



Leadership Capacity and Church Growth: Evidence from Registered Pentecostal Churches in Kenya

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Abstract

The growth of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya has remained an important concern among scholars, practitioners, and denominational leaders. Despite the significance of church growth to spiritual formation, community development, and institutional sustainability, empirical evidence on the role of leadership capacity as a driver of growth among registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya remains limited. The study was anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory as the primary theoretical framework, supported by Social Exchange Theory. The study adopted a positivist research philosophy and a cross-sectional survey design. The target population comprised 693 respondents drawn from 33 registered Pentecostal churches affiliated with the National Council of Churches of Kenya and registered under the Societies Act (Cap 108). A combination of census sampling for senior leaders and simple random sampling for church elders, using the Yamane (1967) formula, yielded a sample size of 282 respondents. A pilot study involving 28 respondents from the International Christian Centre, Nairobi, was conducted to assess instrument validity and reliability. Primary data was collected through structured, self-administered questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 29 through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression analysis. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between leadership capacity and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya ($R^2 = 0.458$, $F = 217.36$, $\beta = 0.615$, $p < 0.05$). The study concludes that leadership capacity, encompassing visionary leadership, strategic decision-making, empowering leadership, and leadership communication, is a significant and indispensable driver of growth among registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya. In view of the findings, the study recommends that umbrella church bodies such as the National Council of Churches of Kenya should institutionalize leadership development policies that specifically promote structured development programmes for bishops, assistant bishops, senior pastors, and

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church elders through targeted mentorship, leadership workshops, and continuous ministerial development.

Keywords: *Leadership capacity, Church growth, Registered Pentecostal churches, Visionary leadership, Kenya*

1.0 Introduction

The growth of registered Pentecostal churches has remained a central concern in Christian theology, missiology, and ecclesiastical practice across centuries and continents (Uroko, 2024). Church growth is widely regarded as an indicator of spiritual vitality, organizational effectiveness, and community relevance in contemporary society (Amenyedzi, 2025). Scholars have broadened the understanding of growth beyond numerical increase to encompass spiritual maturity, leadership effectiveness, financial sustainability, community outreach, and institutional resilience (Amakiri, 2025; Odion, 2023). Across different geographical and socio-cultural contexts, demographic shifts, urbanization, socio-economic pressures, and the strategic engagement of churches in social services such as education, health, and poverty alleviation have each been identified as factors associated with varying patterns of church growth (Shaasha, Msabah and Kyule, 2024). The intersection of leadership, congregational dynamics, and institutional governance has thus become an increasingly important area of scholarly inquiry in the study of church growth trajectories (Gyimah, 2025).

Registered Pentecostal churches constitute significant religious institutions that contribute to spiritual formation, community mobilization, and socio-cultural development within contemporary society (Henry, Gathogo & Munyao, 2025). According to Parsitau (2024), registered Pentecostal churches are playing an important role as spiritual, social, and transformative institutions within contemporary Christianity. Registered Pentecostal churches exhibit experiential faith, the work of the Holy Spirit, evangelism, healing ministries, and changing worship practices that attract different populations across socio-economic and generational lines (Thiga, Pam & Nkansah-Obrempong, 2022). Beyond spiritual formation, Pentecostal churches operate as platforms for community development, moral guidance, humanitarian support, and civic engagement (Odion, 2023). Their political and cultural engagement has defined public discourse and civic participation (David, 2023). The movement's growth has equally been linked to adaptive leadership structures and contextualized ministry models (Masamba, 2023).

Leadership capacity represents a foundational driver of church growth, reflecting the collective competencies, skills, and spiritual maturity of church leaders (Kirk, 2025). Leadership capacity encompasses vision formulation, governance acumen, administrative efficiency, pastoral care competence, and strategic oversight (Kesumawati & Gultom, 2025). Innovative leadership practices have been linked to improved organizational performance and adaptability in the Pentecostal church context (Ndungo, Cheluget, & Jirma, 2025). Strategic leadership intent, characterized by clarity of vision, mission and disciplined implementation, has demonstrated significant influence on institutional growth (Mwangi, Minja, & Msabah, 2024). Studies on leadership approaches reveal that transformational and participative styles create commitment and collective purpose within congregations (Ndonye, 2024). The phenomenon of growing churches, therefore, reflects strong leadership intentionality and adaptive capacity (Masamba, 2023).

In Kenya, registered Pentecostal churches constitute one of the most significant and fastest-growing segments of the Christian population. The 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census indicates that Christianity accounts for 85.5 percent of the national population, with Protestant and Evangelical traditions forming a substantial proportion of this demographic (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2019). Institutional growth is further reflected in registration records under the Societies Act (Cap 108), which provides the legal framework for religious organizations in Kenya (Government of Kenya, 2012). Recent empirical studies have established associations between leadership capacity and growth outcomes in the Kenyan Pentecostal context, including increases in membership, ministry diversification, and financial sustainability (Henry, Gathogo & Munyao, 2025).

Despite their growth and institutional visibility, registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya encounter governance and operational challenges that affect sustainability and public perception. Internal leadership conflicts, succession disputes, and accountability gaps have occasionally disrupted congregational stability and membership retention (Thiga, Pam, & Nkansah-Obrempong, 2021). Furthermore, rapid growth without parallel development of structured administrative systems has exposed some churches to regulatory scrutiny and public criticism. Recent policy discussions, including debates surrounding the Religious Organizations Bill (2024), have intensified attention on financial transparency, leadership qualifications, and institutional oversight within the religious sector (National Assembly of Kenya, 2024). These developments highlight the importance of governance discipline and leadership capacity in sustaining legitimacy and operational continuity.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya have experienced considerable growth over the past three decades; however, this growth has become increasingly uneven, with many congregational contexts stagnating or declining (Uroko, 2024; NCKK, 2023). Although Christianity accounts for 85.5 percent of the national population and Protestant churches constitute a substantial proportion of this figure (KNBS, 2019), many churches continue to experience limited growth both numerically and spiritually. This is evidenced by declining or stagnant membership, inconsistent worship attendance and low levels of participation in spiritual formation, ministry and service involvement, especially among urban youth (NCKK, 2022). The disparity between religious identification and active participation is further underscored by findings indicating that only 56 percent of self-identified religious Kenyans attend worship services weekly (NCKK, 2022).

Internal governance failures and leadership conflicts constitute a significant driver of membership loss among registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya (Thiga, Pam & Nkansah-Obrempong, 2021). Financial mismanagement and leadership succession disputes have further undermined institutional stability and public trust in some churches (Soneye, Abodunrin & Olorunlana, 2025). These challenges reflect a complex relationship of leadership deficits and weak mechanisms for congregational engagement that, when poorly managed, constrain rather than support institutional growth (Kamau & Otieno, 2025; Ndungo et al., 2025). Existing studies have predominantly focused on direct correlations between leadership variables and growth outcomes, without systematically examining the pathways through which leadership capacity translates into growth results. These limitations define a contextual and methodological gap in the evidence base that the current study sought to address by establishing the relationship between leadership capacity and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya.

1.2 Objective of the Study

To establish the relationship between leadership capacity and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between leadership capacity and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is of significance in the field of management, leadership and religious organizational studies because it examines how leadership capacity influences the growth of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya. The study provides an important understanding of how improved leadership structures can enhance member mobilization, institutional direction, and congregational trust. For policymakers and regulatory authorities, including the Registrar of Societies and the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), the study offers information to guide the formulation of policies and regulatory frameworks that encourage structured leadership development and improved institutional performance. To practitioners, especially bishops, senior pastors, and church elders, the findings provide guidance on how to maximize growth through effective leadership communication, visionary planning and empowerment strategies. The study contributes to Transformational Leadership Theory and Social Exchange Theory by strengthening understanding of how leadership capacities act as a mechanism for generating institutional growth, thereby offering a useful foundation for future scholars and academicians interested in leadership and organizational growth in faith-based institutions.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study examined the relationship between leadership capacity and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya. It focused on the 33 registered Pentecostal churches affiliated with the National Council of Churches of Kenya and operating under the Societies Act (Cap 108). The unit of observation consisted of bishops, assistant bishops, pastors and church elders directly involved in strategic leadership, spiritual governance, and congregational administration. Geographically, the study covered all counties in Kenya where the 33 registered Pentecostal churches maintained operational headquarters or primary ministry centres. The study covered the period between February 2026 and August 2026.

2.0 Literature Review

This section reviews the theoretical and empirical literature underpinning the study. It presents the theoretical frameworks that anchor the study and examines empirical evidence on the relationship between leadership capacity and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches.

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

Burns (1978) originally conceptualized Transformational Leadership Theory, which Bass (1985) later developed and refined. The theory posits that transformational leaders inspire and motivate followers to transcend their personal self-interests for the collective good of the organization, thereby generating extraordinary levels of commitment, innovation, and performance (Bass, 1985). The core tenets of the theory comprise four interrelated components: idealized influence,

inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Through these components, transformational leaders create conditions that are conducive to creativity, institutional development, and high organizational commitment, factors that are particularly consequential in settings where growth and change are key imperatives (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The theory further holds that transformational leaders cultivate growth by fostering a shared vision among followers and creating an organizational environment that encourages proactive engagement with institutional goals (Bass, 1990). Research has consistently demonstrated that transformational leadership is positively associated with increased organizational commitment, improved performance outcomes, and enhanced follower satisfaction (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Within registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya, the tenets of transformational leadership are especially relevant, as translating pastoral vision into structured ministry programs and cultivating congregational commitment are central to achieving measurable growth outcomes (Henry, Gathogo & Munyao, 2025). The ability of church leaders to inspire congregational participation, align members with institutional objectives, and drive sustained organizational development mirrors the core mechanisms proposed by transformational leadership theory (Ndungo, Cheluget & Jirma, 2025).

Transformational leadership was originally distinguished from transactional leadership on moral grounds, with transformational leaders elevating their followers' ethical consciousness by appealing to higher ideals and collective purpose rather than personal self-interest or material exchange (Burns, 1978). Authentic transformational leadership is further distinguished from pseudo-transformational leadership by the leader's genuine orientation toward followers' welfare and the collective good, rather than toward personal aggrandizement or manipulating followers for narrow organizational ends (Avolio & Bass, 2004). This ethical dimension makes the theory applicable to mission-driven institutions, where leadership legitimacy derives not merely from formal authority but from the leader's perceived moral credibility and visionary consistency (Northouse, 2018).

Critiques of the theory, however, argue that it idealizes the role of the individual leader and fails to adequately account for contextual factors, systemic constraints, and followers' agency in shaping organizational outcomes (Northouse, 2018). Cross-cultural applications of the theory are also complicated because leadership effectiveness is shaped by social norms and cultural conventions that vary significantly across contexts (Rowold & Heinitz, 2007). Despite these limitations, Transformational Leadership Theory provided the principal theoretical perspective for this study, informing the conceptualization of leadership capacity as the independent variable and growth as the dependent variable. The theory explains how leaders' vision, capacity to inspire, and governance competence translate into measurable outcomes in institutional growth in registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya.

2.1.2 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory was originally developed by Homans (1958), who argued that social behaviour is driven by an assessment of potential rewards and costs associated with social interaction, and that individuals and groups engage in relationships only when the perceived benefits outweigh the costs (Homans, 1958). Blau (1964) expanded this foundational concept by demonstrating that social structures and institutional norms actively shape the nature of exchanges, and that sustained interactions over time generate more enduring and committed social ties. Within

organizational contexts, Social Exchange Theory provides a framework for understanding how relationships between leaders and followers are built on foundations of mutual benefit, reciprocity, and trust (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

In the context of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya, Social Exchange Theory explains the relational dynamic between church leaders and congregants: leaders who provide spiritual direction, pastoral care, and meaningful engagement opportunities generate reciprocal commitments among members, who in turn invest their time, financial resources, and labour in church programs and activities (Packard & Hope, 2023). This reciprocal dynamic sustains congregational engagement and directly contributes to institutional growth, making the theory particularly applicable to the study's examination of how leadership capacity translates into growth. The theory highlights that productive organizational relationships involve not only the exchange of tangible resources such as compensation, opportunities, and material support, but also intangible resources including recognition, spiritual guidance, social support, and emotional investment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Critics of Social Exchange Theory have argued that it places excessive emphasis on rational economic calculation and fails to adequately account for the non-material, emotional, and moral dimensions of social relationships, which are especially salient in religious settings (Emerson, 1976). Notwithstanding these critiques, the theory retains considerable explanatory value when its core propositions regarding reciprocity and obligation are sensitively applied to the contextual conditions and relational norms that govern specific organizational settings (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007). Social Exchange Theory therefore informed understanding of how the quality of reciprocal interactions between church leaders and congregants shapes member participation and commitment, which in turn influences growth outcomes in registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya.

2.2 Empirical Review

The influence of church leadership on growth has been examined through an organizational life-cycle perspective, with findings from Norway demonstrating that leadership practices significantly shape church development across different stages of organizational growth (Jenssen, 2020). The findings revealed that churches encounter key obstacles to growth at the maturity transition stage, and that unless these challenges are handled through intentional leadership intervention, stagnation or institutional decline tends to follow. The study concluded that leadership is central to navigating life-cycle transitions and recommended that church leaders prioritize internal organizational development, cultivate a growth-oriented culture, and proactively remove structural impediments. This study was deemed relevant to the current research because it underscores the centrality of leadership capacity in sustaining church growth trajectories over time.

Dynamic leadership has been identified as a significant factor in ministry growth, as evidenced by a qualitative case study of the World Revival Faith Ministry (WRFM) in Nigeria (Ayodele & Olorunlana, 2025). The findings revealed that Adebogun's inclusive leadership style, characterized by passionate evangelism, sound biblical teaching, and deep community involvement, directly contributed to establishing over 40 ministry branches across Lagos and Ogun States by 2025. The study recommended that church leadership development programs prioritize community engagement, technology adoption, and strategic partnership building. This study was considered relevant to the current research because it demonstrated how specific leadership competencies, particularly community-engaged and vision-driven leadership, translate into measurable structural

growth outcomes, reinforcing the present study's interest in leadership capacity dimensions including empowering leadership and visionary leadership.

The effect of team leadership on the growth of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya has been examined, with findings indicating that leadership practices significantly influence church growth (Henry et al., 2025). The findings revealed that team leadership dimensions collectively explained 19.4 percent of the variance in church growth, with humility and a collaborative ministry climate identified as the most significant individual predictors. The study recommended that bishops cultivate cooperative regional environments and that pastors develop humility as a foundational leadership characteristic. This study was considered applicable to the current research study as it provided Kenya-specific empirical evidence on the relationship between leadership dimensions and growth outcomes in registered Pentecostal churches, while also identifying a gap in the mediating and moderating mechanisms through which leadership influences growth, a gap the current study sought to address.

In a separate study, Ouma (2024) evaluated the effect of strategic leadership elements on the growth of churches affiliated with the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya in Nairobi City County. The findings revealed statistically significant positive correlations between organizational growth and three strategic leadership dimensions: core competencies, organizational culture, and balanced organizational controls, which collectively explained 52.8 percent of the variance in organizational growth. The study thus recommended that church leaders deliberately cultivate core competencies, organizational culture, and structured oversight mechanisms to drive sustainable growth. This study was considered relevant to the current research because it demonstrated how strategic leadership dimensions translate into measurable organizational growth outcomes within a Kenyan church context.

Arotile (2024) used a mixed-methods approach focusing on two denominations, the Redeemed Christian Church of God and the Nigerian Baptist Convention, and found a high degree of relational engagement between leaders and followers in both denominations, with this relational culture accounting for the notable stability and growth patterns that distinguished the two churches within the Nigerian ecclesiastical landscape. The study further found that leaders who identified closely with their congregations and actively engaged followers in day-to-day church activities fostered stronger commitment and accelerated the achievement of organizational goals. This study was considered relevant to the current research because it demonstrated how relational leadership dynamics, particularly leader-follower identification and participatory engagement, contribute to church stability and growth.

Kamau and Otieno (2025) found that churches operating in tighter compliance environments and under more transparent regulatory structures experienced significantly higher growth rates, and they also observed positive correlations between effective leadership communication, strategic planning, outreach capacity, and membership growth. Within the Kenyan context, the impact of transparency and accountability as authentic leadership factors on church growth was also examined by Kamau, Nzinga, and Kimathi (2025), whose findings confirmed that authentic leadership, particularly its transparency and accountability dimensions, significantly influenced church growth ($R^2 = .740$, $p < .05$). These findings reinforce the current study's emphasis on leadership capacity as a key driver of institutional growth among registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study positions leadership capacity as the independent variable and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches as the dependent variable. Leadership capacity was conceptualized using four indicators: visionary leadership, strategic decision-making, empowering leadership and leadership communication. Growth was operationalized in terms of numerical growth, quality of church life, mission growth and extension growth. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework.

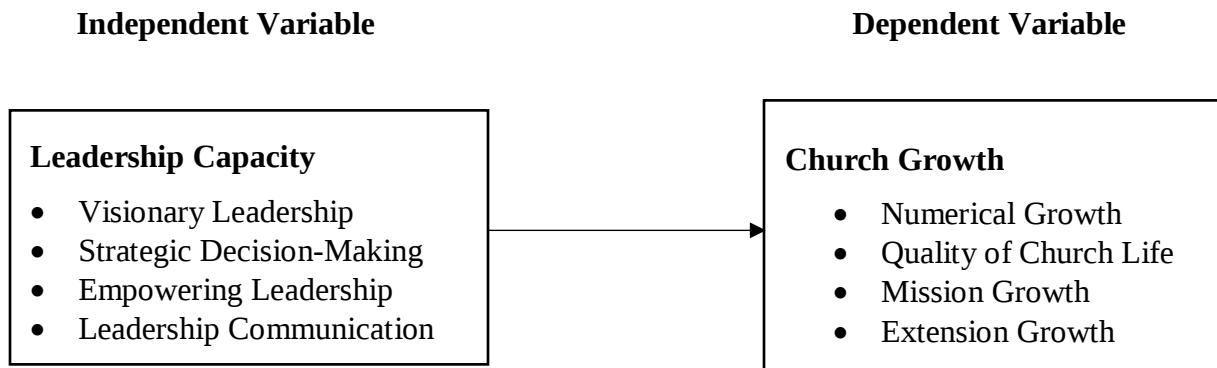


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy and Design

This study adopted a positivist research philosophy because it was consistent with the objective of testing a null hypothesis and examining the relationship between leadership capacity and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya. The positivist philosophy prioritizes empirically based data and objective measurement, which are necessary for assessing the nature, direction, and magnitude of the relationships among the identified variables (Creswell & Poth, 2022). The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design, which was selected due to its ability to enable the researcher to collect data from a large and geographically dispersed population at a single point in time, making it well-suited for examining the relationship between leadership capacity and church growth across the 33 registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya (Creswell, 2014).

3.2 Target Population and Sampling

The target population for this study comprised the 33 registered Pentecostal churches affiliated with the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) and registered under the Societies Act (Cap. 108), operating under the recognition of the Government of Kenya. The unit of observation comprised bishops, assistant bishops, pastors and church elders who were directly involved in strategic leadership, spiritual governance and congregational administration within each of the 33 churches. From each of the 33 registered Pentecostal churches, one bishop, assistant bishop, or senior pastor who represented the highest level of executive leadership were included.

Additionally, 20 church elders per church were included as the primary governance and advisory layer, yielding a target population of 693 respondents.

For the category of bishops, assistant bishops and pastors, a census approach was adopted. For the church elders' category, simple random sampling was used. The Yamane (1967) formula was applied to determine the required sample size from the elder population of 660, at a margin of error of 5 percent, yielding 249 church elders. Combined with the 33 senior leaders selected through the census approach, the study's total sample size was 282 respondents.

3.3 Data Collection and Instruments

Primary data was collected using structured, self-administered questionnaires designed to capture respondents' perceptions of leadership capacity and church growth. The questionnaire was organized into sections, with items measuring leadership capacity across four dimensions: visionary leadership, strategic decision-making, empowering leadership, and leadership communication, each comprising four statements. Church growth items measured numerical growth, quality of church life, mission growth, and extension growth. All items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). A pilot study involving 28 respondents from the International Christian Centre, Nairobi, was conducted to assess instrument validity and reliability.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data was coded, cleaned, and analyzed using SPSS version 29.0. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were computed for all study variables. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between leadership capacity and church growth. A simple linear regression model was specified to test the hypothesis and establish the influence of leadership capacity on church growth. The regression model was specified as:

$$G = \beta_0 + \beta LC + \varepsilon$$

Where G represents the growth of registered Pentecostal churches, β_0 is the intercept, β is the regression coefficient for leadership capacity (LC), and ε is the error term. Diagnostic tests for normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and linearity were conducted prior to regression analysis to ensure the assumptions of the classical linear regression model were met.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

The study administered questionnaires to 282 respondents comprising bishops, assistant bishops, pastors and church elders drawn from the 33 registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya. Of the 282 questionnaires administered, 259 were duly completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 91.8 percent. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) and Kothari (2004), a response rate above 50 percent is adequate for cross-sectional studies, whereas Babbie (2004) considers a return rate above 70 percent very good. This high participation rate indicates strong representativeness of the target population of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya.

4.2 Demographic Information

The gender distribution among respondents showed strong male dominance in church leadership positions, with males comprising 79.2 percent (205 respondents) and females 20.8 percent (54

respondents). This gender disparity reflects broader patterns of leadership representation in registered Pentecostal church governance structures in Kenya. Results on age distribution show a concentration in the middle-aged brackets, with 42.9 percent of the respondents aged 40–49 years and 28.6 percent aged 30–39 years. Regarding education, the majority of respondents held a Diploma (42.1%) or Certificate (25.1%). Church elders formed the largest category at 72.6 percent, while Bishops, Assistant Bishops and Senior Pastors together accounted for 27.4 percent. The majority of respondents had substantial leadership tenure, with 32.4 percent serving 10–14 years and 30.5 percent serving 15–19 years.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics for Leadership Capacity

Leadership capacity was operationalized through four dimensions: visionary leadership, strategic decision-making, empowering leadership, and leadership communication. Respondents rated sixteen statements on a five-point Likert scale. The descriptive statistics for each construct are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Leadership Capacity

Dimension / Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mode
Visionary Leadership	259	4.08	0.96	5
Strategic Decision-Making	259	4.20	0.62	5
Empowering Leadership	259	4.09	0.79	5
Leadership Communication	259	4.26	0.75	5
Overall Leadership Capacity	259	3.95	0.87	5

Source: Research Data (2026)

The results show that leadership capacity recorded an aggregate mean of 3.95 (SD = 0.87) across the 259 respondents, which falls within the agreement range on the five-point scale. Among the four sub-constructs, leadership communication had the highest aggregate mean of 4.26, while visionary leadership had the lowest, at 4.08. These findings suggest that respondents had a high perception of leadership capacity within their respective churches, with some variation across its constituent dimensions.

Regarding visionary leadership, the sub-construct had an aggregate mean of 4.08 (SD = 0.96), indicating high agreement among respondents. The statement “Church leaders motivate members to support long-term church goals” recorded the highest mean score of 4.17 (SD = 0.98, mode = 5), indicating that this was the most highly supported aspect of visionary leadership among the 259 respondents. Regarding strategic decision-making, the sub-construct had an aggregate mean of 4.20 (SD = 0.62), indicating high agreement. The statement “Church leaders carefully analyze situations before making decisions” recorded the highest mean score of 4.31 (SD = 0.86, mode = 5). Leadership communication had the highest aggregate mean of 4.26, with the statement “Church leaders encourage open communication between leadership and members” receiving the highest mean score of 4.38 (SD = 0.86, mode = 5).

4.4 Descriptive Statistics for Growth of Registered Pentecostal Churches

Church growth was operationalized using four dimensions: numerical growth, quality of church life, mission growth, and extension growth. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Growth of Registered Pentecostal Churches

Dimension	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Numerical Growth	259	3.87	0.89
Quality of Church Life	259	3.92	0.80
Mission Growth	259	4.07	0.69
Extension Growth	259	4.18	0.85
Overall Growth	259	3.94	0.79

Source: Research Data (2026)

Church growth had an aggregate mean of 3.94 (SD = 0.79) across the 259 respondents, which falls within the high-agreement range on the five-point scale. Among the four sub-constructs, extension growth recorded the highest aggregate mean of 4.18, while numerical growth recorded the lowest, at 3.87. The statement “The church has established new branches or ministry departments in recent years” recorded the highest mean score of 4.23 (SD = 0.87, mode = 5), indicating that this was the most highly supported indicator of growth among respondents. The statement “New members regularly join the church through evangelism and outreach” also recorded a high mean of 3.97 (SD = 1.08), suggesting that evangelistic outreach was a significant driver of numerical growth.

4.5 Correlation Analysis

To examine the association between leadership capacity and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches, a Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was conducted. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variables	Growth	Leadership Capacity
Growth	1.000	
Leadership Capacity	0.677**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	-

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: Research Data (2026)

The results show a strong positive and statistically significant correlation ($r = 0.677$, $p < .01$) between leadership capacity and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya. This finding suggests that churches in which bishops, assistant bishops, senior pastors, and church elders demonstrate greater capacity in visionary leadership, strategic decision-making, empowering leadership, and leadership communication also tend to report higher levels of church growth. This is consistent with Jenssen's (2020) assertions that leadership is key to addressing life-cycle transitions and with the recommendations of Ayodele and Olorunlana (2025) that church leadership development programs should prioritize community engagement, technology adoption, and strategic partnership building.

4.6 Diagnostic Tests

Prior to regression analysis, a series of diagnostic tests was carried out to ensure that the assumptions of the Classical Linear Regression Model (CLRM) were not violated. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality indicated that p-values for all study variables exceeded the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the assumption of normality was met. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were well below 10, confirming the absence of problematic multicollinearity. The Breusch-Pagan test for heteroscedasticity produced a p-value of 0.089, which exceeded the

0.05 significance level, confirming homoscedasticity. Scatter plot inspection confirmed that a discernible linear relationship existed between leadership capacity and church growth, supporting the appropriateness of the linear regression framework.

4.7 Hypothesis Testing: Influence of Leadership Capacity on Growth

To test the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between leadership capacity and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. Table 4 presents the model summary.

Table 4: Model Summary for Leadership Capacity

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.677	0.458	0.456	0.58504

Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Capacity.

Source: Research Data (2026)

As shown in Table 4, the model yielded an R value of 0.677, indicating a strong positive correlation between leadership capacity and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches. The R-squared (R^2) value of 0.458 implies that 45.8 percent of the variation in church growth is explained by leadership capacity. The adjusted R^2 of 0.456 depicts the robustness of the model, and the standard error of the estimate (0.585) suggests a low level of prediction error, supporting the reliability of the model.

Table 5: ANOVA for Leadership Capacity

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	74.394	1	74.394	217.36	0.000 ^b
Residual	87.963	257	0.342		
Total	162.357	258			

Dependent Variable: Growth

Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Capacity

Source: Research Data (2026)

As presented in Table 5, the regression model is statistically significant, with an F-statistic of 217.36 and a p-value less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000$). This indicates that leadership capacity significantly contributes to predicting church growth. The large F-value indicates that the variance explained by the model is substantially greater than the unexplained (residual) variance, thereby validating the overall strength and reliability of the model.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients for Leadership Capacity

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.510	0.225	-	6.717	0.000
Leadership Capacity	0.615	0.054	0.677	11.444	0.000

Dependent Variable: Growth

Source: Research Data (2026)

Based on the regression output, the fitted simple linear regression equation for predicting church growth from leadership capacity is:

$$\hat{G} = 1.510 + 0.615(LC)$$

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The beta coefficient for leadership capacity is 0.615, with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a statistically significant influence on the growth of registered Pentecostal churches at the 0.05 level. This result implies that for every one-unit increase in leadership capacity, there is an expected corresponding 0.615-unit increase in church growth, holding other factors constant. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.677 indicates that leadership capacity has a strong positive relative effect on church growth. This finding underscores the key role of church leaders in providing clear vision, sound strategic decisions, opportunities for empowerment, and effective communication to enhance the growth trajectories of their congregations. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis (H_0), which stated that there is no statistically significant relationship between leadership capacity and the growth of registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya, is rejected.

5.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that leadership capacity is a significant and indispensable driver of growth among registered Pentecostal churches in Kenya. With leadership capacity alone accounting for 45.8 percent of the variance in church growth signifying a strong positive relative effect, it is evident that the manner in which bishops, assistant bishops, senior pastors, and church elders articulate vision, make strategic decisions, empower members, and communicate has a direct and measurable bearing on whether a church expands numerically, spiritually, in mission scope, and in institutional infrastructure.

Leadership capacity in this study is best understood as a composite, multidimensional construct rather than a single trait. The four constructs, visionary leadership, strategic decision-making, empowering leadership and leadership communication, each reflect a distinct managerial and pastoral competency. The descriptive results showing leadership communication as the most strongly endorsed dimension, alongside visionary leadership as comparatively weaker, suggest that Kenyan Pentecostal church leaders are perceived as more consistently effective communicators than architects of long-term institutional vision. Therefore, while leaders are reasonably adept at conveying information and fostering dialogue with members, there is room for growth in the more forward-looking, strategic aspects of leadership, particularly in charting clear developmental pathways for their congregations.

Moreover, this leadership-growth relationship is neither unique to Kenya nor to the Pentecostal tradition, but is instead a recurring pattern across faith-based institutions in different national and denominational contexts. The consistency between the current findings and those examining ecclesiastical leadership elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond suggests that the mechanisms through which leadership drives growth, namely the cultivation of trust, direction, and member involvement, are broadly generalizable principles of institutional leadership rather than context-specific anomalies. The comparative strength of this study's leadership capacity construct relative to narrower conceptualizations of leadership examined in other Kenyan-based research indicates that a holistic, multidimensional approach to leadership development, one that simultaneously builds vision-casting ability, decision-making rigor, empowerment practices, and communication skill, is likely to yield stronger growth outcomes than interventions targeting any single leadership trait in isolation.

6.0 Recommendations

In view of the findings, the study recommends that umbrella church bodies such as the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) should institutionalize leadership development policies that specifically promote the leadership aspects examined in the study, namely visionary

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leadership, strategic decision-making, empowering leadership and leadership communication. Such policies should require structured development programmes for bishops, assistant bishops, senior pastors, and church elders through targeted mentorship, leadership workshops, and continuous ministerial development. Priority should be placed on the leadership dimensions that demonstrated the strongest contribution to church growth so that leadership development resources are directed toward empirically established growth drivers rather than generalized leadership training.

Furthermore, the Registrar of Societies and denominational governing bodies should work to create an enabling environment that allows church leaders to focus their energies on ministry and institutional development. Compliance procedures relating to registration, reporting, and governance should be made clear, proportionate, and administratively manageable, ensuring that leadership energy is not disproportionately redirected toward administrative obligations at the expense of pastoral and institutional growth functions. Denominational bodies should additionally periodically assess whether their internal governance frameworks are facilitating or constraining leaders' ability to articulate vision, make sound strategic decisions, empower members, and communicate organizational priorities effectively.

The study recommends that bishops, senior pastors, and church elders in Kenya should actively improve on their visionary, strategic, empowering and communicative leadership practices in their daily ministry. Church leaders should foster a culture of collaboration and shared vision by regularly engaging with congregants through planning sessions and encouraging them to contribute ideas for advancing church growth. Leaders should also establish structures dedicated to succession planning and leadership development to sustain institutional depth beyond any single charismatic individual. Moreover, church leaders should regularly review and update ministry strategies to remain consistent with changing congregational needs, ensuring their churches remain responsive to community demands.

Participation in continuous ministerial development programmes, such as leadership training workshops, denominational conferences, and peer learning platforms, is essential for staying informed on emerging trends and best practices in church leadership. Given that leadership communication was the most strongly endorsed dimension of leadership capacity and yet visionary leadership recorded comparatively lower mean scores, church leaders should pay deliberate attention to strengthening their visionary leadership competencies, including the ability to articulate long-term institutional vision, motivate members toward shared goals, and provide clear direction for the future growth of the church.

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