



The Effect of Leadership Succession Planning on the Stability of Evangelical Churches in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Article History

Received: 2024.02.17

Revised: 2024.05.02

Accepted: 2024.05.30

Published: 2024.06.11

Keywords

Career

Employee retention

Planning

Stability

Succession

How to cite:

Omae, K. N., Oginde, D. A. & Njoroge, G. G. (2024). The Effect of Leadership Succession Planning on the Stability of Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County, Kenya. *Eastern African Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 80-93.

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Abstract

Contemporary church leaders shoulder the responsibility of being visionary and fostering a culture that promotes the stability of Churches. However, the instability witnessed in many churches has brought forth numerous challenges, notably stemming from leadership tumult, which adversely impacts the affected congregations. The negligence of leadership succession and transition processes within churches is a significant contributor to this instability. This paper delves into establishing the effect of leadership succession planning on the stability of Evangelical churches in Nairobi County, Kenya. Drawing from 60 churches, 360 church leaders were sampled from whom data was collected using a questionnaire. The strategic leadership theory was used to explain how succession planning facilitates the establishment of strong connections between leaders and their followers, ensuring a smooth transfer of leadership responsibilities and ultimately enhance the stability of evangelical churches. The study reveals that among the succession models examined, including mentoring, (M=3.96, SD=0.716), talent management (M=3.83, SD=0.770), employee retention (M=3.78, SD=0.931), and career development, (M=3.72, SD=0.764) mentoring emerges as a predominantly adopted approach by leaders in Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County. Moreover, the findings indicate that succession planning contributes significantly to church stability, accounting for over 18% of the overall stability. Consequently, the study recommends the integration of leadership and management practices through a holistic approach encompassing mentoring, talent management, career development, and employee retention strategies, complemented by tailored training programs to enhance church stability.

Introduction

One of the most essential components of the broader human resources planning process is succession planning. It is the process through which the department identifies, trains and develops personnel within the organization with the potential to administering key leadership roles in the organizations. Among these organizations are churches and religious institutions. While succession planning is not centred on the church environment, it must be addressed in any context where leadership becomes a prime concern. This paper therefore addresses succession planning as a critical procedure in evangelical churches to ensure a smooth transition of leadership and maintaining continuity of operations. Succession planning is therefore a unique and deliberate effort guided by organizational



leadership to invest in the presumed optimum expertise. Individuals selected for succession mentoring should demonstrate the potential to handle senior management functions and responsibilities if quality services and sustainability are to be achieved; this goes without mentioning the organization's stability (Chukwuma et al., 2021). A key aim of succession planning is ensuring that the churches have ready talent to take up senior roles whenever the need arises, ensuring leadership perpetuity and stability.

Laser (2021) defines organizational stability as the state of an organization's human resources, financial as well as production with a threshold of steady growth in terms of employee assessment and development. The study however notes that it becomes difficult for organizations to attain stability in hard economic times under factors such as inflation which affects marketing costs and ability to sell, ultimately hurting the bottom line of the organization.

According to Hollinger (2013), succession planning focuses on the requirements of organizations based on its strategic direction. It looks at plans for acquiring, retaining, and effectively utilizing current and future leaders. The leadership of an organization should ensure that the needs of leaders in that organization are met in a timely and seamless manner. Guise (2015) on the other avers that succession planning concerns itself with the leaders' ability to have a foresight of the future staffing needs of an organization and make the appropriate plans to fill them. It's also considered as the state of anticipating leadership changes and then developing a smart plan to identify talented employees with leadership potential (Rothwell, 2011). Succession planning entails the articulation and identification of future human resource needs of an organization that is followed by an analysis to determine competence gaps and then provide suitable training, mentorship, and coaching, allocation of special assignments, role-playing and mind games to make them suitably ready for new roles that may arise (Rothwell, 2011). This paper gathers literature from previous studies to examine the effect of leadership succession planning on the stability of evangelical churches in Kenya.

Succession planning in Church Organizations

According to Northouse (2013), in succession planning, leaders challenge their followers through intellectual stimulation to use creative ways in their work environment; by this, they can identify potential successors from the team. Pacho (2016) observed that, despite this noble task, the church was facing its own internal challenges, including democracy issues, poor governance, corruption, leadership struggles, poor succession plans, and poor management of resources. In Nigeria, Ajiboye et al. (2015) discovered that the administration and stability of the Church (Anglican Communion) had been hampered by poor records management systems. The matter was complicated because each parish used a different system, making it difficult to retrieve documents when needed. All these factors reveal that the church in Africa faces instability challenges that need to be addressed urgently, a solution that would be achieved through proper succession planning. This paper is guided by the strategic leadership theory, whose main aim is to ensure that organizations do not collapse as a result of poor succession planning, hence the need to maintain the stability of the evangelical churches. The study hypothesis stated that:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between leadership succession planning and the stability of Evangelical churches.

Principles of Succession Planning

For organizations to remain effective in meeting their goals and objectives, they ought to adapt to change. With the increasingly competitive global economy, most organizations today rely on succession planning as a tool to create a competitive edge and remain viable. Various scholars have established guiding principles for succession planning among them O'Donnell and McCormack (2020)



who opine that succession planning should start with a clear vision and strategic plan which should be linked to the organization's overall strategy. The study also considers that a well-designed succession plan has its commitment to the company's management and board. It requires that current leaders commit time and other resources into communicating succession plans to inspire ambitious candidates in the organization. Other succession planning principles as dictated by O'Donnell and McCormack (2020) include consistent communication, review and tracking progress of the succession planning process besides having a proactive succession planning culture. Additionally, there is need for accountability in maintaining momentum to oversee continual implementation hence important to designate a team. Transparency of the process, assessment of individual talent, development of individual growth plans and assessment of organizational needs are among other elements of succession planning as identified by Rothwell (2015).

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the strategic leadership theory as proposed by Njukunye and Waithaka (2020) who aver that strategic leaders are able to look into the future, determine how it will be and make the necessary plans to achieve it while remaining flexible. Further, these leaders are able to rally employees behind them besides providing the needed resources. As Ng'ang'a (2018) expounds, the main focus of strategic leadership is to ensure that organizations achieve their set objectives through the creation of their desired future and a culture that is favorable for the delivery of organizational results. While contributing to the debate on strategic leadership, Bateman and Snell (2009) perceive it as a leader's ability to foresee as well as visualize the anticipated future of an organization while at the same time, mobilizing resources that includes people to achieve it. According to Abdow (2018), strategic leadership can be conceptualized from the perspective of determining the strategic direction of an organization, creation and sustenance an effective organizational culture, effective management of organizational resources, emphasizing ethical practices, development of human capital, and establishment of organizational balanced control systems. Although the conceptualization of strategic leadership by Abdow (2018) may appear to be different, however, the point of convergent is that, it aims at leading organizations from a futuristic approach.

Methodology

The study used a pragmatic research philosophy to collect quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Clark, 2014) to establish the association that exists between succession planning and the stability of evangelical churches in Nairobi County, Kenya. A descriptive survey design was adopted (Corper & Schindler, 2014) to describe the effect of succession planning on the stability of Evangelical churches in Nairobi County, Kenya. The target population consisted of the 300 registered church organizations in Nairobi County, Kenya with participants in the study represented by Presiding Bishop or General Overseer, the General Secretary, the Senior Pastor, and a Senior Deacon. These leaders were chosen because they were best suited to respond to the leadership-related questions from the conceptual framework and were involved in decision-making for their church organizations. In sampling, Saunders et al. (2012) suggests that a sample size of 10 percent of the population is enough in most studies with large populations. They further explain that due to non-response, the sample size can be increased up to a maximum of 30 percent of the target population. It is on the basis of this arguments that this study therefore will select a sample size of 20 percent of the target population of 300 registered church organizations giving a figure of 60 church organizations. The study sample therefore consisted of 60 church organizations from which one Presiding Bishop/General Overseer and one General Secretary was selected. Additionally, two Senior Pastors and two Senior Deacons from each organization were conveniently sampled. This resulted in 360



leaders from the four categories; Presiding Bishops /General Overseers, General Secretaries, Senior Pastors, and Senior Deacons.

The study employed use of questionnaire guide containing both open and closed ended questions. The instrument was pilot-tested prior to the main data collection to ensure its effectiveness and content validity. The pretest phase involved an expert assessment from four bishops and their church secretaries and leaders from established church organizations. Additionally, the questionnaire was reviewed by doctoral supervisors who were well conversant with the contents of the study and therefore provided feedback on validity of the data collection instrument.

Reliability of Instruments

The study employed Cronbach's Alpha (α), a common internal consistency measure generated by SPSS Version 27, to assess the extent to which a set of test items could be treated as measuring a single latent variable (Cronbach, 1951). This measure was used for the five-point Likert scale items to evaluate internal consistency reliability and determine the cut-off point. According to Sekaran (2006), the closer Cronbach's alpha is to 1, the higher the internal consistency reliability. The study's reliability test of the 12 items yielded a coefficient of 0.7, which was considered the minimum acceptable level (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Ongeti (2014) found that reliability coefficients ranged between 0.661 and 0.891. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was computed from the composite indices of all the dependent, moderating, and independent variables, with each variable calculated as the arithmetic mean of all responses under each objective. The alpha scores for each variable are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Leadership succession planning	.916	20
Stability of Evangelical churches	.788	20

Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis shows that leadership succession planning had 0.916 and the stability of Evangelical churches in Nairobi County, Kenya, had 0.788. These numbers indicate higher reliability, as they are above 0.7.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Coding was done in SPSS by assigning numerals to the response to facilitate data entry (Kothari & Garg, 2014). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used, with descriptive analysis involving absolute and relative frequencies (percentages). Central tendency and dispersion measures, such as mean and standard deviation, were utilized, along with minimum, maximum, and quartile values, and content analysis was employed for qualitative data. In inferential statistics, correlation and linear regression analyses were used to assess relationships between the independent variable (succession planning) and the dependent variable (stability of the Evangelical church). Multiple regression analysis was also employed to examine the combined effect of all independent variables (Bryman, 2016). Correlation statistics, Chi-Square tests, and beta coefficients were computed to establish relationships between the variables.



Demographic Analysis

The study gathered responses from 300 church leaders from Evangelical churches in Nairobi, with the majority being male (87.7%), highlighting the gender disparity among church leaders. Most (37.7%) of the respondents were aged between 41 and 50 years old, with the youngest being below 30 years old represented by (8.7%).

The data also revealed that the majority of the church leaders held a diploma degree (36.3%) as their highest level of education, indicating a moderate level of educational attainment among the leaders. Furthermore, the majority of the church leaders have had considerable tenure of over 21 years represented by 37.5%, potentially pointing towards an upcoming wave of retirements. This underscores the necessity to groom and prepare new leaders to assume their roles hence the emphasis on the significance of leadership succession planning for stability and growth of Evangelical churches in Nairobi County, Kenya. These results are as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic details of respondents

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	263	87.7
	Female	37	12.3
Education Level	Secondary level	22	7.3
	Diploma level	109	36.3
	Undergraduate level	60	20
	Masters level	74	24.7
	Doctorate level	35	11.7
Age of Participants	Below 30 years	26	8.7
	31 - 40	49	16.3
	41- 50	113	37.7
	Above 51	112	37.3
Years of service	Below 5 years	16	5.3
	6 - 10 years	47	15.7
	11-15 years	61	20.3
	16-20 years	69	23
	Over 21 years	107	35.7

Leadership Succession Planning

The study sought to establish the effect of leadership succession planning on the stability of Evangelical churches in Nairobi County, Kenya. Various factors, behaviors, and practices were examined under the main variables (mentoring, talent management, employee retention, and career development). The results obtained showed that mentoring scored highest with (M=3.96, SD=0.716), followed by talent management (M=3.83, SD=0.770), then employee retention (M=3.78, SD=0.931), and career development (M=3.72, SD=0.764) as illustrated in Table 3. This indicates that most church organizations embraced mentoring as a succession planning model. This could be due to church leaders’ reliance on the word of God as a guide on how they need to embrace succession in the church.



Table 3: Descriptive statistics on leadership succession planning models

Leadership succession planning	Mean	SD
Mentoring	3.96	0.716
Talent management	3.83	0.770
Career development	3.72	0.764
Career retention	3.78	0.93

Mentoring and Stability of Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County

The study findings revealed that the majority of respondents agreed that churches offered mentorship programs for transferring skills to emerging leaders, with a mean score of 4.14. However, assigning mentors to support the growth of emerging leaders received the lowest mean score of 3.75. Notably, the statement "Upcoming church leaders are assigned mentors to help them grow in leadership" had the highest standard deviation (SD=1.028), indicating considerable variation in responses around the average mean of 3.96. Although mentoring was identified as a positive predictor (b=.102, s.e.=.044, p=0.126) of church stability, it was not statistically significant. This suggests that while mentorship programs may enhance church stability, the assignment of mentors to mentees may not always occur. The study indicates that evangelical churches in Nairobi County implement leadership succession planning through established mentorship programs despite inconsistencies in mentor assignments. This finding is consistent with Jakubik et al.'s (2016) study, which noted a lack of information sharing about mentoring practices. Additionally, a positive and significant correlation (r=0.262, p<0.01) was found between mentoring and church stability among evangelical churches in Nairobi County, suggesting that church stability increases with higher levels of mentoring. These results support Mundia and Iravo's (2014) findings on the significant impact of mentoring on performance.

Talent Management and stability of church organizations

The study found that the highest mean score (M=3.89) was associated with the statement "There are leadership development programs in the church," indicating that Evangelical churches in Nairobi County prioritize such programs as part of their succession planning to groom future leaders. Conversely, the lowest mean score (M=3.78) was linked to the statement "The best talents are identified, rewarded, and retained," suggesting weaknesses in talent management practices within these churches. These findings imply that while Evangelical churches in Nairobi County emphasize leadership development through programs, there are gaps in identifying, rewarding, and retaining talent that need addressing by church leadership. This aligns with Mahlahla's (2018) study, which showed that leadership development programs and employee engagement positively influence performance.

Correlation analysis revealed a positive and significant correlation (r=0.279, p<0.01) between talent management and church stability among Evangelical churches in Nairobi County. This indicates that effective talent management practices contribute to increased church stability, consistent with Jepchumba's (2021) findings on the impact of talent management practices on organizational performance.

Regression analysis was further performed using SPSS and the results obtained supported the descriptive results. Identifying talent management as a positive and significant predictor (b=0.156, s.e.=0.047, p=0.042) of church stability. This suggests that adopting talent management initiatives contributes to the stability of Evangelical churches in Nairobi County.



Career development and stability of church organizations

The study revealed that the highest mean score ($M=3.79$) was associated with the statements "Church leaders have programs for preparing the next generation of leaders" and "Church leaders encourage a culture of lifelong learning in the organization." This suggests that Evangelical churches in Nairobi County have established structured career development programs to groom future leaders and promote continuous learning within the organization. However, the lowest mean score ($M=3.60$) was linked to the statement, "Employees are encouraged to choose to work where they are most suited based on their skills," indicating a lack of emphasis on utilizing available skills and placing leaders based on their abilities for organizational benefit. These findings align with Park et al.'s (2014) observation that continuous preparation of future leaders is essential for organizational sustainability and success.

Correlation analysis showed a positive and significant correlation ($r=0.295$, $p<0.01$) between career development and church stability among Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County. This suggests that church stability increases in tandem with the level of career development within these churches, consistent with Ayodo's (2022) findings on the positive association between career development and employee satisfaction, leading to improved performance.

Regression analysis supported these results, indicating career development as a positive but non-significant predictor of church stability ($b=0.126$, $s.e.=0.079$, $p=0.088$). This suggests that while career development contributes to the stability of Evangelical church organizations, its impact is not statistically significant.

Employee Retention and stability of church organizations

The study found that the highest mean score ($M=3.94$) was associated with the statement "Church leaders have a positive attitude towards their followers," indicating that leaders of Evangelical churches in Nairobi County value and appreciate their followers and workers, recognizing their significant role in advancing the gospel, as demonstrated by Singh (2019). However, the lowest mean score ($M=3.64$) was linked to the statement, "Church leaders have put in place mechanisms for employee welfare," suggesting that some church leaders have not implemented welfare mechanisms that could motivate their followers.

These findings suggest a need for church leaders to prioritize employee welfare alongside fostering positive relationships with their followers. Correlation analysis revealed a positive and significant correlation ($r=0.301$, $p<0.01$) between employee retention and church stability among Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County, Kenya. This implies that church stability increases with higher levels of employee retention within these churches.

Regression analysis further supported these findings, identifying employee retention as a positive and significant predictor ($b=0.189$, $s.e.=0.039$, $p=0.004$) in the model. This indicates that the mechanisms implemented by church leaders to retain employees significantly contribute to the stability of Evangelical churches in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Church Stability

Four elements were used to measure church stability in order to determine how succession planning in the selected churches influenced stability of the churches. These included numerical growth, spiritual growth, financial growth, and turnover rate, which collectively represent the aspects of church stability as depicted in Table 4.



Table 4. Church Stability

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Numerical Growth	300	1	5	3.90	0.665
Spiritual Growth	300	1	5	3.96	0.714
Financial Growth	300	1	5	3.65	0.741
Turnover Rate	300	1	5	3.245	0.946

The results on Table 4 above show that spiritual growth scored highest represented by (M=3.96, SD=0.714), followed by numerical growth (M=3.90, SD=0.665), financial growth (M=3.65, SD=0.741), and turnover rate (M=3.245, SD=0.946). The results imply that Evangelical churches in Nairobi County focused on preaching the gospel as a pillar to ensure the followers grew spiritually. These results coincide with the study by Mbewe (2020), who explained that the role of the church should be to evangelize to sinners, yet most organizations experience wrangles that hinder their growth.

Numerical Growth

The analysis of respondents' perceptions regarding numerical growth in the church indicated that the statement with the highest mean score (M=4.04) was "The number of church members has been growing during the past five years," suggesting that Evangelical churches in Nairobi County have experienced growth over this period. However, the lowest mean score (M=3.74) was observed for the statement "New church members join the church every Sunday," indicating that growth may not occur consistently on a weekly basis.

Regarding response variability, the statement "The church has opened a new branch in the last ten years" had the highest standard deviation (SD=1.087), suggesting respondents disagreed about this issue. Conversely, the statement "One's talents are considered during recruitment into the church" had the lowest standard deviation (SD=0.925), indicating more clustered agreement among respondents. These findings are consistent with Mugambi's (2020) research, which also indicated rapid growth in church attendance across Africa.

Spiritual Growth

The evaluation of respondents' perceptions regarding spiritual growth within the church indicated that the highest mean score (M=4.09) was for the statement "Preaching occupied a central part in the church," suggesting that Evangelical churches in Nairobi County prioritize preaching the gospel to foster spiritual growth. However, the lowest mean score (M=3.84) was observed for the statement "The number of conflicts in the church has been going down during the last five years," indicating that some internal conflicts persist within these organizations despite their focus on preaching.

Regarding variability in responses, the statement "The church has effective training programs for new believers" had the highest standard deviation (SD=1.00), indicating disagreement among respondents about the effectiveness of the church's training programs for new believers. Conversely, the statement "The belief systems of church members are very strong" had the lowest standard deviation (SD=0.889), suggesting more clustered agreement among respondents, implying that followers in Evangelical church organizations are spiritually nourished, leading to strong belief systems. However, some respondents perceived a lack of specialized attention to new believers despite the church's focus on preaching. These findings align with Mbewe's (2020) research, which emphasized the church's role in evangelizing to sinners and highlighted challenges posed by internal conflicts hindering growth within organizations.



Financial Growth

The assessment of respondents' perceptions regarding financial growth within the church showed that the statement with the highest mean score (M=3.81) was "The church collections have been growing for the last five years," while the lowest mean score (M=3.46) was observed for the statement "The church has inadequate physical infrastructure."

The average mean score of 3.67 coupled with standard deviations greater than 1 suggests that financial growth may contribute to the instability of Evangelical church organizations in Nairobi, Kenya. These findings are in line with Sigini's (2015) research on Pentecostal Assemblies in Malawi, which indicated that financial instability was a significant factor hindering the growth of Evangelical church organizations in Nairobi.

Turnover Rate

The evaluation of respondents' perceptions regarding the turnover rate within the church revealed that the statement with the highest mean score (M=3.49) was "There are churches that do not have trained Pastors," while the lowest mean score (M=2.95) was observed for the statement "The rate at which members of the clergy have been leaving ministry is high." These findings suggest that Evangelical churches in Nairobi County may rely on alternative methods rather than formal training to prepare their followers for leadership positions.

Overall, the average mean score of 3.25, coupled with standard deviations greater than 1, (SD=1.323). This indicates a greater dispersion of responses around the mean score of 3.25, suggesting disagreement among respondents regarding the turnover rate of clergy members. Conversely, the statement "indicates a low perception among leaders in Evangelical churches in Nairobi regarding the turnover rate.

Correlational Analysis

The study sought to establish the relationship between leadership succession planning and the stability of the evangelical churches in Kenya. A correlation analysis was therefore performed based on the four elements of succession planning that comprised mentoring, talent management, career development, and employee retention on the stability of Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County, Kenya. Results are as presented in Table 4.

Table 5 below presents the results of the correlation analysis between mentoring, talent management, career development, employee retention, and church stability of Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 5: Correlation analysis of mentoring, talent management, career development, employee retention, and stability of Evangelical Churches

Variable	Church stability
Mentoring	.262**
Talent management	.279**
Career development	.295**
Employee retention	.301**

From the foregoing data representation, employee retention depicts the highest correlation coefficient of (r=0.301, p<0.01) followed by career development, talent management and mentoring at (r=0.295, p<0.01), (r=0.279, p<0.01). and (r=0.262, p<0.01), respectively.



Leadership Succession Planning and Stability of Evangelical Churches

Table 6 presents the results of the correlation analysis between leadership succession planning and the stability of Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 6: Correlation between Succession Planning and Stability of Evangelical churches

Variable	Succession Planning	Church stability
Succession Planning	-	.366**
Church stability	.366**	-

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results presented in Table 6 indicated the existence of a positive and significant correlation between leadership succession planning and church stability of Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County, Kenya ($r=0.366, p<0.01$). This implies that an increase in leadership succession planning leads to a corresponding increase in church stability at the Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County, Kenya. The results agree with the findings of Sulernan et al. (2021), which found a positive and significant relationship between leadership succession planning practices and performance.

Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 27 to determine the effect of the independent variable (Succession Planning) on the dependent variable (stability of evangelical churches in Nairobi). The model measured the effect of Mentoring, Talent management, Career Development, and Employee retention on the stability of Evangelical churches in Nairobi County.

Tables 7 and 8 show the results obtained from the analysis measuring the effect of succession planning on the stability of evangelical churches in Kenya.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.468 ^a	.219	.208	.42408	.219	20.640	4	295	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), BER_C, BM_C, CDV_C, TM_C

b. BER_C: Employee retention; BM_C: Mentoring; CDV_C: Career development; TM_C: talent management

Table 7 shows that the overall model was significant. This shows that succession planning affects the stability of church organizations in Kenya. The model explains 21.9% of the variance in the stability of Evangelical church organizations in Nairobi, Kenya. Table 8 displays the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable.



Table 8: Model 1 Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.000	.024		-.012	.990		
1	BM_C	.068	.044	.102	1.533	.126	.598
	TM_C	.096	.047	.156	2.038	.042	.453
	CDV_C	.079	.046	.126	1.714	.088	.486
	BER_C	.114	.039	.189	2.897	.004	.624

a. Dependent Variable: CS_C: Stability of evangelical churches

Table 8 above shows that only talent management (b=0.156, s.e.=0.047, p=0.042) and employee retention (b=0.189, s.e.=0.039, p=0.004) had a significant impact on the stability of churches in Nairobi, Kenya. This implies that a unit increase in talent management increases church stability by 15%, holding other factors constant. In comparison, a unit increase in employee retention successfully increases church stability by more than 18%. From the foregoing analysis, the hypothesis of the study was rejected, and a conclusion drawn that the relationship between leadership succession planning and the stability of Evangelical churches in Nairobi, Kenya, is statistically significant.

Discussion

The study sought to establish the effect of leadership succession planning on the stability of Evangelical churches in Nairobi County, Kenya. Various factors, behaviors, and practices were examined under the main variables (mentoring, talent management, employee retention, and career development). This section compares findings of this study with other studies conducted on how mentoring, career development, talent management and employee retention influence stability of churches.

Mentoring and Stability of Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County

The study indicates that Evangelical churches in Nairobi County utilize mentorship programs for leadership succession, even though mentors may not always be assigned to mentees consistently. This finding resonates with Jakubik et al.'s study (2016), which noted a lack of information sharing about mentoring practices. It suggests that church leaders recognize the importance of preparing younger leaders for future roles, as supported by Tams' (2014) findings on the correlation between mentoring programs and high performance.

Furthermore, there's a significant positive correlation between mentoring and church stability in Nairobi County's Evangelical churches. This suggests that stability increases with higher levels of mentoring, consistent with Mundia and Iravo's (2014) findings on mentoring's impact on performance.

While existing mentorship programs are acknowledged, the study identifies notable gaps in mentor-mentee pairings, potentially undermining these initiatives' effectiveness. It underscores the urgent need for church leaders to enhance mentorship practices through consistent pairing and regular mentor training, which could greatly improve the quality and impact of church-based mentorship programs.

Talent Management and stability of church organizations

The findings reveal that Evangelical churches in Nairobi County prioritize leadership development programs, including talent management, as part of their succession planning. Despite strong



mentorship programs, gaps and weaknesses in talent identification, reward, and retention are identified within these programs. Correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between talent management and church stability among Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County, with regression analysis further supporting talent management as a predictor of church stability. This suggests that effective talent management practices contribute to organizational stability.

While Mahlahla (2018) focused on mentorship programs, these results suggest potential gaps within program components, calling for a comprehensive review. This aligns with studies (Ali & Babu, 2015) and Jepchumba, (2021) emphasizing comprehensive talent assessment and development practices and the significant impact of talent management on organizational performance.

Weaknesses in talent identification, reward, and retention within mentorship programs could undermine talent management effectiveness. To address these issues, robust talent management strategies are recommended, including regular assessments, personalized career plans, and competitive reward systems to attract and retain top talent.

Career development and stability of church organizations

The results confirm that Evangelical churches in Nairobi County have established structured career development programs to prepare their leaders for future roles. However, they also indicate a lack of a culture that promotes utilizing available skills and placing leaders based on their abilities for organizational benefit.

Statistical analysis sheds light on the relationship between career development and church stability. Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between career development and church stability among Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County, implying stability increases with career development levels. Regression analysis supported this, identifying career development as a positive but non-significant predictor of church stability, indicating its contribution without statistical significance.

These findings resonate with Park et al. (2014), who stressed continuous leadership preparation for organizational sustainability. They're also consistent with Ayodo's (2022) study, linking career development to employee satisfaction and improved performance, as seen in church stability.

The study underscores a cultural gap hindering skill utilization and effective leader placement, potentially impacting career development program effectiveness. Hence, there's a call to foster a culture that encourages skill utilization and optimal leader placement among church leaders. Future research should explore organizational cultures promoting career development programs, considering these findings.

Employee Retention and stability of church organizations

The findings indicate that leaders of Evangelical churches in Nairobi County highly value and appreciate their followers and workers, recognizing their crucial role in advancing the gospel, as supported by Singh (2019). However, there's a revealed gap in the implementation of welfare mechanisms by some church leaders, which could serve to motivate their followers. This contrasts with Magaisa and Musundire's (2022) study, defining employee retention as coordinated activities ensuring employee welfare for retention.

Additionally, correlation analysis unveiled a positive and significant relationship between employee retention and church stability among Evangelical Churches in Nairobi County, Kenya, implying stability increases with employee retention. Regression analysis supported this, identifying employee retention as a positive and significant predictor, indicating its substantial role in bolstering church



stability. To address the identified gap, it is imperative to develop and implement effective welfare programs to enhance the motivation and well-being of followers and workers within these churches.

Conclusion

On the basis of the study findings and discussion of the same, this study concludes that succession planning contributes significantly to church stability, accounting for over 18% of the overall church stability. The study found that employee retention scored high as a core element of succession planning in affecting church stability. Other aspects include mentoring, career development and talent management.

In order to enhance the church stability through succession planning, the following recommendations are proposed. To integrate leadership and management practices by combining mentoring, talent management, career development, and employee retention and succession planning. Implementation of training programs to enhance leaders' effectiveness in understanding individual motivations and addressing individual issues will further improve individualized consideration and support.

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