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Full Length Research

Church Leadership-Membership Relationship and Church Growth: A Study of Assemblies of God Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study determined the relationship between church leadership-membership relations and church growth, with a focus on Assemblies of God churches in Lagos State. The research explores how leadership styles affect the physical as well as the spiritual growth of the church. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for this study comprised congregants and church leaders from Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study targets active members of Assemblies of God churches, aged 18 and above, with varied educational backgrounds and socio-economic statuses. The estimated population size is approximately 5,000 church members from Assemblies of God churches in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study's sample consisted of 224 participants, comprising 24 clergy and 200 congregants, selected from 8 Assemblies of God churches in Lagos State, Nigeria. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across church sizes. The instrument that was used for data collection is a well-structured questionnaire titled "Church Leadership-Membership Relationship on Church Growth.". Questions are drawn based strictly on the stated objectives and literature reviewed. The validity of the instruments was determined by 3 experts, and a reliability index of 0.80 was obtained. The research questions were answered using simple descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance with appropriate degrees of freedom using t-test analysis. The result revealed that pastoral care relationships to a high positive extent influence church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State, and there is no significant difference in the mean score of congregants and clergy of Assemblies of God Church on the influence of spiritual leader-follower relationships on church growth. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that Church leaders should develop and implement effective pastoral care programs that provide emotional and spiritual support to members, including regular visitations, counseling, and support groups, church leaders should establish formal mentorship programs that pair experienced leaders with emerging leaders, providing guidance, support, and training to help them develop their spiritual gifts and leadership skills, and church leaders should prioritize building strong interpersonal relationships with their followers by being approachable, empathetic, and genuinely interested in their lives, thereby fostering a sense of belonging and connection.

Keywords: Church Leadership, Membership, Mentor-Mentee, Church Growth

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between church leaders and members has been identified as a key factor that can influence the success or failure of a church. This relationship is often characterised by a high level of trust,

respect, and communication among church leaders and members. It is believed that a positive church leader-member relationship can lead to increased church attendance, financial support, and participation in church

activities (Vancil & Mutch, 2021). However, there is limited research on the specific impact of this relationship on church growth. Therefore, this study sets out to examine the impact of the church leadership–membership relationship on church growth. A case study of Assemblies of God Church in Nigeria.

Studies have shown that when church leaders are able to build strong relationships with members, it leads to increased member engagement, higher rates of volunteerism, and more financial giving. These are all important factors that can contribute to the growth of a church. Of course, there are other factors that can affect church growth, such as the overall health of the community and the quality of the church's programmes and ministries. But the relationship between leaders and members is a significant factor. There are different types of relationships that can exist between the church leaders and the members. Some of these relationships, according to Malphurs (2019) and Fischer (2019), include but are not limited to spiritual leaders and instructional and financial relationships. A church leader-member relationship can be a combination of different types of relationships. For example, a church leader may act as a spiritual leader, mentor, and friend to a member. Or, a church member may provide financial support, volunteer their time, and also look to the church leader for guidance and spiritual care. So, it is not always a case of one type of relationship or the other. Rather, the relationship can be a blend of different types, depending on the needs and goals of both parties.

The spiritual leader-follower relationship is unique and complex, as it involves both a spiritual and a leadership dimension. On the one hand, the spiritual leader is responsible for providing spiritual guidance and direction to followers. On the other hand, the leader is also responsible for setting an example and inspiring followers to achieve their full potential. The relationship is built on trust, respect, and a shared vision. It's a powerful relationship that can have a profound impact on both the leader and the followers. In a spiritual leader-follower relationship, the leader must be trustworthy and honest in order to gain the followers' trust. In turn, followers must be willing to take risks and be vulnerable in order to develop trust in the leader. Similarly, the leader must show respect for the followers and their unique perspectives. Likewise, followers must respect the leader's authority and expertise. The leader and followers must also have a shared vision and purpose in order to work together effectively. A shared vision allows the leader and followers to work together towards a common goal. It also helps to create a sense of unity and purpose within the group. When there is a shared vision, the leader and followers can work together to overcome challenges and achieve great things. In short, the shared vision is what holds the relationship together and allows it to thrive.

The type of relationship relevant to this study is the interpersonal relationship between church leaders and their members. In this type of relationship, the leader and member interact with each other on a personal level,

building trust and understanding. This relationship may be informal, such as a casual conversation after church, or it may be more structured, such as a meeting to discuss the member's spiritual growth. The key to this type of relationship is establishing a personal connection and building rapport. According to Smith (2019), this relationship is built on mutual respect and understanding. For him, the church leader should be able to listen and empathise with the member, while the member should respect the leader's role and authority. This relationship is further characterised by trust. The church leader should be trustworthy and honest, while the member should feel safe and comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings. This relationship is also collaborative. The church leader and member should work together to achieve the member's spiritual goals. Hence, Chaves (2019) noted that an interpersonal relationship includes a shared identity, shared experiences, and emotional connection. Chaves suggests that this relationship goes beyond the professional role of the church leader and includes a personal connection. An interpersonal relationship is a relationship in which a church leader and member interact on a personal level, built on mutual trust, respect, and a shared spiritual goal." This definition highlights the unique aspects of the church leader-member relationship, such as the spiritual connection and shared goals. Vaters (2019) defined the relationship between pastors and their flock as an intimacy and familiarity that allows the shepherd to guide, counsel, and comfort the sheep. This definition emphasises the shepherd-sheep metaphor often used in Christianity, highlighting the pastor's role as a guide and a source of comfort.

Similarly, instructional relationship refers to the relationship between a teacher and a student. In the context of a church, this relationship could involve a pastor or other church leader teaching a Bible study, Sunday school class, or other type of educational programme. This relationship is important because it provides an opportunity for the teacher to model and encourage spiritual growth while also providing a space for the student to ask questions and learn from the teacher's experience and knowledge. There are several ways that church leaders can establish and maintain an instructional relationship with their members. First, they can create a culture of learning and curiosity within the church, where people are encouraged to ask questions and explore their faith. Second, they can offer regular educational opportunities, such as Bible studies or classes, where they can model and encourage spiritual growth. Third, they can make themselves available for individual conversations and questions, providing a safe space for people to ask questions and learn. One other important aspect of the instructional relationship is feedback. Church leaders can give feedback to their members on their progress in their spiritual journey, and members can provide feedback to their leaders on the effectiveness of the educational opportunities offered. This feedback can help both sides to learn and grow.

An instructional relationship is a close, personal relationship between an adult and a church leader that is aimed at Christian growth and development (Wind & Bird, 2022). It emphasises the importance of a close, personal relationship between the teacher and the student with a focus on Christian growth and development. There are a few ways to apply this definition in a practical way. First, church leaders can take the time to get to know their members on a personal level, learning about their lives and interests. Second, they can tailor their teaching to the needs and interests of their members, making the material relevant and engaging. Third, they can provide opportunities for members to ask questions and share their insights, creating a two-way learning experience. Similarly, Kaggwa (2020) defined the instructional relationship as a one-on-one partnership between the pastor and the layperson. Miller goes on to say that this relationship is not just about teaching but also about listening, encouraging, and supporting. Here, the role of the church leader is to teach, listen, encourage, and support their members. The role of the member is to trust and be open with their leader, allowing them to be taught and guided. It is important to note that this is a partnership, with both sides playing an active role in the relationship (Kaggwa, 2020). In summary, an instructional relationship is a close, personal partnership between a church leader and a church member, focused on mutual learning and growth. It's based on trust, openness, and a willingness to learn from one another. This relationship is not just about information but about sharing experiences, emotions, and insights.

The church is an organisation that performs a lot of financial dealings with its members. Hence, between the church leaders and the members, there exists a financial relationship. According to Nkosi (2018), financial relationships are governed by principles of honesty, fairness, and integrity. In the context of the church, financial relationships are often referred to as "stewardship". This refers to the responsibility of church leaders to manage and care for the resources of the church, including its finances. Stewardship is guided by the principles of transparency, accountability, and integrity. Church members are also called to be good stewards of their personal finances and to contribute to the church as they are able. The financial relationship between church leaders and members can have a significant impact on the overall relationship. When finances are managed well, with transparency and accountability, it can build trust and a sense of unity. However, if finances are mismanaged, it can lead to conflict, distrust, and even division within the church.

Therefore, it is important for church leaders to approach financial relationships with wisdom, humility, and prayer. This way, they can honour God and serve their members well. Hence, Vancil and Mutch (2021) defined financial relationships as "the way Christians interact with each other and with money." Burkett highlights the importance of viewing money as a tool for serving God and others, rather than a means to personal

gain. This perspective helps to keep financial relationships focused on their true purpose, rather than on selfish motives. The implications of the financial relationship between church leaders and members can be significant. When finances are managed well, the relationship can be strengthened, and the church can fulfil its mission more effectively. However, when finances are mismanaged, it can cause damage to the relationship and prevent the church from achieving its goals. This is why it is so important for church leaders to handle financial relationships with care and wisdom. Financial relationships in the church are the opportunity to express stewardship as believers make and manage their money in accordance with God's priorities and purposes (Nkosi, 2018). The implications of this definition can be summed up in two main points. First, it emphasises the need for church leaders to be knowledgeable and equipped to help members make wise financial decisions. Second, it highlights the importance of members being accountable to God and the church for their financial choices. When these two things are in place, it can create a healthy and productive financial relationship between church leaders and members (Hemphill, 2023).

From the foregoing, this study has identified several types of relationship between the church leaders and the members. Available literature has also suggested that these relationships are important to the growth and actualisation of the churches' objective. Hence, a number of studies have been carried out to find out the predictive impact of this type of relationship on church growth. For instance, Vaters (2019) examined the relationship between spiritual leadership and church growth and found that spiritual leadership is significantly related to church growth. Specifically, they found that the spirituality of a congregation's members is a better predictor of church growth than are the congregation's facilities, programmes, and sociological make-up. Also, Mwita (2019) examined the relationship between pastoral care and church growth. The study found that pastoral care, which includes personal visitation and counselling, was positively associated with church growth. Specifically, the study found that churches that provided more hours of pastoral care per week experienced more growth in membership, worship attendance, and giving. Furthermore, Kaggwa (2020) explored the link between instructional relationships and church growth and revealed that when church leaders invest in building strong, personal relationships with their members, the church will naturally grow and thrive. Additionally, Chaves and Dougherty (2019) explored the role of mentor-mentee relationships in church growth and found that the presence of a strong mentor-mentee relationship was associated with higher levels of church growth. They also found that the most effective mentor-mentee relationships involved regular meetings, open communication, and trust. Furthermore, Ecklund and Scheitle (2017), in their study "Relationships matter: The importance of interpersonal bonds in religious communities", looked at the role of interpersonal relationships in religious

communities and how these relationships can impact church growth. The study found that interpersonal relationships are an important factor in the health and growth of religious communities. Finally, a study by the Lake Institute on Faith and Giving revealed that churches that were more transparent about their finances tended to have higher rates of giving.

This study is anchored on social exchange theory by George Homans (1958). Social exchange theory, proposed by George Homans in 1958, suggests that relationships are based on a process of give-and-take, in which each party exchanges resources (such as time, effort, and money) with the other. Social Exchange Theory (SET) is based on several fundamental assumptions that underpin its explanations of social behaviour. At its core, SET assumes that individuals act rationally, weighing the potential rewards and costs of their actions in social interactions. This rationality is driven by self-interest, as people seek to maximise their rewards while minimising their costs. All social interactions, according to SET, involve the exchange of rewards and costs, whether tangible or intangible. Furthermore, individuals expect reciprocity in their social exchanges, anticipating that others will respond in kind. In evaluating their social exchanges, individuals compare them to their expectations, past experiences, and alternatives.

Some studies reviewed in this study are Nkosi (2018), which investigated the impact of interpersonal relationships on church growth: a case study of Presbyterian churches in South Africa. The population of the study consisted of all members of Presbyterian churches in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. A sample of 1,000 church members and 50 church leaders was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. The findings of the study revealed that interpersonal relationships had a significant positive impact on church growth. Kaggwa (2020) examined the impact of instructional relationships on church growth: a case study of Anglican churches in Uganda. The study employed a mixed-methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The population of the study consisted of all members of Anglican churches in the Kampala Diocese of Uganda. The findings of the study revealed that instructional relationships had a significant positive impact on church growth. Mwita (2019) investigated the impact of financial relationships on church growth: a case study of evangelical churches in Tanzania. The study employed a mixed-methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The population of the study consisted of all members of Evangelical churches in the Dar es Salaam Region of Tanzania. A sample of 700 church members and 40 church leaders was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. The study used a questionnaire and an interview schedule as instruments for data collection. Data was collected through a survey of church members and in-depth interviews with church leaders. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and thematic

analysis. The findings of the study revealed that financial relationships had a significant positive impact on church growth.

A story was told of a group of believers that split from Faith Tabernacle Church due to disagreement over the Holy Spirit baptism in 1934, called the Church of Jesus Christ, in Afara, Old Umuahia, in Eastern Nigeria, which was later affiliated with Assemblies of God USA in 1939. Assemblies of God Church became the foremost Pentecostal denomination in Nigeria. The church expanded to Lagos, Nigeria, from the east in 1957, through Rev. J. U. Omereonye, a missionary who settled in the Ajegunle area called Amore. From there, it expanded to all the states in western Nigeria. Presently the church has 9 administrative units in Lagos, with about 978 local branches. Today, Assemblies of God has grown into a major force in the Christian body in Nigeria. The church has played an important role in the development of Lagos State. The church has been involved in a wide range of activities, including providing social services, running schools and orphanages, and engaging in community development initiatives. The church has also been a major source of spiritual guidance and support for many residents of Lagos State.

However, the Assemblies of God church in Lagos State is grappling with a myriad of challenges that are impeding its growth and development. One of the most pressing issues facing the church is the mass exodus of youth members to other denominations, particularly influenced by the rise of Pentecostalism. This trend has resulted in a decline in membership retention and poses a significant obstacle to sustaining church growth and vitality. Additionally, the church is confronted with broader societal challenges such as urbanisation, poverty, and unemployment, which have created barriers to active participation in church activities. These socio-economic factors not only hinder the church's outreach efforts but also limit its ability to engage and retain members effectively. Moreover, studies by Pentecostalism in Lagos (2023), Ibekwe (2018), and Aka (2020) have shed light on critical issues within the church administration, including a shortage of trained leaders, which further exacerbates the challenges faced by the Assemblies of God church in Lagos State. Despite experiencing some growth, the Assemblies of God churches in Lagos, Nigeria, lack comprehensive research on the impact of leadership-membership relationships on church growth, to the researcher's best knowledge. Hence, the need for understanding the dynamics of effective leadership-member interactions is particularly concerning given the complex socio-economic landscape in which the church operates. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate how leadership-membership relationships can influence church growth within the context of these challenges to ensure the sustainability and relevance of the Assemblies of God Churches in Lagos, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Assess the extent to which interpersonal relationships impact church growth in Assemblies of God Church.
2. Determine the extent to which instructional relationships impact church growth in Assemblies of God churches.
3. Ascertain the extent to which financial relationships impact church growth at the Assemblies of God Church.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does interpersonal relationship influence church growth in the Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State?
2. To what extent does the instructional relationship influence church growth in the Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State?
3. To what extent does financial relationship influence church growth in the Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance to guide the study.

H01 Interpersonal relationships do not significantly impact church growth in the Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State.

H02 Instructional relationship does not significantly impact church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State.

H03 Financial relationships do not significantly impact church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in Assemblies of God church, Lagos State. The population for this study comprises members, leaders and pastors of AGC Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study targets active members of Assemblies of God churches, aged 18 and above, with varied educational backgrounds and socio-

economic statuses. The estimated population size is approximately 94,000 church members from Assemblies of God churches in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study's sample consists of 384 participants (comprising 84 clergy and 300 congregants, selected from 8 Assemblies of God churches in Lagos State, Nigeria). A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across church sizes. Within each section, 2 churches were randomly selected, and then 6 clergy and 34 congregants were randomly sampled from each church. Congregations with not up to 34 congregants were merged with another congregation. This approach allowed for proportional representation and mitigated potential biases, ensuring the sample accurately reflects the characteristics of the population. There are distinct methods for calculating sample size for different study designs and different outcome measures. For the purpose of this study, the Cochran (1967) formula with a 10 per cent confidence level was adopted. The instrument used for data collection was a well-structured questionnaire titled "Church leadership-membership relationship with church growth questionnaire". Questions are drawn based strictly on the stated objectives and literature reviewed. The questionnaires are structured in two sections. In section A, the respondents were required to provide the demographic information. Section B elicited information on church leadership-membership relation and church growth. This section was divided into 3 clusters. Cluster 1 elicited information on the influence of interpersonal relationships on church growth in the Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State. Cluster 2 elicited information on the influence of instructional relationships on church growth in the Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State. Cluster 3 elicited information on the influence of financial relationship impact on church growth in the Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State. The response format is a 4-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) (4 points), High Extent (3 points), Low Extent (2 points) and Very Low Extent (1 point). The validity of the instruments was determined by 3 experts from the faculty of religious studies at Paul University Awka and my supervisor. To test the reliability of the questionnaire instrument, the Cronbach's alpha method of reliability will be used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. 20 copies of the samples of the questionnaire will be administered to 20 church members that are not part of Paul University, Akwa. A reliability index of 0.80 was obtained. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. The four-point scale was used to compute the mean. This means that the cut-off mark is 2.50. Hence, items with points above the cut-off mark of 2.50 were retained, while those below 2.50 were not accepted. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance with appropriate degrees of freedom using t-test analysis. The hypotheses of no significant difference were retained if

the p-value was greater than the 0.05 level of significance; otherwise, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Results

Demographic Information of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Information of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Gender	Male	222	57.81	57.81
	Female	162	42.19	42.19
	Total	384	100.0	100.0
Status	Clergy	84	21.88	21.88
	Congregants	300	78.12	78.12
	Total	384	100.0	100.0
	O level	84	21.88	21.88
	Diploma	77	20.05	20.05
	Degree	129	33.59	33.59
	Postgraduate	60	15.64	10.42
	Others	34	8.85	8.85
	Total	384	100.0	100.0

Data from the survey revealed that while 222 (57.81%) of the respondents are male, 162 (42.19%) of the respondents are female. Also while 84 (21.88%) of the respondents are clergy, 300 (78.12%) of the respondents are female. Finally, the data revealed that the majority of the respondents 129 (33.59%) are degree holders, followed by O'level holders 84 (21.88%). Additionally, 77 (20.05%) of the respondents are Diploma certificate holders while 60 (15.64%) of the respondents are post graduate degree holders. Finally, 34 (8.85%) of the

respondents possess unclassified certificates. However, data from table 4.1 revealed that all the respondents are capable of filling and giving accurate answers to the questionnaires.

Research Question One

What is the extent of relationship between interpersonal relationship and church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State?

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard deviation of congregants and clergy on the interpersonal relationship and church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	The quality of interpersonal relationships between church leaders and followers contribute to church growth?	3.13	1.027	High Extent
2	Positive interactions between church leaders and members foster a sense of community, leading to church growth?	3.05	.914	High Extent
3	The church leader's ability to build and maintain strong relationships with members impact member retention and church growth?	3.25	1.063	High Extent
4	Church leaders' efforts to engage with members and show genuine interest in their lives contribute to church growth?	3.04	.995	High Extent
5	A sense of belonging and connection among members, facilitated by church leaders, impact church growth and development?	3.20	.689	High Extent
Cluster Mean Scores		3.13	0.938	High Extent

Table 2 shows the cluster mean of items 1-5 was 3.13. This is above the benchmark score of 2.50 of a 4-point rating scale. This implies that interpersonal relationships to a high positive extent influence church growth in

Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State. The table also revealed that the cluster standard deviation of items 1-5 was 0.938. This also shows that the respondents were not far from the mean and the opinion of one another in their

responses on the influence of interpersonal relationship on church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State, adding further validity to the meaning.

Research Question Two

What is the influence of instructional relationship on church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State?

Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard deviation of congregants and clergy on the extent instructional relationship influence on church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	The church leader's ability to provide clear and relevant biblical instruction impact church growth	3.09	.964	High Extent
2	Church leaders' teaching and preaching styles contribute to members' spiritual growth and development	3.14	1.023	High Extent
3	The church leader's instructional relationship with members help them apply biblical principles to their daily lives	3.01	.970	High Extent
4	Church leaders' discipleship and mentorship programs contribute to members' spiritual maturity and church growth	3.12	.976	High Extent
5	The church leader's ability to provide relevant and practical biblical training impact members' involvement and commitment to the church	3.16	.962	High Extent
Cluster Mean Scores		3.10	0.979	High Extent

Table 3 shows the cluster mean of items 1-5 was 3.10. This average is above the benchmark score of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale. This implies that instructional relationships to a high positive extent influence church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State. The table also revealed that the cluster standard deviation of items 1-5 was 0.979. This also shows that the respondents were not far from the mean and the opinion of one another in their responses on the influence of

instructional relationships on church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State, adding further validity to the meaning.

Research Question Three

To what extent does financial relationship influence church growth in the Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State?

Table 4: Mean Scores and Standard deviation of congregants and clergy on the extent financial relationship influence on church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	The church leader's transparency and accountability in financial matters impact member trust and church growth?	3.28	.618	High Extent
2	Church leaders' financial stewardship and management practices influence members' giving habits and church growth?	3.20	.709	High Extent
3	The church leader's teaching on biblical stewardship and generosity impact members' financial commitment to the church?	2.96	.885	High Extent
4	Church leaders' financial planning and budgeting practices contribute to the church's financial stability and growth?	3.42	.651	High Extent
5	The church leader's handling of church finances impact member confidence and participation in church activities?	3.33	.973	High Extent
Cluster Mean Scores		3.24	0.767	High Extent

Table 4 reveals that the cluster mean of items 1-5 was 3.24. This value is above the benchmark score of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale. This implies that financial relationships to a high positive extent influence church growth in the Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State. The table also revealed that the cluster standard deviation of items 1-5 was 0.767. This also shows that the respondents were not far from the mean and the opinion of one another in their responses on the influence of

financial relationships on church growth in the Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference in the mean score of congregants and clergy on the extent interpersonal relationships influence church growth in Assemblies of God Church.

Table 5: T-test Analysis of congregants and clergy of Assemblies on the extent interpersonal relationship influence church growth in Assemblies of God Churches in Lagos State.

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	t.cal	P-value	Remarks
Congregants	24	3.1417	.73539	222	.051	.959	NS
Clergy	200	3.1330	.78434				

The data in Table 5 indicates a t-calculated value of .051 and a significant p-value of .959. Since the p-value of .959 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. Consequently, there is no significant difference in the mean score of congregants and clergy on the influence of interpersonal relationships on church growth in Assemblies of God Church, Lagos State.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant difference in the mean score of congregants and clergy on the extent instructional relationships influence church growth in Assemblies of God Church.

Table 6: T-test Analysis of congregants and clergy of Assemblies on the extent interpersonal relationship influence church growth in Assemblies of God Churches in Lagos State.

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	t.cal	P-value	Remarks
Congregants	24	3.0750	.88428	222	-.180	.857	NS
Clergy	200	3.1100	.90153				

The data in Table 6 indicates a t-calculated value of -.180 and a significant p-value of .857. Since the p-value of 0.857 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. Consequently, there is no significant difference in the mean score of congregants and clergy on the influence of instructional relationships on church growth in Assemblies of God Church, Lagos State.

Hypothesis three:

There is no significant difference in the mean score of congregants and clergy on the extent to which financial relationships influence church growth in Assemblies of God Church.

Table 7: T-test Analysis of congregants and clergy of Assemblies on the extent financial relationship influence church growth in Assemblies of God Churches in Lagos State.

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	t-cal	P-value	Remarks
Congregants	24	2.9917	.79011	222	-2.284	.023	NS
Clergy	200	3.2660	.52212				

The data in Table 7 indicates a t-calculated value of -2.284 and a significant p-value of .023. Since the p-value of .023 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null

hypothesis is therefore rejected. Consequently, there is a significant difference in the mean score of congregants and clergy on the influence of financial relationships on

church growth in Assemblies of God Church, Lagos State. This implies that the opinion of both the clergy and congregants differs on the influence of financial relationships on church growth.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding of the study revealed that interpersonal relationships to a high positive extent influence church growth in the Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State. Specifically, interpersonal relationships between church leaders and followers contribute to church growth, foster a sense of community, lead to church growth, build and maintain strong relationships with members, and impact member retention and church growth, as well as foster a sense of belonging and connection among members. This validated the findings of Nkosi (2018) on the impact of interpersonal relationships on church growth: a case study of Presbyterian churches in South Africa. The findings of the study revealed that interpersonal relationships had a significant positive impact on church growth.

Furthermore, the findings of the study in accordance with research question 5 revealed that instructional relationships to a high positive extent influence church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State. Specifically, church leaders' ability to provide clear and relevant biblical instruction impacts church growth, contributes to members' spiritual growth and development, helps members to apply biblical principles to their daily lives, and contributes to members' spiritual maturity, as well as impacts members' involvement and commitment to the church. This validated the findings of Kaggwa (2020) on the impact of instructional relationships on church growth: a case study of Anglican churches in Uganda. The main objective of the study was to investigate the impact of instructional relationships on church growth in Anglican churches in Uganda. The findings of the study revealed that instructional relationships had a significant positive impact on church growth.

Finally, findings from the study revealed that financial relationships to a high positive extent influence church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State. Consequently, church leaders' transparency and accountability in financial matters impact member trust and church growth, influence members' giving habits, impact members' financial commitment to the church, contribute to the church's financial stability and influence members' confidence and participation in church activities. This is in agreement with the findings of Mwita (2019) on the impact of financial relationships on church growth: a case study of evangelical churches in Tanzania, which revealed that financial relationships had a significant positive impact on church growth.

Conclusion

The study concludes that interpersonal relationships to a high positive extent influence church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State. The opinions of congregants and clergy on the extent of influence of interpersonal relationships on church growth did not significantly differ. Instructional relationships to a high positive extent influence church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State. Congregants' and clergies' opinions on the extent of influence of instructional relationships on church growth did not significantly differ, and Financial relationships to a high positive extent influence church growth in Assemblies of God Church in Lagos State. There is, however, a significant difference in the mean of opinion of clergies and congregants on the extent of influence of financial relationships on church growth. This means that these types of leadership styles contribute to increased member retention, commitment, and participation, ultimately driving church growth. The consistency of these findings across different aspects of leader-follower relationships underscores the importance of church leaders prioritising relationship-building and investing time and effort into developing and maintaining strong, supportive connections with their followers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Church leaders should prioritise building strong interpersonal relationships with their followers by being approachable, empathetic, and genuinely interested in their lives, thereby fostering a sense of belonging and connection.
2. Church leaders should prioritise providing clear, relevant, and practical biblical instruction that equips members to apply biblical principles to their daily lives, promoting spiritual growth and maturity.
3. Church leaders should prioritise transparency and accountability in financial matters, regularly communicating with members about the church's financial situation, budget, and expenditures, thereby building trust and promoting financial stewardship.

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