



Transformational Leadership Approach and its Impact on Church Growth in Local Baptist Churches in Oyo and its Environs

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Abstract

A leadership style determines how leaders implement plans and strategies to accomplish given objectives while accounting for stakeholder expectations and the well-being and soundness of their team. Thus, no local church can grow and be sustained beyond her leader. Studies have been made on transformational leadership's principles, dimensions and development. However, this study investigated the impacts of transformational leadership on church growth among local Baptist churches in Oyo and its environs. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The study's sample size consisted of 300 respondents purposefully selected randomly from fifty (50) local Baptist churches in Oyo and its environs. Primary data source includes questionnaire and structured interview guide. Secondary data source includes books, journals, magazines, periodicals and Internet sources. The findings showed that well-organized management of resources, increase productivity, improve team building, increase in spiritual growth of the church, creativity and innovation, and actualization of church goals are the impacts of transformational leadership approach on church growth among local Baptist churches in Oyo and its environs. The study conclude that transformational leadership approach affords everyone involved in the organization to move at the same pace and get the goals and the missions of the organization achieved. The study, therefore, recommended that that leaders in Local Baptist churches in Oyo and its environs adopt transformational leadership approach as leadership model for church growth.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Church Growth, Local Baptist Churches and Oyo



Introduction

The Church which is the gathering of believers has goals that are clearly stated in the Bible which is the expected level the local church should be operating. No local church can grow and be sustained beyond her leader. Nihinlola (2010) explained that in the most basic form and everyday use, leadership is the position occupied by a person who guides or directs a group, team, organization, etc. Some other definitions incorporate the purpose or essence of leadership such as service, influence, guidance, transformation, etc. Leadership styles are generally classified as dictatorial/authoritarian, authoritative, consultative, participative, democratic and *laissez-faire* (Akintunde, 2007). These various styles have to do with the use of power and authority in leadership. While the autocratic styles involve decision making without consultation with followers, the other extreme is permissive leaders who simply allow the organization to run without giving any clear directives. While different circumstances may call for different styles, the best leadership style generally is the consultative-participative styles whereby the leader involves his followers in decision-making process.

A leadership style determines how leaders implement plans and strategies to accomplish given objectives while accounting for stakeholder expectations and the wellbeing and soundness of their team. Leadership styles have been studied in various forms to establish the appropriate or most effective leadership style that motivates and influences others to accomplish set goals. The major tenet of effective leadership style is the degree to which it builds follower trust (Klan, 2008). There are different types of leadership style and the focus on this study is on transformational leadership approach. Transformational leadership is the process by which a person interacts with others and is able to create a solid relationship that results in a high percentage of trust that will later result in an increase of motivation both intrinsic and extrinsic in both leaders and followers. The essence of transformational leadership is that leaders transform their followers through their inspirational nature and personalities. These attributes provide a sense of belonging for the followers as they can easily identify with the leader and its purpose. Transformational leadership approach affords everyone involved in the organization to move at the same pace and get the goals and the missions of the organization achieved. Generally, a lot of studies have been carried out on the subject of



transformational leadership style. Studies by Ifatokun (2023), Adebayo (2023), Ishola (2021), Morillo-Shone, (2015), Mwambazambi & Banza, (2014), among others attest to this fact. However, the aforementioned studies have not sufficiently investigated transformational leadership approach and its impacts on church growth in local Baptist churches in Oyo and its environs. The aim is to examine the impact of transformational leadership approach on church growth among Local Baptist Churches (LBCs) in Oyo and its environs. A local Baptist church is a religious organization that belongs to the Baptist denomination and is located in a specific community or region. A local Baptist church is a religious organization that plays an important role in the spiritual, social and cultural life of its community. It provides a supportive community for members to worship learn and grow in their faith, as well as a platform for engagement and service to the wider community.

This study will be of immense benefits to the leaders, most especially leaders of LBCs in Oyo and its environs and other places as findings could be used to encourage leaders to engage transformational leadership approach for the growth of the church in LBCs in Oyo and its environs and other places. The research will also expose the leaders to maximizing their leadership skills and responsibilities for the growth of the church. The result of the study will sensitize leaders in Baptist churches and other Christian denominations to have and keep the consciousness of the fact that the church should not just grow for a while but the growth of the church must be sustained continuously. To achieve this task, the study employs descriptive survey research design. It involves collecting data that accurately and objectively describe how things are in their present situation. The sample size of the study consisted of 300 respondents purposefully selected randomly from fifty (50) local Baptist churches in Oyo and its environs. Primary source of data includes questionnaire and structure interview guide and secondary source of data include books, journals, magazines, periodicals and internet source.

Concept of Transformational Leadership

A transformational leader is one who is able to recognize and enhance an existing need or demand of a potential follower. Transformational leader looks for potential motives in the followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result is a



relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents. Transforming leadership becomes 'moral' in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leaders and the led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both. Perhaps the best modern example is Gandhi, who aroused and elevated the hopes and demands of millions of Indians and whose life and responsibility were enhanced in the process (Burns, 1978).

A transformational leader is a leader who understands his or her moral responsibility as that of contributing to the transformation and enhancement of individuals and communities or organizations for a higher communal good (Mwambazambi & Banza, 2014). Transformational leaders transform followers by creating changes in their goals, values, beliefs and aspirations (Mathafena, 2007). Commenting then on their behavior, action, role and influence scholar emphasizes that these leaders behave according to transformational leadership principles and hence become admired role models who are respected, emulated and trusted. One of the key things a leader does to earn credibility is the consideration of the needs of others over his or her personal needs.

Leaders share risks with followers and are consistent rather than arbitrary; they can be counted on to do the right thing, demonstrating high standards of ethical and moral conduct; they avoid using power for personal gain- and then only when needed. Leaders behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers' work. Team spirit is aroused, enthusiasm and optimism are displayed. Leaders get followers involved in envisioning attractive future states (Mathafena, 2007).

Scholar equally posits that transformational leaders engender trust, seek to develop leadership in others, exhibit self-sacrifice and serve as moral agents, focusing their attention and that of their followers on objectives that transcend the more immediate needs of work groups. Transformational leadership can produce significant organizational change and results, because this form of leadership fosters higher levels of intrinsic motivation, trust, commitment, and loyalty from followers than do most leadership practices. Transformational leadership is measured by both the leader's performance and development, and by the degree to which associates are developed to their full leadership



potential. The associates are encouraged to use the techniques of effective leadership (Mathafena, 2007).

Features of Transformational Leadership

The specific features of transformational leadership are able to achieve the needed transformation in any organization. Scholar observes that if one understands leadership to be transforming situations, environments and organizations to a more desired state, then the question is: 'What are the essential qualities in a leader that enable him or her to influence others in such a way that they collectively contribute to transformation?' As mentioned above, transformational leaders generally look beyond their personal achievements. They are not intent on using their power or influence to make themselves look good (Van, 2007). The essence of leadership as argue by scholar is to focus on the needs of others and then apply one's talents, technical, rational, and emotional as well as one's visualizing abilities to address those needs (Greenleaf, 2002).

Leaders see themselves as catalysts and facilitators in the creation of something that is only possible with collective effort and the talents of diverse people, something that represents further possibilities for growth. The focus of their approach is to facilitate the process where a growing number of members have internalized shared values that motivate their contributions. That way people motivate themselves and the relationship with the leader become interdependent and not dependent. It furthermore implies the leader's willingness to enable and to empower others (Van, 2007). Transformational leadership is therefore a kind of leadership that is selfless and ethical in intent, in behavior and in action. A transformational leader uses his or her own skills, qualities and values as well as those of others to positively influence the lives of the followers who, in turn, grow into solid transformational leaders capable of transforming individuals, organizations and communities. Contributing to the development of the required leadership from within the very community that needs the leaders will demand church leaders to know their church members who can contribute to leadership development and who can also effectively use their expertise for this purpose. They will equally need to understand community potential and problems as well as cultural issues which can create unnecessary clashes.



Principles of Transformational Leadership

This section discusses seven principles of transformational leadership.

1. *Principle of Simplification:* Successful leadership begins with a vision, which reflects the shared purpose. This is the ability to articulate a clear, practical, transformational vision which answers the question, "Where are we headed?" For any team, discussing goals, objectives and vision unifies the members (Avolio & Bass, 1991).
2. *Commitment of Other People to the Vision:* Once the transformational leader is able to bring synergy to the organization, he must then use various means to energize (motivate) the staff. A common way to motivate others is to challenge them, provide ample opportunity to join the creative process, and give them the credit (Rees, 2010).
3. *Principle of Facilitation:* This is the ability to effectively facilitate the learning of individuals, teams, and other reliable and reputable resources. The primary job of leadership now is to facilitate the learning's of others. The inborn quest of humans (staff) to learn more and more becomes the leaders' greatest asset to address organizational challenges. Transformational leaders have been given a sacred trust of being stewards of their staff's intellectual capital (Blaine, 2017).
4. *Principle of Innovation:* An effective and efficient organization requires members to anticipate change and not fear it. Leaders must initiate and respond quickly to change. Team members successfully influence one another to assimilate change because the transformational leaders have built trust and fostered teamwork (Avolio & Bass, 1991).
5. *Principle of Mobilization:* This is the ability to enlist, equip and empower others to fulfill the vision. Transformational leaders look for willing participants who have already been given formal leadership responsibilities and also among people who have not. They desire leadership at all levels, so they find ways to invite and ignite leadership all levels. They introduce simple baby steps to enlist larger participants (Adebayo, 2023).
6. *Principle of Preparation:* This is the ability to never stop learning about themselves with and without the help of others. Transformational leaders realize that the transformation they pursue in is a reflection of their own spiritual quest- that they must serve the world through their giftedness because that is the only way they truly



fulfill their life mission. With this mindset, moments of being stuck become moments of total dependence on God. This is such a rigorous path of learning that transformational leaders must be in thriving relationships with others pursuing transformation (Ishola, 2021). It is within these vital relationships; life opportunities and obstacles get saturated in love and support.

7. *Principle of Determination:* A leader missions is sometime difficult and their journey often lonely. Leaders depend on their stamina, endurance, courage and strength to finish each day. Because their focus is not only on raising their own leadership but the development of others, the most rigorous and humbling of all human endeavors, transformational leaders experience times of self-doubt, grief and fatigue. Transformational leaders have to develop spiritual, emotional, and physical disciplines to sustain their high level of commitment to their cause. Transformational leaders, then, are awareness raisers who see strategic initiatives to be fulfilled, problems that align with their own spiritual life mission. As they make leadership commitments to those strategic initiatives, they make commitments to their own emergence. As the leaders transform, the world is transformed (Ifatokun, 2023).

Concept of Church Growth

According to Rainer (1998), church growth is a discipline, which is concerned about the planting and continuing health of local churches and groups of churches. It cares deeply about anything that may engender or hinder the starting and continuing of local churches. Church growth is the discipline which investigates the nature, expansion, planting, multiplication, function and health of Christian churches as they relate to the effective implementation of God's commission to make disciples of all people (Matthew 28:18-20). Scholar buttresses further that, church growth means all that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ into leadership with him and into responsible church membership (Hopkins, 2008).

Church growth can be defined as the process by which changes are realizing in the church whether by size or volume. In other word, it is the way by which the church is experiencing positive change within the Church. This can be actualized physically (in the sense that the church



experiences growth in number or in material) and spiritually (in the sense that the Church has deeper knowledge of God and His word that is, they have spiritual changes in their life positively) (Torbert, 1961). Church growth is a biblical concept since church as a congregation of believers needs to grow just as the believer is meant to grow until they reach maturity in Christ Jesus. Church growth is, therefore, an activity of God through men in the salvation work of redeeming men. Church growth began with God through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus also explained the basic concept of Church growth in the parable of the Kingdom of God which Jesus linked to a mustard seed. The seed when planted grows up to become the greatest of all shrub (Luke 13:20-21; Mark 4:30-32) which point to the fact that church growth is an act of God which must be carried out through the instrumentality of men, using God's way and method. Since the kingdom of God will grow regardless of the tactics of Satan. It then means, church of God will grow when it is planted and continue to nurture, using God's way and method, more so when in obedience to God commandment (Wagner, 1978).

Historically, Church growth can be traced to the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ from the conversion of the first believer in Christ Jesus to the time Jesus selected twelve disciples and the formation of the congregation of believer (the first Church in Jerusalem). The growth of the church then continues with series of activities and through events in history, that tries to activates and reformed the church to meet up with the challenges of the time. Such is the early period of 1500s, with the Reformation started by Martin Luther, when Martin Luther noticed that the Church seemed stagnant and corrupted with wrong doctrine. This Reformation stirred the people up to the need to turn to the Bible as the basis for the active life of the church. As the church returned to the Bible, it became renewed and came alive. Hence, the church freed herself from death of holding to salvation by work and became dependent on God's grace which sufficiently paid for man's sin in Christ Jesus once and for all (Wagner, 1978).

McGavran developed the theory of church growth, by setting up a definite objective which made more effective the propagation of the gospel and multiplication of churches on new ground. The scholar believed that church growth principle has a universal application. He started with the mission field and later spread to America. Again, he disputed the non-Biblical position held by American churches, a position



that glorifies quality (Hunter, 1983). Scholar further defines Church Growth as “All that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him and into responsible church membership” (Hunter, 1983). This definition seems to define evangelism, but it is too broad for Church Growth because of the phrase "all that is involved which could include the areas of Christian education, pastoral theology, missiology, or other disciplines.” In a later definition, the scholar writes: Church growth is that science which investigates the planting, multiplication, function and health of Christian churches as they relate specifically to the effective implementation of God's commission to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 18:19-20). Church growth strives to combine the eternal theological principles of God's Word concerning the expansion of the church with the best insights of contemporary social and behavioral sciences, employing as its initial frame of reference (Hunter, 1983)

Scholars also aver that, Church growth is that science that investigates the planting, multiplication, growth, function, health, and death of churches. It strives to apply the biblical and social principles in its gathering, analysis, displaying, and defending of the facts involved in implementing the Great Commission (Wagner, 1970). In the light of the foregoing, one can understand that church growth has nothing to do much with fantasy of the church or numerical possession. Church growth in real sense is more than that. Church growth is therefore a unique discipline in that it is a selfless service to God. It requests for self-sacrifice and it is also a task demanding business. Church growth in the researcher opinion therefore, is a progressive development or increament of a local body of Christ in physical structure, mental, numerical and spiritual.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Table 1: Impacts of Transformational Leadership approach on Church Growth among LBCs in Oyo

| Items | Respondents | SA | A | SD | D | Total |
|-------|-------------|----|----|----|---|-------|
| | Pastors | 32 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 50 |



| | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| Well-organized management of resources | Deacons | 28 | 20 | 1 | 1 | 50 |
| | Workers | 20 | 26 | 3 | 1 | 50 |
| | Members | 139 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 150 |
| | Total | 219 | 74 | 4 | 3 | 300 |
| | Total Percentage | 73% | 24.7% | 1.3% | 1% | 100% |
| Increase productivity | Pastors | 39 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| | Deacons | 26 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| | Workers | 40 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| | Members | 107 | 38 | 2 | 3 | 150 |
| | Total | 212 | 83 | 2 | 3 | 300 |
| | Total Percentage | 70.7% | 27.7% | 0.6% | 1% | 100% |
| Improve team building | Pastors | 24 | 25 | 1 | 0 | 50 |
| | Deacons | 21 | 28 | 0 | 1 | 50 |
| | Workers | 23 | 22 | 4 | 1 | 50 |
| | Members | 103 | 44 | 0 | 3 | 150 |
| | Total | 171 | 119 | 5 | 5 | 300 |
| | Total Percentage | 57% | 39.6% | 1.7% | 1.7% | 100% |
| | Pastors | 39 | 7 | 0 | 4 | 50 |



| | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| Increase in spiritual growth of the church | Deacons | 26 | 20 | 1 | 3 | 50 |
| | Workers | 43 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| | Members | 95 | 25 | 15 | 15 | 150 |
| | Total | 203 | 59 | 16 | 22 | 300 |
| | Total Percentage | 67.7% | 19.7% | 5.3% | 7.3% | 100% |
| Increase in numerical growth of the church | Pastors | 21 | 23 | 4 | 2 | 50 |
| | Deacons | 13 | 28 | 3 | 6 | 50 |
| | Workers | 20 | 27 | 2 | 1 | 50 |
| | Members | 94 | 35 | 11 | 10 | 150 |
| | Total | 148 | 113 | 20 | 19 | 300 |
| Actualization of church goals | Total Percentage | 49.3% | 37.7% | 6.7% | 6.3% | 100% |
| | Pastors | 29 | 18 | 1 | 2 | 50 |
| | Deacons | 37 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| | Workers | 39 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 50 |
| | Members | 93 | 54 | 2 | 1 | 150 |
| Increased commitment | Total | 198 | 92 | 5 | 5 | 300 |
| | Total Percentage | 66% | 30.6% | 1.7% | 1.7% | 100% |
| | Pastors | 23 | 19 | 0 | 9 | 50 |
| | Deacons | 27 | 19 | 2 | 2 | 50 |



| | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| from members | Workers | 28 | 15 | 7 | 3 | 50 |
| | Members | 58 | 71 | 13 | 4 | 150 |
| | Total | 136 | 124 | 22 | 18 | 300 |
| | Total Percentage | 45.4% | 41.3% | 7.3% | 6% | 100% |
| Encourage creativity and innovation | Pastors | 17 | 23 | 6 | 4 | 50 |
| | Deacons | 29 | 15 | 1 | 5 | 50 |
| | Workers | 29 | 15 | 0 | 6 | 50 |
| | Members | 75 | 45 | 19 | 11 | 150 |
| | Total | 150 | 98 | 26 | 26 | 300 |
| | Total Percentage | 50% | 32.6% | 8.7% | 8.7% | 100% |

The table shows the impacts of transformational leadership approach on church growth among LBCs in Oyo and its environs. The table discloses that 97.7% of the respondents agreed that transformational leadership style will bring about well-organized management of resources among LBCs in Oyo and its environ. It reveals that transformational leadership brings about increase productivity as agreed by 98.4% of the respondents. Also, 96.6% of the respondents agreed that transformational leadership improve team building. 87.4% and 87% of the respondents also agreed that increase in spiritual and numerical growth of the church respectively are impacts of transformational leadership style on church growth among LBCs in Oyo and its environs. Furthermore, the table reveals 86.6% of the respondents agreeing to the statement that actualization of church goals is achievable through



transformational leadership style. Therefore, 86.7% of the respondents agreed that transformational leadership brings about increased commitment from members. As such, 82.6% of the respondents agreed that transformational leadership encourage creativity and innovation.

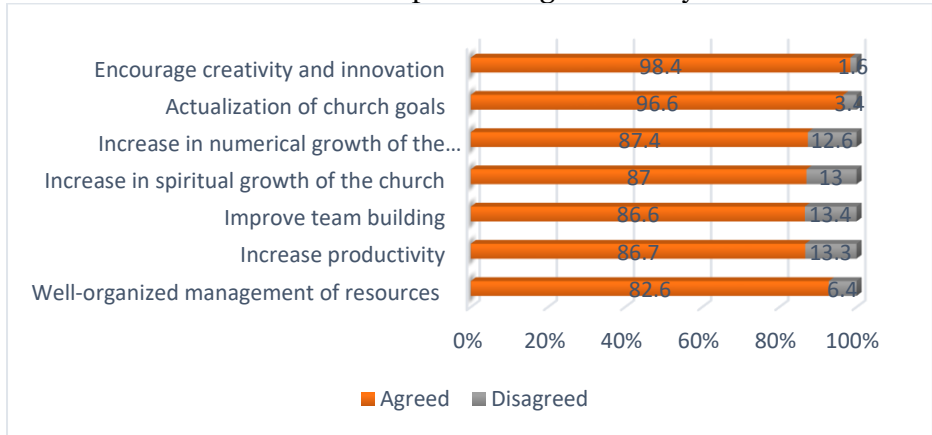


Figure showing Proportion of respondents on the impacts of transformational leadership on Church Growth

Responses from the interviewee further reveals that transformational leadership has a very significant role to play in church growth. Respondents affirmed that transformational leadership leads with clear vision. Such leader has the ability to set new goals and introduces new ideas for sustainable church growth. Transformational leadership allows teamwork for maximum result. There will be cooperations as people will be ready to work getting results will not be difficult. Findings from the table shows that transformational leadership style improve team building. This aligns with scholar assertion that effective transformational leaders are constantly encouraging and building the confidence of their team which counteracts all the negative things they either think about themselves or the negative information they are bombard with via media and relationships (Ishola, 2021). The results of the findings also reveal that adopting transformational leadership style by church leaders will cause increase in both spiritual and numerical growth of the church. Scholars alluded that transformational pastoral



leader focuses primarily on the spiritual transformation of the people in a manner that enables them to fulfil their God-given destiny (Ifatokun, 2023). Transformational pastoral leaders lead through the consciousness of their responsibility to guide the people towards God, and influence them to make a difference in the world. In this way, they use their God-given knowledge, the Bible, spiritual gifts and training to nurture and transform the people through care, encouragement and motivation. Scholars opined that the ability of a pastoral leader to effectively inspire and stimulate transformation in the attitude and behaviour of the congregation and the church as a whole made the transformational pastoral leadership style a catalyst for growing a healthy church (Adebayo, 2023). Others impacts of transformational leadership style on church growth as reveals by the findings are increase productivity and the encouragement of creativity and innovation. Scholar also posited that transformational leadership style enhances gift development (Ishola, 2019). Transformational leadership provide this through individual members to achieve their potential through coaching and mentoring. Therefore, it can be deduced that transformational leadership style is an appropriate model to adopt by church leaders in LBCs in Oyo and its environs for sustaining church growth.

Conclusion and Recommendations

No local church can grow and be sustained beyond her leader. A leadership style determines how leaders implement plans and strategies to accomplish given objectives while accounting for stakeholder expectations and the wellbeing and soundness of their team. Transformational leadership approach affords everyone involved in the organization to move at the same pace and get the goals and the missions of the organization achieved. This study, therefore, affirmed that well-organized management of resources, increase productivity, improve team building, increase in spiritual growth of the church, creativity and innovation, and actualization of church goals as the impact of transformational leadership approach on church growth among local Baptist churches in Oyo and its environs. In the light of the findings, it is therefore, recommended that leaders in LBCs in Oyo and its environs adopt transformational leadership approach as leadership model for church growth.



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