

The Role of Idealized Influence on the Performance of Pentecostal Assemblies of God Churches in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT: Performance is one of the problems facing contemporary organizations that are operating in the current dynamic business environment. The objective of this study was to determine the role of idealized influence on the performance of Pentecostal Assemblies of God churches in Eldoret County, Kenya. The study was anchored on both Transformational Leadership Theory and the Balanced Scorecard Model. Positivism research philosophy and descriptive research design were selected to guide the study. The target population was all the 820 ministry leaders in the 60 Pentecostal Assemblies of God Churches in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. A sample population of 269 respondents comprising of Senior Pastors, Deacons, elders, secretaries, treasurers, heads of departments in women's, youth, and Sunday school ministries and other leaders serving in various church committees were selected using multistage and purposeful sampling techniques from 15 assemblies. The research gathered empirical data using structured questionnaires which was later analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Program (SPSS) version 26 software. The results showed that idealized influence had a moderate positive correlation with church performance ($R=0.309$). The study recommends that church leaders in Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya improve on the aspect of being role models, and providing visionary leadership to their followers.

KEYWORDS: Transformational Leadership, Idealized influence, performance

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Just as in other business environments, performance is one of the challenges facing the church that is operating in a very dynamic and unstable context in most parts of the world. In a previous study that was done in the European Countries, the results showed that churches had continued to decline in numbers (Bendavid, 2015). For example, in Ireland, the number of church members declined by 11 percent from 60 percent in 2002 to 49 percent in 2012. The study further revealed that although the decline in church membership had not resulted in the closure of some of the churches, however, it had resulted in some of the church pews being almost empty. The main contributing factor to the decline in church membership in the West has mainly been attributed spiritual immaturity among church members.

In a comparative study that was carried out to ascertain the rate of the decline of churches in South Africa, Ferreira & Chipenyu (2021) found that church decline begun in the 1980s and was still ongoing at the time the study was done, leading to the closure of some of the churches in the country. For instance, the membership of Pentecostal churches in South Africa reduced by 10.4 percent between 1991 and 2001 from 54.4 percent to 44.0 percent due to factors such as politics, education, health, economy, and social and culture. The study further found that the decline is mostly affecting black congregations as compared to white congregations. Although the church decline affected almost all the churches in South Africa, however, the Protestant churches seemed to be more affected than the rest.

In a study that was done in Kenya to investigate the effect of church conflicts on the growth of Pentecostal Churches in Kenya and especially focusing on Nairobi County, Thiga et al, (2021) found that Full Gospel Churches of Kenya, Kenya Assemblies of God, Pentecostal Evangelism Fellowship of Africa, and Worldwide Gospel Church of Kenya to be the churches mostly affected by growth and performance challenges. The study found that majority of these church faced conflicts involving their top leadership that was hindering their growth and performance. As a result, these churches lost some of their members to the neighbouring churches. From the literature presented from the global, regional, and local perspectives, it is clear that the church has not been performing well which has contributed to decline in membership.

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Statement of the Problem

From the biblical perspective, the nation of Israel was chosen by God to make him known to all nations. According to Agang et al., (2020), the Church is supposed to be a firm and stable institution accomplishing the Great Commission based on Jesus Christ's church foundation. After being in the world for three and half years, Jesus left the same mandate with the church of fulfilling the Great Commission of spreading the word of God to all parts of the world (Bendavid, 2015). However, although the primary objective of the church is to influence the values of society through the spreading of the gospel, previous studies have shown that the church is undergoing performance challenges due to the existence of conflicts facing both secular and Christian organizations (Naibaho et al. 2021). There result of lack of church growth and performance has been closure of churches, church members shifting from one church to another, lack of spiritual growth among church members and a Great Commission that remain partially fulfilled.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Raman et al. (2021) conducted a study among professors in Indonesian public universities to establish the impact of idealized influence on task job performance by their subordinates. Both quota sampling method and non-probability sampling methods were employed to select the study's participants from the respective public universities. Data was analyzed using the Partial Least Squares structural equation. The study established that there was a direct correlation between idealized influence and job task performance that was consistent with the Attribution Theory. The study by Raman et al. (2021) sampled university professors as its respondents and therefore raising a methodological gap that the current study filled by having church leaders as the respondents. Further, the study by Raman et al. (2021) was grounded on Social Exchange Theory while the current study was grounded on Transformational Leadership Theory. In terms of contextual gap, the study by Raman et al. (2021) was conducted in a secular context while the current study was conducted in a church context.

Suhana et al. (2020) did a study to determine the nexus between idealized influence and organizational performance in private universities in Indonesia. In this study, transformational leadership was the independent variable, knowledge sharing was the dependent variable, while contingent reward was the intervening variable. The study respondents were university lectures who were selected using purposive sampling method. The study was grounded on Transformational Leadership Theory with the findings establishing a positive and significant relationship between idealized influence and knowledge sharing. The study by Suhana et al. (2020) was conducted in Indonesia and in a secular setting, which reveals a contextual gap as its findings may not be directly applied to PAG-K Churches in Eldoret, Kenya where the current study was carried out.

Mwakajila and Nyello (2021) explored the impact of idealized influence on organizational performance in small and medium enterprises (SME) in Tanzania. Specifically, the study was done to determine the extent to which idealized influence led to the organization financial stability. The study was moderated by the age and the shareholding structure of the organization. Study participants were recruited from the service, trade and manufacturing sectors using stratified sampling method. The study was grounded on Transformational Leadership Theory. It was established that idealized influence positively and significantly influenced the financial performance of Tanzanian SMEs. The study also established the age and shareholding structure of the enterprises moderated the relationship. However, the study presents a contextual gap in that it was conducted in an SME context while the current study was done in a church setting.

In Nigeria, Komolafe et al (2025) carried out a study with the aim of determining the effect of idealized influence on conflict resolution among church leaders of Nigerian Pentecostal churches in Abuja. The study was anchored on pragmatism philosophy and correlational research design respectively. The study sampled 371 respondents using purposeful sampling method from whom data was collected using both closed and open-ended questionnaires. The data was later analyzed using SPSS version 26 for quantitative data and NVIVO version 14 for qualitative data. The results showed that idealized influence had a significant positive correlation ($r=0.482$) on conflict resolution in Nigerian Pentecostal Churches in Abuja. The study by Komolafe et al (2025) presents a contextual gap in that it was done in Nigeria while the current study will be done in Kenya.

Kimeto and K'Aol (2018) did a study on the impact of idealized influence on performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The focus was on how idealized influence affected employee loyalty, which is an element of organizational performance. The study was anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory. Using stratified sampling method, participants were selected among the senior managers leading key functions from the 40 commercial banks operating in Kenya. It emerged that idealized influence that directly and positively impacted on performance in commercial banks in Kenya was attributed to increased staff loyalty. The focus of the study was on commercial banks presenting a contextual gap which was addressed in the present study which was conducted in a church setting.

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Langat et al. (2019) studied the impact of idealized influence on organizational performance in the Kenyan insurance industry. The study used both correlational research design and positivism research philosophy due to its quantitative nature. The study treated transformational leadership as the independent variable, employee performance as the dependent variable and employee work value congruence as the moderating variable. The study used stratified and systematic sampling methods to recruit study participants working as lower-level managers from the 52 insurance companies operating in Kenya. The researcher analyzed data using descriptive statistics. The study presented a conceptual gap in that it had three variables while the current study had two variables. Further, the study by Langat et al. (2021) was conducted in insurance companies while the current study was undertaken in PAG-K Churches in Eldoret Uasin Gishu County.

METHODOLOGY

Positivism Research philosophy using descriptive research design were employed in this study. The target population was all the 820 ministry leaders in the 60 Pentecostal Assemblies of God Churches in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. From 15 assemblies, a sample population of 269 respondents comprising of Senior Pastors, Deacons, elders, secretaries, treasurers, heads of departments in women, youth, and Sunday school ministries and other leaders serving in various church committees were selected using multistage and purposeful sampling techniques. The research gathered empirical data using structured questionnaires which was administered to the 269 respondents. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Program (SPSS) version 26 software. The qualitative data collection used in-depth interviews using Key informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive Statistics for Idealized Influence

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Idealized Influence

Statement	SD F (%)	D F (%)	N F (%)	A F (%)	SA F (%)	Total F	Mean	SD
I am proud to be associated with this church	45(17.9%)	42(16.7%)	35(13.9%)	57(22.6%)	73(29.0%)	252	3.28	1.482
I often go beyond self-interest for the good of the group	36(17.1%)	53(16.3%)	45(11.9%)	61(24.2%)	57(30.6%)	252	3.20	1.377
I often act in ways that build the respect of church members	43(17.1%)	41(16.3%)	30(11.9%)	61(24.2%)	77(30.6%)	252	3.35	1.482
I often display a sense of power and confidence in church	36(14.3%)	50(19.8%)	33(13.1%)	71(28.2%)	62(24.6%)	252	3.29	1.400
I talk about his/her most important values and beliefs	59(23.4%)	49(19.4%)	32(12.7%)	62(24.6%)	50(19.8%)	252	2.98	1.476
Composite Values	—	—	—	—	—	252	3.22	1.443

(Source - Field Data, 2024)

This study sought to examine the role of idealized influence on the performance of PAG church in Eldoret, Kenya. Table 1 above presents the results of this analysis. The overall mean for idealized influence was 3.22, implying that most of the respondents agree with the statements presented to them under the aspect of idealized influence. The most outstanding statement under idealized influence was that “I often act in ways that build the respect of church members” (M=3.35, SD=1.482). This shows that majority of the respondents agreed with the statement presented to them and that the responses were clustered around the central point. The statement with the lowest mean was that “I talk about his/her most important values and beliefs” (M=2.98,

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SD=1.476). This shows that although majority of the respondents did not agree with the statement that was presented to them, the responses were clustered within a central point.

Summary of Church Performance Elements

Table 2: Summary of Church Performance Items

Element	Mean	SD
Financial Perspective	3.06	1.382
Customer Perspective	3.21	1.372
Internal Processes Perspective	3.14	1.386
Training and Development Perspective	3.05	1.321

(Source - Field Data, 2024)

The results presented in Table 2 above showed that customer perspective had the highest mean ($M=3.21$) and a standard deviation of 1.372 followed by internal process perspective ($M=3.14$, $SD=1.386$). Financial perspective was third with a mean of 3.06 and a standard deviation of 1.382. Learning and growth perspective had the lowest mean of 3.05 and a standard deviation of 1.321.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was carried out to determine the effect of idealized influence on church performance on the performance of Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The results are presented table 3 below.

Table 3: Correlation analysis for idealized influence and church performance

Correlations

		Idealized Influence	Church Performance
Idealized Influence	Pearson Correlation	1	.309**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	252	252
Church Performance	Pearson Correlation	.309**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	252	252

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

(Source - Field Data, 2024)

Table 3 above shows the results of correlation analysis between idealized influence and church performance. The Pearson Correlation results reveal a weak and positive relationship between idealized influence and church performance, ($r=0.309$, $p<0.001$) (Cohen, 2013). The results indicate that church performance increases in direct proportion to idealized influence. These findings indicate that idealized influence, which is a key component of transformational leadership plays a meaningful role in enhancing performance of churches where the study was done. These findings are in support of those of previous study by Raman et al (2021) that found a direct connection between idealized influence and job task performance. Additionally, a study to determine the nexus between idealized influence and organizational performance in private universities in Indonesia established that there was a positive and significant relationship between idealized influence and knowledge sharing (Suhana et al, 2020).

Regression Analysis

A regression analysis was conducted to explore the impact of idealized influence on church performance among PAG-K churches in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The model summary is presented in table 4 and 5 below.

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Table 4: Coefficients of the regression analysis between idealized influence and church performance

Coefficients

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.557	.112		22.785	.000
	Idealized Influence	.172	.034	.309	5.138	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Church Performance

(Source - Field Data, 2024)

Table 5: Model Summary

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	
1	.309 ^a	.096	.092	.48382	.096	26.402	1	250	.000	1.904

a. Predictors: (Constant), Idealized Influence

b. Dependent Variable: Church Performance

(Source - Field Data, 2024)

Model summary for regression of idealized influence on church performance.

The relationship between idealized influence can be presented by the equation;

$$\text{Church Performance} = 2.557 + 0.172 (\text{Idealized Influence})$$

The results presented in Table 4 above indicates that a unit increase in idealized influence is expected to have corresponding increase in church performance by 0.172 units on average when all other factors are held constant. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta=.309$) further confirms a small effect size, as per Cohen's (2013) guidelines. Additionally, the model summary presented in Table 5 above shows that a significant proportion of the variance in church performance is explained by variance in idealized influence, with $R=.309$, $R^2=0.096$ and adjusted $R^2=0.092$. This indicates that a change in idealized influence accounts for only 9.6% variation in church performance. On hypothesis testing, the results showed a significance level of 0.00, which is lower than the recommended 0.05 making the null hypothesis to be rejected in favor of the alternative.

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was carried out to examine if the regression is by chance or inherent between the variables. Table 6 below presents the ANOVA results.

Table 6: ANOVA results for regression of Idealized Influence on Church Performance

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.180	1	6.180	26.402	.000 ^b
	Residual	58.521	250	.234		
	Total	64.702	251			

a. Dependent Variable: Church Performance

c. Predictors: (Constant), Idealized Influence

(Source - Field Data, 2024)

The results of ANOVA indicate a significant effect, $F(1,250) = 26.402$, $P < 0.001$. This indicates a significantly beta fit for the data compared to a model with no predictors. The small p-value shows a strong evidence to support the assumption that the regression

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coefficient, β , is different from zero. The regression analysis results, just like the correlation analysis results, indicate that there is a significant statistical relationship between idealized influence and performance of the various institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of both the correlation and regression analysis showed an existence of a positive but weak relationship between idealized influence and church performance in Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya ($R=0.309$, $p<0.01$). Further, the results indicated that 9.6 percent ($R^2=0.096$) of church performance in Pentecostal Assemblies of God churches in Eldoret was attributed to idealized influence. On hypothesis testing, the results showed a significance level of 0.000, which is lower than the recommended 0.05 making the null hypothesis to be rejected in favor of the alternative. From these findings, it can therefore be concluded that idealized influence that encompasses the respondent being proud to be associated with the church, going beyond self-interest for the good of the group, often acting in ways that build the respect of church members, often displaying a sense of power and confidence in church, and the respondent talking about his/her most important values and beliefs, has a significant impact on church performance. It can therefore be concluded that respondents who are intentional in idealized influence aspects can largely and positively affect how the church performs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, it is recommended that church leaders should integrate idealized influence into their day-to-day management practices to drive better results. They are further encouraged to act as role models, actively inspiring and motivating their team members to achieve common organizational goals. Additionally, church leaders should employ tools like the Balanced Scorecard to monitor and align leadership practices with financial, customer, internal process, and learning and growth perspectives. This will enhance transparency, accountability, and overall performance within the organization. Regarding policies, it is recommended that church organizations formalize idealized influence practices within their policy frameworks. The findings of this study reinforce the applicability of transformational leadership theory in improving organizational performance. The study demonstrates that, idealized influence which is a component of transformational leadership contribute significantly to organizational outcomes.

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