# Servant Leadership and Church Members' Motivation of Pentecostal Churches in Port Harcourt

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***Abstract***
*This study aims to determine the relationship between servant leadership quality and church members' motivation in Pentecostal church in Port Harcourt. This study used associative descriptive quantitative methods with a population of 359 respondents drawn into samples using random sampling and saturated sampling / total sampling methods. Primary data were sourced using questionnaire administered to members and leaders of Pentecostal churches. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and simple percentages. From the findings, the study concludes that majority of the respondents accepted that there was significant relationship between servant leadership and church members' motivation in Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt. It recommends that leaders within the churches should prioritize the needs of their followers by promoting empathy, community involvement, and fostering a participatory decision-making process. This will build a more engaged and motivated members as well as a more cohesive and dynamic church environment. Pentecostal churches should seek to further develop the transformational aspects of its leadership approach and leadership has been shown to inspire employees by articulating a compelling vision and fostering innovation. The members' role should focus on enhancing emotional intelligence, and adaptability.*

***Keywords***: *Servant Leadership, Church Members' Motivation, Pentecostal Churches, Port Harcourt*

## Introduction

The idea of Servant Leadership was first introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970 in his essay titled "The Servant as Leader." Greenleaf defined "Servant Leadership" as a leadership philosophy that emphasizes service to others as the primary priority (Yoas *et al.*, 2024). According to this concept, a leader must first serve, and then leadership emerges as an aspiration to serve better. The essence of "Servant Leadership" is to place the needs of followers above the personal needs of the leader. This concept is rooted in strong ethical and moral values, making it a unique approach in the world of leadership (Spears, 2010). In the context of contemporary leadership, "Servant Leadership" has gained significant attention from academics and practitioners. Research shows that this leadership style can increase job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and team performance. "Servant Leadership" is considered an effective approach in dealing with the complexity and rapid changes in the modern business environment. This concept emphasizes the development of followers' potential, encouraging their personal and professional growth.

Additionally, "Servant Leadership" is believed to build a more ethical and sustainable organizational culture. In an era where transparency and accountability are increasingly prioritized, this approach offers appreciable team motivation and enhances productivity (Dierendonck, 2011). In the realm of leadership theories, servant leadership stands out as a compelling paradigm that emphasizes the leader's focus on serving others, fostering their growth, and prioritizing their needs. Rooted in ancient philosophies yet gaining traction in contemporary organizational settings, servant leadership embodies a transformative approach to leadership that fosters trust, collaboration, and ethical decision-making. This essay delves into the essence of servant leadership, exploring its principles, applications, and the relevance of recent sources in understanding its profound impact on today's dynamic workplaces. According to Yoas *et al.*, (2024) from a believer's perspective, this concept has strong resonance with Christian teachings. Jesus Christ, as the primary example in the Christian faith, is often portrayed as a servant leader. The Bible presents various examples where Jesus demonstrates the principles of "Servant Leadership," such as when He washed the feet of His disciples. In the context of churches and faith-based non-profit organizations, "Servant Leadership" is viewed as a leadership model that aligns with spiritual values. The application of this concept in religious organizations can help bridge the gap between secular leadership theory and biblical principles. Therefore, further exploration of "Servant Leadership" from a theological perspective becomes highly relevant and important. The growth and success of the early church mainly depended on the abilities of the church leaders. This was demonstrated by the powerful preaching of the gospel by Peter which lead to the conversion of 3000 people who joined the early church in a single day (Acts 2:41-47). It can be noted in scripture that the increase of church membership is the initiative of the Holy Spirit working through men, the tongues of fire that rested upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost was a theophany that came to impart a missionary purpose upon them. Eliyana (2019) narrated that it is the responsibility of the church leaders today and their congregants to carry out the mission of God in making him known to the world. Church leaders are responsible for the success or failure of a church. God holds leaders responsible for what takes place in the ranks. It is through responsible and able leadership that God keeps his people in the right direction. Without good leadership the vision and mission of the church cannot be accomplished.

The global concept and concern of servant leadership are serving others before leading them (Greenleaf, 1977). Serving is the primary purpose of a servant leader (Greenleaf, 1977). According to Oketch (2020), servanthood in leadership is like an overturned hierarchy in which leaders are under the pyramid as a servant. In addition, Clarke (2000) noted that the word servanthood related to Christian leadership after Jesus' pattern. In churches around the globe, there are different challenges that hinder church leadership. For example, conflict within the church, lack of knowledge, financial constraints, discrepancies in culture, and other internal factors (bureaucracy, corruption, lack of good governance and security, and conflict) affect today's churches. As a result, these challenges weaken the servant leadership of current churches all over the world. The lack of servant leadership has hurt the church and community globally (Elliot, Murayama, & Pekrun, 2011). Likewise, African churches fail to lead and evangelize the community around them due to misplacement of servant leadership (Rainer, 2014). The external challenges that churches face are the growth of Islam, political instability (leadership crisis), economic and social factors, and information and technology. The churches face the same challenges, but servant leadership has a great role to solve such problems which hinder the church, community, and the whole country. If church leaders develop a servant leadership style, the church experiences better growth in leadership and wins the community for Christ. However, internal challenges like the new age

movement rose from the church and negatively impacted the Nigerian churches. This study examined servant leadership and church members' motivation of Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt.

## Literature Review

### Conceptual Review

### Servant Leadership

Servant leadership refers to the philosophy of leadership that puts serving others as the topmost priority. It calls for a holistic approach to work, a sense of community and the sharing of power in decision making. According to the New York Times, servant leadership deals with the reality of power in everyday life, its legitimacy, the ethical restraints upon it and the beneficial results that can be attained through the appropriate use of power. Greenleaf coined the concept of servant leadership in the 1970's, which has now become a popular contemporary leadership theory. Greenleaf applied his belief about the value of serving others first to his career of 40 years as a manager at AT&T and then started writing about this form of leadership (Greenleaf, 2002). According to Greenleaf, servant leaders are those who are first and foremost interested in serving those around them. Through this act of serving they become leaders. The purpose of this service is for others to grow in service and in leadership. Even though servant leadership has been a recognized form of leadership since the 1970's, research on the model only began in earnest in 1999 and is still in its early stages. There are numerous definitions of servant leadership and many instruments that measure various attributes of servant leaders (Parris & Peachey, 2012).

Scholars have not yet reached consensus on the definition or theoretical model of servant leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011). Although there are many proposed attributes of a servant leader, the basic foundational definition that Greenleaf offered continues to be, central in the present research and clearly resonates with Jesus' conception of 'leader as servant'. Greenleaf states the main characteristics of a servant leader are having a foundational desire to serve and "to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served" (p. 27). The many definitions of servant leadership in the literature keep this one aspect of servant leadership in tact as well. Servant leadership is presented as a form of leadership that is linked to ethics, virtues and morality as well as a way to serve, rather than as a way to wield power over people (Parris & Peachey, 2012). Servant leadership increases organizational commitment and follower satisfaction, improving organizational success (Allen et al., 2018; Charles, 2015). While the concept of service in leadership has roots in Christian Scriptures (English Standard Version, 2001/2016, John 13:1-20), the notion of servant leadership gained momentum with Robert Greenleaf in the 1970s (Bass et al., 2008; Greenleaf, 1977). Greenleaf's (1977) premise was "the servant-leader is servant first" (p. 27). The emergence of the servant leadership theory has expanded beyond 100 characteristics (Clark, 2018; Focht & Ponton, 2015), has been researched across cultures (Trompenaars & Voerman, 2010), and leadership levels (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017). While servant leadership affects positive and healthy organizational change, more focus is on definition and attributes than organizational implementation. The problem is how do organizations implement a servant leadership culture throughout the organization.

### Characteristics and Benefits of Servant Leadership

Greenleaf believed that all could be servant leaders, whether born or taught (Dittmar, 2006). According to Davis' (2018) Myers-Briggs study, all personality types can be servant leaders. The study of servant leadership has identified over 100 characteristics, leading to some confusion

(Focht & Ponton, 2015). However, through a Delphi study, Focht and Ponton (2015) identified 12 primary characteristics: valuing people, humility, listening, trust, caring, integrity, service, empowering, serving other's needs before their own, collaboration, love, unconditional love, and learning. The most predominant of these characteristics shared across the research was humility. A servant leader demonstrates leadership without needing the spotlight (Savel & Munro, 2017; Akuchie, 1993; Wilson, 2016). The characteristic of humility confronts the ego-driven leader and other leadership approaches that focus on personal ambitions and organizational goals at the expense of people (Bass et al, 2008; Briere, 2021). Building from the foundation of service and humility, ethical behavior and moral development were consistently discussed across research as foundational characteristics of servant leadership. According to Bass et al. (2008), servant leaders encourage moral growth in followers. To promote this development, servant leaders must lead by example if they are going to influence and delegate successfully (West, 2014). Practicing the right ethical behaviors are critical to organizational success, as history shows that many leaders fall into moral and ethical failures due to issues going on in the heart (Serrano, 2014; Franco & Antunes, 2020). Servant leadership engages followers through ethical positions, which strengthens the moral climate of an organization (Eva et al., 2019). Another primary characteristic of servant leadership is the growth and development of followers. Like transformational leadership, servant leadership seeks to help develop gifts, talents, and abilities (Wilson, 2016). A key goal of servant leadership is to grow people rather than organizations (Wilson, 2016). According to Russell (2016), outstanding leadership starts with a desire to serve others. To keep followers on a growth and development path, servant leaders need to keep casting vision and speaking to purpose; otherwise, followers will lose focus and turn inward, forfeiting service (Maxwell, 2018; Bell et al., 2011). Short and long-term visions are essential to the growth and development process. Avolio and Yammarino (2008) believe there is an opportunity to improve the characteristic of vision within servant leadership; however, Trompenaars and Voerman (2010) outline that servant leader's view the long-term and short-term decision processes as vital to results. Wilson (2016) highlights critics of servant leadership struggle with the element of vision because it's hard to serve and lead at the same time, and there are times when a leader needs to pull away. Wilson (2016) also points to similar concerns around authority. According to Williams et al. (2017) servant leaders engage their followers and are committed to their growth. Organizations that encourage servant leadership offer people an opportunity to fully commit to it and work tirelessly to train their people (Sinek, 2014). When followers get it wrong or fail, servant leaders keep hope alive in the transformation process. A hopeful development environment improves persistence and embraces success over failure (Searle & Barbuto, 2011). While focused on follower development, servant leaders cannot lose sight of the development of other leaders. Authentic servant leadership is not a one-sided sacrifice on the part of the servant leader; all should benefit and grow in an encouraging environment (Russell, 2016). Although servant leaders are committed to follower growth and development, they must recognize that some do not embrace servant leaders (Lacroix et al., 2017). However, resistance should be met with humility while keeping hope alive and indirectly influencing the opposition from afar. Servant leadership introduces several benefits to an organization. According to Song and Ferch (2020) meeting the needs of others and bringing them to a place of wholeness is one of the core tenets of servant leadership. When followers are loved, there are higher satisfaction, collaboration, and teamwork (Buck, 2019). Follower satisfaction influences organizational commitment, determining organizational success (Charles, 2015; Allen et al., 2018). Other benefits of servant leadership include collaborative environments of trust and innovation, countering traditional siloed cultures that hinder change (Savel & Munro,

2017; Kim, 2020; Sloan et al., 2020). The fearless organization is more innovative, takes more significant risks, reduces catastrophic failures, and instills a culture of active listening and speaking (Edmondson, 2018). Servant leaders remove crippling fear from the organization by demonstrating their care and concern for the individual and the organization.

**Pentecostalism in Nigeria**

When we talk of Pentecostals, we are referring specifically to Classical Pentecostals. Classical Pentecostals are those that trace their roots to the turn of the century, and the Azusa Street revival. Essentially, Pentecostals believe that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the 120 at Pentecost as is recorded in Acts 2 should be normative for all Christians. Further, the key sign associated with this Spirit-baptism is glossolalia, as it was in Acts. Classical was added in about 1970 to distinguish Classical Pentecostals from Charismatics (Noel 2007). It has been argued by some scholars like Wonsuk, Karkkainen and Asamoah-Gyadu (2014) that Pentecostalism is not a monolithic movement. Thus any attempt to define Pentecostalism at the global level faces insurmountable challenges. Reasons for the multiplicity and diversity of movements and traditions that can be grouped under the inclusive category or Pentecostalism are many and varied. First, unlike established Christian traditions such as Roman Catholicism, Pentecostalism cannot build on ecclesiastical tradition for the simple reason that it came to existence only a century ago. Second, until recent years, Pentecostalism has not produced much theological literature; its contribution to Christian faith has been in the form of occasional pastoral and missional writings, testimonies, dreams, prophecies and the likes that do not easily translate into an analytic, discursive theology. Third, because Pentecostalism was birthed out of dynamic experience rather than a theological discovery, it has liberally incorporated elements from a number of theological traditions and sources such as Methodist-Holiness Movements, the Protestant Reformation, mystical-charismatic movements in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church, as well as 'Black' or African American spirituality. Scholars now recognize the Pentecostal tradition's multiple points of origin (Bruner, 1970). This movement has become a global force in Christianity with significant representations on every continent (Stephenson, 2009:1), Global Pentecostalism was introduced in the early dawn of the twentieth century by Holiness evangelist Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929) who advocated that xenolalia tongues are the proof of Spirit baptism. This doctrine gave birth to the Azusa revival (1906) through his student William Joseph Seymour (1870-1922) and further to the organization of the American Assemblies of God (1914). Korean classical Pentecostalism is related to this lineage. According to the view of Walter J. Hollenweger, there are five historical roots for the Pentecostal movement: black oral tradition; Roman Catholicism; Evangelicalism; critical theology; and ecumenism (Kim, 2013). Although the foundations for Pentecostalism in Nigeria were laid as far back as the early 20th century, the phenomenal growth and development of Pentecostal churches in the country is generally associated with the country's social, economic and political dynamics from the late 1980s up to the present day. The rise of Pentecostalism thus coincides with a period of severe economic crisis and political upheavals in Nigeria, accompanied by social tensions resulting from the adoption of "structural adjustment policies, massive corruption and unemployment. Pentecostal churches through their messages of material prosperity, career success, healing, good health and freedom from oppression, provided a platform for people to deal with their misery, encouraging their aspirations toward self-actualization. Pentecostal churches have impacted certain aspects of the domestic domain. They provide inner power to survive the anxieties, unease, destabilization, and crises of modern Africa, replacing the loss of efficacy of other religious options. They aids the satisfaction of new needs and developing an

existential theology that engenders upward mobility in life activities because prosperity is predicated on the quality of inner life (Kalu, 2009). Indeed, Pentecostalism's tremendous growth can be attributed in no small part to its common touch and direct appeal to the populace.

The Pentecostal message has been taken to the most common folk of society, and has spoken a word of truth sorely needed among the outcast and oppressed. The many histories of Pentecostalism testify to the fact that from its beginnings, the Pentecostal movement has thrived where other representations of Christianity have struggled, simply by meeting the everyday spiritual needs of the world's most ordinary people (Noel, 2007). Pentecostalism is a spiritual movement of the people. Kalu (1998) identified a number of Pentecostal movements that are peculiar to Africa: Inter-denominational fellowships (e.g., Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International and Women Aglow); Evangelistic Ministries (e.g. Deeper Life Bible Church); Deliverance Ministries (specializing in exorcism); Prosperity or Faith Ministries (tending toward Positive thinking); Intercessors part of Intercessors Africa; Bible Distribution Agencies (e.g. Gideons Bible International, accepting only born-again members); and Classical Pentecostals such as Four Square Gospel Church and Assemblies of God Church.

In another vein Kalu (2008) submitted seven strand typology of Charismatic Movements in Africa:

i. A diviner or religious leader from the traditional religion who suddenly accepts the power of Christianity and urges the community to yield to it;

ii. A strand of prophets, who would emerge from the ranks of a Christian praying band, sometimes the tendency was to pose like an Old Testament prophet sporting a luscious beard, a staff, and a flowing gown. The prophet would call for a holiness ethic and manifest the gift of healing like William Wade Harris, whose ministry started in 1910;

iii. A wave of African Indigenous Churches arose all over Africa at different times before the First World War and especially during the influenza epidemic of 1918. Some were messianic and others revivalistic.

iv. Sometimes a puritan and charismatic expression of Christianity would occur within the boundaries of mainline denominations.

v. External input. A range of external agents featured white Holiness and Classical Pentecostal groups that engaged mission in various parts of Africa. People received Holy Spirit baptism before inviting outsiders.

vi. African charismatic agency, Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) agents in Southern Africa, The role of migrant workers must not be ignored.

vii. The period since 1970. The face of Pentecostalism in Africa was catalyzed by Charismatic movements led by young people from mainline churches from the late 1960s in some parts of the continent, but more especially in the 1970s.

Basic features, beliefs and identified reasons for the growth of African Pentecostalism include: beliefs in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a sign of born again, new birth, repentance, or faith in Jesus Christ; the gift of the Holy Spirit as an important requirement for appointment in the church; the gift of Holy Spirit manifests in glossolalia (speaking in tongues) as an evidence of sanctified life, or holiness; the second coming of Jesus Christ to redeem believers; the great commission as exemplified in Mathew 28;the Priesthood of all believers as taught in 2 Peter; the inner worldliness and the power or Christians to overcome all forces of evil; power encounter, the belief that the power in the blood of Jesus of Christ will annihilate all demonic manipulations; emotional worship exhibited in yelling, shouting and clapping and dancing; faith healing and casting out of demons; slaying in the Spirit- a sign that one is filled with the Holy Spirit as members

fall prostrate on the floor; human problems are believed to be caused by the devil and evil forces; claims of dreams, visions and revelations common, especially in response to untoward happenings; fasting, prayer, night vigils, and open crusades are regularly observed; use of media in worship and liturgy, prosperity gospel-salvation is not only spiritual but also in material blessings; holy living; emphasis in tithing and sowing of seeds; preponderance of youths and women; rejection of orthodox medicines; and an apocalyptic vision of the world and most of them do not take part in politics, they are apolitical (Grudem, 1996; Martin, 2002; Obiora 2004; Ishaya 2011).

The main modus operandi of Pentecostal mission has been straightforward evangelism and church planting from its inception. It takes almost every conceivable method, demonstrable of its creativity and zealousness. It also accompanies claims of the demonstration of supernatural power. The most common of them is divine healing, and it provides an outstanding inroad for the gospel (Ma, 2014:87). The character of African Pentecostalism is, according to Kalu (2007), diverse and amoebic, creating a movement that is complex and full of ironies, solving old problems while creating new ones. African Pentecostalism has Africanised Christian liturgy in a free and spontaneous way that does not betray its essential Christian character, and liberates it from the foreignness of European forms. African Pentecostals are among the most committed churchgoers in the townships. They have experienced the living Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit; and their lives have been radically changed as a result. This conversion, or 'born again' experience as the Bazalwane call it, has so transformed their lives that they do not have time for traditional practices. Unlike any other church group, they have almost unanimously rejected the ancestor cult and traditional divination; and they also spurn the use of alcoholic beverages and tobacco. This indicates the radical break from their past that their conversion represents. They are aggressive evangelists, adding members to their churches at a rapid rate, often at the expense of other churches, especially the mission churches (Anderson 1999).

**Membership Motivation**

Leadership and motivation are two indispensable elements that drive organizational success and growth. Leadership encompasses the ability to inspire, influence, and guide individuals or groups towards achieving common goals, while motivation refers to the inner drive or enthusiasm that compels individuals to take action towards those goals. The definitions of leadership and motivation, explore their significance in organizational growth, and outline research objectives and scope aimed at understanding their dynamic interplay. The significance of leadership and motivation in organizational growth cannot be overstated. Effective leadership sets the tone for an organization, shaping its culture, vision, and strategic direction. Leaders serve as role models, inspiring employees to perform at their best and fostering a sense of unity and purpose within the organization (Avolio et al., 2009). Moreover, strong leadership promotes innovation, adaptability, and organizational resilience, essential qualities for navigating complex and dynamic business environments (Gardner et al., 2010). Similarly, motivation plays a pivotal role in driving organizational performance and growth. Motivated employees are more engaged, productive, and committed to achieving organizational objectives (Latham & Pinder, 2005). They exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction, leading to lower turnover rates and enhanced employee retention (Grant, 2008). Furthermore, motivated individuals are more likely to embrace change, take initiative, and pursue continuous learning and development, all of which are critical for organizational success in today's competitive landscape (Pinder, 2008).

**Empirical Review**

Soeardi *et al.* (2022) investigated the impact of leadership on the development of public organizations. They emphasize that an organization's success is directly linked to the quality of its leadership. Leaders in public organizations are vital for adapting to new challenges, keeping pace with advancements, and enhancing the quality of public service. The study concludes that for a leader to effectively develop a public organization, they must be capable of motivating their subordinates, possess both technical and emotional competencies, and adhere to the professional ethics relevant to their role. Specifically, leaders in public organizations should have well-developed emotional intelligence alongside their knowledge and skills, which includes self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Furthermore, the paper emphasizes that leaders in public organizations must be able to motivate their subordinates to find new and better ways of completing work, as employees often tend to rely on familiar methods without considering improvements. The leader's role is to arouse the creativity and innovative spirit of their team to enhance organizational performance and adapt to changing demands. Overall, this work concludes that effective leadership is essential for the development and success of public organizations, particularly in terms of the leader's ability to inspire, guide change, and foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

Artha *et al* (2023) examined the role of servant leadership and work motivation in determining organizational commitment and work performance. The researchers used a quantitative approach with a survey method, collecting data from 90 employees. The results show that the majority of employees are male (86.7%) and aged between 21-30 years (66.7%). Most employees have a bachelor's degree (46.8%) and have worked at the company for 4-6 years (60%). This work used SEM-PLS analysis to test the hypotheses and examined the mediating effects. The evaluation of the outer model showed that all the constructs had good discriminant and convergent validity, with outer loading values above 0.7 and AVE values above 0.5. The reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability also demonstrated high reliability for all the variables studied. The inner model evaluation indicated that the structural model fits the data well, with a Q2 value of 0.901, meaning the model can account for 90.1% of the variance in the dependent variables. Overall, this work found that servant leadership and work motivation have a significant positive effect on organizational commitment and work performance. Additionally, organizational commitment was found to mediate the relationship between servant leadership, work motivation, and work performance.

Amin et al (2023) explored workers performance in the context of organizational culture and transformational leadership. This work was informed by the primacy of human resource management in the modern era. It was carried out to determine the variables that account for employee performance. Some basic quests were to develop basic theoretical and research models. This work deployed an associative descriptive quantitative method with a sample size of 152 respondents who are employees within an organization. It was found that to improve employee performance in an organization, then the concept of transformational leadership must be encouraged. Corporate culture can be improved by enhancing organizational cultural values. And finally, employee performance can be improved by leveraging on motivational tools to improve the general outlook of the organization.

Tajudin *et al* (2023) scrutinized competence and employee performance motivation within the framework of career development. This work came up in the context of agencies wanting to engage employees that have the potential to contribute meaningfully and achieve organizational goals. Put succinctly, this work aimed to examine factors that can improve employee performance within

existing narrative and discourses. Deploying an associative quantitative method within survey research, this work drew on a sample of 188 respondents to arrive at findings. The result shows that competence has significant association with performance, that competence has significant impact on work motivation, career development and as was on growth. Finally, the result showed that work motivation and career development can mediate the extent to which competence affects performance. Several studies have explored how leadership and motivation play a role in religious organizations.

**Relevance of Servant Leadership to This Study**

Servant leadership, as conceived by Robert Greenleaf, provides a powerful framework for understanding how servant leadership affects motivation in a religious context like the Pentecostal church members. At the core of Greenleaf's theory is the idea that the true leader is first and foremost a servant - their primary motivation is to serve the needs and development of their followers, rather than to accumulate power or advance their own interests. This "servant first" mindset is in contrast to the traditional view of the leader as an authoritarian figure issuing top-down directives. Greenleaf argued that servant leaders, through their focus on serving others, are able to cultivate a healthier, more autonomous, and more motivated workforce. This aligns well with the goals of organizational growth, as employees who feel empowered, supported, and cared for by leadership are more likely to be engaged, productive, and committed to the organization's mission. Specific servant leadership characteristics that can foster motivation among Pentecostal church members in Port Harcourt.

**Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing a descriptive and exploratory approach to investigate the impact of servant's leadership on motivation of Pentecostal church members in Port Harcourt. The research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how servant's leadership functions as a catalyst for members' motivation. The primary sources of data for this study are documentation and personal experience as participants in the ministry. These methods were selected to capture through questionnaires administered to Pentecostal church members. The population is the entire members of Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt while the sample size was four members of 100 Pentecostal churches used in Port Harcourt. The collected data were analyzed thematically, focusing on patterns and narratives related to servant's leadership influence on church members motivation. Documentation was systematically reviewed to extract relevant information on historical milestones. Personal experiences were critically reflected upon and integrated with documentary evidence to validate findings and provide contextual depth.

**Empirical Results**

The study targeted a sample of 400 respondents selected across the Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt. Of the 396 respondents, a response rate of 92.8 percent was recorded. This implies that 358 out of the 400 questionnaires administered were retrieved and used for the analysis. 42 questionnaires were not used for the study, out of the 38, 17 questionnaires were rejected questionnaire for error while 21 questionnaires were not retrieved.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Servant Leadership and Members' Motivation

| s/n | servant leadership and members motivation | SA | A | D | SD | _ | STD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Your leaders in the church practices servant leadership | 150<br>42.5% | 142<br>40.2% | 21<br>5.9% | 40<br>11.3% | 3.13 | 1.04 |
| **2** | You fill the characteristic of servant leadership from your leaders | 164<br>46.5% | 131<br>37.1% | 31<br>8.8% | 27<br>7.6% | 3.22 | 1.04 |
| **3** | There is relationship between servant leadership and church member motivation | 133<br>37.7% | 173<br>49.0% | 35<br>9.9% | 12<br>3.4% | 3.21 | 1.03 |
| **4** | The leadership style motivate you in the church | 122<br>34.6% | 162<br>45.9% | 36<br>10.2% | 33<br>9.3% | 3.06 | 1.02 |
| **5** | The leaders in your church motivates you | 199<br>56.4% | 109<br>30.9% | 24<br>6.8% | 21<br>5.9% | 3.37 | 0.96 |
| **6** | Servants leadership is welcome as a strategy to motivate members | 163<br>46.2% | 151<br>42.8% | 13<br>3.7% | 26<br>7.4% | 3.27 | .903 |
| **7** | Servant leadership positively influences church members' creativity by fostering a supportive church environment. | 128<br>36.3% | 186<br>52.7% | 20<br>6.7% | 19<br>5.4% | 3.19 | 1.04 |
| **8** | Servant leadership promote equal right of church members | 148<br>41.9% | 150<br>42.5% | 31<br>8.8% | 24<br>6.8% | 3.19 | 1.04 |
| **9** | Servant leaders are focused on followers' needs that church goals suffer. | 69<br>19.5% | 105<br>29.7% | 129<br>36.5% | 50<br>14.2% | 2.61 | 2.51 |
| **10** | Recent sources highlight how servant leadership foster positive outcomes like church member development, creativity, and gender equality | 222<br>62.9% | 97<br>27.5% | 15<br>4.2% | 19<br>6.59% | 3.48 | 0.85 |
| **11** | servant leadership embodies a transformative approach to leadership that fosters trust, collaboration and ethical decision-making among church members | 115<br>32.6% | 116<br>32.9% | 77<br>21.8% | 45<br>12.7% | 2.85 | 1.51 |
| **12** | Servant leadership is built upon a set of principles that prioritize well-being and development of church members | 127<br>35.9% | 148<br>41.9% | 41<br>11.6% | 37<br>10.5% | 3.14 | 1.09 |
| **13** | Servant leadership offers structured and pragmatic approach to leadership, emphasizing the importance of clear expectations, rewards, and corrective actions in achieving church goals | 154<br>43.6% | 124<br>35.1% | 45<br>12.7% | 30<br>8.5% | 3.14 | 1.04 |
| **14** | As churches navigate complex and uncertain environments, leaders must strike a balance between leadership approach and members motivation | 199<br>56.4% | 102<br>28.9% | 22<br>6.2% | 30<br>8.5% | 3.33 | 0.923 |
| **15** | Servant leadership offers a powerful framework for inspiring change, motivating members, and driving church growth | 153<br>43.3% | 121<br>34.3% | 50<br>14.2% | 29<br>8.2% | 3.12 | 1.04 |

**Source: Field Work, 2026.**

The objective of study was to examine the extent to which servant leadership relate to motivation of church members in Pentecostal church in Port Harcourt. The univariate section was concerned with the presentation of the data for the variables of the study. The data presented herein were continuous and so were assessed using the mean and standard deviation in the assessment of their central tendencies and dispersion. Given the positive statements adopted in the measurement of each variable and the scaling method which ranks from 1 = for very low extent to 4 = very high extent, a mean score of $x > 2.5$ with a relative standard deviation of $s < 2.0$ was adopted as substantial evidence of support or agreement to the indicator. From the table we concluded that majority of the respondents accepted that there was significant relationship between servant leadership and church members motivation in Pentecostal church in Port Harcourt.

Furthermore, the literature suggests that servant leadership styles, which are often associated with high levels of motivation lead to increased church growth (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The high confidence expressed by respondents in the members leadership strategies supports the idea that servant leadership is at play, enhancing both individual and members growth. The findings of this study, which examined the relationship between servant leadership and motivation, of Pentecostal church members in port Harcourt agree with existing literature on the critical role of leadership and motivational factors in church development and employee satisfaction. The results reveal a strong positive correlation between servant leadership strategies and church growth which is consistent with leadership theories that emphasize the impact of leadership on organizational success (Northouse, 2021).

## Conclusion

Conclusively, the study underscores the pivotal role of servant leadership in church members in Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt. The research highlights that a significant portion of the church members in the Pentecostal churches recognize the effectiveness of leadership style and vision, with the majority agreeing that these factors positively influence their motivation. The alignment of church members with the leaders indicates a strong sense of direction and purpose within the churches which is crucial for fostering a cohesive and motivated workforce. From the findings, the study concludes that servant leadership has positive and significant motivating effect to members of Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt.

## Recommendations

i. Leaders within the churches should prioritize the needs of their followers by promoting empathy, community involvement, and fostering a participatory decision-making process. This will build a more engaged and motivated members as well as a more cohesive and dynamic church environment.

ii. Pentecostal churches should seek to further develop the transformational aspects of its leadership approach and leadership has been shown to inspire employees by articulating a compelling vision and fostering innovation. The members' roles should focus on enhancing emotional intelligence, and adaptability.

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