

# Impact of Leadership Tussle on Evangelistic Growth and Economic Strength of the Assemblies of God Church in South East of Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

*The study is an investigation into the impact of leadership tussle on the evangelistic growth and economic strength of Assemblies of God Church in southeast of Nigeria. The objectives were to find out the impact of leadership tussle on the evangelistic growth and economic strength of the married and single members of the Church under investigation. Survey research design was adopted and a set of structured questionnaire and interview techniques were employed to collect data from 760 respondents while the responses of the interviewees served as complementary in the discussion. Findings from the study indicated that leadership tussle has greatly impacted the evangelistic growth of Assemblies of God church with the highest mean of 3.25, cumulative mean of 2.93 and  $p =$  value of 0.971; and that leadership tussle has serious impact on the economic strength of Assemblies of God church with the highest mean of 3.62, cumulative mean of 3.18 and  $p =$  value of 0.003. Hence, the paper recommends that Church leaders should be open and transparent in order to build trust that will make members to engaged in evangelism and supportive during periods of crisis; and that do all to retain membership, which strengthens the church economically.*

**Key words:** Leadership Tussle, Impact, Evangelistic Growth, And Economic Strength

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## **Introduction**

Christian leadership refers to the principles and practices of leadership within the context of the Christian faith that is influenced by Christian values, beliefs, and teachings. This leadership focuses on the application of Christian principles in various leadership roles, either in the church, religious organizations or in secular settings by individuals who identify as Christian. Thorsten (2011) on the other hand says that Christian leadership today seems to get confused frequently with modern concept of celebrity. Christian leadership is a servant leadership which is modeled by Jesus Christ. A Christian leader is accountable to God because God is the ultimate source of authority and calling. Christian leadership in the words of McCallum and DeLashmutt (2021) is a

visionary leader that get idea through interaction with God which he sometimes shares with others. This idea could be a mental picture based on biblical principles that is combined with imagination or an actual revelation from God. The Christian leader help Gods people in Christ to fulfill Gods revealed purpose and to manage faithfully all that God has entrusted to their care.

In John 10: 10-11, Jesus declared “I am the Good shepherd” and as such Christian leaders should modeled after Christ. Leadership in Christianity is believed to be a call to service in the Christian church. This is because Christian leadership is inspired by God who alone promotes the necessary attributes in them (Danbaba, 2016). Christian leadership centers on helping Gods people to fulfill Gods purpose and manage faithfully all that God has entrusted in their care. Individual believers make up the church though but collectively participate in serving Gods purpose. Christian leadership can only work when divinely appointed men and women respond in obedience to Gods call. It is therefore obvious that a good leader is not one who tries to do everything alone but one who mobilizes people to work. Such leader must have confidence in others without being afraid of losing his/her leadership position. Biblical leadership on the other hand is specially rooted in the teachings and examples found in the Bible. Biblical leadership is drawn directly from the scriptures as a guide for leadership principles.

In 2020, there were reports of a leadership tussle within the church’s northern district with rival factions jostling for control of the district leadership positions. The tussle of the right man to Manned the number one position in Assemblies of God Church Nigeria has affected the operations of the church, with many members leaving the church due to the uncertainty and instability caused by the tussle. Efforts to resolve the crisis through mediation and dialogue did not yield success, and the matter is being adjudicated in court. The protracted leadership tussle has raised concerns about the impact of the crisis on its members and the wider Christian community in Nigeria. From all the accusations and counter accusations, the conflicts stemmed from disagreement over incompetency, greed, and financial mismanagement, of the then General Superintendent. The issue of incompetency as a problem of leadership tussle in Assemblies of God Church Nigeria is not unique to the Assemblies of God church Nigeria, but can be observed in many organizations and institutions. Incompetency in the context of this study refers to a lack of skill or ability to perform duties and responsibilities required for a particular position. The General Superintendent of Assemblies of God Nigeria has been accused of several misdemeanor that ranges from mismanagement of the church funds, nepotism, and making decisions that are not in the best interest of the church. This led to series of legal battles, which resulted in the suspension and removal of the General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God Church Nigeria and some other church leaders. The incompetency of these leaders has been exacerbated by the leadership tussle as many of the leaders who has been accused of maladministration refused to step down, leading to a power struggle within the church. The resultant effect of incompetency of the leadership of Assemblies of God Church Nigeria is that members of the church have lost the trust and confidence they reposed in the church leadership and as such has led some members to either backslide or leave the church entirely. The lack of accountability and transparency of the leadership has led to a split in Assemblies of God Church Nigeria that this study sets to address.

## Review of Related Literature

A leader is someone who guides, motivates, and influence a group of individuals towards a common goal or vision. Leaders can be found in various context, such as in politics, business, community, organizations or in families. Leaders often take responsibility for their actions and decisions, and they equally work to create a positive and productive environment for those they lead. Morgan (2020) states that a leader is someone who can see how things can be improved and who rallies people to move toward that better vision. To him, a leader is that individual that work toward making their vision a reality while putting people first. Putting other first shows that such leader is empathetic as well as connect with people in order to be successful. Leadership on the other hand has to do with taking the reins, showing initiative, making decisions and inspiring others to work together toward a common vision. Barney and Pratt (2022) saw leadership as the ability of an individual or a group of people to influence and guide followers or members of an organization, society or team. In some cases, leadership may have nothing to do with title but a creation of non-incremental change through meticulous planning, vision, and strategy. In the words of Ward (2023), leadership may not intrinsically link to profit, it increases their company's bottom line.

Leadership matters to God and churches hence God chooses and uses leaders within churches to lead people to that which God desired them to do. Christian leaders don't only move people toward morally and spiritually ambiguous goals but seek to serve others and marshal them toward a goal oriented by God. Thus, Christian leadership is seen as a process of influencing a community to use their God-given gifts toward a goal and purpose as led by the Holy Spirit (Stetzer, 2022). Christian leadership encompasses timeless Christian ideal of service, stewardship, shepherding, and humility Mark 9: 33. Fraser (2012) defines Christian leadership as a dynamic relational process in which people, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, partner to achieve a common goal. To him, serving others by leading and leading others by serving are Christian leadership.

Jemar (2021) opines that Biblical leadership is defined by Jesus Christ Himself. This style of leadership Jesus exhibited is servant leadership as could be seen in the gospel of John 13: 2-17 where Jesus the master washed the feet of the disciples and dry it with towel. Jesus exemplified the servant leadership in action. Similarly, Trevin (2014) cited Sander (1967) book "Spiritual Leadership" where the likes of Martin Luther, John Wesley and others as spiritual leaders in their time yielded to Gods' sovereignty and their willingness to endure suffering. Jesus our role model is the personification of a servant leader who did not make Himself equal to God, but washed the Apostles feet to show them that a leader must lead by service. In Christian context, leadership is a calling modeled on the Triune God who is the source of authority and power. The characteristic of Christian leadership from the forgoing must be upheld by church leaders, Assemblies of God Church inclusive.

The fundamental focus of the church is to preach the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It's rather unfortunate that leadership tussle has eroded the primary focus of AGC, Nigeria (Jegade, 2021). The tussle in Assemblies of God church has derailed the one united church from its main goal of soul winning. Though conflicts or tussle is inevitable either the body of Christ or contemporary society but the ability to resolve the crisis whenever it occur is of great importance. The reason being that conflict could occur among siblings, spouses, colleagues, parents and

neighbors. The church is not also exempted from conflicts even though she is a unit of the larger society and has a vital role play, it's therefore become necessary on how she handles conflicts that may arise with their members and among leaders. Leadership tussle within the church can have a significant impact on evangelistic growth of Church in the sense that it affects the leader's commitment to outreach efforts. A dispute in the church leadership may generate to shift from church's mission and outreach activities.

Babalola (2022) asserts that leadership tussle in the church makes it difficult for leaders to preach Christ to both sinners and members. The reason being that they are guilty of the word of God that commanded Christians to be the light and salt of the world Matthew 5:14. Christians are to counter the power of sin by illuminating the world. Their lives should be an on-going witness to the reality of Christ's mandate to live by Gods principle. Leadership tussle within the church will have negative impact on evangelistic growth of the church in the sense that it diverts leader's attention from focusing on evangelism and outreach. The energy these leaders exert on resolving internal disputes can be channeled to crusades or door to door outreaches. The mission of evangelism (that is to engage in the end-time harvest of souls that would accompany the preaching of the full gospel throughout the world. Nmah (2017) argued that the impact of leadership tussle will dapple the spirit of evangelism and soul winning. Members will not be committed to outreach programs. In the words of Piper (1995), spiritual leadership is essential in our churches because a leader is expected to use variety of methods to get his members to know God and to glorify Him in all that they do. The essence is that a good and God-fearing leaders should aim at developing his members through bible studies and Sunday school programs rather than being a dictator. Math.5:14-16 states that a leader must love both friends and enemies.

Barnard (2021) argued that tussle for leadership have less to do with one's peripheral vision by turning a 'blind eye' to issues that leaderships chooses not to address. The leader may be posed by false spirit that makes him to lead the congregation astray or exercise unhealthy influence causing grief but all the followers do is roll their eyes in other direction. Members tolerate the abusive leader instead of enjoying his leadership, thus any attempt to discipline him/her leads to resistance. Akinloye (2019) states that there is the rise in the number of legal disputes in Nigeria involving church leadership. This litigation cost should ordinarily go to the funding of programs such as printing of posters, transportation for guest speakers and other logistics that would lead to soul winning rather than the law court.

Aworinde (1993) argued that when there is tussle for leadership in the church, there will be unnecessary and careless spending as could be seen in the case of Assemblies of God church Nigeria where the then General Superintendent (GS) Prof. Paul Emeka took the church to court on the ground of his suspension. Igata (2014) reported that for the then GS to retain his position as the authentic leader of Assemblies of God church Nigeria, the Enugu High Court need to be paid handsomely. Rather than settle the case as stipulated by the constitution of the church, the then GS took the law into his hands. This action further fuelled the accusation of misappropriation of church funds which was supposed to be for the development of the church. The financial aspect of the church will go down the drains because such money will be used to attack one another. A typical example is the cases of corruption rocking the Assemblies of God Church Nigeria. Njoku (2016) reported that a source familiar with the leadership tussle in the church claimed that the General Superintendent (GS) of the church forged a certificate claiming to be a professor which was not the case initially but was a case of misappropriation of millions of naira from the church pension

fund account without due process. It was also alleged that the General Superintendent (GS) bought a house in Germany worth N250, 000,000 without the approval of the executive committee. With these accusations and counter accusations, the General Superintendent (GS) refused to own up to his actions rather he claimed that political, god-fatherism, envy and ethnic gang up by his distracters to push him out from his leadership position are responsible for the crisis.

The once peaceful members of one-fold family had been torn apart following a leadership tussle that has bedeviled the church. Two senior Reverend gentlemen had been at logger heads, each claiming to be the overall leader of the church. The tussle created factional group which caused 'a-free-for-all-fight' between the two opposing groups (Ogwuda, 2015). That is why the chairman central working committee of the Assemblies of God South-South council, Nsikak Akpan in an interview blamed the love for material things as the major reason for the crisis.

Another report from Oluwafemi (2021) states that a protest also erupted at the Assemblies of God church, Jesus Power parish Ashanti-West Region, Ghana over the dismissal of seven (7) leaders of the local assembly. The dismissed members alleged that they are being persecuted for rejecting the appointment of a new resident pastor which was imposed on them by the Regional Superintendent, Stephen Yaw Manu. The reality of materialistic tendencies that is tearing the church apart could also be seen in the contemporary society where the youths are caught in the web as well. Ukeachusim (2022) in support of the above statement says that the quest for materialism could be seen in the rate of cybercrime, fraud, ritual killing, drug and human trafficking which is the order of the day. This is why in Nigeria, Pentecostalism has become a booming trade mark of a Christian evangelistic crusade. While there may be some faithful Pentecostal leaders who are committed to the course of promoting Gods Kingdom on earth, several others have continued to pursue their pre-occupation as a commercial venture and utilize any means to accumulate profits.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Two specific objectives:

- i. to assess the impact of leadership tussle in the Assemblies of God church on the evangelistic growth in South East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.
- ii. to determine the impact of leadership tussle in the Assemblies of God church on the economic strength of members in South East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

In view of the problem of the study, the following research questions are hereby stated to guide the study.

- i. What is the impact of leadership tussle in the Assemblies of God church on the evangelistic growth in South East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria?
- ii. What is the impact of leadership tussle in the Assemblies of God church on the economic strength of members in South East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

To direct this study, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

- i. There is no significant difference in the opinions of married and singles on the impact of leadership tussle on the evangelistic growth of the church in South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

- ii. There is no significant difference in the opinions of members with different educational qualifications on the impact of leadership tussle in the Assemblies of God Church on the economic strength of the church in South East of Nigeria.

### Research Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. This method allows the researcher to collect data from a large population of subjects within a relatively short time span. It helped the researcher to produce authentic and accurate information from the respondents for the purpose of testing hypotheses concerning the stated problem of the study. The target population was 878,191 registered members of Assemblies of God Church located in the five states of South Eastern States of Nigeria comprising of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. These states had 5 Zones with District Areas (DAs). Fifteen DAs were samples and two churches each with the required number of variables of interest, gives us 30 churches. Respondents were sample on first come, first serve basis on the announced date of visitation. They were guided on how to fill the structured questionnaire in addition to structured interview schedule that were validated by experts.

### Results and Discussions

The data collected from the sampled respondents were statistically analyzed with the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The bio-data variables were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Research questions were discussed using frequencies and percentages along with mean scores and standard deviation. A bench mark value of 2.5 was used as the midpoint average for decisions on the expressed opinions. The null hypotheses were tested with inferential statistics. Specifically, null hypothesis one was were tested with t-test and the second was tested with the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Both hypotheses were tested at the fixed probability level of 0.05 ( $P = 0.05$ ).

**Table 1: Classification of respondents by marital status**

Variable	Variable options	Frequency	Percent
Marital Status	Married	466	61.3
	Single	294	38.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>760</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Field survey, 2023)

Table 1 shows that (61.3%) of the respondents were married while (38.7%) were single. This classification indicates that the opinions of the respondents were represented fully in the study.

**Table 2: Classification of respondents by highest educational attainment**

Variables	Variable option	Frequency	Percent
Highest educational attainment	No Western education	45	5.9
	Primary	106	13.9
	Secondary	272	35.8
	Tertiary	337	44.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>760</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Field survey, 2023)

In terms of educational attainment, (5.9%) of the respondents had no western education, those with primary education were (13.9) and (35.8%) had secondary school education while (44.3%) had tertiary education. This distribution shows that most of the respondents were educated and could be relied upon to provide information for assessing the impact of leadership tussle on the growth of Assemblies of God church in south-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

The assessment of leadership impact on the evangelistic growth of Assemblies of God church in south east geopolitical zone of Nigeria were assessed by rating of the suggested items and computing the mean scores along with the standard deviations as summarized in table 3. Decision on the items is based on the midpoint average of 2.50.

**Table 3: Rated impact of leadership tussle on evangelistic growth**

SN	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std
1	Spirit of evangelism and soul winning is weakened	332	332	48	48	3.25	0.832
2	Makes it difficult to organize crusade	160	380	60	160	2.71	1.024
3	Hinders outreach efforts and stall growth	192	396	48	124	2.86	0.975
4	Resources meant for evangelistic activities could be diverted	264	320	32	144	2.93	1.069
5	Dilute the impact of the gospel message	176	400	104	80	2.88	0.882
6	Weaken the outreach campaign's credibility and effectiveness	256	300	64	140	2.88	1.071
7	Limit the organization's ability to fund outreach programs	204	332	96	128	2.81	1.016
8	Lead to inconsistency in the gospel message	236	208	204	112	2.75	1.052
9	Difficult to plan and execute effective outreach and mission work	224	412	48	76	3.03	0.871
10	Pastoral care and support may suffer	252	428	32	48	3.16	0.775
11	Reduce collaboration with other denominations	268	272	124	96	2.94	1.009
<b>Aggregate mean score</b>						<b>2.93</b>	<b>0.592</b>

*(Decision mean = 2.50)*

Respondents were unanimous on the adverse effect of leadership tussle on evangelistic growth of in the Assemblies of God Church in south east geopolitical zone of Nigeria as indicates with mean scores in table 3. As shown in the ratings, 43.7% each of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that leadership tussle weakens the spirit of evangelism and soul winning in the church. Only 6.3% each of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the opinion. The mean score was 3.25 with a standard deviation of 0.832. As components of the weakness, 21.1% and 50.0% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that leadership tussle makes it difficult to organize crusade for soul winning and 25.3% along with 52.1% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that such tussle hinders outreach efforts and stall growth. Only 6.3% and 16.3% of the total respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the expressed opinion. The mean score of 2.86 was higher than the midpoint average of 2.50. As part of the negative impact of leadership tussle on evangelistic growth of the Church, 34.7% and

42.1% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that resources meant for evangelistic activities could be diverted by leadership struggles among contending members.

Though 4.2% and 18.9% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the opinion but the mean score of 2.93 clearly implied that most respondents agreed with the suggestion. The respondents were of the view that leadership contention usually dilute the impact of the gospel message and weakens the outreach campaign's credibility and effectiveness of the evangelism, the mean scores were 2.88 each of the two items. In the table, 33.7% and 39.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with this opinion. Respondents who did not agree and strongly disagreed with the opinion were 8.4% and 18.4% respectively.

Among other adverse effects of leadership tussle on the evangelistic growth of evangelists and deacons in the Church according to 26.8% and 43.7% of the respondents who strongly agreed and agreed, is that it limit the organization's ability to fund outreach programs. The mean score was 2.81 and 31.1% along with 27.4% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that such developments lead to inconsistency in the gospel message while 29.5% and 54.2% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that leadership tussle make it difficult to plan and execute effective outreach and mission work. The mean score was 3.03. In the same vein, 33.2% and 56.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that pastoral care and support suffers because of contention among leaders in the church. And 35.3% along with 35.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that such tussle reduces collaboration between Assemblies of God church with other denominations. The observation of the expressed opinion implied that leadership tussle adversely affects the evangelistic growth of Assemblies of God Church in south east geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

To determine the impact of leadership tussle on the economic strength of members in the Assemblies of God church, the opinions of the respondents on the selected items were rated and scored in means and standard deviations in table 4. Direction of opinion is based on the mean score of 2.50.

**Table 4: Rated impact of leadership tussle on the economic strength**

SN	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std
1	Depopulation of the church leads to low income in the church	520	208	16	16	3.62	0.636
2	Mismanagement of church funds	384	296	48	32	3.36	0.781
3	Leads to embezzlement of church funds	432	232	32	64	3.36	0.906
4	Financial donors lose confidence in the leadership hence withdraw their financial support	272	392	64	32	3.19	0.759
5	Makes it difficult for members to pay tithes and offering	360	256	48	96	3.16	1.009
6	Reduce budget planning and execution	192	460	48	60	3.03	0.795
7	Financial resources diverted to litigation	312	352	64	32	3.24	0.778
8	Stifle fund raising efforts	208	472	16	64	3.08	0.791
9	Decline in mission and outreach programs	208	300	92	160	2.73	1.080
10	Budget allocation maybe delayed	220	412	48	80	3.02	0.880
11	Leads to fund being locked up due to uncertainties	316	336	60	48	3.21	0.839



12	Deplete reserves thus making the church to be vulnerable	320	328	64	48	3.21	0.845
<b>Aggregate mean score</b>						<b>3.18</b>	<b>0.502</b>

*(Decision mean = 2.50)*

The expressed opinions of respondents in table 4 generally shows that they were of the view that leadership tussle has negative impact on economic strength of members of Assemblies of God Church. Respondents were of the view that leadership tussle leads to depopulation and income of the church. In the table, 68.4% and 27.4% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with this opinion. Only 2.1% each of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the view. The mean score was 3.62 with a standard deviation of 0.636. Apart from depopulating the church, 50.5% and 38.9% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that leadership tussle leads to mismanagement of church funds and embezzlement of church finances. In the table, the mean opinion expressed for the two items were 3.36 each which shows that most of the respondents were in agreement with the suggested adverse impact of leadership tussle on the economic strength of the church. The adverse impact of leadership tussle was perceived to affect the sources of income for the church. In the table, 35.8% and 51.6% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that leadership tussle could discourage financial donors and make them lose confidence in the church leadership leading to withdrawal of their financial support. Only 8.4% and 4.2% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this negative impact of leadership tussle in the church.

But the mean score of 3.19 with a standard deviation of 0.759 clearly indicated that most respondents held this negative impact of leadership tussle in the church. As part of the negative effects of leadership tussle on the church's finances, 47.4% and 33.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that it makes it difficult for members to pay tithes and offerings. Though 6.3% and 12.6% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the opinion but the mean score of 3.16 was higher than the midpoint average of 2.50 which clearly showed that most members agreed with the negative impact of leadership tussle on the church finances. As part of the negative impact of leadership tussle, 25.3% and 60.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that it reduces budget planning and execution while 41.1% and 46.3% strongly agreed and agree respectively that it leads to financial resources of the church being diverted to legal litigation. The mean scores for these two items were 3.03 and 3.24 with standard deviations of 0.795 and 0.778 respectively. The development according to 27.4% and 62.1% of the respondents who strongly agreed and agreed, stifled fund-raising efforts which 27.4% and 39.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively led to the decline in economic strength of the church. But 12.1% and 21.1% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that leadership tussle could lead to decline in the economic strength of the church. The mean score of 2.73 with a standard deviation of 1.080 implied that most respondents were of the view that the development could lead to such negative impact on the economic strength of the church. As part of the negative impact, 28.9% and 54.2% of the respondents were of the view that budget preparation and allocation could be delayed as a direct result of the contending parties and 41.6% along with 44.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that the development could lead to fund being locked up due to uncertainties while 42.1% and 43.2% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that such contention could lead to depletion of reserved funds thereby making the church

to be vulnerable to uncertainties. The general opinion expressed in the table clearly revealed that leadership tussle negatively impacts the economic strength of the church.

### Test of Null Hypotheses

The null hypotheses formulated to determine the extent to variability in opinions of the respondents on impact of leadership tussle on growth of the Church in South-East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria were tested with inferential statistics in this section at the fixed probability level of 0.05. The hypotheses are tested with the two samples t-test and one way analysis of variance as follows:

The result of the two samples t-test used to compare the opinions of the married and single respondents on the impact of leadership tussle on the evangelical growth of the church is summarized in table 5.

**Table 5: Two samples t-test on impact of leadership tussle on evangelical growth**

Marital status	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	t-value	Df	p-value
Married	466	2.93	0.576	0.02670	0.037	758	0.971
Single	294	2.93	0.617	0.03601			

*(t-critical = 1.96, p < 0.05)*

Table 5 reveals no significant difference between married and singles respondents on the impact of leadership tussle on the evangelical growth of the church. The observed t-value for the test was 0.037 obtained at 758, degree of freedom with a p-value of 0.9710 ( $p > 0.05$ ). These observations did not provide enough evidence for rejecting the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis that, there is no significant difference in the opinions of married and singles on the impact of leadership tussle on the evangelistic growth of the church in South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria is therefore retained. The result implied that the married and single respondents held the same view that leadership tussle has adverse impact on the evangelical growth of Assemblies of God Church in South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

The one-way analysis of variance procedure was used for this test because of the multiple levels of the independent variable (Levels of Education). A summary of the analysis of variance model is presented in table 6a-c.

**Table 6a: One way analysis variance on the impact of leadership tussle with respect to economic strength**

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Between Groups	3.446	3	1.149	4.623	0.003
Within Groups	187.820	756	0.248		
<b>Total</b>	<b>191.266</b>	<b>759</b>			

(*F-critical = 2.60, p < 0.05*)

The result in Table 6a reveals that the respondents differed significantly by their level of education with regards to impact of leadership tussle on economic strength of Assemblies of God Church in South East of Nigeria. The observed F-value (4.623) obtained for the test is higher than the critical value (2.60) indicated at the bottom of the table. The p-value obtained at 3, 756, degree of freedom (df) was 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). These observations provide enough evidence for rejecting the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis that, there is no significant difference in the opinions of members with different educational qualifications on the impact of leadership tussle in the Assemblies of God Church on the economic strength of the church in South East of Nigeria is therefore rejected. Table 16b shows the mean opinions of the respondents by their levels of education on the impact.

**Table 6b: Opinion opinions of respondents' level of education with regard to impact of leadership tussle on the economic strength**

Educational attainment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
No Western education	45	3.45	0.298	0.044
Primary	106	3.17	0.415	0.040
Secondary	272	3.16	0.453	0.027
Tertiary	337	3.17	0.572	0.031
<b>Total</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>0.502</b>	<b>0.018</b>

(*Decision mean = 2.50*)

The summarized means by level of education of respondents in Table 6b reveals that those with secondary school education had the least mean rating of the impact. The highest mean rating of the impact, were those with no Western education. Those with primary and tertiary education had equal ratings. To determine the level of education whose group were significantly different from the others in the mean rated opinions on the impact, a mean separation test was carried out using the Scheffe procedure. The result is summarized in table 6c.

**Table 6c: Result of Scheffe procedure on the rated impact of leadership tussle with regards to economic strength of the church.**

Education (I)	Education (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
No Western education	Primary	.27654*	0.08868	0.022
	Secondary	.29070*	0.08021	0.005
	Tertiary	.28197*	0.07911	0.006
Primary	No Western education	-.27654*	0.08868	0.022

	Secondary	0.01416	0.05707	0.996
	Tertiary	0.00543	0.05551	1.000
Secondary	No Western education	-.29070*	0.08021	0.005
	Primary	-0.01416	0.05707	0.996
	Tertiary	-0.00873	0.04063	0.997
Tertiary	No Western education	-.28197*	0.07911	0.006
	Primary	-0.00543	0.05551	1.000
	Secondary	0.00873	0.04063	0.997

\*. *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.*

The result in Table 6c, reveals that respondents with no Western education were significantly different in their ratings of the impact from any other group with different levels of education. Between respondents with primary, secondary and tertiary education, there was no significant difference in their mean rating of the impact. Observations of the mean scores in table 16c reveals that significant variability in the mean scores was basically on the magnitude of the group rating since all the respondents were of the view that leadership tussle has negative impact on economic strength of the church

### Discussions of Findings

This study revealed that the leadership tussles negatively impact evangelical growth of Assemblies of God Church in the study zone. It was revealed that respondents were unanimous on the adverse effect of leadership tussle on evangelistic growth of evangelists and deacons in the Church (Interviewees, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13). Respondents were of the view that leadership tussle weakens the spirit of evangelism and soul winning in the church as well as makes it difficult to organize crusade for soul winning by hindering outreach efforts resulting in stalled growth of the church. The study found that leadership tussle had the tendency of misdirecting resources meant for evangelistic activities where contending members were involved. The study revealed that that respondents were of the view that leadership tussle tends to dilute the impact of the gospel message and weakens the outreach campaign's credibility along with effectiveness of the evangelism. Such leadership tussle is revealed to limit the organization's ability to fund outreach programs and lead to inconsistency in the gospel message as well as make it difficult to plan and execute effective outreach and mission work by the church due to reduced collaboration between the church and other denominations.

The report from the interview collaborated these findings. According to one of the interviewees "Permit me here to use a parable in my native dialect "Onye ulo ya na agba oku anaghi achu oke" which means (a person whose house is burning does not pursue rat). So talking about evangelism and making increase to the body of Christ when all is not well with the church is not possible. The leadership tussle makes it difficult for leaders as well as members to embark on evangelism". In the words of another respondent from the interview "Sincerely speaking, the spread of the gospel of Christ has reduced significantly. Evangelists, deacons and pastors no longer go out for evangelism and those who manage to evangelize do not win souls because the news of the crisis is all over the social media. People were like how they can believe in the gospel these people preaches when the leaders they looked up to are fighting themselves. Questions like why are your leaders not practicing what they preach? Why do they hate each other so much? And why do they go against the bible principle by taking each other to court?" the unanswered questions

helped to tarnish the image of the church. The church finds it difficult to organize crusades and revival programs which ordinarily is meant to attract people to church.

Another interviewee re-echoes same opinion with more emphasis by saying that “a lot of attention was given to the internal fight between the two gladiators (Prof. Paul Emeka and Dr. Chidi Okoroafor) than winning souls for Christ”. The finding here is in support of Jegede (2021) who reported from a previous study that leadership tussles has eroded the primary focus of preaching the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Assemblies of God Church, Nigeria. The finding supported the findings of Nmah (2017) who argued that the impact of leadership tussle will dapple the spirit of evangelism and soul winning and that members will not be committed to outreach programs. The findings of this study contradicted the report of Barnard (2021) who argued that tussle for leadership has less to do with one’s peripheral vision by turning a ‘blind eye’ to issues that leaderships chooses not to address and that the leader may be posed by false spirit that makes him to lead the congregation astray or exercise unhealthy influence causing grief but all the followers do is roll their eyes in other direction.

The study reveals that leadership tussle negatively impacts the economic strength of Assemblies of God Church in the study zone. Among others, it was found that the phenomenon leads to depopulation and income of the church hence many Pastors welfare were neglected. The study equally reveals that it leads to mismanagement of church funds and embezzlement of church finances which are inimical to evangelical growth of the church. Findings reveals that leadership tussle discourages financial donors to the church by their loss of confidence in the church leadership which could lead to withdrawal of their financial support. As part of the negative impact on the economic strength of the church, the findings reveals that leadership tussle could makes it difficult for members to pay tithes and offerings, reduce budget planning and execution and leads to financial resources of the church being diverted to legal litigation. It was found that members were of the view that leadership tussle could lead to decline in mission and outreach programs of the church, lock up of funds and depletion of reserved funds thereby making the church to be vulnerable uncertainties.

The unanimous response from members of the interview groups (Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 & 8) collaborated this to affirm that leadership tussle has negatively impacted the financial strength of Assemblies of God church. Before the crisis, the church can boast of their members who can pay about two hundred thousand as tithe (N200,000) but because of the crisis these members no longer come to church while some of them has migrated to other denominations. So it has greatly affected the financial resources of the church. And according to another interviewee “When people stopped coming to church, definitely the income of the church must surely reduce because of the reduction in tithe and offerings. The church finds it difficult to meet up with the financial needs of the church and her members. The church no longer meets the target hence cannot remit to the General Council or the main stream”. In illustrating the impact of leadership tussle on the economic strength of the church, one of the interviewees, has this to say. “A typical example of the negative impact of leadership tussle is what happened in my church last year when the breeze took off the roof of the church and the church requested an assistance from the Executive Council of the church to re-roof back the church but no assistance came. The council refusal is based on insufficient funds from tithe and offerings which is the result of the depopulation of the church members”. The findings here support report from previous study by Akinloye (2019) who states that there is a rise in the number of legal disputes in Nigeria involving church leadership and that

litigation cost should ordinarily go to the funding of programs such as printing of posters, transportation for guest speakers and other logistics that would lead to soul winning rather than the law court. The findings of this study agreed with Akabike, Ngwoke, and Chukwuma (2021) who states that fighting to head the church is not always leading a spiritual or religious entity; it is sometimes to be in total control of an impressive economic and political organization and empire that stretches from the West coast of Africa to the shores of Canada, China, Australia and New Zealand.

### **Conclusions**

From the findings of the assessment carried out in this study, the research wishes to conclude as follows:

1. Leadership tussle has negative impact on the evangelistic growth of Assemblies of God church in South East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The evangelistic activities such outreach and mission work were weakened as a results of leadership tussle in the church.
2. The economic strength of Assemblies of God church in South East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria is negatively impacted by leadership tussle in the church. The sources of income of the church have been adversely impacted for members find it difficult to pay tithes and offerings.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Church leaders should be open and transparent in communication about the tussle and its resolution process can build trust within the congregation. For when members are informed, they will be more likely to remain engaged and supportive during periods of crisis.
2. Leaders should engage in mediation by seeking guidance from trusted mentors and advisors who would facilitate in reconciling the aggrieved persons which will pave way for healing within the church community.

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