

Leader's Intellectual Stimulation Training and Church Leadership Performance

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Abstract- This study sought to investigate the influence of intellectual stimulation training on graduate's performance focused on the Pan Africa Christian University (PAC) Transformational Church Leadership (TCL) diploma program graduates of 2016 and 2017, in selected churches in Kenya. The study sought to establish the extent to which TCL trained graduates/church leaders in intellectual stimulation influence the church leader's performance. Survey and interviews were used to collect quantitative, and qualitative data. The study found leader's intellectual stimulation to have a strong positive and significant correlation with church leader's performance among graduates, with a Pearson correlation of 0.570, while in church members/congregation had a Pearson correlation of 0.69. The study revealed that church leader's intellectual stimulation made them more creative and innovative in decision-making and conflict resolution which significantly influenced church growth. The study concluded that intellectual stimulation positively and significantly increased performance in church leaders in Kenya.

Index Terms- Creativity; Innovation; Intellectual Stimulation; Performance; and Transformation

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Leadership has developed to a great importance over several decades, with transformational leadership receiving much scholarly attention in recent years (Ayiro, 2014; Bass & Riggio, 2010; 2013; 2016; Barine, & Minja, 2014; Burns, 2010; Hargis, Watt, & Piotrowski, 2011; Ishikawa, 2012; Mbithi, K'Obonyo, & Munyoki, 2015; Rutledge, 2010). Effective leadership is desired for individuals, members and organizations to achieve their goals. However, transformational church leadership has not been linked to training to establish how the training influences church performance. Great ministers of God's word can fail the congregations if as leaders they are not capable of leading the church. Dever, (2016) observed that when congregations cannot trust their leaders, the mistrust result to a spiritual deficiency, which is a basis for slow church growth. Therefore, the church must begin to holistically devote to preparing upcoming and present laity and lay leaders to fill the leadership gap that exists in

the church today ((Moss, 2014; Mwambazambi & Banza, 2014; Nkonge, 2012).

Van Wyk (2017) recommends that transformation is a change of response seen in the lives of individuals who have been fascinated upon to change by allowing themselves to interact with transformative teaching. This study helps to establish the influence of the TCL training on graduates/church leader's performance in the Kenyan church. Intellectual stimulation speaks of how transformational leaders stimulate innovation, creativity, and new solutions to old problems (Avolio & Bass, 2001). They continually look for ways to improve and include their followers in the problem-solving process (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Intellectual stimulation increases productivity.

Research by Watson, (2012) observed that there is a need for church-based leadership training that can bring about transformational results while using both the Old and the New Testament strategies, with Jesus' strategy being the center. The church in Kenya, and especially the local church, has the greatest potential for training transformational church leaders following the example of Jesus to raise quality leaders (Luvega, 2019, March 27; Njaaga, 2019, December 05).

The greatest example of transformative leader training in the entire Bible is that of Jesus Christ and His twelve disciples where He spent over three years training this group of men from various backgrounds. Jesus established transformational leadership in all its components in His life and work Mark 1:16-20 (Burkus, 2010). As a transformational leader, Jesus exhibited intellectual stimulation. He solved problems in new ways, for example, while most people would row back to shore in a storm, he would calmed the sea. When being questioned by a lawyer, he would redirect the question and ask the lawyer the question saying, "Who is my neighbor?" In the truest sense of innovation, Jesus perceived the real needs of those around him and responded to them. Paul builds on Jesus' example as he exhibits intellectual stimulation evident in Acts 18:3- a new way of doing ministry, by using his hands to support the work. 1 Cor. 9:12 where he creatively modeled the way and intellectual stimulation innovative methods of setting aside his personal rights to work with the church, as supported by Posner and Kouzes that, one must be open to the ideas of others and their consequent execution (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Paul's intellectual stimulation as a change agent demonstrated boldness

in challenging the status quo Acts 20:17–21; 2 Corinthians 3:12. Paul's engagement in transformational leadership brought about great performance of church growth in his work as an Apostle of Christ.

Though Avolio, (2011) noted that transformational leadership could be taught, learned, and practiced, gaps exist in literature regarding the connection between training transformational church leaders and its influence to church leader's performance. Intellectual Stimulation does not just happen, a leader must look for new sources of inspiration that will spring fresh ideas and stimulate exceptional solutions to issues and decision making. Through studying leaders can be inspired and stimulated to get new strategies to creatively and innovatively improve their performance. Leaders must be fully devoted to new opportunities to learn and develop their skills in creative abilities and be able to stimulate members to question assumptions, status quo, approach issues in novel ways, and creatively solve problems (Lee, Cheong, Kim, & Yun, (2016). In intellectual stimulation, leaders not only challenge the status quo; they also encourage creativity and innovation by encouraging themselves and followers to explore new ways of solving problems and approaching situations. Therefore, the church must review its role in training intellectual stimulation among church leaders and utilize most of their opportunities and knowledge to support church leaders training program that equips the learners for both ministry and leadership in the church (Strohbehn, 2020).

Intellectual Stimulation and Church Leader's Performance

Intellectual stimulation represents an important component of transformational leadership. Herrmann and Felfe, (2013) pointed out that leaders are stimulated to see new tasks as challenges that nurture their innovation and creativity in the organization. Arnold and Loughlin, (2013) agree that intellectual stimulation refers to the leader's capability to develop skills capacity that enables them to be innovative and creative. Leaders use challenges as opportunities to examine their skills and allow creative ways to enhance their organizational performance (Caza & Posner, 2014). These leaders seek new openings solutions to organizational issues as members/congregation are encouraged to think of new ways to create and innovate, which allow the church members/congregation become more dedicated and committed to the achievement of the church goals (Anjali & Anand, 2015; Northouse, 2016).

The church needs an intellectually stimulated leader who creatively and innovatively deal with the conflicts and disagreements positively and professionally to ensure right decisions are made (Thakore, 2013). Decision-making is a vital responsibility of an intellectually stimulated leader, for people always connect leadership in organizations, businesses, churches, and politics with making right decisions. Ejimabo (2015) stressed that effective leaders are those who involve their congregations in decision-making by allowing them to debate on issues of concern and come up with resolutions.

Leaders support and work together as a team with followers by using fresh ideas and developing inventive ways of solving conflicts and making resolution to enhance performance (Yukl, 2013). Transformational leaders stimulate the congregation's

efforts to be innovative and creative by involving the members in a constructive resolution of conflicts and making of right decisions (Metwally & El-bishbshy; 2014; Yasin, Nawab, Bhatti, & Nazir, 2014). Intellectually stimulated leader not only encourages, inspires, and stimulates innovative thoughts but also offers opportunity for their implementation that inspires organizational creativity and produce change that will help grow and shape the future success of the organization (Afsar, Badir, & Bin Saeed, 2014; Bayram & Dine, 2015; Kouzes & Posner, 2014).

The research done by Ndwiga, Lewa, and Ngaithe (2016) found that intellectual stimulation was positively and significantly related to follower's performance. This finding implies that when transformational leaders encourage their followers to be innovative and creative, they establish safe conditions, and share ideas, the followers are encouraged to come up with new techniques of dealing with conflicts and making decisions. Orabi (2016) in his study in Jordan proved that intellectual stimulation plays an important part in influencing employee's performance resulting in better organization performance.

Church Leader's Performance

It is perceived that the church leader's performance is measured by the transformation and growth of the leader, the church congregation, and the organization. The indicators of church leadership performance include; creatively and innovatively practicing critical thinking, enhance problem solving, empowered in making decisions and conflict resolutions and arouse the same in their members. All these are supposed to result to spiritual, social, numerical, and economic growth that bring about a stable healthy congregation (Bonem, 2012).

Church growth is an increase, development, expansion, and maturity of the church. Growth is always a sign of a healthy church in this study referred to as performance that is spiritual, numerical increase, social and economic growth. Transformational leader's intellectual stimulation is acknowledged as part of the most significant elements involving their performance either to the positive or negative (Bojica and Fuentes, 2012; Mittal and Dhar, 2015). Intellectual stimulation element of transformational leadership shows an important part in forming the structure and environment for organizations to perform (Chan et al., 2014; Yukl, 2013).

Transformational leadership emphasizes followers' potential development and innovative consciousness rather than directly taking advantage of existing values of members. However, too many transformational behaviors of leaders can lead to unexpected consequences such as overly empowering behaviors of leaders by solving problems by themselves which not only requires more time and energy seeking ways to resolve issues, but also leads to reduced efficiency in performance (Lee et al. 2016).

Study Findings

The indicators selected to measure intellectual stimulation were put in four statements Positive encouragement, Seeking congregations opinion, Collective decision making and Innovative problem solving. The leader's performance score among diploma graduates of PAC University are indicated in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1:-
TCL Graduates/Church Leader's Intellectual Stimulation

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	STDev
Positive encouragement	1(0.6%)	0(0%)	8(5%)	77(48.4%)	73(46%)	4.389	0.645
Seeking congregates opinion	3(1.9%)	7(4.4%)	13(8.2%)	81(50.9%)	55(34.6%)	4.119	0.874
Collective decision making	0(0%)	10(6.3%)	17(10.7%)	84(52.8%)	48(30.2%)	4.069	0.812
Innovative problem solving	4(2.5%)	9(5.7%)	15(9.4%)	90(56.6%)	41(25.8%)	3.975	0.9
Composite Mean						4.138	0.807

The study found out that the respondents to great extent agreed that TCL graduates work well with the congregation by encouraging them positively, scoring a by a mean of 4.39 and standard deviation of 0.65. TCL graduates pursue the concepts and view of the members in the congregation because they are significance for decision making as indicated by a mean of 4.12 and standard deviation of 0.87. TCL graduates seek differing perspectives when solving problems by a mean of 4.07 and standard deviation of 0.81. TCL graduates encourage the congregation to come up with innovative ways of resolving problems as indicated by the mean of 3.98 and standard deviation of 0.90.

Perception of church members/congregation on influence of leader's Intellectual Stimulation on leader's performance was also considered. Various parameters were used to test the level of agreement of the respondents on how church leader's intellectual stimulation influence transformational leadership training and church leader's performance among diploma graduates at PAC University. Respondents were requested to indicate the extent of their agreements on each statement used. The findings are indicated in Table1.2.

Table 1.2:-
Perception of Church Members of Leader's Intellectual Stimulation

	N	A	SA	Mean	STDev
Positive church participation	0(0%)	18(31%)	40(69%)	4.69	0.467
Members initiatives in meeting the church needs	5(9%)	38(66%)	15(26%)	4.17	0.566
Timely conflict resolution by the leader	10(17%)	13(22%)	35(60%)	4.43	0.775
Guidance and involvement of members on decision making	8(14%)	30(52%)	20(34%)	4.21	0.669
Composite Mean				4.37	.614

The data presented in Table 4.11 shows that respondents approved that congregations are encouraged positively to participate in the church activities as shown by mean score of 4.69 and standard deviation of 0.47. Leaders encourage members to come up with ideas to meeting the church needs by mean score of 4.17 and standard deviation of 0.57. In times of conflict, the leader listens and guides the parties in reconciliation as presented by mean score of 4.43 and standard deviation of 0.78. The leader also guides and involves members in decision making by mean score of 4.21 and standard deviation of 0.67. This means that leaders positively encouraged the congregation to participate in church activities and involved in decision-making and problem solving

through, among others, seeking their ideas and opinion and encouraging them to explore different perspectives and new ways of solving problems.

This study linked Intellectual Stimulation to the TCL diploma training of church leaders to establish how the training contributes to the church leader's transformation and its influence on their performance in the selected Kenyan churches. Exploring the degree to which intellectual stimulation between TCL graduates influences church performance in Kenya was worth looking at. A look at the graduates and members/congregation composite mean score rating on the intellectual stimulation presented a higher rating by members/congregates with a mean

score of 4.37 against mean score of 4.13 by the TCL graduates, implying that members/congregations felt the graduates/church leaders inspired and involved them to create and innovate ways of resolving church issues and making decisions. This is because creativity was observed among TCL graduates. They deploy as part of their human resource, involvement in conflict resolution and decision-making. Respondents were able to observe that the graduates were able to stimulate members/congregates be creative and innovative as they sort new ways of resolving issues and making decisions. This was apparent in the following verbatim comments;

For one respondent said that “TCL graduates bring the creativity and innovation that is required” (KII-1, “They get new ideas, are open to new methods, and new approaches of doing ministry” (KII-3).

“Besides coming up with new methods and new approaches of doing ministry, they involve their members in finding solutions and decision making” (KII-5, KII-4)

A Pearson correlation analysis shown that a relationship exists between intellectual stimulation by TCL graduates/church leaders and church performance with statistically significant positive correlation score ($r = .570, p < .01, N = 159$). Intellectual stimulation had a coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.32$), an indication that intellectual stimulation was responsible for the variation in the respondents score in leaders’ performance at 32%. This suggests a strongest positive correlation between the variables.

The researcher conducted a Pearson correlation analysis to determine the relationship between the same variables as reported by the church members/congregation. The relationship between intellectual stimulation composite score and church performance composite score had a positive correlation ($r = 0.69, p < .01, N = 58$). Intellectual stimulation had a coefficient of consideration of ($r^2 = .479$), an indication that intellectual stimulation among church members was responsible for variation in the respondents score in leaders’ performance at 47.9% suggesting a strong positive correlation between the variables.

This was corroborated by the interviews with senior church leader that indicated: “through the TCL training, intellectual stimulation is built, the graduates’ eyes are open, and they are able to think outside the box in resolving problems and making decisions” (KII-3). “Graduates become more innovative in coming up with different ways of doing ministry and taking the initiative to ensure it is done”. KII-4. “The leaders are open to new methods and new approaches of doing ministry, they receive new ideas and are able to embrace change” (KII-5). “Gradates involve members in and encourage them to come up with new ways when making decisions” (KII-2).

The study showed intellectual stimulation has a positive impact on church performance. This suggested that the graduates and members surveyed from the selected churches in Kenya believed that the transformational leadership element of intellectual stimulation influence graduates/church leaders, inspire them to be innovative, come up with new thoughts and creative approaches of handling situations. Nonetheless, members are stimulated to seek different views when solving problems, establish new perspectives of dealing with conflict and come up with new ways that will help them to generate creative and

innovative ways for performance. In support of the findings, Reza (2018) agrees that intellectual stimulation leader boosts, stimulates, and persuades members to innovate and produce change that will help develop and form the future triumph of the organization. As the outcome shows, the followers are exposed to try new methods: for example, creating new ideas, emerging new services, embarking on fresh resolutions, and embracing fresh technology in serving the church. This specified that intellectual stimulation did yield a positive environment that increased the levels of confidence in both the leader and the members/congregation in creativity and innovation for problem solving and decision making that result to great performance. These findings are supported by previous research conducted by (Anjali & Anand, 2015; Metwally & El-bishbishy; 2014; Orabi, (2016; Seloane, 2010; Wang & Rode, 2010). Consequently, enhancement of follower’s performance as seen in the Bible in the life of Paul who encouraged congregants to positively participate in the church activities. Paul committed his life to fulfilling the great commission, intellectually appealing to the church to stimulate their thinking in doing the same as seen in (1 Cor. 9:23), this contributed to the growth of the early church not just spiritually, but also numerically, socially and economically.

Church performance increased as the graduates practiced intellectual stimulation by identifying the need of improving their creativity and innovation and coming up with new idea that helped the church grow. In times of conflict the leader listens and guides the parties in reconciliation using new strategies and approaches, this bring about not just spiritual growth, but also social where the members care for each other. The growth is the church is evident as the church leaders involve congregations and encourage them to participate in the church decision making, this helps the church to grow in all dimensions for everybody feels they belong.

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