Pastoral Leadership Practices and Innovations Among Churches in Lagos West Baptist Conference, South-Western, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study of leadership in religious organizations has assumed a level of great importance as research on it has steadily increased in intensity over the years. Pastoral leadership is an important element of every church organization. Effective leaders, however, must understand the dynamics of changes and apply innovations to their leadership styles and practices. This study delves into pastoral leadership practices and innovations within the Lagos West Baptist Conference in South-Western Nigeria. Addressing key questions on predominant leadership practices, responses to challenges, and the extent and application of innovation. The study draws on a diverse population of pastors, church leaders, and congregants. Findings reveal a nuanced landscape where traditional roles intertwine with innovative strategies, adapting to societal changes and theological shifts. It also sheds light on the crucial relationship between leadership practices and innovation. The study concluded that effective leadership, characterized by vision, adaptability, flexibility, charisma and a strong sense of purpose, serves as an s catalyst for fostering congregational growth and development. The study recommends continuous professional development, collaborative knowledge-sharing, and the integration of technology to enhance pastoral leadership. This comprehensive exploration contributes valuable insights for church leaders, scholars, and policymakers, offering recommendations for fostering effective pastoral leadership within the unique context of the Lagos West Baptist Conference.

Keywords: Pastoral; Leadership; Innovation; Leadership Practices

Introduction

The 21st century has brought about enormous global changes to the way people carry out their daily activities, their belief system, their attitude to worship, the expressions of their faith, personality development and lifestyle. This is coming in the wake of rapid development of information technology, the revolution in biotechnology, irregular economic shifts, various pandemics and devastating outbreaks. These changes in the global environment are forcing a new understanding of group dynamics, interpersonal relationships, the concept of leadership, the preference for religious affiliation, changes in lifestyles, and other facets of life. The roles of leaders in accentuating growth amid these sprawling changes, have become much more important to the development of organizations like never before (Gyanchandani, 2017). Leaders are expected to focus, not only on various organizational development initiatives, innovations, creativity, and idealization; but also look after the various psychological, emotional, financial, spiritual, and physical needs and wellbeing of their followers. In the light of these changes, it has been established that leadership practices and styles has the ability to motivate followers to become the best they could and drive innovations in a creative manner has become critical indices to the survival and growth of organizations (Aslam, 2018).

Currently, the world is showing greater preference for the competitive forces of secularism, agnosticism, and atheism to the extent that the number of people outside the Church is growing than at almost any time in history (Bolger & Gibbs, 2005; Package, 2011; White, 2013). Also, pluralism exerts more significant pressure on traditional values and old-time religion. Everything is now a matter of personal preference. Package (2011) observed that religion is no longer sacrosanct, but a premium is placed on positive thinking, relativism, and subjective religiosity. These were the same claims made by Grenville and Posterski (2004), in their study on Canadian Evangelical Christianity that many Canadians do not attend church because they believe that every religion is equally true and good. They also believed that religion is not essential for guidance in their daily lives. As it turns out, the people's challenges are compounded by the pressure of meeting the speed of technological change. Today's people have become an "instant" and "–less" (cordless, tubeless, cashless, wireless, endless, etc.) generation.

This was heightened by the pandemic situation of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the early 2020 which shuts out all religions and economic activities worldwide. As the nations began to witness regular increase in the number of confirmed cases of the virus, the governments across the world imposed lockdown on their nations (Aluko, 2020). As a result of this pandemic, which spread across the world like wildfire within months of its outbreak, churches and other public places were closed. While some leaders quickly adopted the concept of internet ministry using technology, many others were shut down totally for a long period. Afolaranmi (2020) noted that this hindered the pastoral ministry of many church leaders in Nigeria to their church members and subsequently the vitality of the congregation. Covarrubias, Dunaetz, and Dykes (2021) noted that COVID-19 pandemic created an unprecedented need for innovations in churches worldwide.

The mainline churches in Nigeria were not as lucky with the outbreaks of COVID'19 pandemic, as they had to swim or sink. However, Ajala (2021), taking the ministry of a Baptist Pastor Bayo Afolaranmi into consideration, submitted that internet ministry became an alternative ministry channel during this period for few mainland churches although, with its limitations and challenges. Arasa, Angolafale and Murrighili (2022) noted that while the pandemic has reduced the attendance of the faithful at church, priests have responded in

various ways, trying to continue spiritual assistance to the congregations in their various Roman Catholics dioceses. Also, McGowon (2020) submitted that clergiein Anglican churches have now been working to add competence in video-conferencing programs to the list of desirable pastoral skills to practice and visibly succeed or fail at, and many communities have maintained their close existing connections by streaming worship live.

In Nigeria, a number of empirical studies have been focused on innovation in church congregations. Ossai-Ugbah (2011) investigated the information and communication technology in use in Baptist churches. The study adopted a descriptive survey method to explore how Nigeria Baptist congregations using computer technologies to innovate had enhanced traditional ministries in worship, fellowship, pastoral care, education, evangelism, mission and community outreach. The study showed that the educational background of pastors affected the adoption of technology as a tool for innovation in their churches and those who adopted technology did so to enhance their sermon preparation, worship and running of teaching materials during service. Bolu (2011), conducted a study, where he sought to understand the conception of church leaders on the use of technology for church growth programs. The author inquired about the adoption of electronic communication platforms such as emails, telephone and virtual learning environment, message streaming and dedicated software for church administration and human capital development. The study established that in Nigerian churches, the adoption of information and communication technology has brought about an organizational shift in church growth and communication strategy of the church.

However, it is evident that most of the studies primarily concentrated on the use and types of innovation in the church. A few had focused on process and technology issues without establishing any correlation or link between the nature of innovation in church congregations and the leadership practices, particularly the ideas and system of leadership employed by church pastors in ensuring innovation to approach the rapid changes in the church administration and system. Obviously, the study on church innovation has been reduced to the use of information and communication technology in the church. This is a significant gap in research, particularly in Nigeria, where more than 65% of the population is below the age of 35 years. This age group is the people the church needs to reach with attractive innovations and creative activities toward their personal spiritual growth and church vitality. Therefore, this study will investigate the leadership practices for innovations, and types of innovations and establish its relationship with church vitality in Lagos West Nigeria Baptist Congregations.

The study of leadership has assumed the level of serious significance as research on it has steadily risen in intensity over the years (Shanlian, 2013). What started as the "Great Man" theory of leadership, where the leader was considered as born with leadership capabilities, has evolved through different stages to the current emphasis where the focus is on transformational leadership with serious concerns for shared meanings, values and goals. This development over the years is described table 1.

Table 1: Evolution of Leadership Theories

Leadership Theory	Year	Definition
Great Man Theory	1840's – early 1900's	It assumes that the traits of leaders are intrinsic which means that great leaders are born.
Trait Theory	1930's – 1940's	It believes that people are either born or made with certain qualities which makes them excel in leadership roles.
Behavioral Theory	1940's – 1950's	It focuses on the behaviors of leaders as opposed to their mental, physical or social characteristics.

		Hence, the division into concern for task or for people.
Contingency Theory	1960's	It states that there is no single way of leading and that every leadership style should be based on certain situations.
Transactional Theory	1970's	Where leaders and followers engage in exchange of value in a mutually beneficial relationship.
Transformational Theory	1970's	This is where the leader interacts with followers to achieve extraordinary results.

However, today's leaders in the emerging paradigm are seen as catalysts and great influencers in the process of achieving positive organizational outcomes (Morrell & Hartley, 2006). Transformational leadership is associated with extra ordinary performance, sense of mission, continuous learning and innovation (Den, Van & Koopman, 1997 and Hater & Bass, 1988). Indeed, as Bossidy and Charan (2002) pointed out, meaningful changecan only come with execution when transformational leaders and their constituents learn to overcomethe fears associated with status quo.

Schaubroeck, Lam and Cha (2007), argued that when transformational leaders displayed attendant behavior with the above categories, organizations will experience superior teamperformance. The attendant behaviors includes; leaders communicate a high level of belief and confidence in the group's ability to achieve capacity stretching goals, leaders effectively model exemplary behavior required for best performance, leaders demonstrate caring concern for people as individuals to promote a sense of belief within the group, and leaders build a sense of community and cooperation.

Selman (2014), posited that whether the subject of interest is leadership or innovation, organisations' concern is about achieving sustainable change regardless of the size of change, level of continuity or degree of breakthrough desired. He concluded that both leaders and innovators change the context, impact their own personal frame of reference and affect the paradigmof those who have stakes in the innovation. According to Hunter, Steinberg and Taylor (2012), the innovation leader must therefore take ownership of the creative process and effectively collaborate,simplify and inspire. Unfortunately, a 2014 survey by the Center for Creative Leadership established the leadership challenge in delivering innovation as it found a striking gap between the need for innovation and its ability. The study, therefore, established that leadership capabilities to deliver innovation must be developed appropriately.

Kouzes and Posner (1997) believed that each organization was quite different, and stated that successful organizations may have very different values and that the specific set of values that serves one company may hurt another. Described through their research were five fundamental practices of successful leaders: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart (refer to Table 2). The researchers developed the LPI through their exploration into best practices of leadership. The LPI was designed to measure these five leadership practices.

Table 2: Key Descriptors for Leadership Practices as Defined by Kouzes and Posner (1997)

Leadership Practices	Key Descriptors
Challenging the Process	Seeking out change, growth, innovation; taking risks; learning from mistakes.
Inspiring a Shared Vision	Envisioning the future; enlisting others; appealing to hopes and values.
Enabling Others to Act	Fostering collaboration; building trust; giving power away; offering support.
Modeling the Way	Setting the example; promoting consistent progress; building commitment.
Encouraging the Heart	Recognizing individuals; celebrating team accomplishments.

Thus, the decisive elements in the measure of leaders' capabilities will include qualifications, experience, skills relating to sensemaking, visioning, relating and inventing. Without prejudice to where the leader is operating, whether in the private sector or public sector or in the faith-based organizations, the essential requirements remain the same. This study will also adopt the above factors to measure pastoral leadership capabilities.

Horth and Vehar (2015) were of the opinion that there is a leadership challenge at every level of an organization and it is critical because a leader may dismiss an idea, stifle a conversation and exchange; or may occasionally jettison a suggestion that runs contrary to his current priority or a personal prejudice may prevent him from welcoming a creative solution; or even for some strange, undefined reason, a leader may refuse an innovation. Despite these scenarios, the transformational leader is expected to facilitate constructive cooperation across organizational boundaries connecting ideas with ideas and influencing people of different priorities and interests. Does the Bible have something to say about leadership and how it could resolve the leadership challenge for effective innovation? The answer, is yes.

The bible consists of different theological reflections on leadership. The Old Testament is filled with stories of different leaders, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Joshua, Saul, David, Nehemiah and the Prophets. Each of them was raised up for a different reason within an overarching purpose to bring restoration of God's image in everyone and in everything but they all displayed different leadership characteristics. Similarly, in the New Testament, new themes of leadership emerged to accelerate the work of recovery of the human race from satanic domination. Several new leaders were raised. The list included Jesus Christ of Nazareth, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Barnabas, Paul, Timothy, Silas and many others.

From the biblical survey of leaders and leadership themes in the Old and the New Testaments, it is clear that God's purpose for leadership is to lead people from where they are to where God wants them to be (Clinton & Straub, 2010). It is to grow them into Christlikeness so that they can participate in accomplishing the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20). God expects the motives of the leader to be right and his methods to follow biblical precedence as inspired by the Holy Spirit. Leaders are to equip; empower, correct, train, coach, encourage, confront, and develop their followers. In doing this, leaders should establish good relationship, model humility with incredible firmness, lead exemplary life, be creative and innovative, and

remain visionary as they lead others in the pursuanceof the truth.

Innovation remains a key driver for excellent and successful performance of a leader. Consequently, it has become a key part of organizational strategy with the aim of turning ideas into value, leading to improve goods and services, renewed methods and process in the quest to sustain development and growth. Schumpeter (1934) defined innovation as a system of Introducing a new product or modifications brought to an existing product; A new process of innovation in an industry; discovery of a new market; developing new sources of supply with raw materials; and ther changes in the organization.

David (2007) defined innovation as tryingto figure out a way to do something better than it's ever been done before. Simiyu (2013) thinks that innovation is beyond just trying to figure out but it is the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization. Selman (2014) suggested that a more powerful way to think about innovation is to regard it as intentionally bringing into existence something new that can be sustained and repeated and which has some value or utility. In other words, innovation is real, tangible and has to do with some practical "in the world" value. Again, according to Selman (2008), innovation is about making new tools, new products, creating new processes and introducing something 'new' which allows human beings to accomplish something they were not able to have or do previously.

In another landmark study on innovation, Chesbrough (2003) submitted that the changing business environment required organizations to turn from closed innovation approach to an open one. The author introduced the idea of open innovation which he described as "the use of purposive inflows and outflows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation and expand the markets for external useof innovation respectively" The open innovation paradigm encourages organizations to collaborate and network with external sources as they look to enhance their innovation performance (Durst & Stahle, 2013). With regards to types of innovation, Baker and Sinkula (2002) identified three types of innovation namely: product/service, process, and strategy; each of these could vary from incremental to radical (Schilling,2010) and from sustaining to discontinuous (Christensen, 2013). But the Organisation of Economic Development (OECD) Oslo Manual (2005) prescribed four different innovation types. These are: product, process, marketing and organizationalinnovations.

Innovative leadership is on the high demand in the contemporary time, this is because previous discussions on leadership theories have indicated strong support for transformational leadership and charismatic leadership among various other leadership theories in existence to enhance performance in any organization. These two theories envisage forward-looking leaders who are able to foster innovation, motivate employees to perform beyond normal expectations, and establish core values where employees put aside their personal interests for the greater good of the organization (Samad, 2012). However, organizational performance and achieving the goals of an organization require leaders who are also innovative. This is to say that transformational and charismatic leaders are still incapable of achieving the excellence and growth required by the organization most importantly, in the face of ongoing rapid changes in technology and globalization. Hence, this study will also evaluate innovative leadership theory.

Innovative leadership fosters innovation through developing an innovation-friendly culture and setting strategic direction that guides and builds trust among the employees to innovate. Different experts have given their own views of innovative leadership. These viewpoints mainly concentrated on one or two aspects of the total leadership process; such as Agin and Gibson (2001) stress developing an innovative culture and strategic direction through

the leaders' role; Morris (2007) emphasizes on developing innovative culture; Vitello-Cicciu (2003) emphasized on emotional intelligence; Jeong and Keatinge (2004) stressed on holistic view; Hamel (2006) talked about innovative management and Maxwell (2005); Prestwood and Schumann (2002) and Hodge and Linney (1999) provided some behavioral guidelines on innovative leadership. Putting these views together, Sultana and Rahman (2012) give a view of interactive elements of the innovation leadership process as graphically represented below:

Fig. 1: Innovative Leadership Model

Innovative leadership is a process of building an innovative organization where people are committed to contributing innovatively. Innovative leadership is the combination of four elements emotional intelligence, innovative organization, management innovations, and interaction with outsiders. Emotional intelligence helps the leader to be innovative in managing people and building innovative organization and management and interacting with stakeholders. To create management innovations, the innovative leader needs to identify a big novel problem to be solved. When the problem is identified the leader needs to set new principles and management orthodox that will accelerate the pace of innovations. The innovative leader may also look outside for management innovations that can be installed in his organization. Once the management innovation is set, the innovative leader should work to build the innovative organization. The leader needs to assign innovative champions to guide them, inspire the employees, and build trust by making a fault-tolerant environment. Once the inside of the organization is set for innovation the innovative leader looks out for the idea from different stakeholders, such as customers, suppliers, and, academia, etc.

The innovative leadership system learned from Jesus by the Apostles propelled it from humble obscurity to renowned attraction, infectiousness, and respectability. The early church evolved from its limitations of internal focus to boundless efficacy by utilizing innovation and creativity in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. The teaching and methodology of Jesus Christ invariably caused the early church to "turn the world upside down." (Acts 17:6). Evidently, regardless of one's school of thought, whether one equates church growth with numeric increases or incarnational growth or internal organic growth or missions' transformation, the incontrovertible point remains that any church that desires to grow should pay particular attention to innovation. How a congregation sets its strategy and structure its processes and

ministry to overcome emerging obstacles and respond to changing social conditions and grow is what church innovation is all about.

The Nigeria Baptist Convention is the umbrella body for all Baptist congregations in Nigeriaand the Southwest Baptist churches are the biggest with about 52% of the entire Baptist membership nationwide. Its stated objectives are: "To be a community of believers that represent Christ by proclaiming the gospel, discipling believers, caring and developing churches to be involved in holistic ministries – evangelistic, social and healing – and collaborating with other Christian agenciesacross the globe". According to Ayokunle (2014), "the NBC is involved in spreading the gospel bothin Nigeria and abroad, theological education, liberal arts education and leadership development, active in the campaign against the HIV/AIDS scourge, Poverty Alleviation Education Program". Tofacilitate its work of ministry in every part of Nigeria, the Convention is divided into 33 Conferencesand the Conferences are divided into Associations and Congregations in the same geographical areas that make up the Association.

The Baptist work in Nigeria dates back to around 1850 when Jefferson Bowen landed in Badagary, a city in South West Nigeria. He came as a missionary of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, United States of America and he labored tirelessly along with indigenous converts to ensure that the Baptist work was firmly planted in the land. This effort, observed Ajayi (2014), resulted into the present Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) which was formed in 1914. According to him, at that beginning 31 churches with total membership strength of 2880 were the foundational members of the Convention. Today, Ayokunle (2014) observed that theNBC is the largest Baptist body in Africa and the third largest in the Baptist World Alliance.

The Nigerian Baptist Convention has over 10,000 churches, 3 million baptized members and about 6.5 million non-baptized members spread over 33 conferences in the nation. The South West Baptist congregation is supposedly the largest in Nigeria. This, according to Ajayi (2014), is because the Baptist enterprise is largely concentrated in the region probably because it took root from there.

The church stated intention had been clear and direct, "it was not in search of numerical growth that is not matched with spiritual maturity" (Ajayi 2014). This philosophy, though excellentaffected the growth of many Baptist congregations because it was interpreted to mean "no" to innovation. As it were, Baptist congregants are typically elitists, whether they are found in the citiesor in the suburbs, educated or not, they are generally called "people of the book"; an appellation theypicked up because of their knowledge and intense love for the written word of God. Members are usually active in church though they lead very busy lives with families, social commitment and workengagements.

One very painful observation about Baptist churches in Nigeria generally is the diminished spiritual vitality in congregations, stagnancy in church attendance, migration of youths to Pentecostal Churches and declining participation and involvement in church programs. There cannot be any single factor that is responsible for this development but the stronghold of traditions and rules in theface of changing culture coupled with its very couscous approach to church leadership styles and innovation. However, inrecent times, there has been a significant change towards missions and evangelism and the denomination has become more receptive to impactful innovations which some years back would have been unacceptable. The NBC is currently running a vision tagged: "Mission of Kingdom growth: Moving forward, breaking

new frontiers". Ayokunle (2014), the author of this theme challenged the Convention that unless the techniques and technologies are appropriate to the realitiesof this stated intention, the efforts will be in vain.

Lagos Baptist West Conference

Hence, Lagos West Baptist Conference is an affiliate of the Nigerian Baptist Convention which was established in 2010 following the multiplication of the defunct Lagos State Baptist Conference into Lagos Central, LagosEast and Lagos West Baptist Conferences. It is one of the 33 conferences in the Nigeria Baptist Convention, consisting of 13 Baptist Associations and 266 congregations. The Conference upon its inauguration spelt out its vision as follows: "The vision of Lagos West Baptist Conference is puttingmissions first and capacity building next (Matthew 28:18-20)" (Adeniji, 2015). This vision encapsulates the whole idea behind the coming together of the cooperating congregations, to foster the development of missions and evangelism and build up people until they come to the full knowledge of the truth

Statement of the Problem

The image of the Church has taken a beating because of a combination of factors which ranges from boring church activities, stagnation in approach, lack of varieties, adherence to unnecessary traditions, bad personal experiences of people with churches, technological changes, innovations and developments, and many others. These challenges are creating problems which require new responses and practices by the church. Therefore, many Baptist congregations are not experiencing attendance growth and spiritual development expected of a growing church. In fact, it was established in the literature that if Baptist congregations remained in this posture, the generation of young adults and youths would never be able to relate with the denomination (Barna, 2014; Austin-Robertson, 2014; Voas & Watt, 2014). Hence, the church must respond with strategic leadership practices and innovation to provide strategic solutions to these identified problems.

Every congregation faces immense pressure to innovate, and the type and nature of innovation will vary from one congregation to another, probably depending on the nature of congregational activities, church governance, congregational context, and cultural environment. In the context of mainline churches in Nigeria, especially the Baptist congregations, most studies concentrated on the impact of information and communication technology as it affects church growth and how it enhances different aspects of the church ministry. Most of them have adopted the case study approach. This brought about a gap in the understanding of innovation and innovation performance in church literature in Nigeria. It is also noticeable that the few studies that focused on technology as a tool of innovation did not establish any link between innovation and church vitality or any of its elements. Besides, technology usage is just a medium to achieve innovation; several key issues on church innovation can be explored.

Hence, there is a need to examine wider issues concerning the nature and content of innovation and how these affect the church's witness within the emerging socio-cultural, technological and demographic changes in Nigeria while staying true to their denominational beliefs, values and understanding of Scripture. Thus, the study will establish the leadership practices, types of innovation and relationship among the congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference. This research, therefore, will answer questions on the leadership practices and types of innovation in churches in Nigerian Baptist Churches.

Aims and Objectives of the Study
    The aims and objectives of this study are:
1. Ascertain the leadership practices of church pastors among the congregations in Lagos West Baptist Conference churches.
2. Ascertain the types of innovations initiated by church pastors among congregations in Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches.

Research Questions
    The research questions to be pursued in this study are:
1. What are the leadership practices of church pastors among congregations in Lagos West Baptist Conference churches?
2. What are the types of innovations being initiated by church pastors among congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference?

Methodology
    The study adopted the survey method to examine and identify the causal relationship between leadership practices and innovation in the congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference. The questionnaire, which was designed with closed-ended questions using Likert scale was self-administered, to collect data from leaders and members of Baptist churches in the Lagos West Baptist Conference churches. Descriptive statistics was used to test the demographic information of the respondents in order to organize them for easy categorization and analysis. The Population of the study consists of thirty-nine (39) church leaders and one hundred and forty-six (146) church members, selected in the Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches for the purpose of this study.

Result and Findings

Table 3: Demographic Information of Church Members (N=146)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender		
Male	86	59.0%
Female	60	41.0%
Age		
0-25	27	19.0%
26-50	81	55.0%
50-75	37	25.0%
75 and above	1	1.0%
Previous Service as a Church Leader		
Yes	76	52.0%
No	70	48.0%
Highest Qualification		
High School Certificate	37	25.0%
First Degree	88	60.0%
Master's Degree	12	8.0%

PhD	2	1.0%
Others	7	5.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 3 represents the demographic distribution of the selected church members. The table reveals the summary of participants' bio data regarding Gender. It is observed that 56% of the study participants were male, while 41% were female. The result implies that more males participated in the study than their female counterparts. It shows that 19% of the study participants were 0-25 years, 55% of the study participants were 26-50 years, 25% of the study participants were 50-75years and 1% of the study participants were 75 years and above. Deducing from the findings, it is obvious that majority of the respondents were in age 26-50 years, followed by respondents in 50-75 years, these calibres of people are mature enough to give accurate information to the researcher. Furthermore, presented that 52% of the study participants have previously served as a church leader at one time or the other while 48% have not been involved in leadership position before in the Church. The result implies that, more respondents have in one time or the other occupied a leadership position in the church. Lastly, It was observed from Figure 4.1d that 25% of the study participants were SSCE holders, 60% of the study participants are First Degree holders, 8% of the study participants were Masters' holders, 1% of the study participants is PhD holders, and 5% of the study participants were holders of other certificates. The result implies that majority of the study respondents were holders of higher qualifications who have been exposed to give accurate information to the researcher.

Table 4: Demographic Information of Church Leaders (N=39)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	29	74.0%
Female	10	26.0%
Age		
0-25	4	10.0%
26-50	16	41.0%
50-75	18	46.0%
75 and above	1	3.0%
Role as Church Leaders		
Pastor	22	56.0%
Associate Pastor	5	13.0%
Ministry Head	5	13.0%
Others – Volunteers/Other ministers	7	18.0%
Qualification		
High school	9	23.0%
First degree	14	36.0%
Masters	13	33.0%
Others	3	8.0%
Professional Qualification		
Certificate	15	39.0%
Dip. Th.	2	5.0%
B. Th	12	30.0%

BA/B.Th.	3	8.0%
M.Div.	3	8.0%
M.Th.	2	5.0%
D.Min	2	5.0%
Years of Pastoral Leadership Experience		
1- 5	21	54.0%
6-10	5	13.0%
11-15	4	10.0%
16-20	3	8.0%
21 & above	6	15.0%
Years of Pastoral experience in the Former Church (if any)		
1-5	25	64.0%
6-10	5	13.0%
16-20	1	3.0%
Not applicable	8	20.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 4 revealed that majority 29 (74.0%) of the respondents were male; also, majority are between the age of 26 – 75 (87%). Again, the majority are church pastors 22 (56%). The table further revealed that the majority are highly educated, with 27 (69%) having a first degree and masters degree. 15 (39.0%) and 12 (30.0%) represent most of the respondents with certificates and B.th qualifications. The majority of the respondents' years of leadership experience is between 1 – 5 years (54%), with 25 (64%) having 1 – 5 years of experience in formal church.

Research Question One: What are the leadership practices of church pastors among congregations in Lagos West Baptist Conference churches?

Table 5: Leadership Practices of Church Pastors in Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches (N=39)

Items	Very True of Me	Partially True of me	Not So True of Me	Not At All	Not Sure	Mean	Standard Deviation
I create year planner and models that outline congregational programs and events	24 (62%)	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	5 (12%)	2 (5%)	4.15	1.29
I work collaboratively with other members of the congregation	33 (85%)	4 (10%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.79	0.52
I maintain open communication with the congregation – frequent communication	30 (77%)	7 (18%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	4.67	0.77
In our church, I create a sense of urgency to promote quick actions	25 (64%)	9 (23%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	1 (3%)	4.41	0.99
I express with a few simple words what we could and should do	22 (56%)	13 (33%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	4.36	0.99
I provide appealing images about what we can do and should do	21 (54%)	10 (26%)	3 (7%)	3 (7%)	2 (5%)	4.15	1.18
I enable others to think about old problems in new ways	18 (46%)	14 (36%)	1 (3%)	3 (7%)	3 (7%)	4.05	1.23

I give members permission to break with conventional things and to respond to new challenges	21 (54%)	10 (26%)	3 (7%)	2 (5%)	3 (7%)	4.13	1.24
I communicate, drive and align with the churches' vision, goals and objective	34 (87%)	3 (7%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	4.77	0.74
I welcome feedback from the congregation	29 (74%)	8 (20%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	4.62	0.85
					Weighted Mean	**4.41**	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 5 presents the leadership practices of church pastors in Lagos West Baptist Conference churches. To answer this research question, a benchmark of 3.0 was set. The decision was based on the average of the five responses being 3.0. The table reveals that all the items used to measure leadership practices of church pastors in Lagos West Baptist Conference churches established the fact that leadership practices of church pastors in Lagos West Baptist Conference churches tended towards vision casting, participatory decision making, open communication, and encouragement to innovate as all the nine items used to capture leadership practices of church pastors in Lagos West Baptist Conference churches had mean above the set benchmark of 3.0.

For instance, on the item which stated that: I create year planner and models that outline congregational programs and events ($\bar{x} = 4.15$). I work collaboratively with other members of the congregation ($\bar{x} = 4.79$). I maintain open communication with the congregation – frequent communication ($\bar{x} = 4.67$). Most In our church, I create a sense of urgency to promote quick actions. ($\bar{x} = 4.41$). I express with a few simple words what we could and should do ($\bar{x} = 4.36$). I provide appealing images about what we can do and should do ($\bar{x} = 4.15$). I enable others to think about old problems in new ways ($\bar{x} = 4.05$). I allow members to break with conventional things and espond to new challenges ($\bar{x} = 4.13$). I communicate, drive and align with the churches' vision, goals and objective ($\bar{x} = 4.77$). I welcome feedback from the congregation ($\bar{x} = 4.62$). The weighted mean values of the 10 items or grand mean which is (4.41) on the table were accepted as rated above decision bench mark of 3.0. To further answer research question one, responses from the key personalities interview session indicated that leaders in Lagos West Baptist Conference churches are visionary, proactive and strategic, dynamic and transformational.

In summary, this finding indicates that the leadership practices of church pastors in Lagos West Baptist Conference churches is vibrant and of high quality in terms of visioning, relating, sensemaking and innovative.

Research Question Two: What are the types of innovations being initiated by church Pastors among congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference?

Table 6: Types of Innovations Being Initiated By Church Leaders among Congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference (N=146)

Our Congregation	SA	A	NS	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
experiments with new ideas that enhance our ministry	82 (44%)	85 (46%)	10 (5%)	5 (3%)	3 (2%)	4.29	0.82
Introduces new methods that could enhance our ministry	86 (46%)	83 (45%)	7 (4%)	6 (3%)	3 (2%)	4.31	0.83
experiments with new things that enhance our ministry	73 (40%)	88 (48%)	10 (5%)	7 (4%)	7 (4%)	4.15	0.96
is largely conventional	48 (26%)	79 (42%)	32 (17%)	12 (7%)	14 (8%)	3.73	1.14
is a replica of other congregations in the denomination	34 (18%)	74 (40%)	40 (22%)	25 (14%)	12 (6%)	3.50	1.13
structure has not changed since establishment	20 (11%)	32 (17%)	22 (12%)	59 (32%)	52 (28%)	2.51	1.35
has an established method of selecting leaders and assigning roles which has not changed	50 (27%)	63 (34%)	30 (16%)	23 (12%)	19 (10%)	3.55	1.29
has a defining system of decision making?	74 (40%)	93 (50%)	7 (4%)	7 (4%)	4 (2%)	4.22	0.86
regularly comes up with new ways to organize our church ministry departments	64 (35%)	91 (49%)	18 (10%)	7 (4%)	5 (2%)	4.09	0.91
regularly develop new methods of sharing responsibilities	61 (33%)	98 (53%)	16 (8%)	6 (3%)	4 (2%)	4.11	0.86
always find new ways of dealing with our community and other church bodies	50 (27%)	97 (52%)	22 (12%)	7 (4%)	9 (5%)	3.93	0.99
is more concerned with the experience the people receive from the activities of the church	56 (30%)	92 (50%)	16 (9%)	9 (5%)	12 (6%)	3.92	1.08
design new ways of interacting with one another	57 (30%)	90 (49%)	17 (9%)	12 (7%)	9 (5%)	3.94	1.04
is more concerned with solving problems	73 (40%)	78 (42%)	18 (9%)	11 (6%)	5 (3%)	4.10	0.98
Create new levels of engagement with the community	52 (28%)	92 (50%)	29 (15%)	7 (4%)	5 (3%)	3.97	0.91
Weighted Mean						**3.89**	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 6 presents the types of innovations being initiated by church leaders among congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference. To answer this research question, a benchmark of 3.0 was set. The decision was based on the fact that the average of the five responses was 3.0. The table reveals that all the items used to measure types of innovations being initiated by church leaders among congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference buttress the fact that there are different types of innovations being initiated by church leaders among congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference as 14 out of the 15 items used to

capture types of innovations being initiated by church leaders among congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference are having means above the set bench mark of 3.0.

For instance, on the item which stated that: experiments with new ideas that enhance our ministry ($\bar{x} = 4.29$). Introduces new methods that could enhance our ministry ($\bar{x} = 4.31$), experiments with new things that enhance our ministry ($\bar{x} = 4.15$). is largely conventional ($\bar{x} = 3.73$), is a replica of other congregations in the denomination ($\bar{x} = 3.50$), has an established method of selecting leaders and assigning roles which has not change ($\bar{x} = 3.55$), has a defining system of decision making. ($\bar{x} = 4.22$), regularly comes up with new ways to organize our church ministry departments ($\bar{x} = 4.09$), regularly develop new methods of sharing responsibilities ($\bar{x} = 4.11$), always find new ways of dealing with our community and other church bodies ($\bar{x} = 3.92$), is more concerned with the experience the people receive from the activities of the church ($\bar{x} = 3.92$), design new ways of interacting with one another ($\bar{x} = 3.94$), is more concerned with solving problems ($\bar{x} = 4.10$), Create new levels of engagement with the community ($\bar{x} = 3.97$). The weighted mean values of the 15 items or grand mean which is (3.89) on the table were accepted as rated above decision bench mark of 3.0.

To further answer research question two, responses from the key personalities interview session revealed that leaders in Lagos west Baptist conference churches are innovative and dynamic in their approaches towards ensuring church ministry growth, discipleship, church membership, church administration, worship services, and responses to Covid'19 experience, among others.

In summary, this finding indicates that church leaders deploy innovative ideas through initiatives that enhance their church ministries, solving problems and relating with church members. Hence, churches in Lagos West Baptist conferences embraces multi-dimensional innovations. This includes; open innovation, process innovation, and organizational innovation.

Discussion of Findings

Findings on research question one of this study revealed various leadership practices of pastors in Lagos West Baptist Conference as the respondents indicated the demonstration of excellent and high qualities of leadership practices by the church leaders. The result showed various practices that the Baptist church leaders employ to ensure growth and vitality in their congregations, including collaboration, development of congregational programs and planners, excellent communication, shared leadership, motivation, feedback and suggestions, among others. This finding aligned with the submission of Schaubroeck (2007), who argued that transformational leaders communicate a high level of belief and confidence in the group's ability to achieve capacity-stretching goals, effectively modelling exemplary behaviour required for best performance, demonstrate caring for people as individuals; and build a sense of community and cooperation.

Again, this finding agreed with the postulations of Kouzes and Posner (1997), which measured five leadership practices and reported that each organization was quite different and stated that successful organizations may have very different values and that the specific set of values that serves one organization may hurt another. Hence, the authors described five fundamental practices of successful leaders as; challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. Therefore, the finding of this study established that these fundamental practices are characteristics of leaders in Lagos West Baptist Congregation.

Furthermore, this finding agrees with Horth and Buckner (2014) submission that leaders need to adopt creative approaches to leadership. This involves bringing new thinking, ideas and innovative actions to crack difficult organizational problems and remaining agile in responding to daily challenges. The authors encouraged leaders to show support and confidence in the work of individuals by promoting creativity and leading innovative behavior for the organization. Again, this finding replicates the four factors: sensemaking, relating, visioning, and inventing, which are features of excellent leadership, as highlighted by Ancona (2005). The finding is also supported by the findings of Warren's (2016) Sloan four capabilities leadership framework: sensemaking, visioning, relating and inventing.

Furthermore, findings from research question two revealed that church leaders in Lagos West Baptist Conference deployed different types of innovation through new ideas and methods that enhanced their ministries. The study highlighted different types of innovations being initiated by the church leaders of Lagos West Baptist Conference. These included experimenting with new ideas that enhanced the congregation's vitality and ministry, introducing new methods, trying out new things that could bring about effectiveness in the order of service and administration, designing new ways of interacting with one another, create new level of engagement with the community, regularly develop new methods of sharing responsibilities, regularly comes up with new ways to organizes the church ministry department, application of information and communication technologies in the administration and worship services of the congregations, and always find new ways of dealing effectively with the community and other church bodies, among others. This established that church leaders and their practices in Lagos West Baptist Conference are creative and innovative, which is one major factor for the growth and vitality of the congregations.

These practices are compared with the innovative capabilities of different great transformational leaders in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament contains stories of leaders: Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Joshua, Saul, David, Nehemiah and the Prophets. Each of them was raised for a different reason with an overarching purpose to bring restoration of God's image in everyone and everything, but they all displayed different leadership characteristics. The New Testament recorded many transformational leaders who exhibited great characteristics and practices. These include Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, James, and Timothy, among many others.

It is established from the findings that leaders in the Lagos West Baptist Conference are fulfilling the agenda of God as seen from the biblical survey of leaders and leadership themes in the Old and New Testaments. God's purpose for leadership is to lead people from where they are to where God wants them to be (Clinton & Straub, 2010), grow them into Christlikeness so that they can participate in the great commission (Matthew, 28:18-20), bright motives and biblical methods as inspired by the Holy Spirit, equip; empower, correct, train, coach, encourage, confront, and development their followers through establishment of good relationship, interpersonal and effective communication, creativity and innovation, and remain visionary as they lead others in the pursuance of the truth.

Findings from this study agreed with the definition and concepts of innovation as highlighted by Evans (1991). According to the author, innovation is the ability to discover new relationships, see things from new perspectives and form new combinations from existing concepts. Simiyu (2013) also established that innovation has to do with successfully implementing creative ideas within an organization. Furthermore, Horth and Vehar (2014) stated that innovation is creating and implementing something new that adds value to the

organization and its people. Dunaetz (2021) noted that the most visible forms of innovation in churches are basically new programs and activities but may also include the introduction of new technologies, as was common during the COVID-19 pandemic, new administrative structure (such as adding staff), or new processes (such as determining who will be on a church board and other forms of leadership selection.

Covarrubias, Dunaetz and Dykes (2021) found evidence that innovativeness increased church commitment during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors stated that the perceived innovations strengthened relationships and church commitment during the pandemic. It was concluded that innovativeness will continue to be very important and church leaders should strive to increase it through vision casting, leadership selection, developing organizational openness, and especially through introducing new, creative and technological based programs and activities that create and solidify relationship between the members of the congregations, environment and other congregations.

In addition, Poole (2008) supported this finding, quoting Genesis chapter one, verse one to five and Jeremiah chapter thirty-one, verse thirty-one to thirty-three. He stated that innovation is doing new or old things in a new way. The author examined innovation in God's creation and new creation. In Jeremiah, God promised a new way to restore people's relationship with Him, broken by disobedience. God's plans and purpose for mankind remained the same, but He did find a new way of reaching out to His people. Poole further established that change is part of life and that older people should create opportunities to discuss innovative ideas, especially from the young people, to develop responses to the challenges that they will face later in life. However, these innovations must be consistent with God's unchangeable purposes.

Summary of findings

The summary of the findings are as follows:
1. leadership practices of church pastors in Lagos West Baptist Conference churches are is excellent and of high quality
2. church leaders deploy innovative ideas through initiatives that enhance their church ministries, solving problems and relating with church members.
3. There are multi-dimensionally of innovations being initiated by church leaders among Lagos West Baptist Conference Congregations.

Conclusion

This study established the practices of leaders and innovation in the congregations in Lagos West Baptist Conference. It also sheds light on the crucial relationship between leadership practices and innovation. Our findings demonstrated that effective leadership practices existed within the Baptist congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference. A leader's ability to inspire, communicate, and adapt to the changing needs of the congregation is essential in achieving sustained growth and spiritual well-being. The study also underscores the importance of innovative leadership within the Nigerian Baptist Convention Churches. Leaders who deploy strategic innovations in their practices will be able to respond and adapt to the rapidly changing situations in church administration and system of the 21st century. Further, Leadership practices is a catalyst for congregational growth, development and vitality. That is, effective leadership, characterized by vision, adaptability, flexibility, charisma, and a strong sense of purpose, serves as a catalyst for fostering congregational vitality.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made:

1. Implement structured leadership development programmes to nurture and enhance the leadership capability within the congregation and provide training and mentoring to cultivate leaders with vision, adaptability and strong communication skills to ensure continuity and sustainability of congregational vitality in the Nigeria Baptist Convention Congregations.

2. The leaders and congregations should leverage technology and digital platforms more by investing, maintaining, and expanding the church's online presence, including websites, social media, and virtual worship services, to reach a larger audience.

3. Leaders must remain spiritually, culturally, and traditionally sensitive while developing and maintaining contextual adaptability and flexibility. This will help to recognize the diverse needs and challenges within the local landscape and how they affect their locality and congregation to ensure adequate responses through tailored strategies and plans.

4. The church leaders should ensure that they stay informed about best practices in leadership, innovation, technology and congregational engagement within the broader religious and non-profit sections. Learning from successful models can help refine the Nigerian Baptist Convention's approach to congregational vitality.

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