) servant leadership model, Rocha's empowerment model (1997) and Fry's (2003) spiritual leadership theory all underscores empowerment of people that trigger church spiritual growth.

Conceptual Framework

The three main constructs that formed the conceptual framework are: Servant leadership, empowerment and church spiritual growth. The dependent variable which is church spiritual growth consists of commitment to worship, evangelism, church attendance, and sharing of possessions as sub-constructs. Ishola and Ayangbekun (2018) argues that servant leaders are modelled by Jesus Christ who aspire to make a difference to lives of those they lead using one's resources through caring, motivating and encouraging them. According to Life Ministry Kenya (2020) spiritual growth could be achieved through training, fasting, prayer, and devotions to God by believers. Figure below summarizes the conceptual framework of the study.

Conceptual Framework: Effect of Servant Leadership and Empowerment on Church Spiritual Growth
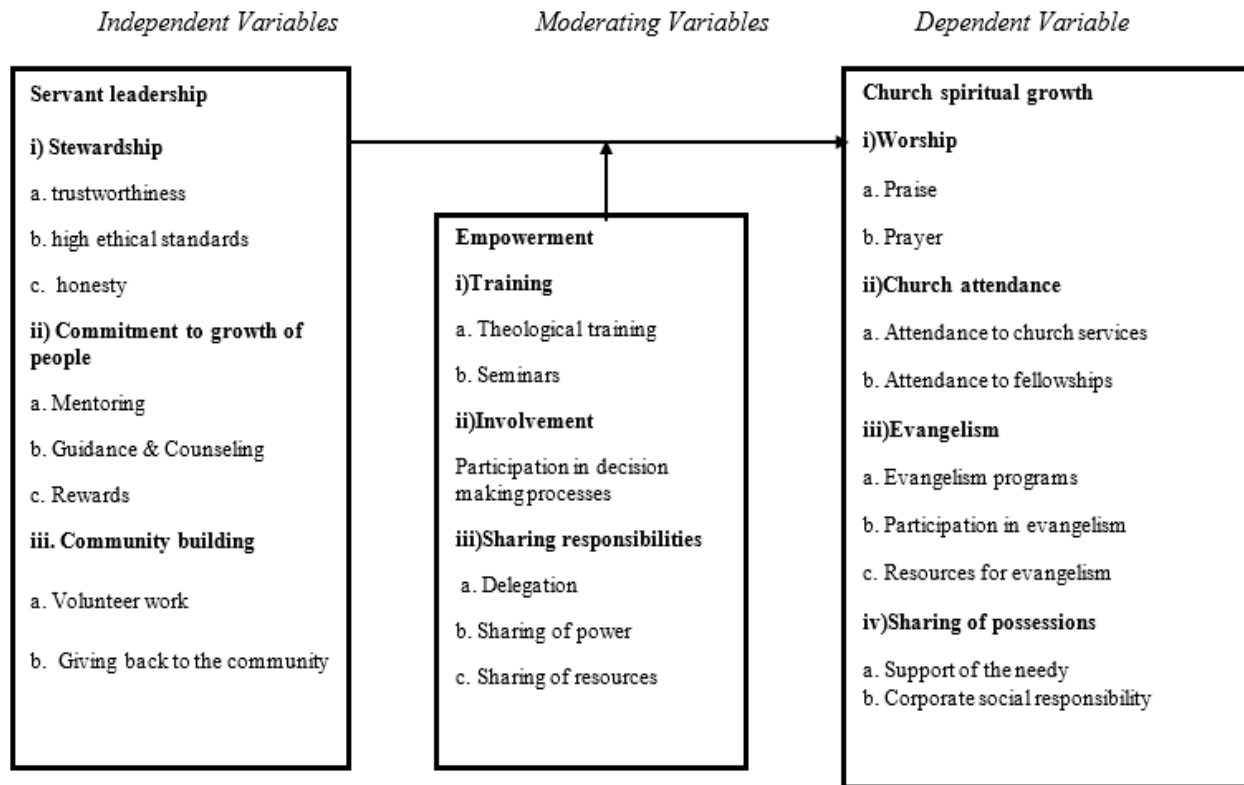

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Source; Researcher, 2024

3.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

Research design is basically a detailed guiding plan on how the researcher intends to investigate the research question in a given study. This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design and exploratory research design to assess effect of servant leadership and empowerment on church spiritual growth. According to Matisi (2020) descriptive survey design gives room for the researcher to assess relationships of various variables. On the quantitative dimension, relevant data would be collected and interpreted to enable the study bring out informed findings. On the other hand, exploratory design is pertinent in a qualitative aspect of research to find out information about a phenomenon that is not well known (Amjad et al., 2020). Exploratory design is convenient in mixed methods study for its nature of obtaining insight information from participants (Creswell, 2014).

In data collection, analysis and interpretation, mixed method (both qualitative and quantitative approaches) were employed. A descriptive cross-sectional survey research design fits well in both qualitative and quantitative study as it enables in-depth understanding of meaning and situation of people (Bloomberg, 2019). A descriptive cross-sectional survey research design is therefore

convenient as it explores people views and attitudes about a specific phenomenon. According to Mbogori et al., (2019), descriptive cross-sectional survey research design gives room for researchers to assess and analyze relationships between variables and further evaluating, distributions, frequencies and other characteristics of population under study. Research design made data collection and analysis more efficient and cost effective since data was collected across selected churches in the five selected counties in one given time.

Research Philosophy

The main guiding research philosophy for this study was pragmatism. Pragmatism is a worldview that underscores that what is important and valid is that which works in a particular situation (Johnson & Chistensen, 2014). The relevance of pragmatism to this study is that it is underscores flexibility in research therefore applicable in a mixed method approach. According to Zukauskas et al (2018), the focus underpinned by the pragmatism philosophy is on research questions as opposed to methodologies used in research. In addition, researchers decide on which procedures, methods and strategies to employ in research handy to their investigations. The use of a philosophical approach that is fit for purpose in a particular situation forms the basis of pragmatic worldview (Kaushik Walsh, 2019).

Population and Sampling Methods

The target population constitute 2000 church pastors, elders as well as members from which a sample of 333 was obtained through purposive and stratified random sampling techniques in selected Pentecostal churches within Nairobi, Machakos, Muranga, Kiambu and Kajiado counties. The total response rate of was 304 (91%). The population sample per denomination is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Population Sample

S/No	Denomination	Population	Total
1.	Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa	Pastors, elders and church members	173
2.	Kenya Assemblies of God	Pastors, elders and church members	80
3.	Full Gospel Churches of Kenya	Pastors, elders and church members	80
	Total		**333**

Source: Author (2023).

Slovin's formula was used to calculate the sample size. Muyembe & Anselemo (2023) asserts that Slovan's formula is used when distribution of attributes being measured in the study population are unknown to the researcher. Slovin's formula was used to compute the sample size of a target population of 2000 as follows:

$n = N/1+Ne^2$

where:

n = Sample size

N = Population size

e = Margin of error

n = 2000/1+2000x0.0025 = 333

The population sample size used in the study was therefore 333.

Summary of population sample size is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Sample Size Distribution

Local Church	Pastors	Elders	Members	Total
PEFA Gikomba	6	44	50	**100**
PEFA Kenanie	5	15	15	**35**
PEFA Olturoto	5	15	15	**35**
KAG Kitengela	1	13	13	**27**
KAG Community Church	1	13	13	**27**
KAG Kajiado	1	13	13	**27**
FGCK Nairobi	2	13	15	**30**
FGCK Kiambu	1	12	13	**26**
FGCK Muranga	1	12	13	**26**
Totals	**23**	**150**	**160**	**333**

Source: Author (2023).

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

Questionnaires and interview guides are the chief primary tools that were employed in collecting data. Questionnaires were administered with help of a research assistant. Questionnaires are desirable in research due to their ability of larger coverage, low cost and devoid of biases observed in interview method (Kothari, 2014). Besides, two church focus discussion groups (FDGs) one from KAG and another from PEFA church were engaged to provide qualitative data pertinent the study. Interviews were undertaken with help of research assistance with audio recording used to obtain in-depth information. Prior to data collection, permission for undertaking research was obtained from the Pan African Christian University (PACU) and National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). In addition, permission for collecting data was sought in writing from leaders of respective churches.

Data was derived from three Pentecostal denominations within Nairobi Metroplolitan counties: Nairobi, Kajiado, Muranga, Kiambu and Machakos. Data was derived from 333 church leaders and members; 173 from PEFA; 80 from KAG and 80 from FGCK. There were two categories of respondents: Church leaders (pastors and elders) and church members each filling separate part of the questionnaire. An interview guide was used to interview two discussion groups consisting of

pastors and elders. Data triangulation strategy was used where interview guides and questionnaires (both closed and open ended) were utilized. According to Creswell (2014) triangulation is helpful in minimizing investigation errors involved in single study approaches.

4.0 FINDINGS

Response Rate

The response rate was high as 304(91%) where church leaders and members of the target sample population provided information on the effect of servant leadership and empowerment on church spiritual growth. There was a high response rate for both the leadership and membership where church pastors were 54, church elders 68 while church members were 181. Demographic characteristics of the respondents showed a well balance representation where whereby on gender, male were 137 (45.1%) and female were 166 (54.6%). Diverse ages were well represented from where the majority of respondents were above 40 years. In the aspect of education, most respondents were secondary school leavers (30.6%) and Diploma holders (29.9%) while the least were certificate (3.3%) and PHD holders (0.3). Education a key element that points at understanding of respondents as they provide information. The demographic characteristics of respondents had laid down a foundation for understanding the type of population the study worked on. Generally, the Pentecostal church composition was observed to have a balanced gender and a well-educated congregation. The respondents were mature and well informed on matters leadership and church affairs. Table 3 below indicate response rate per church of all the 333 questionnaires as distributed to the sampled population of 333 church leaders and members in nine churches within five counties.

Table 3: Response Rate (Per Church)

Local Church	Distributed	Returned	Percentage	Not Returned	Percentage
PEFA Gikomba	100	83	83%	17	17%
PEFA Kenanie	35	25	71%	10	29%
PEFA Olturoto	35	35	100	0	0%
KAG Kitengela	27	27	100	0	0%
KAG Community Church	27	27	100%	0	0%
KAG Kajiado	27	27	100%	0	0%
FGCK Nairobi	30	30	100%	0	0%
FGCK Kiambu	26	26	100%	0	0%
FGCK Muranga	26	24	92%	2	8%
Totals	**333**	**304**	**91%**	**29**	**9%**

Source: Research Data (2024)

Reliability of the Questionnaire

According to Mbogori (2020) reliability tests assists in enhancing acceptability of research instruments. The moderator variable was empowerment of church members while the dependent variable was church spiritual growth. The assessment of servant leadership was done using 8 questions. Cronbach Alpha was used to test reliability of study constructs. Empowerment which

was a moderating variable containing sub variables of training, involvement and sharing of responsibilities had 8 questions and Cronbach value of 0.719 while spiritual growth with indicators of worship, attendance, fellowship and sharing of possessions accounted for 12 questions with a tested value of 0.85. Average results for reliability tests are summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Status
Servant Leadership	0.681	Reliable
Empowerment	0.719	Reliable
Church Spiritual Growth	0.85	Reliable
Overall mean	**0.861**	

Table 4 indicates that alpha values are over 0.7 and therefore pointing out a high level of internal reliability on constructs of servant leadership, empowerment and church spiritual growth. Study by Nzenge (2021) that delved on church had also indicated a high reliability rate of between 0.630 and 0.848. The study variables are there for dependable to be used in obtaining consistent and valid outcome.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Face, construct and content validity was established through engaging supervisors and experts of leadership profession. Face validity entails finding out whether a test measures what a researcher intent to measure. The face validity of the research instrument was improved by having an instrument pre-testing before the actual data collection. According to Creswell & Clark (2018), construct validity means the extent to which relevant data depict accurate representation of the theoretical concept. Mugenda Mugenda (2019) asserts that construct validity is the degree to which a questionnaire represents study concepts in a theoretical sense. This was established to ensure the questionnaires used serve the right purpose by providing relevant, accurate and representative data.

Content validity was also measured. It is the degree to which a measurement tool like a questionnaire represents the measured construct and the process of assessment should be systematic and based on best practice (Yusoff, 2019). This means ensuring that measurement is directed to what is relevant and rightful to measure. There were two sections within the questionnaires, open ended questions to take care of qualitative data and closed questions to serve quantitative data. There were two main parts of questionnaires: Part A for church Pastors and Elders Part B for church members. Respondents are only allowed to fill either of the parts depending on their status (leaders or members).

Descriptive Analysis

Empowerment

Empowerment is a moderating construct between servant leadership and church spiritual growth. Table 5 shows rating of empowerment variables.

Table 5: Empowerment Item Statistics

S/N	Description		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. Dev
	Training									
1	Our church provides theological training for leaders	Freq	16	21	42	123	102	304	3.9	1.104
		%	5.3%	6.9%	13.8%	40.5%	33.6%			
2	Our church provides seminars for leaders	Freq	7	8	23	126	140	304	4.26	0.884
		%	2%	3%	8%	41%	46%			
	Involvement in Decision Making									
	Our pastor involve church members in decision making	Freq	9	17	38	127	113	304	4.05	0.994
		%	3.0%	5.6%	12.5%	41.8%	37.2%			
	Suggestion boxes are availed to enhance expression of opinions among church members	Freq	34	63	67	71	69	304	3.26	1.318
		%	11.2%	20.7%	22.0%	23.4%	22.7%			
	Sharing of responsibilities									
	The pastor delegates duties and responsibilities to church members	Freq	6	9	31	117	141	304	4.25	0.902
		%	2%	3%	10%	38%	46%			
	Our church leaders shares power with members	Freq	13	34	50	112	95	304	3.8	1.128
		%	4%	11%	16%	37%	31%			
	The pastor shares resources with the church members	Freq	20	30	60	109	85	304	3.69	1.171
		%	7%	10%	20%	36%	28%			

Table 5 indicates that provision of training for leaders is quite satisfactory. The highest ranking is aspect is that of the Pentecostal churches providing training seminars with a mean of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.884 while theological training for church leaders had a mean score of 3.9 and a standard deviation of 1.104. This points out a strong support and emphasis Pentecostal churches on training and especially holding seminars. This study mirrors the studies by Nzenge (2021) and by Ndonye (2019) that both revealed high level provision of training for church leaders within the Pentecostal churches in Kenya. However, in the contrary, study by Mahlangu (2021) pointed out gaps in training of church leaders in Pentecostal churches in South Africa.

On the aspect of involvement of church members in decision making processes, pastors involving members in decision making had a higher ranking of 4.5 and 0.994 for mean and standard deviation respectively. However, the use of suggestion boxes by churches in obtaining views from people had a mean of 3.26 while the standard deviation was 1.318. This demonstrates involvement bestowed upon church members by their leadership in area of participating in decision making processes such as determining projects to be undertaken by the church. This is key in empowering church members to make them have a sense of ownership on activities carried out by the church. However, the church members were not provided with platform to express their independent views about the church through provision of suggestion boxes. Study by Matisi (2021) on leadership styles and church spiritual growth agrees with this study that involvement of church members in church decision making processes through delegation is key in enhancing spiritual growth. This

is also supported by Nzenge (2021) which revealed Pentecostal church member's involvement by their leaders in decision making processes. In order to enhance church member's empowerment through involvement in decision making, there is need to embark on the use of suggestion boxes within the church premises so as to enable congregants to air their views in confidentiality.

On delegation of duties and responsibilities, the aspect had a higher mean of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.902. On the other hand, leaders sharing resources with church members had the least mean 3.69 and a standard deviation of 1.171. This indicate that although church leaders in Pentecostal churches delegate their duties to their membership, some do not provide power and resources required for discharge of the delegated duties and responsibilities. A study on PEFA churches done by Matisi (2020) revealed failure by church leaders to share duties and responsibilities could affect church growth. It is prudent that church leaders should delegate duties and bestow their members with powers and resources to perform delegated duties.

Servant Leadership

The study sought to assess the stewardship practices in the church of which indicators are trust, trustworthiness and honesty. Commitment to growth of people was assessed using attributes of mentorship, guidance and counseling as well as provision of rewards. Community building variable was measured using attributes of involvement in volunteer work and giving back to the community. A summary of responses by respondents is outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: Servant Leadership Item Statistics

S/No	Description		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. Dev
Stewardship										
	The Pastor is trusted in the management of church resources	Freq	8	22	24	125	125	304	4.11	1.004
1		%	3%	7%	8%	41%	41%			
	The Pastor does things the right way when serving	Freq	5	10	22	132	135	304	4.26	0.856
2	God	%	2%	3%	7%	43%	44%			
	The Pastor is honest in	Freq	5	12	33	125	129	304	4.19	0.898
3	service to God	%	2%	4%	11%	41%	42%			
Commitment to Growth of People										
S/N	Description		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. Dev
	The pastor organizes mentorship programs for church members	Freq	6	14	15	151	118	304	4.19	0.876
1		%	2%	5%	5%	50%	39%			
	Our church leadership provides guidance and counselling services for church members	Freq	5	27	19	136	117	304	4.10	0.972
2		%	2%	9%	6%	45%	38%			
	Our church leadership rewards church members for good work done.	Freq	17	37	72	108	70	304	3.58	1.134
4		%	6%	12%	24%	36%	23%			
Community Building										
	Description		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. Dev
	Our church frequently gets involved in community volunteer work	Freq	14	42	48	117	83	304	3.7	1.146
		%	5%	14%	16%	38%	27%			
	Our church is active in giving back to the community	Freq	20	25	28	124	107	304	3.9	1.166
		%	7%	8%	9%	41%	35%			

Table 6 shows that the aspect of pastors doing things the right way when serving God is rated highest with a mean of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 1.004. This indicate that pastors possess high ethical standards in the way they conduct themselves in serving God. The second aspect with higher rating is honesty among pastors with a mean of 4.19 and a standard deviation of 0.898. According to Northouse (2022), attribute of demonstrating high ethical standards is crucial in making leaders successful. Kaur et al. (2021) posit that honesty among leaders is key in attaining organizational goals. The positivity of views on high ethical standards are a pointer of servant leadership attributes demonstrated by Pentecostal church leaders.

On commitment to growth of people, the views of respondents rated pastors provision of mentorship programs as highest with a mean of 4.19 and a standard deviation of 0.876 whereas the church leadership rewards for good work done by the membership was ranked the lowest with a mean of 3.58 and a standard deviation of 1.134. Even though the Pentecostal church leadership

nurtures their members through mentorship programs, there is a gap on reward systems where often good performers in service to God in the church are not appreciated by issuance of rewards. This points a need to sensitize church leaders on the significance of rewards in enhancing commitment to serve by church members.

This finding is in tandem with study by Boya (2022) done within the church context in South Africa. The study revealed downward trend of volunteering services and reward provisions by church leadership to the followership. There is therefore need for church leaders to offer rewards to their members as a way to encourage and motivate them to get committed in the work of God and by so doing enhance church growth.

The aspect of community building had the attribute of giving back to the community ranked higher with a mean of 3.9 and a standard deviation of 1.166 while community volunteer work was ranked lower with a mean of 3.7 and a standard deviation of 1.146. Mutua & Kiruhi (2021) study on volunteer services among public leaders revealed that effective servant leaders are both ethical and committed to offer voluntary services to community. Voluntary services enhance organizational growth. Lower ranking of volunteer services calls for sensitization to the church on the importance of volunteer services to the communities within their premises so as to enhance both numerical and spiritual growth.

Church Spiritual Growth

Table 7 shows spiritual growth indicators: Worship, church attendance, evangelism and sharing of possessions and how respondents gave their views on these attributes.

Table 7: Church Spiritual Growth Indicators

S/N	Description		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. Dev
Worship										
	Our church has an active choir/praise and worship team	Freq	8	2	21	101	172	304	4.4	0.858
		%	3%	1%	7%	33%	57%			
	Our church is committed to praise and worship	Freq	8	1	22	113	160	304	4.37	0.846
		%	3%	0%	7%	37%	53%			
	Our church has an active prayer plan in place	Freq	2	6	24	116	156	304	4.38	0.769
		%	1%	2%	8%	38%	51%			
	Our church is commited to prayer	Freq	3	3	24	105	169	304	4.43	0.763
		%	1%	1%	8%	35%	56%			
Church Attendance										
	There is a noticeable increase in attendance of our services	Freq	4	17	38	144	101	304	4.06	0.894
		%	1%	6%	13%	47%	33%			
	There is a noticeable increase in attendance of other believers' fellowship	Freq	6	14	62	144	78	304	3.9	0.903
		%	2%	5%	20%	47%	26%			
Evangelism										
	Our church has evangelism programs in place	Freq	9	17	42	113	123	304	4.07	1.016
		%	3%	6%	14%	37%	40%			
	Our church actively participate in evangelism missions	Freq	11	15	36	122	120	304	4.07	1.017
		%	4%	5%	12%	40%	39%			
	The pastor and church members give their resources in support of evangelism	Freq	10	10	40	113	131	304	4.13	0.987
		%	3%	3%	13%	37%	43%			
Sharing of possessions										
	Our church supports the needy in society.	Freq	15	27	43	121	98	304	3.86	1.116
		%	5%	9%	14%	40%	32%			
	Our church has a roadmap on how it supports the needy in the society	Freq	17	35	89	95	68	304	3.53	1.125
		%	6%	12%	29%	31%	22%			
	our church provides volunteer social services to the local community	Freq	18	38	76	106	66	304	3.54	1.137
		%	6%	13%	25%	35%	22%			

Table 7 reveals that on worship, commitment to prayer by the church congregants takes lead with a mean of 4.43 and a standard deviation of 0.763 where as active participation in choir/praise and worship takes the second position with a mean of 4.4 and a standard deviation of 0.858. These are the highest means amongst all the indicators of a growing church. It points out high dedication of

Pentecostal churches in the area of worship to God through prayer, praise and worship. This finding is in line with study by Nzenge (2021) who posit that prayer and fasting as well as personal relationship of believers with God is emphasized in Pentecostal churches.

On church attendance the highest mean is on Sunday service church attendance with a mean of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 0.894 whereas attendance of other fellowships had a mean of 3.9 and a standard deviation of 0.903. Even though church members actively attend church services, there is reluctance in attending fellowships such as home fellowships in equal measure. This result is in tandem with findings of study by Nzeng'e (2021) that revealed a mammoth church attendance of mean 4.2326 and standard deviation of 1.3646. In addition, the study uncovered minimal attendance to interdenominational fellowships by only 27% within the Kenyan Pentecostal churches. This according to the study could be due to church divisions and conflicts (Thiga, 2021). This can have a negative impact in church spiritual growth as believers will only be relying on Sunday services for spiritual nourishment. This therefore calls for more effort in encouraging other fellowships in addition to Sunday services.

Evangelism is another key indicator of church spiritual growth of which the attribute of resource provision in support of evangelism was placed the first with a mean of 4.13 and a standard deviation of 0.987. However, evangelism plan within churches and active participation in evangelism both accounted for a mean of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 1.016 and 1.017 respectively. These findings unravel efforts of Pentecostal churches in investing in support of evangelism missions. Nevertheless, there was a gap revealed in preparations for evangelism by having plans to guide on how it would be executed and a loophole in participation in reaching people on the ground. Study by Mwangi (2019) on missional effectiveness on FGCK churches in Kiambu District in Kenya revealed similar findings that established minimal participation of congregants in cross-cultural missions. This calls for Pentecostal churches to inject more efforts on development of robust structured evangelism plans and sensitize congregants on the importance of participating on face to face evangelism so as to enhance church numerical and spiritual growth.

This finding mirrors well with study on a Rwandese Pentecostal church by Kamanzi (2020) that delved on effect of servant leadership on missionary evangelistic activities. The study established a gap of inadequate support for evangelists especially on capacity building to enhance reaching the unreached. In addition, this finding is similar study by Sirengo (2019) on Pentecostal churches in Kenya that revealed that many believers are ready to send missioners to the field with their resources but themselves prefer to stay behind.

On sharing of possessions, the highest mean was support of the needy with a mean of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 1.116. The least was a roadmap in place on how to support the needy in society with a mean of 3.53 and a standard deviation of 1.125. This shows that Pentecostal churches do have believers with a passion to support the needy but at times the leadership does not provide an elaborate plan to guide them realize their goal in providing support for vulnerable groups in society. This calls for robust strategic church plans and calendars to be put in place to provide direction on a framework that spells how support the needy should be undertaken.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis obtained from focus discussion group pointed enormous views that demonstrated that empowerment of church members was prevalent through training of church

members, involving them in decision making processes and sharing with them responsibilities in the church. This plays a key role in the church spiritual growth. This is affirmed by the following excerpts by the participants:

Participant 1: There are about six members in our church that have attended theological training. It helps the church growth because spiritually people will get more advanced knowledge and spiritual teachings.

Participant 2: There are five church leaders in theological training college currently on going. We also hold seminars for leaders. It helps in in spiritual growth for people will discern false doctrines and desist from them

Participant 3: "There are levels of leadership and departmental leadership and anytime there is a decision to be made everybody is involved. It helps in church growth because everybody is involved"

Participant 4: "Mainly we have such programs when there are church seminars for example youth rallies where they do evangelism. People got involved when people have seminars so people go for outdoor evangelism"

Participant 5: "Yes, there is delegation for example if the pastor is absent then there is someone who sits in for him. It helps in growth because everyone will have experience"

Participant 6: "In our case there in none because the church is mature with various departments and duties as outlined in church program and timetable. One-man show will cause the church to decrease because things will be monotonous, it becomes more personal."

Participant 7: Before we make any decision we call committees of different departments to involve them. When departmental leaders are not available their assistants are allowed to perform duties on their behalf. This helps the church to growth as individual's needs are met by the leadership on personal level.

Participant: 8 "The last time we gave them food, we contribute food and clothes. Definitely because you have met the need of this person and the will come near and easily joining you."

Views of participants demonstrated that Pentecostal Churches puts emphasis on theological training and seminars for their church leaders and members. This view was supported by descriptive analysis results that indicated theological training and seminars had a mean of 3.9 and 4.6 respectively. The average mean of both sub constructs was 4.25 which is the highest than all predictor variable sub constructs. This is a strong indication that Pentecostal churches engage their church leaders and members on training programs especially seminars that enhance spiritual maturity and growth. On the matter of empowerment of the church through theological training and seminars, this finding mirrors well with study by Nthenge (2021) and the one by Ndonye (2019) whose results revealed that Pentecostal churches within Kenya empowered their congregants through offering opportunities for seminars and theological trainings.

Participants' views in this study indicated that Pentecostal churches involve their members in decision making processes. This is pertinent as supported by study on an Indonesian Church carried out by Hastings & Kane (2018) which established that lack of church member's involvement in decision making processes by leaders could affect church growth negatively as it denies them empowerment opportunity. Themes of member's involvement in decision making are

related to findings in descriptive statistics that revealed a 0.429 correlation coefficient level that translate to moderately positive correlation between involvement and church spiritual growth. A statistical significance of 0.000 also points out the effect church members' involvement in decision making processes is vital in church spiritual growth. According to study by Maitisi (2020) church members' empowerment triggers stir church growth. Thematic analysis on information obtained from focus discussion groups pointed to similar patterns as those in quantitative data analysis which both reveal a positive moderating effect of empowerment on servant leadership and church spiritual growth.

Hypothesis Testing

A regression analysis to establish moderating effect of empowerment on church spiritual growth was run. The test took place at a confidence level of 95%. ANOVA, and model summary were utilized to generate results. Table 8 Shows the Model summary results on empowerment moderating effect on Servant Leadership and Church Spiritual Growth.

Table 8: Empowerment Moderating Effect on Servant Leadership and Church Spiritual Growth

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.716a	0.512	0.509	0.509

Table 8 above presents results for linear regression analysis to determine whether empowerment has any moderating effect on the relationship between servant leadership and spiritual growth. The moderately high R-squared value 0.512 suggests that the regression model explain a significant amount of the variance in church spiritual growth, and the high correlation. Coefficients R = 0.716 indicates a strong positive correlation/relationship between servant leadership and church spiritual growth. In study of defense department in the United States of America that delved on servant leadership effect on employee empowerment, Andrew (2020) study revealed that empowerment of employees in an organization increases trust and efficiency. It is therefore evident that empowerment is a crucial mediator between servant leadership and church spiritual growth.

Table 9: ANOVA Model Regression on Empowerment Moderating Effect

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	81.729	2	40.864	157.49	.000b
	Residual	77.842	300	0.259		
	Total	**159.571**	**302**			

The null hypothesis states that "church members' empowerment has no significant moderating effect in the relationship between servant leadership and church spiritual growth." Since the p-value is $\alpha=0.000<\alpha=0.05$, there is a strong evidence to conclude that there is a significant moderating effect. This means that church members' empowerment does indeed have a statistically significant role in influencing the relationship between servant leadership and church spiritual growth in Pentecostal Churches within Nairobi metropolitan counties in Kenya.

In summary, the low p-value provides strong support for rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis, indicating that church members' empowerment plays a significant moderating role in this relationship. Lawton (2021) in study on church decline and

strategies for growth in the United States underpinned the need of empowerment through formation of sensitization hubs where believers can be enlightened on strategies of church growth. Study by (Diara & Mokwenye, 2019) revealed a crisis in the Nigerian Church due to mercantization of the Gospel thus retraining empowerment of believers resulting to spritual decline. On studies by Matisi (2020) in the Kenyan church context, it was established that empowerment can be attained through delegation of duties by the church leadership, for such practice positively affects church growth. All in all, quantitative data analysis shows a positive moderating effect of empowerment on servant leadership and church spiritual growth, and in the same vein, in qualitative analysis, majority of participants views affirmed the strong moderating effect of empowerment in the relationship between servant leadership and church spiritual growth.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to assess moderating effect of empowerment on servant leadership and church spiritual growth within Pentecostal Churches in Nairobi Metropolitan Counties, Kenya. The study findings revealed that the moderating variable, empowerment of church members was significant in affecting relationship of servant leadership and church spiritual growth in the Pentecostal churches. An aggregate mean of 3.88 observed from sub constructs of training, sharing of responsibilities and involvement of church members in decision making processes draws a conclusion that empowerment is a major trigger in affecting servant leaders endeavor to grow church congregants spiritually.

The study findings both through quantitative and qualitative approaches reveal that all the constructs of both servant leadership and empowerment do affect church spiritual growth. This revelation is key for it means churches can leverage on church member's empowerment as a way to spur church spiritual growth. It is crucial for church leaders to demonstrate and put in practice servant leadership practices and empower their followership so as to realize church growth. The anaysis on the empowerment variable reveals a strong moderating effect between servant leadership and church spiritual growth. Churches could therefore make deliberate efforts of empowering their congregants through training, involvement and sharing of responsibilities to trigger church spiritual growth. Revelations of the study indicate that although Pentecostal churches embrace empowerment of their members through training, involvement and sharing of responsibilities they need to improve on the area of sharing of power. Empowerment theory can be a game changer to ensure that church members are well equipped and strengthened and in turn this would lead to church spiritual growth.

Recommendations

The implications of positive effect of empowerment and servant leadership on church spiritual growth would be dynamic changes that benefits the church to mature and increase. Strong empowerment means congregants would be willing to support the church goals of evangelism, fellowships, worship and sharing of resources. A negative implication is likely to happen when church leaders fail to strengthen empowerment attributes of training, involvement in decision making and sharing of responsibilities. Church service being service to God requires high level of empowerment of church members so as to realize immense church spiritual growth. Revelations

of the study indicate that although Pentecostal churches embrace empowerment of their members through training, involvement and sharing of responsibilities they need to improve on the area of sharing of power. Empowerment theory can be a game changer to ensure that church members are well equipped and strengthened and in turn this would lead to church spiritual growth.

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