2023

Leadership Strategies for Sustaining Membership in Southern Baptist Churches

George L. Blount Jr.
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

George L. Blount Jr.

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Michael Lavelle, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. John Hannon, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Ify Diala-Nettles, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2022

Abstract

Leadership Strategies for Sustaining Membership in Southern Baptist Churches

by

George L. Blount Jr.

MS, Walden University, 2009

BS, Walden University, 2006

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2022

Abstract

Church membership is declining, and the number of Americans identifying as having no religious affiliation is increasing. Church members can provide for a community's spiritual and financial needs and promote the growth of evangelical believers and biblical stewardship. However, some pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders lack effective leadership strategies to sustain membership. Grounded in transformational leadership theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership strategies Southern Baptist church leaders from three churches in Pennsylvania use to sustain membership. Participants were three church leaders who sustained church membership for 3 years or longer. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and church documents and analyzed using thematic analysis. Four themes emerged: (a) understanding the vision, pastoral training; (b) being relational, maintaining youth membership, technology; (c) understanding and providing for the needs of the community; and (d) following up with members and nonmembers. A key recommendation is for church leaders to involve church members in projects to help members become active and engaged in the church's vision. The implications for positive social change includes the potential to enhance education and civic and social in individuals, families, and communities.

Leadership Strategies for Sustaining Membership in Southern Baptist Churches

by

George L. Blount Jr.

MS, Walden University, 2009

BS, Walden University, 2006

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2022

Dedication

First, I am grateful to my parents, my mother, Barbara A. Blount, and my late father, George L. Blount, Sr., who encouraged me to be the best at whatever I do. Second, I would like to thank my adult children, Keisha, George III, and my son-in-law Cleveland III who watched me struggle to complete this paper and encouraged me to "See it through." They reminded me of the words of Edgar Guest: When you're up against trouble, meet it squarely, face to face; Lift your chin and set your shoulders, Plant your feet and take a brace. When it's vain to try to dodge it, do the best that you can do; You may fail, but you may conquer, See it through!

Of course, I cannot forget my college sweetheart and my best friend through 43 years of friendship and 39 years of marriage. Without her, none of this would be possible. She was there to encourage me to trust in Christ, she was there when I felt like quitting, and she was there when the road got rough, and the going got tough; Andrea would remind me that "With Him, there is nothing impossible." She reminded me of my life scripture, Proverbs 3:5-6. Because of her, this paper is dedicated to her, and I end with this saying by Douglas Malloch: If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill, Be a scrub in the valley — but be the best little scrub by the side of the hill; Be a bush if you can't be a tree. If you can't be a bush, be a bit of the grass, And some highway happier makes; If you can't be a muskier then just be a bass — But the liveliest bass in the lake! We can't all be captains, we've got to be crew, There's something for all of us here, There's big work to do, and there's lesser to do, And the task you must do is near. If you can't be a

highway then just be a trail, If you can't be the sun be a star; It isn't by size that you win, or you fail —Be the best of whatever you are!

Table of Contents

ii

List of Tables

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Different leadership styles exist in the church. Consequently, followers assume that a leadership style results from a default personality rather than a strategic direct attempt (Lam, 2020). For example, Wollschleger (2018) posited that practitioners rarely assume that a religious leader makes various adaptations to appeal to a particular crowd. However, Wollschleger (2018) stated that a leader chooses an appropriate leadership style based on congregational needs. Coleman (2004) stated that leaders appeal to congregational members' strengths and personality traits. An outgoing leader can create a welcoming environment, thereby contributing to growth and increased contributions.

Pastors of local congregations are in similar positions as the chief executive officers of other local for-profit and nonprofit organizations. However, pastors respond individually to the religious needs of their congregations (Levin, 2020). The role of Baptist pastor leadership style has evolved to include more than spiritual guidance. Pastors fulfill complex leadership roles in secular institutions (Sirris, 2019). Pastors' roles can be challenging because they face extreme pressure from congregants and their issues (Sielaff et al., 2021). Loyd (2009) stated that pastors might equate effective leadership with sound preaching and are often unprepared to deal with administrative and managerial issues.

Church membership has drastically declined in the United States (Gill, 2018). Attendance rates in congregations that include children under 18 dropped by 22% in mainline churches from 1998 to 2008 because of family commitments (Barna Group, 2009). Families often do not have time to help their children prepare for church services; therefore, they do not attend. Specifically, church membership in the Southern Baptist

Church denomination decreased by 77,786 in 2016, representing an annual revenue loss of $84 million (Lifeway Insights, 2017). Factors that influence growing church membership include attracting young adults, creating activities for youth, providing resources for church members, and creating effective organizational church structures (Barna Group, 2009). This study will add to existing research on declining church membership that affects communities.

Background of the Problem

Churches and faith-based organizations are essential to communities but they also rely on growing membership and support. Church leaders can use marketing and organizational leadership strategies to obtain and maintain their market segment (Elkington et al., 2017). After all, the church represents a presence beyond the traditional role of spiritual guidance in communities (Campbell & Winchester, 2020). Church members provide for communities' spiritual and financial needs and promote the growth of evangelical believers and biblical stewardship. However, leaders of approximately 90 religious' organizations in the United States sought to reorganize under Chapter 11 of the bankruptcy code between 2006 and 2011 (Foohey, 2014).

Church organization structures can be predictable and permissive, which can lead to a lack of interest in stewardship and declining membership (Boerl, 2014). Boerl (2014) identified leadership style as a potential explanation for church membership decline. When church membership declines, churches receive fewer donations and have fewer resources to perform the work of the ministry (Boerl, 2014). Faith-based organizations have a significant effect on the U.S. economy, with total 2016 receipts of more than $378 billion (Grim & Grim, 2016); however, membership, attendance, and revenue have

drastically decreased, which has caused a crisis in U.S. churches (Merwe et al., 2013).

The problem for church leaders is understanding how their churches can provide for their

communities when facing recessions and financial setbacks.

Individual giving in the church occurs through methods beyond just tithes and

offerings. Church members have historically provided food and clothing and served as a

beacon and pacesetter for society by assisting those living in poverty (Sullivan, 2019).

However, church revenues are necessary to meet societal, community, and economic

needs.

Problem Statement

Church giving in the United States has declined significantly, reducing churches'

ability to meet community needs (Fowler et al., 2020). Church membership has also

declined; between 1978 and 2018, Americans identifying as having no religious

affiliation increased 300%. The number of Americans who never attend church services

increased by 200% from 2006 to 2014 (Twenge et al., 2016). The general business

problem is that churches lose revenue when membership declines. The specific business

problem is that some Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry

leaders lack effective leadership strategies to sustain church membership.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership

strategies Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders use to

sustain membership. The population for this study included three participants from three

participating churches. Data were collected from senior pastors and ministry leaders in

three Southern Baptist churches in Philadelphia's metropolitan statistical area (MSA)

who have sustained church membership from January 2016 to January 2019. Individuals, businesses, and social groups within the Philadelphia MSA may benefit from church leaders having strategies to sustain membership and financial contributions. An increase in church membership could also lead to an increase in education, civic, and social involvement could lead to improvements in individual lives, families, and communities.

Nature of the Study

Researchers use qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Hendren et al., 2018). I explored this phenomenon using a qualitative case study. Researchers who have conducted qualitative research use open-ended questions to gather data from sample populations on past and future occurrences (Mohajan, 2018). The qualitative method is valuable because it aims to understand and describe an issue observed in the natural context in which it occurs (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Furthermore, qualitative researchers use open-ended questions and detailed descriptions of the perceptions and experiences of participants. A researcher does not interject their predetermined ideas of the problem (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

In contrast, researchers using the quantitative research method use closed-ended questions to test hypotheses and examine the relationships or correlations between variables (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The quantitative method was inappropriate for this study because I did not examine variables or test hypotheses. Researchers who use mixed methods incorporate qualitative and quantitative aspects (Timans et al., 2019). The mixed method was not appropriate for this study because there was no need for a quantitative component to test hypotheses and examine relationships or differences among variables.

The qualitative method was appropriate for this study because I aimed to understand and describe an issue observed in the natural context in which it occurs.

Several research designs exist within qualitative research, including case studies, phenomenology, and ethnography (Fusch et al., 2018). A case study design was suitable because the focus was to explore what, how, and why questions (Yin, 2018). The focus of the research was how church leaders maintain membership, which made this a descriptive study. The case will be a specific church denomination, the Southern Baptist church, and a specific geographical region in metropolitan Philadelphia. The study included more than one Baptist church, and this research was a multiple case study. A researcher must understand the phenomenon using a single case study or multiple case studies. The advantages of researchers using multiple case studies can create a more conclusive theory when the suggestions are empirical evidence (Gustafsson, 2017). Data collection involved conducting individual interviews using open-ended questions, reviewing existing documents, and observing participants. Researchers use phenomenological research designs to understand participants' lived experiences (Patterson, 2018). The phenomenological design was inappropriate because that objective was not the goal of this study. Researchers use ethnographic studies to focus on an entire culture by studying real-time situations in natural settings (Chopra, 2020). The focus of this study was not on cultural phenomena; therefore, an ethnographic design was not appropriate. I chose a qualitative case study design over ethnography because I was studying church leaders' leadership strategies to retain members.

Research Question

What leadership strategies do Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and leaders use to sustain church membership?

Interview Questions

1. What leadership strategies do you use to motivate church members toward church attendance?

2. What leadership strategies do you use to motivate nonmembers to become members?

3. What challenges have you encountered in using leadership strategies to sustain members?

4. How do you overcome the challenges you face in using leadership strategies to sustain members?

5. How do you implement strategies to sustain membership?

6. How do you implement strategies to increase nonmembership?

7. What leadership strategies do you use for long-term membership sustainability?

8. What additional information would you like to share regarding the leadership strategies you use to sustain members?

Conceptual Framework

I used the transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework for this study. Burns (1978) introduced the transformational leadership theory in political leadership. Burns used the theory to describe leaders who set clear objectives, recognize and support others, exhibit fairness and integrity, understand people's emotions,

encourage followers, and inspire individuals to reach their potential. The theory's central concepts include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Bass, 2009). Transformational leadership theory may include insight into the strategies that senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders in the Southern Baptist church use to sustain membership.

Additionally, I used the transformational theory to understand the data and intentions behind the religious leaders' statements. For example, transformational leadership theory focuses on moral uplifting, increasing numbers of committed followers, and transforming the lives of those involved for the better (Burns, 1978). Burns emphasized the role of social justice within religious practice.

Operational Definitions

Biblical stewardship: The belief that human beings are helpers of Jesus Christ based on scripture (Liang, 2018).

Charitable giving: Offering money or other material things to disadvantaged people to support scientific, religious, and educational causes at no charge (Neumayr & Handy, 2019).

Church growth: A Christian movement focused on spreading religion through research, sociology, and marketing techniques (Wright, 2017).

Church member: A person who regularly worships the creator in a specific church (Leeman, 2017).

Leadership strategy: Used to determine how many leaders are needed, what kind, where, and what skills they have to achieve the objectives (Alam, 2020).

Ministry leader: The person the pastor authorizes to oversee a ministry (Chatira &

Mwenje, 2018).

Transformational leadership: A process that can change and transform people to achieve objectives based on emotions, values, ethics, and standards (Jambawo, 2018).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Every study includes aspects not within a researcher's control, which are assumptions (Leeman, 2017). For example, one assumption was that participants in this case study would answer all interview questions truthfully and honestly based on their organizational roles. Another assumption was that church leaders participating in the research would promptly complete the interview questions.

Limitations

Limitations identify a study's lack of evidence or weaknesses to secure proper documentation (Levi-Belz et al., 2021). Limitations can also include complications or restrictions in a research study because of a lack of resources or a potential lack of clarification (Ross & Zaidi, 2019). A limitation in this study was obtaining qualified interviewees willing to participate in the study. No matter the purpose, a researcher is obliged to the academic community to present a complete and honest study.

Delimitations

Delimitations refer to boundaries established in research to ensure a researcher does not spend time collecting unrelated information (Ross & Zaidi, 2019). This qualitative case study involved interviewing senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders of the congregations of three Southern Baptist churches in the Philadelphia MSA. Pastors from other churches or geographical areas did not participate in this study.

Significance of the Study

The study findings are significant to other churches because church leaders can apply the study findings and recommendations on leadership strategies to improve attendance, leading to more contributions to the church. Regarding performance, the findings may be helpful in implementing and executing a ministry that affects the community. I identified strategies that church leaders can employ to ensure their churches receive more donations and maintain large followings. Lastly, church leaders can use the study findings to efficiently apply management skills by adopting revenue retention strategies to steer church activities and overcome challenges.

Contribution to Business Practice

The findings of this study include leadership strategies that church leaders adopt to increase membership and maintain or increase revenue. The congregation represents the customers in church settings, and tithes and offerings represent revenue. Therefore, church leaders must ensure they prioritize members before the interests of other existing or potential stakeholders, and the congregation retains revenues generated from direct operations with customers. The process may increase in-person interactions catered to the individual members. Church leaders who apply the findings of this research may maintain their membership and strengthen their organization's financial position. Business leaders build trust to increase their customer bases, increasing revenue; church leaders could implement similar strategies to build and maintain church membership.

Implications for Social Change

The findings from this study may include strategies for church leaders to retain parishioners and generate revenues by attracting and retaining members. The financial

stability of the churches under study may further enable the leaders to contribute to social change by executing social actions comparable to businesses' corporate social responsibility. In the case of churches, the social actions may develop goodwill among community members to increase membership. In biblical terms, the church is responsible for its members and the community to relieve their affliction and support them in all their needs (Fung et al., 2021). Therefore, the community may enjoy societal benefits churches can provide.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The following is a review of the literature that serves as the foundation for the research problem and justifies the study's purpose. The literature review may align with the existing body of knowledge regarding church leadership, the decline in church membership, and the loss of revenue. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership strategies Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders use to sustain church membership.

The organization of the literature review reflects themes related to the research problem. First, the literature review includes a discussion on the theory used to support this study, which is transformational leadership theory, and why this theory is appropriate for the study. The second theme explored is declining church membership and vitality in the United States, including Baptist denominations. The next theme includes the elements of transformational leadership that show how past researchers link the success or failure of churches in the United States to church revenue. I include how researchers measure strategies U.S. church leaders use to maintain revenue streams, including previous research methodologies.

I systematically conducted a literature search to obtain materials for this review by identifying databases containing peer-reviewed studies. The databases used to locate materials in the review included ProQuest, EBSCOHost, and Google Scholar. In the literature search, several keywords, both in single terms and in combination were used: *church leadership, church membership, church revenues, church vitality, and the decline of church membership, effective church leadership, leadership style, leadership strategies, servant leadership, transactional leadership,* and *transformational leadership*.

In the literature review, I explore the seminal literature on leadership and empirical studies with the same theories that will serve as the foundation for this research. I reviewed relevant materials and associated the current topic with peerreviewed research conducted in English and published between 2014 and 2019. The focused setting was the United States. The publication dates, language used, and focused settings resulted in 216 sources in the review. Among the 216 sources, 185 were journal articles, and 152 were published after 2017. There were 11 dissertations with a publication date newer than 2017. The dissertations were appropriate because they comprised some of the most recent studies performed on church leadership and the decline in church membership. The non-peer-reviewed sources included 17 books and three government agency reports. Table 1 illustrates a breakdown of literature review sources and publication dates.

Table 1

Literature Review Source Content

	Total	Published 2017–2021	Published before 2016
Books	17	0	17
Peer-reviewed articles	185	152	33
Dissertations	11	11	0
Governmental agency reports	3	0	3
Total	216	163	53
		(75%)	(25%)

Transformational Leadership

I used the transformational leadership theory to explore Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders' strategies to sustain membership. Downton (1973) introduced the concept of transformational leadership when describing political leaders. However, this leadership concept transcended only political leaders and organizational psychology through Burns's (1978) expansion of the concept. I emphasized two leadership theories in this study: transformational and transactional. Burns (1978) identified the mutual relationship between leaders and followers and highlighted two significant leadership processes: transactional and transforming. Transactional leaders meet the needs and interests of their followers in diverse ways from transformational leadership, including exchanging interests. Transactional leaders provide followers with benefits in exchange for their commitment and loyalty. In a transforming leadership process, Burns defined the leader and the follower as boosting or raising each other to higher levels of motivation and morality.

Leaders and followers do not share equal responsibility or status, despite the empowering nature of the leadership process. The transformational leader includes characteristics church leaders can follow. The leader remains in charge, motivating and

changing the followers while the followers are partners with the leaders. Leaders are not to manipulate followers (Bass, 1985). The leaders treat followers with attention to their mutual intent to achieve organizational goals. Burns defined transforming leadership as leaders making positive changes by transforming how people think work. Burns stressed that transformational leadership includes reaching out to followers by aligning them in creating change by influencing their thoughts and actions.

Transformational leaders have been able to relate to their followers, causing motivation through their leadership style, and the followers strive for a greater mission or purpose than the leader. The transformational leadership theory can apply to church leaders (Burns, 1978). Burns (1978) asserted that transforming leaders should create meaningful change in the lives of the people they lead. Applying transformational leadership can lead to significant changes in the lives of followers and organizations. Applying the approach can lead to redesigned perceptions and values, including the expectations and aspirations of the followers, which makes it applicable to church leadership.

Other authors have emphasized transformational leadership. Bass (1985) expanded and improved on Burns's (1978) transformational leadership theory. Bass replaced Burns' term *transforming* with the term *transformational*. Between Burns's work in 1978 and Bass in 1985, Burns's theory rose in popularity in organizational psychology. Bass extended Burns's 1978 research by exploring the psychological mechanisms that underscored transactionally and the transforming leadership processes. The premise of transformational leadership is the influence on followers. Bass (1985) measured the extent to which a leader was transformational by assessing the level of

influence a leader has on the followers. Bass asserted that a leader's influence includes the trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect followers have for their leader. Bass (1985) asserted that followers would increase productivity. Transformational leaders influence motivation and performance because they do not lead for self-gain; they inspire missions and visions and encourage followers to identify as positive leaders (Bass, 1985). A transformational leader can encourage followers in diverse ways to challenge the system and make the environment more conducive to success.

Bass emphasized modernizing forms of leadership and included more qualities of transformational leaders. Bass highlighted the significant effect that creating impressions has on followers. Bass maintained that transformational leaders can control followers by creating the impression of being a good leader, thereby inducing the same qualities in their followers. In contrast to Burns (1978), Bass claimed that leaders could act transformational and transactional. In the subsequent decades of research and metaanalysis, researchers demonstrate that transformational and transactional leadership could positively predict different performance outcomes.

Many leaders emulate transformation leadership. Transformational leadership theory emerged as a standard tool used in modern leadership studies in different sectors, scenarios, and institutions (Alegbeleye & Kaufman, 2020). Transformational leadership includes a long-term focus on inducing leadership qualities in followers to prepare them as leaders in the future (Lam, 2020). This influence relies on a leader's follower relationships. Transformational leadership's four key behaviors are (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration (Bass, 2005). However, Rowold and Borgmann (2013) criticized the four

critical transformational leadership behaviors. Rowold and Borgmann (2013) doubted the behaviors' independence, noting that the behavior descriptions are unclear and pointing out that behaviors overlap.

Idealized Influence

Idealized influence is an example of how transformational leaders should influence followers. Idealized influence includes qualities seen through actions, such as courage, abiding by laws, depicting proper moral actions, and applying rationality in making decisions and actions (Gardner et al., 2021). Idealized influence entails using tools to create impressions with a sense of importance. In other words, leaders can inspire their subjects to respect, admire, and emulate their behavior (Koveshnikov & Ehrnrooth, 2018). Motivation includes inspiring leaders.

Inspirational Motivation

Leaders must inspire their followers to motivate them. Inspirational motivation involves the power of influence through words of wisdom and the power to depict the virtue of prudence (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017). Akkaya (2020) defined inspirational motivation as using words to portray courage and determination to empower followers and promote positive progress. Leaders assure their followers of growth instead of representing command and authority. Intellectual stimulation helps to motivate followers of transformational leadership.

Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation includes the element of skills and leadership strengths.

The third element emphasizes a leader's intelligence through innovation and creativity (Darwish et al., 2020). The premise of this concept is that a leader uses strong innovation skills to lead people and depict leadership strengths (Bass, 2005). Leaders should portray intelligence and logic in making decisions while involving people in the decision-making process (Newark, 2018). Consequently, decisions will appear efficient, and people will have more decision-making and implementation knowledge. Followers feel stimulated intellectually and encouraged to try innovative approaches without criticism because they differ from leaders' ideas. Individual consideration pays attention to each follower's needs.

Individualized Consideration

Individualized consideration is a balancing of needs. Every individual in society has specific needs and desires that may vary from the needs of others; therefore, transformational leaders should balance followers' needs while ensuring that everyone feels a sense of satisfaction in their environment (Bass, 2005). Barnett (2017) noted that individualized consideration involves leaders addressing the individual growth of their followers by nurturing their leadership skills within them.

Transformational leadership has elements of other leadership styles as well. Transformational leadership overlaps with other leadership descriptions, such as charismatic and servant leadership (Otto et al., 2021). One of the strengths of transformational leadership is the wide range of research on the topic and researchers' findings of its effectiveness. The emphasis on the needs and development of followers makes transformational leadership an optimistic and motivational theory (Niessen et al., 2017).

I used the transformational leadership style in this research because of its focus on followers' needs and empowerment and leaders' positive behaviors and its wide acceptance as an effective leadership style. Followers focus on positive behavior befitting churches, emphasizing caring interactions between members (McCall, 2019). Understanding the mind of the transformational leader includes examining great transformational leaders in the Bible and church history. Transformational leaders can relate to their followers personally and motivate their followers to strive for a greater mission or purpose. In addition, the Bible emphasizes positive behaviors and the empowerment of church members, which aligns with transformational leadership. The transformational leadership model includes strengths that any church leader can exemplify.

Strengths of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders have notable strengths. Researchers have used transformational leadership theory widely, including in different geographical regions, departmental corporations, and behavioral cultures, emphasizing that this leadership model is adequate (Crane & Broome, 2017). Chief executive officers, managers, and followers exemplify the transformational leader style (Hunt, 2017). Researchers have studied transformational leadership since the late 1970s (Asbari et al., 2020).

In transformational leadership, leaders consider the needs of followers. This approach acknowledges the reciprocal role of the followers, and leaders are not responsible for all actions and relationships (Cote, 2017). The intense focus on vision is another strength of the transformational leader (Yaslioglu & Selenay, 2018). Through a joint focus on the vision, followers become inspired and develop a sense of belonging and

unity (Yaslioglu & Selenay, 2018). Furthermore, transformational leadership facilitates change in organizational leaders employing a joint focus and effort toward a vision (Baškarada et al., 2017). These strengths of transformational leadership theory unite leaders and followers to pursue a shared vision for an organization and shared responsibility. Transformational leaders can also demonstrate weaknesses.

Weaknesses of Transformational Leadership

Weaknesses of transformational leadership exist. The main criticism of the theory centers on the measuring instrument, which is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The basis of the questionnaire is the transformational leadership theory, which measures different leadership behaviors used in quantitative studies rather than qualitative studies (Reid, 2020). Researchers questioned the validity of the MLQ (Gautam & Enslin, 2019). Another criticism is that the theory lacks comprehensive development and clarity (Singh et al., 2021).

Showing strength is not always relevant for transformational leaders. In addition, researchers described the transformational leadership theory as elitist, with too much emphasis on the leader's positive characteristics at the follower's expense (Reid, 2020). Pattnaik and Sahoo (2021) indicated that the critics questioned the transformational leadership theory for its emphasis on the behaviors and characteristics of leaders. Despite weaknesses, transformational leadership theory aligns with researchers and organizational managers (Reid, 2020; Yukl, 2012). Transformational leadership can have an impact on a decline in church membership.

Declining Church Membership and Vitality in the United States

Evidence exists that church membership and commitment are declining. Study results on the religiousness of Americans indicated that less than 20% of the U.S. population regularly attends church (Dyson, 2021). The results are a considerable decrease in religious affiliation from previous decades. Twenge et al. (2016) noted that regional differences in church attendance exist. For example, 13.8% of the population of Hawaii attends church regularly, which is the only state where church attendance surpassed population growth between 2000 and 2004. Church attendance in Arkansas, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Tennessee, which have higher percentages of church attendees than Hawaii, maintained church attendance consistent with the population growth in the respective states.

As mentioned above, despite declining church membership, some states have increased church membership. For example, church attendance in the Bible Belt state of Texas has increased, while church attendance in most Northeastern states has declined (Twenge et al., 2016). In 2015, researchers for the Pew Research Center indicated a close to 10% decrease in Americans identifying with Christianity between 2007 and 2015. Researchers attributed the decline to external reasons, such as cultural changes, increased secularization, heightened and deepening social globalization, political affiliations, educational spending, and more robust controls of educational content (Franck & Iannaccone, 2014). In addition, researchers noted prominent differences regarding Christian religiousness regarding age and gender as both hold implications for future church membership.

Age and Gender Differences Linked to Churchgoing

Young adult membership in Christian denominations is a topic of church decline. The proportion of participants in Christian churches in the United States between 18 and 29 is only 20%, compared with 37% of participants in Eastern religions and 42% of participants in Islam (Heinz, 2017). Many young Christians between the ages of 18 and 19 leave the church. Specifically, Rainer and Rainer (2008) noted that nearly one-third of 29% of young people between 18 and 19 leave the church. In the interviews with young people between 18 and 19, most participants indicated that they were believers but failed to find a relationship between faith and church attendance. Rainer and Rainer used the responses from the essential participants and findings from other studies to advocate the principles of the essential church, which is a church that is free from barriers. Church participation is part of the activities in the essential church.

People of all ages and sexes participate in church activities. A study conducted by researchers for the Pew Research Center concluded that compared to women, fewer men attend church, read the Bible, pray, and meditate (Furman et al., 2021). In the same study, more men identified as atheists and religiously unattached than women. Hvidtjørn et al. (2014) and Trzebiatowska (2018) indicated that church leaders found alarming social trends in church membership decline. The gap between church attendance and religious activities occurred before the 21st century (Trzebiatowska, 2018). Li et al. (2020) indicated that 18% of men and 25% of women attend church monthly.

A summary of the findings of the Pew Research Center

Table 2

Belief in God Among Americans

	Absolutely believe in God	Fairly believe in God	Believe in God not too much or not at all	Do not know	Do not believe in God	Do not know if they believe in God
M	57%	21%	7%	1%	12%	3%
W	69%	18%	4%	1%	6%	2%

Note. The Pew Research Center is an independent fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping the world. The data are from polling, demographic research, media content analysis, and other empirical social science research. Pew Research Center does not take policy positions.

Age and gender differences in church attendance and personal religious activities have implications for future church membership and fulfilling the Great Commission described in Matthew 28:19-20. The Great Commission relates to the instructions of Christ for the disciples to teach his word to the world. Researchers studied why church membership declines, and others focused on developing and maintaining the interest of the youth in attending and participating in church activities (Pew Research Center, 2015). Religious vitality could be a reason for the decline. Research study findings show that a significant cause of church decline is a lack of church resources and support, leading to the physical decline of church buildings.

Religious Vitality

The Baptist Church has a problem with vitality. The public considered the Baptist church an institution of prestige and authority (Joiner, 2020). Willigenburg (2019) described the church as being in a decline stage, partly because of its elevated levels of segregation and a decline in religious vitality. Religious vitality refers to church members' participation levels in church activities (Kühle & Hoverd, 2018). Howard et al.

(2019) discovered a significant link between religious vitality and the diversity of church members. The religious vitality construct refers to the realized joy and life obtained by connecting with God, people, and the community (Kühle & Hoverd, 2018). Jones (2016) defined the construct as expressing an individual's relationship with God. A church with high vitality can facilitate the spiritual maturity of its members by making them possess clear visions and interests for their future (Herrington et al., 2020).

Church vitality is essential for increasing membership. Research study results indicated that the decline in church membership created attention to church vitality and the need for a positive connection between the church and the community (Rainer, 2014). Several factors contribute to the decline in religious vitality. Therefore, church leaders should direct change gradually with community involvement and support to gain new members while maintaining and serving the current members.

A loss of vitality is evidence of decreased community activities. Decreased interest and participation in ministries and the lack of outward community focus in the church led to a loss of vitality (Rainer, 2014). These factors align with religious vitality because church leaders can create community outreach programs while teaching spiritual leadership. A decline in membership requires strategies associated with growth in vitality and enhancement of leadership effectiveness (Ehrkamp & Nagel, 2017; Gill, 2017).

Introducing new members to the Christian faith is not an easy task. Church leaders must find strategies to increase church membership to prevent unaffiliated membership. The U.S. church leader's missionary's potential to introduce church members to the Christian faith lost momentum in the 21st century (Shann et al., 2019). Early missionaries established the groundwork for churches, including the Southern Baptists, as a viable

church movement (Jones, 2016). The phenomenon of the dead church emerged in 2015 when Manning (2015) defined it as the rise of the nonphenomenon, signified by the number of religiously unaffiliated individuals who answered none when asked about their religion. The members are of various ages.

The membership of the church sometimes depends on the age of the members. The number of American adults who attest to having no religion between the 1970s and 1980s grew from 10% to 23% (Smith & Cooperman, 2016). Pöhls (2021) posited that the increase of nonreligious persons are atheists. Younger members of society, representing 23%, describe themselves as atheists, agnostics, or nothing (Smith & Cooperman, 2016). The number of atheists steadily increased, and more people are becoming secular with no religion or spirituality in terms of beliefs and behavior patterns. Similar to the findings of Smith and Cooperman (2016), Zuckerman (2016) asserted that more than 35% of millennials do not belong to a religious group. The millennials, among other groups, are a part of hurting church membership if they do not attend church regularly.

People in all church affiliations do not attend church regularly. As early as the 20th century, members stopped their affiliation with any religion, including Christianity (Ehrkamp & Nagel, 2017). These unaffiliated individuals do not regularly attend church services or activities and are not in religious institutes, especially Christian churches or denominations (Pew Research Center, 2015). The decline in religious participation occurs in the Southern Baptist Church and multiple Protestant denominations. In addition, church leaders are experiencing a decline in denominational families, including Methodist, Lutheran, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians. The problem that church leaders experience is the disconnect of the followers.

Church leaders have concerns about the decrease in activities. As many as 82% of church leaders reported experiencing a significant loss of influence on their congregants, which resulted in members becoming less actively involved in ministries (Pew Research Center, 2015). Church members who are inactive and disconnected from church leadership may leave the church (Rainer, 2014). Despite the decline in membership, researchers contended that the church is as important as ever in society (Ehrkamp & Nagel, 2017). Despite losing membership, the church's primary mission remains constant (Heelas, 2017). Church leaders still have a significant role in addressing and assisting in alleviating human suffering, economic disparities, and religious conflicts (Rogers & Konieczny, 2018). The church remains crucial to the overall well-being of people and communities (Pillay, 2017). When people leave the communities, they often leave the church.

Studies emerged on the importance of church leadership in reversing declining membership and commitment. Americans left church organizations for distinct reasons, including mobility, life transformations, and experiences of conflict (Pew Research Center, 2015). The number of Americans expressing self-identification with Christianity declined. According to recent studies, church leaders perform critical roles in their services to church members or followers in caring for people living in communities worldwide and bringing them justice (Akanbi & Beyers, 2017). However, evidence shows that church leaders are at risk of emotional, physical, and mental stress and burnout, making them ineffective and disengaged (Adams et al., 2017). The church's survival depends on the health of the leaders and the members.

Member Growth and Retention

The survival of the church indicates signs of decay. Researchers may report decay and little hope for the church's survival because the church is not a human-made institution (Abernethy et al., 2016). Rainer (2014) described the centrality of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 in maintaining church membership. From Matthew 28:20, the church as the body of Christ will exist until the end of the world and Jesus' second coming. In Matthew 28:19, Christians are responsible for increasing the Church's membership (Heinz, 2017). In God's will, the church should grow, and its members should remain faithful until the end of the world. They were observing trends and discussing the negative growth trends in the church, especially from a worldly perspective alone, which will not fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus, documented in Matthew 28:20 (Jones, 2016).

Church members often become Christians and spread the news to other Christians. Christians and their leaders must return to the Bible and find what the Word of God says about spreading the Gospel (Rainer, 2014). From an organizational and cultural development viewpoint, steps exist to ensure the church does not stagnate but changes with the times (Rainer, 2014). Heinz (2017) discussed mitigating the decline and death of the church from a biblical perspective by using Ezekiel's vision of the valley with dry bones wherein God-breathed life to demonstrate the biblical steps to grow and sustain the church. Henard asserted that church traditions should not become the norm; churches must make the Great Commission central in their vision statement because it is the true purpose of the church. Henard noted that a balance between modernizing the church and maintaining its true purpose is to teach all nations the good news about Christ

Jesus. The essential church is one way of addressing the declining membership.

Essential Church

The need for an essential church is pivotal for the church's survival. Addressing the declining number of young churchgoers is a matter of urgency, as Rainer and Rainer (2008) found that over 66% of church members between the ages 18 and 22 years old leave the church, mainly because they do not perceive belonging to a church as essential to their lives. Rainer and Rainer discussed the essential church as an example of church structures and activities that are beneficial in maintaining membership. The essential church includes four characteristics: (a) simplify; (b) deepen; (c) expect; (d) and multiply (Rainer & Rainer, 2008). These aspects represent an uncluttered church organization, undiluted biblical teaching increasing members' knowledge of the Bible and God, psychological reflection on members' attitudes, and practical elements of change to address decreasing numbers of church members (Rainer & Rainer, 2008). The attitudes of the church members can reflect the motivation towards membership.

Church leaders must find a way to motivate their members toward increasing church membership. Cornette (2017) proposed practical organizational steps to increase and maintain church membership, including motivating members to invite guests to the church and following up with each guest through the organizational structures of the church. In addition, church leaders should use different opportunities and approaches to inform the congregation of the importance of being a church member.

Biblically based information can motivate members to provide sufficient opportunities to commit to the church. In developing the church into a close-knit unit where members feel they belong, the different church leaders must inform them about the

new members and integrate them into a Bible study unit where they can grow spiritually and socially (Cornette, 2017). Digital media is becoming more prevalent to church members.

Digital Media

Millennial digital media users may use a form electronics to attend church. This age group grew up with various forms of digital media and used them daily (Hutchings, 2016). Cyber or online churches may fulfill the needs of millennials who grew accustomed to them anytime, anywhere world of digital media. However, online churches cannot provide a close unit and the interpersonal interaction characteristic of traditional churches (Hutchings, 2016). Social media is prevalent in churches to keep members informed, enlighten new members, and facilitate group forming between members of a ministry (Gould, 2015). Church Music can be an intricate part of providing church growth.

Music

Contemporary music is another way to maintain the interest of younger members.

In Australia, Hillsong, a church and denomination, is one of the best illustrations of the success of contemporary gospel music (Hughes, 2016). The contemporary perception of church music is one of the gifts from God, which the church can worship God and enlighten its members (Cheong, 2017). However, receiving a musical gift from God brings the responsibility of stewardship to serve God and the church members.

Scriptural references exist describing making music and singing to worship God's existence. For example, in Psalm 40:3, the Psalmist claimed that God put a song in his mouth. At the end of his life, God instructed Moses to write a song on behalf of the nation

before receiving the Mosaic Covenant Deuteronomy 31:19, 22, 30 (Blomberg et al.,

2017). Although music and singing to the Lord are featured strongly in the Bible, the

Bible does not state which style is acceptable; only that music should glorify and worship

the Lord. Contemporary music and writing styles make gospel songs attractive to the

younger cohort. Ensuring the proper emphasis of the message of the Bible through music

is essential because people remember the words and melodies of songs more efficiently

and longer than they remember sermons (Hughes, 2016). Young adults are sometimes

perceptive of gospel music. Contemporary Gospel music can be a source to increase

young adult membership.

Decline Among Young Adults

A decline exists in young adults in the church. The number of adult Protestant

worshippers in the United States declined by approximately five million between 2007

and 2014 (Powell et al., 2016). The number of young people that have dropout has

increased from 59 to 64 percent (Townes, 2021). The number of young people belonging

to the none's group increased from 16% to 23% in the same period. According to the

2015 census, young people between 18 and 29 make up 76% of the adult population in

the United States (Powell et al., 2016). Three-quarters of this group professed atheism.

Powell et al. (2016) discussed the idea of growing young, which indicates that young

people should grow up in church and that the church leadership should alter their

strategies to enable young people to feel at home and learn about a Christ-centered life.

A need exists for inter-generational relationships or mutual dependence between

the young and the church. Powell et al. (2016) identified several themes related to

growing young: (a) enable young people to lead by providing leadership training; (b)

have compassion toward young people; (c) build a Christ (Jesus)-a centered community where the teachings fall on Jesus, and on what it means as a Christian; (d) create a warm and welcoming church community, where young people feel welcome and loved; (e) include young people in all aspects of the church a priority; and, (f) teach young people to live as good neighbors by living the Jesus life and inviting others to church. Powell et al. emphasized the importance of creating a vibrant faith in Jesus through sound teaching and living Jesus's life. Powell et al. stressed that a super modern church is not what young people need. Instead, young people need personal warmth that allows them to feel welcome and safe at church and empowers them to serve in different ministries to fulfill their desires (Powell et al., 2016). However, young people do not want to participate, which leads to a decline in membership. Many opportunities exist to keep young people in the church. Churches do not have to look ultramodern and have technology resources to attract young people (Powell et al., 2016), and church leaders should not teach a diluted version of the Gospel. Powell et al. suggested that youth are eager to learn Bible truths. Church leaders must keep updated with modern trends but do not compete with the material world because the church leaders offer Jesus. The pastor is essential for church leadership.

The Call of a Pastor

The pastor goes through a rigorous hiring process. Ingram (1981) outlined the standard hiring process for Southern Baptist pastors. Formalized and accepted denominational processes for becoming a pastor in a church are essential, including in Southern Baptist churches, where the absence of formal processes acts as a barrier to appointing suitable pastors. The church's success and growth depend on the pastor's

success (Gregory, 2020). The pastoral candidate in certain Protestant denominations must complete seminary education before becoming eligible for ordination (Pandey & Chawla, 2016). Only ordained ministers may assume the leadership role in churches of these denominations. This process is different in the Southern Baptist church. Congregations hire pastors to serve as leaders rather than just servants (Pandey & Chawla, 2016).

The selection process for pastors is usually like the hiring process in business organizations in secular settings. Congregations select candidates based on the candidates' trial sermon and make little or no effort to determine their leadership abilities (Wollschleger, 2018). A pastor is a leader, a planner, and a decision-maker who works toward growing and sustaining membership. The strategies in the Southern Baptist church fall short in determining the pastor's qualifications in this regard. According to Carter (2009), pastors have multiple roles, although they are mainly responsible for developing the church as an organization. The pastors function as administrators, counselors, resource managers, fundraisers, and shepherds (Carter, 2009). Researchers cannot study pastoral leadership effectiveness without considering the construct of spirituality. In Carter's research, leadership style did not significantly impact pastoral effectiveness. Carter noted that using a small sample size of 93 might affect the findings, with a larger sample size producing different results (Carter, 2009).

Church leaders need to become more aggressive toward finding strategies to increase membership. Based on a review of the previous literature, the church, as an institution in the United States, is in a crisis (Carter, 2009). Although the research did not minimize the church's role, researchers indicated that church leaders should become initiative-taking towards decreasing the decline in church membership. While researchers

indicated the value of church leaders in maintaining church membership and vitality, specific church leadership strategies remain unknown. Transformational leadership is one strategy for pastors.

Leadership Strategies

A decline in church membership is costly for the organization. The number of church members has decreased by 200% since 2014. Leaders in churches must invest in strategies to maintain members. Successful leaders begin with building a unifying vision. Leaders reinforce the organization's mission and purpose (Shet, 2021). They create a vision of the organization's future and make sure followers understand the vision. Leadership strategies include storytelling with emotion concerning situations. The followers work toward connecting to the vision. Creating a vision includes building relationships and helps define the leader's philosophy (Priest & Jenkins, 2019). Leadership strategies include getting all members on board, focusing on results, building innovation, and leading by example Leaders use strategies to gain trust and inspire followers to believe in the organization's future. The leadership theories of servant leadership, transformational, charismatic, transactional, the trait approach, and situational have characteristics that pastors can use as practical strategies to help curtail the decline in church membership.

The culture of the organization depends on the style of leadership. The organization leader shares the best resources and tools to build a strong culture (Priest & Jenkins, 2019). The trait approach has an essential leadership role. These leaders emphasize dependability, emotional intelligence, outgoing, approachability, and ethics.

The leaders who share these traits develop trust and respect among followers (Cote, 2017). The traits also include honesty and integrity, like transformational leadership. Situational leadership is also identical to transformational leadership.

Situational leaders base their leadership styles on the situation. The leader meets the needs of the followers by changing their style to a high low supportive or low directive behavior style. A high low supportive style is when leaders offer emotional and emotional support (Cote, 2017). In addition, situational leaders utilize behavior and task orientation, which are transactional and transformational leadership strategies. Charismatic leadership also has characteristics of transformational leadership.

Charismatic leadership is based on the premises of personal characteristics. Charismatic leaders are strong leaders who instill beliefs and values in their followers (Cote, 2017). These leaders create competent followers who are optimistic. The morality of charismatic leadership is notable. High expectation is evident in their leadership style. The task-oriented characteristic is like transformational leadership. Servant leadership is an example of the passion the pastors can emulate.

Servant leadership is one of the examples pastors follow to motivate their followers. Pastors can use the characteristics of servant leadership as strategies to keep followers engaged. The characteristics of withdrawal, listening, acceptance, empathy, healing, and understanding are associated with therapists and not necessarily leaders who serve in other public capacities (Shirin, 2014). The characteristics of listening, empathy, and healing are particularly therapeutic. Shirin (2014) indicated that therapeutic spirituality could be a part of leadership if a leader is a good psychologist. Leaders who

adopt listening, empathy, and healing strategies can teach their followers and improve the decline in church membership. The members trust their pastors and seek compassion.

Gaining trust is an essential strategy of leadership. Sometimes leaders can abuse the trust of their followers with negative behavior, which can lead to psychological stress and family conflict (Samian & Budihardjo, 2021). Followers look for personal support and endorsement. Leadership strategies include providing emotional support to their followers. Leadership theories include trust as part of a leader's style. Legood et al. (2021) indicated that transformational leadership is associated with confidence. Trust is an excellent transformational leadership strategy because it inspires followers to believe in its vision. Pastors can use transformational leadership to encourage their members to believe in their vision.

Transformational Leadership Theory in Churches

Transformational leadership has elements of a motivating source for pastors. Researchers explored the role of transformational leadership theory in churches in peerreviewed studies and dissertations (Ortiz, 2015; Williams, 2014). For example, Ortiz (2015) claimed that transformational leadership theory could transform membership enthusiasm. Ortiz considered Abraham a transformational leader because of his ability to create a vision, possession of courage and confidence, capacity to care about people, and an intense sense of justice.

Church leaders may use transformational leadership to maintain and attract church members. Ortiz (2015) asserted that transformational leaders are one of the reasons church leaders can maintain the number of their congregations. In contrast, in a study of the relationship between transformational church leadership and church growth, Brooks

(2018) found no significant relationship between church growth or non-growth and transformational leadership style. Church leaders used transformational leadership to guide themselves toward ethical reasoning and actions. Additionally, church leaders inspire congregations and give them the hope of religion they seek. Finally, leaders functioned as role models for those in their congregation who wanted to occupy different leadership positions in churches (Ortiz, 2015; Scuderi, 2014).

Church leaders who practice transformational leadership may help bring in more members, increasing membership. Scuderi (2014) noted that leaders' application of transformational leadership theory increased church revenues through offerings and other church initiatives to boost income bases. Scuderi researched the nature, use, and effects of transformational leadership. Williams (2014) researched how pastors serving congregations of 1,000 people or more learned and applied transformational leadership qualities from biblical scriptures to influence their leadership. Williams explored general data, such as pastors' moral actions, courage, motivation, practical problem solving, and decision-making skills.

The qualitative research methods included interviewing ministers, ministry leaders, and members. Williams then recorded, analyzed, coded the data, and compared them to the Transformational Leadership Skills Inventory (TLSI). Data revealed alignment to pastor leadership traits and transformational leadership skills, which evidenced pastors' real-life applications of the theory. Williams aligned the ten leadership skills measured by the TLSi with biblical principles and suggested these skills could serve as the basis for leadership training in the church.

Outreach programs are potential solutions for pastors practicing transformational leadership in the church. Williams (2014) indicated that providing more outreach programs could align with training, recruiting, and supervising potential pastors. Williams made important conclusions regarding transformational leadership in the church, including the ten domains of transformational leadership in the TLSI.

The data showed that different scriptures could support each domain, even though no specific repetitive scripture alignment crosses the ten domains. Williams concluded that the domains of transformational leadership had scriptural connections to the Bible. Williams added that pastors were passionate about working with the church, so transformational leadership worked for them. The leaders' deep care and concern for people represented their core values, as exhibited by their interview responses (Williams, 2014). Therefore, transformational leadership could be a solution to maintain church membership.

Transformational leaders have attributes desirable to people.

Transformational leaders know that transformation begins with the person or individual; therefore, they pay specific attention to motivating a person to change (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). This characteristic aligns with the perception that pastors constantly need people to connect while maintaining strong ties to the church. Moreover, many pastors believe people should invest through teachings and training, aligning with how transformational leaders invest in their followers (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). As a result, pastors who believe in transformational leaders show positive results.

Some pastors use transformational leadership to lead churches. Christopherson (2014) conducted research using mixed methods to explore the leadership strategies of

pastors from 27 Baptist churches and their leadership styles' impact on their churches' orderliness and progress. Christopherson found that 29% of the pastors applied transformational leadership when leading their churches.

Church leaders who apply transformational leadership are spiritual leaders. Christopherson noted that the pastors viewed church growth as spiritual growth instead of increased tithes and offerings, and more importantly, not just concerning membership.

The study results indicated that church growth might remain stable with increased financial resources; however, other church leaders might still grow through the spiritual development of their congregations with adequate finances to run and maintain church facilities.

Transformational leadership in nonprofits is particularly complex. Grandy (2013) explored transformational leadership in nonprofit settings to determine church leaders' strategies in managing their churches. Like other studies on transformational leadership, Grandy extracted qualitative data through various data collection methods and identified changes in religious organizations over time. Grandy attributed most of these transitions by the church to the leadership strategies that the church leaders implemented.

Transformational leaders can use this style of leadership to grow their membership. Transformational leadership styles in the inspirational and motivational model significantly impacted how subjects behaved and acted, contributing to churches' growth (Zaccaro et al., 2018). The research findings indicated that church leaders transmitted their leadership skills to their congregations. The findings indicated that for positive changes to occur, Christian leaders must emulate leadership styles that are more

transformational for the whole church to transform. These leaders sometimes include the practice of transformational leadership in the scriptures.

Researchers explored the incidences of transformational leadership concerning biblical scriptures. Religious leaders explored the qualities supported by transformational leadership theory (Timans et al., 2019). The study employed qualitative research methods to determine the abstract qualities observed in the Book of Nehemiah, one of the leaders in the Hebrew Scriptures, to compare these with transformational leadership. In the researcher's analysis of biblical scriptures, (Timans et al., 2019) discovered that in the dynamic environment Nehemiah lived during the rebuilding of the city wall, he used various leadership methods that included traits similar to transformational leadership traits.

The Bible has instances were transformational leadership. For example, when Nehemiah learned of the conditions in Jerusalem, he requested permission to return to Judah in Nehemiah 2:5 (Jones, 2016) and arrived in Jerusalem in 444 BC. In 52 days, Nehemiah completed rebuilding the city walls (Jones, 2016). Thomas et al. provided a context for the transformational leadership model from the scriptures, adopting the theory and demonstrating that transformational leadership was part of religious activities. The study explored whether leadership strategies that align with the transformative style can influence the business strategies of church leaders in increasing church vitality, membership, and revenues. Leaders must measure the characteristics of servant leadership.

Measuring Transformational Leadership

One of the instruments researchers used to measure transformational leadership is the MLQ. The unit of measurement for transformational leadership obtains an accurate extent of transformational leadership (Patterson, 2018). The standardized instrument MLQ explores various leadership types (Jennie, 2016). The MLQ is a survey with 45 questions using 5-point Likert-type scales that interviewees can use to determine their leadership style. The five levels range from the highest, frequently if not always, to the lowest, not at all (Avolio & Bass, 2013). The MLQ includes general answers from leaders without indicating specific traits (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018). Researchers use the MLQ by providing it to leaders to complete (Ramchunder & Martins, 2014;

Tyczkowski et al., 2015; Vasilagos et al., 2017).

Various researchers used the MLQ to explore the influence of three leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and servant leadership. Alsayed et al. (2013) used the MLQ and a communication satisfaction questionnaire to assess the effectiveness of both types of questionnaires in measuring leadership styles. The research was quantitative with a sample size of 360, sufficient to develop conclusions in various institutions with various settings over a period sufficient to reach conclusions. Alasayed et al. deduced that the MLQ helped determine the effectiveness of the factors involved in the three leadership styles. The results confirmed that the MLQ is valuable for measuring the transformational leadership approach through the independent research survey style. Transformational leadership is a choice for leaders; however, alternative leadership styles exist for church leaders.

Alternative Leadership Styles for Church Leaders

In addition to research on the transformational leadership style, researchers studied effective church leadership with other styles. Researchers routinely contrast the transformational leadership approach with transactional leadership theory (Wahyuni et al., 2014; Wart, 2013). Wart (2013) reviewed major studies within organizational leadership literature to identify critical overarching insights, specifically those of particular importance to leaders in administrative positions in the nonprofit public sector, which reflect churches, and found that transactional leadership also had benefits.

Transactional leaders have notable differences from transformational leaders. Antonakis and House (2013) concluded that transactional leadership is favorable for formal settings whereby leaders undergo evaluation through qualitative and quantitative criteria. When leaders make decisions in transactional environments, the followers should only take their orders and execute them efficiently without fearing punishment. However, the transactional form of leadership is not effective in all cases.

Transactional leadership can sometimes appear rigid, making it difficult to accept and appreciate changes (Yang & Yang, 2019). For example, transactional leaders might issue threats or offer rewards and other catalysts to exchange results (Wart, 2013). Therefore, employees may struggle to achieve success when organizational leaders are experiencing challenges (Fountaine et al., 2019). Transactional leadership entails a formal relationship between leaders and their subjects. When problems occur in these organizations, the leaders frequently blame employees instead of negotiating the outcome and reaching a consensus on solving the problem (Bligh et al., 2018).

Transformational leadership and transactional leadership combined is the possible solution for leaders. Baah (2015) explained that situations did occur where the leadership style was a combination of transformational and transactional leadership. Conducting a literature review of resilient leadership, Dartey-Baah found that efficient and robust leadership requires combining transactional and transformational leadership strategies. However, the research findings could not substantiate that active leadership occurred by combining transformational and transactional leadership strategies because the study did not include research from qualitative data.

The transactional theory of leadership helps expand the efforts of employees when employees' actions are compulsory rather than voluntary. In some settings, motivation can also increase through transactional leadership. Breevaart et al. (2014) concluded that transactional leadership was a motivational factor for subjects when leaders issued orders, threats, and rewards. Therefore, a leader focused on the continuous growth of an organization would prefer to adopt a transactional form of leadership so the subjects could work toward reaching the expectations. Breevaart et al. studied a military setting that required force and vigor; therefore, the findings may not apply appropriately to a church setting. The findings overshadow the challenge of demonstrating the effectiveness of transactional leadership in churches.

The transactional leadership style has elements church leaders can follow. Two primary elements exist within the transactional leadership style: contingent reward and management by exception (Bass & Bass, 2009). The contingent belief is that attaining objectives that will lead to better performance and higher satisfaction is the basis of a follower's reinforcement (Breevaart et al., 2014). The contingent believes that attaining

objectives that will lead to better performance and higher satisfaction is the basis of a follower's reinforcement (Breevaart et al., 2014). Management, by exception, includes the leader directly supervising the followers and interacting with them when they are not meeting objectives (Breevaart et al., 2014). These two main elements are common elements of the Bible and Christian theology.

Transactional leadership could be a solution for church leaders to maintain leadership. The contingent reward has deep roots in Christian teachings (Drury, 2003). Although Christians believe faith can lead to salvation, some believe God will reward and bless those who engage in faithful service and Christian practices. Christians also believe that God is the best example or role model for the concept of management by exception, wherein they believe God only intervenes when people destroy the covenant of God's people (Drury, 2003). God provided his rules in the Ten Commandments in the Book of Leviticus, and followers believe that punishments will result if they do not follow these rules. Church leaders are working under a reward system that involves eternal reward, in which other nonreligious organizations cannot compete (Drury, 2003). Other leadership theories exist for church leaders to follow.

The servant leadership style is another option for pastors to follow. A growing body of evidence shows the effectiveness of the servant leadership style used in church (Washington et al., 2014). Servant leadership is not a new style but has received greater attention in recent years. Servant leaders put the overall good, the welfare of their organization, and the needs of those performing the necessary tasks of the organization ahead of their interests and desires (Liden et al., 2014; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

Servant leaders view leadership as the opportunity to serve and demonstrate a style of leadership that encourages subordinates to follow. Servant leadership includes proponents that church leaders can exemplify. For example, Greenleaf (1970), a proponent of servant leadership, put forth ten primary characteristics or capacities that a servant leader embodies, which are the capacity to (a) listen, (b) awareness, (c) empathy, and (d) healing (e). The other primary characters are (a) persuasive, (b) conceptualization, (c) foresight, (d) commitment to growing others, (e) community building, and (f) serving as a steward of organizational stakeholders' resources.

Church pastors can model servant leadership to increase church membership. Greenleaf claimed that his leadership model or paradigm derives from stories about people on a religious journey (Tran et al., 2020). For example, one of the group's members, Leo, explored the completion of menial chores by demonstrating servant leadership skills through spiritual singing to bring the message of God and leadership to motivate people. The group disappeared when Leo disappeared, highlighting his importance as a servant leader (Grisaffe et al., 2016; Winston & Fields, 2015).

Leo exemplified servant leadership qualities. Chan (2021) revealed that Leo was the servant leader of the Order, instrumental in the journey. Hence, Leo was both a leader and a servant. Greenleaf (1970) claimed that a servant leader possesses a natural desire to serve. The natural desire to serve exists before the individual makes the conscious choice to work as a leader, which contrasts with other leaders who do not aspire to serve. Servant leaders ensure the satisfaction of coworkers and followers' needs occur. A servant leader grows as a person becomes healthier, wiser, and more independent (Grisaffe et al., 2016; Winston & Fields, 2015). These leaders can create a sociomoral climate.

The sociomoral climate has an impact on the church organization. Fung et al. (2021) studied the effects of servant leadership on the sociomoral climate of Catholic parishes and the spiritual health of their members. Okonkwo explored how church followers perceived the servant leadership orientation of their leaders affected the sociomoral climate of the organization, as well as the spiritual being of the followers. Data gathered from 354 parish staff, and volunteers of 53 Catholic parishes personnel in the dioceses of Oklahoma City and Tulsa used structural equation modeling.

The findings indicated that servant leadership directly and strongly influences the sociomoral climate of the people in Catholic parishes and the spiritual health of the followers. Results also showed a positive association between the sociomoral climate and the spiritual well-being of the church members. The sociomoral climate applied to moderate and mediated servant leadership's effect on the members' spiritual well-being. The results indicated that the effect of servant leadership on the church members' spiritual well-being was more substantial if church members perceived the sociomoral climate positively (Fung et al., 2021). Heinz (2017) studied the relationship between the servant leadership style and behaviors of the lead pastor and church members' commitment to the church, including affective, continuance, and normative organizational commitment.

The servant leadership instrument has eight dimensions. Heinz (2017) assessed the servant leadership of the lead pastor using the servant leadership survey, which measures eight dimensions of the leadership style. The dimensions include, (a) empowerment, (b) standing back, (c) accountability, (d) forgiveness, (e) courage, (f) authenticity, (g) humility, and (h) stewardship. These dimensions aligned with the

threecomponent model to assess the 135 church members' affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

Test result from the servant instrument proves servant leadership's dimensions. Results from the data analysis using Spearman's rho test showed significant and positive links between the eight dimensions of servant leadership and the affective commitment of the church members. Heinz (2017) concluded that a significant and positive relationship exists between six dimensions of servant leadership, with the courage and continuance commitment of the church members excluded. Conversely, six dimensions of servant leadership, excluding courage and authenticity, connect to normative commitment. These results indicated that servant leadership strategies might improve membership because the intent is to encourage members to serve as followers with leadership potential.

Jesus Christ serves as an example of servant leadership. According to Danielson (2017), modern pastors may want to reflect the ultimate example of Jesus Christ or act in his image to self-identify as servant leaders. Shirin (2014) noted that servant leadership is gaining currency among Christians, mainly because Christians feel that servant leadership originates in the New Testament. Shirin (2014) added that servant leadership seems biblical to bible scholars, but servant leadership was not a Biblical principle. Shirin indicated that much of servant leadership aligns with the scriptures and tradition. For example, Jesus washed the disciples' feet, told them that he came to the world to serve and not to lord over them, and told them that whoever wanted to serve as a leader should behave like a servant (Shirin, 2014). In addition, the writings of St. Augustine emphasized the behavior of Jesus.

The writings of St. Augustine are an indication of servant leadership. Shirin

(2014) analyzed the writings of St. Augustine by determining whether servant leadership is inherently Christian. Shirin first explored the therapeutic origins of servant leadership and then explored the associated issue of whether the contemporary Western therapeutic worldview is Christian. The results of Shirin's (2014) analysis showed that despite the connection between servant leadership and Christian practices, the alignment remained in conflict with St. Augustine's cultural practice in three crucial differences.

The writings of St. Augustine are Pivotal in learning about Jesus and the apostles. First, St. Augustine claimed that a communal setting was necessary to cure a person's soul genuinely and authentically (Shirin, 2014). Second, St. Augustine claimed or believed that studying a person's ultimate purpose was necessary to cure a soul. Third, St. Augustine did not believe in being autonomous as the focus of an individual's identity. The apostles were in the community with Jesus, and he taught them, in at least one wellknown passage, about sitting on his right and left side, followed by Mark 10:43 that they were to serve. Jesus modeled leadership and sent the apostles to teach and heal.

The literature emphasized that servant leadership has existed for years, including in modern times. In another study, Shirin (2014) studied how Christians can inherently consider the application of servant leadership in modern settings. Shirin claimed that service, regardless of whether it is an integral part of the Christian praxis, could not appear if the reason for providing service was to achieve an agenda. Therefore, people may use servant leadership to describe Christian leaders. However, they cannot describe the theory as inherently Christian, and Christian leaders cannot embrace it in other occupations. Furthermore, the meaning of service can change, and perceiving service as being Christian will prove difficult. Therefore, Shirin's findings indicated that servant

leadership is not the best leadership style for church leaders if the goal is to increase church membership.

Summary

Increasing evidence exists that church membership and commitment are declining. The percentage of young-adult dropouts has increased from 59 to 64 percent. Less than 20% of the U.S. population regularly attends church, a considerable decrease in religious affiliation from previous decades (Twenge et al., 2016). Twenge et al. (2016) noted that regional differences in church attendance exist. The decline in church membership is not new because it has decreased for decades (Pew Research Center, 2015). Researchers indicated that transformational leadership is a valuable tool for leaders who strategize to apply inspiration-oriented leadership (Burns, 1978).

Church leaders used transformational leadership to improve their influence and promote spiritual growth within the congregation. In addition, church leaders can use transformational leadership to influence church finances and retain their operations. Research study results show that transformational leadership exists, especially in religious settings, even before Burns (1978) introduced the theory. Research results indicated that leaders who adopt transformational leadership could implement the four elements of transformational leadership. Researchers suggested that other leadership styles, such as transactional leadership, were inappropriate in church settings. Researchers employed both qualitative and quantitative methods in their studies of leadership styles.

Transition

The decline in church membership is an ongoing issue. The decline in church membership is not new because it has decreased for decades (Pew Research Center, 2015). The decrease occurred within the Southern Baptist church, which experienced an annual revenue loss of around $84 million in 2016 (Lifeway Insights, 2017). Researchers indicated several factors behind the decline, including the church leadership role. However, the role of leadership in reversing the trend, sustaining membership, and increasing much-needed revenues remains unknown.

Although this study focuses on multiple churches, declining membership is a business problem. The general business problem is that churches lose revenue when membership declines. The specific business problem is that some Southern Baptist church leaders lack leadership strategies to sustain membership. Therefore, the present study may include findings and strategies to sustain membership. Section 2 will include the purpose of the multiple qualitative case studies to explore the strategies Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders use to sustain membership. Section 3 will include a discussion of the findings, implications of social change, recommendations for future research, and the conclusion of the study.

Section 2: The Project

The focus of this Section is the purpose of the qualitative multiple case study in which I explored the strategies Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders use to sustain membership. I evaluate the research method, the role of the researcher, data collection, and organization techniques. Semistructured interviews were

the primary method used to collect data from each participant. I reviewed documents collected from three churches in the MSA of Philadelphia to explore strategies currently in use to secure sustainable funding from church membership.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership strategies Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders use to sustain membership. The population for this study included three participants from each participating church. Senior pastors, associate ministers, and ministry leaders in three Southern Baptist churches in Philadelphia's MSA who sustained church membership from January 2016 to January 2019. The findings of this study have potential implications for positive social change because individuals, businesses, and social groups within the Philadelphia MSA benefit from the financial contributions churches receive from sustaining membership. In addition, churches can increase education, civic, and social involvement and lead to improvements in individual lives, families, and communities.

Role of the Researcher

I served as the primary data collection instrument because of my role in collecting and analyzing qualitative data. In qualitative research, a researcher is the primary data collection instrument (Yin, 2018). An interview protocol helps a researcher obtain information on participants' views and experiences and helps mitigate researcher bias (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). My role involved conducting interviews to obtain in-depth data and organizing and synthesizing data. I have experience in the church setting and a strong background in revenue management and leadership. However, I did not have any relationship with the chosen churches or the participants.

I completed the training on protecting human research participants by the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research. I adhered to the principles within the Belmont Report. Adhering to ethical standards is essential when conducting research. The Belmont Report protocol includes three regulations and guidelines researchers must follow when using human subjects (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Following the ethical principles set out in the Belmont Report and the guidelines for protecting human subjects is essential during research. These principles include respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). The Belmont report ensures that researchers remain ethical while following the guidelines for research of human subjects.

No relationships exist with any of the participants, or selected churches exist. Treating each participant by following the Walden University IRB process is ethically essential throughout data collection. Each potential participant received an informed consent form to sign before I conducted interviews.

Qualitative research is subject to researcher bias, which can influence study results (Galdas, 2017; Roulston & Shelton, 2015). Yin (2018) discussed avoiding individual bias in qualitative studies. I have experience in the church setting, and I am passionate about the concepts of revenue management and leadership. Therefore, I was acutely aware of the possibilities of bias. Bracketing ensures participants' views are the focus and that researcher bias does not affect the validity and reliability of the study. Using an interview protocol was valuable because it helped me to mitigate bias (Shann et al., 2019). In addition, maintaining respect for the participants' rights avoids any violations or offensive actions when conducting an interview (Sim & Waterfield, 2019).

This process is used to maintain rationality when collecting and analyzing data (Ross & Zaidi, 2019). Finally, observing and documenting verbal and nonverbal communication, if possible, can be done through field notes for each interview (Stans et al., 2018). Including these safeguards aims to minimize or avoid researcher bias.

Participants

The population for this study included nine participants representing senior pastors, associate ministers, and ministry leaders from each of three Southern Baptist churches in the MSA of Philadelphia. Participation in the study required specific criteria (Joyner et al., 2018). The participants needed to have sustained church membership from January 2016 to January 2019. Each participant needed to know strategies to retain church memberships. Participants for this case study were selected because of their demonstrated ability to retain membership during the identified period. Participants included senior pastors, associate ministers, and ministry leaders who have leadership roles in a church setting. The participants received information about the questions before collecting the data in a case study (Yin, 2018). Before recruiting participants and collecting data, I obtained approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). I also contacted the senior pastors at each church and only met with participants after obtaining approval from the senior pastor.

All potential participants were invited to attend a meeting to receive details regarding the purpose of the study. A formal letter is an accurate way to request participation and introduce a study (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). The meeting included information regarding the study and allowed me to promote trust and a sense of confidentiality among participants (Yardley et al., 2013). At the meeting, I provided

recruitment material containing my contact information and asked interested parties to e-mail an indication of their interest. Interested parties then received an informed consent form by e-mail. A study's success is critical to gaining access to participants (Blomberg et al., 2017). Participants who signed the consent form to participate received interview dates, times, and locations (Ngozwana, 2018). The consent form contained the purpose and description of the study, the researcher's role in the study, and participants' rights to answer some or all questions without penalty. In addition, the consent form contained contact details if participants had questions about the research.

I developed a working relationship with the participants, remained flexible with the participants' schedules, remained professional, and followed up with all participants. Remaining professional and prepared may help build a credible relationship and increase the chances of accurate data collection (Rubin & Babbie, 2016). A researcher's professionalism, preparedness, and approach may help build a credible relationship with participants, thereby increasing the chances of collecting accurate data (Rubin & Babbie, 2016). I answered any questions the participants had about the process, ensured a clear understanding of the study, and explained any steps in the process to the participants. The participants' answers and personal information remain confidential. Participants received a copy of the interview questions (see Appendix C) and answered with the understanding that no party may publish, share, or use the information. All interview documents and data files will remain confidential.

Research Method and Design

Researchers who carefully select a suitable method and an accurate research design create a credible doctoral study (ChanSovacool et al., 2018). I selected a

qualitative method and case study design. The qualitative case study was appropriate to explore the best strategies Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders use to sustain church membership. An appropriate research method and design is essential because they provide the necessary framework for a researcher to record and analyze data (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

Research Method

Researchers consider three methods: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed. From the three potential methods, I chose to perform a qualitative study. Researchers use the qualitative method to provide insights into the perceptions and experiences of a set of events, processes, or actions in a social context (Yin, 2018). Researchers use the qualitative method to study people's behavior and why and how they process ideas (Queirós et al., 2017). Qualitative researchers draw theoretical conclusions from research questions related to phenomena in a natural setting (Barnham, 2015). In this study, I used a qualitative method to explore church leaders' strategies to sustain their membership between 2016 and January 2019.

Quantitative researchers use variables to determine significance, correlation, and relationships (Khan, 2014). Researchers use quantitative research to test the relationship between variables and hypotheses (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). I did not use quantitative research because I did not test any hypotheses or examine relationships between variables. Mixed-methods research comprises both quantitative and qualitative research strategies (Yin, 2018). Only qualitative research applied in this study, so I did not use a mixed method. I used qualitative research to allow participants to make meaning from their strategies for sustaining church membership.

Research Design

Qualitative research includes several research designs, such as case study, phenomenology, and ethnography. A case study design was most appropriate for this research. Case studies entail a profound and thorough analysis of the literature in the relevant research topic field to develop a strong background for the study (Snyder, 2019). Researchers use the phenomenological design to understand participants' lived experiences (Howard et al., 2019).

A phenomenological study was not appropriate for this study because I did not seek to reflect the lived experiences of the participants. Researchers use ethnographic studies to focus on an entire culture and study situations in real-time in the natural setting (Chopra, 2020). The case study is optimal because I conducted an in-depth study of church leaders' strategies. The purpose of a case study is to gain a deeper understanding of behaviors of participants under study. A case study is practical when the purpose of the research is to understand the actions and motives behind the actions (Yin, 2018). Because I interviewed pastors, associate ministers, and ministry leaders from more than one Southern Baptist church in the Philadelphia MSA, I used a multiple case study model. Yin (2018) posited that a case study design allows a researcher to collect data from various sources to assure credibility. The data collected in case study research come from two or more data triangulation sources, including interviews, peer debriefing, and member checking. Member checking enhances the dependability and transparency of the research (Fusch et al., 2018). Ensuring data saturation in my study required collecting data until no added information or themes emanate from the data collection process.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study included nine participants: three each from three churches in the MSA of Philadelphia who sustained church membership for 3 years or longer. The individuals in this study held specific leadership positions in the churches. I used purposeful sampling to confirm that participants met the necessary criteria for participation. I used a purposive sampling strategy to seek pastors and church leaders with different experiences. Researchers use purposive sampling to explore issues, questions, or dilemmas and examine a phenomenon (Yin, 2018). Purposive sampling is efficient because a small sample size of participants may share the same mindset and similar attributes. The sampling technique was appropriate for this study because of the convenience of selecting participants knowledgeable about strategies to sustain church membership.

The nine participants from three churches gave consent to participate. In a research study, the research question aligns with the sample size. Selecting participants for a case study aligns with the selection of the participants to answer the research question and the conceptual framework (Yin, 2018). Fifteen participants yield sufficient data to reach saturation based on suggestions by Dworkin (2012), who indicated that researchers could use nine participants as a sufficient sample size for a qualitative study. Fusch et al. (2018) indicated that no particular number of participants is necessary for qualitative studies. Fusch et al. suggested that between eight and 15 participants should provide sufficient data to obtain saturation. The criteria for eligibility in this research study was that each participant be a senior pastor, ministerial staff, or ministry leader

within one of three churches in the MSA of Philadelphia and have sustained church

membership for at least 3 years.

Ethical Research

I obtained approval from the Walden University IRB staff before beginning the

qualitative research study and selecting the research sites to participate in the study. I

explained to participants their rights and their roles in the study. The leaders of the

various churches granted permission because they will request me to collect data from the

congregation as part of the protocol.

I obtained approval from the Walden University IRB staff and church leaders and

invited participants who met the criteria to participate in the study based on their role,

knowledge, and position in the church. The selection of the participants was one of the

factors that enabled the delivery of an optimal study outcome. Individuals who met the

criteria to participate received an informed consent form to read and sign if they agreed

with the terms of the research. Children are a vulnerable group in research (Crane &

Broome, 2017). Children are not part of this research because the study will include only

persons knowledgeable in how their church sustains membership. Before the interviews

occurred, primarily communication with participants occurred through e-mail.

Each participant received an informed consent form. The participants could

withdraw from the research study at any point. The request to withdraw from the research

could occur verbally or in writing (Yin, 2018). The participants had an option to

withdraw from the study during the research process with timely notification to the

researcher. A provision existed for participants who withdrew to request the removal of

their data from the study cases where the well-being or security of participants was in

jeopardy. Participants did not receive incentives to avoid coercion and undue influence during the research study. The payment of incentives may increase the likelihood of participation compared with studies that do not include incentives (Kelly et al., 2017).

I coded the names of the participants and churches. To maintain the privacy of the churches, unique pseudonyms for the participants, letters to identify each church, and numbers to identify each participant occurred in the analysis. Thus, the alphanumeric code A1 will refer to Church A Participant 1. The actual names of the participants will remain concealed to hide their identities. Confidentiality is an approach that researchers use to protect the data provided by participants. Collecting any information that may lead to identifying the participants, for example, their names or phone numbers, to eliminate all chances of access to information by third parties will occur in the study.

The consent documents, signed by the participants, and the answers to interview questions in print will remain stored in a lockbox, encrypted in a password-protected flash drive for 5 years. I stored the documents in a lockbox to prevent unauthorized persons from accessing the participants' data. The documents could lead to disclosing the participants' information violating the ethical guidelines (Surmiak, 2018). When the 5year period ends, shred the documents and reformat the password-protected flash drive before disposing of them if necessary. Shredding physical documents helps avoid unauthorized data retrieval (Wolf & Beskow, 2018).

Data Collection Instruments

I served as this study's primary data collection instrument and used semistructured interviews guided by open-ended questions during the data collection process. Secondary data collection came from the literature and documents from the

participants. In qualitative research studies, the researcher has a vital role in the data collection (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) indicated that the standard methods of collecting data are interviews, focus groups, direct observations, artifacts, participant observation, and archival records. A semistructured interview is a typical data collection process used by qualitative researchers (Bell et al., 2018). Researchers use semistructured interviews so participants can reflect on their subjective experiences and freely express their viewpoints in detail (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

I engaged participants with eight interview questions to address the central research question during the face-to-face interviews. The expected length of the interviews will be 30 minutes for each participant. Brayda and Boyce (2014) advised researchers to use face-to-face interviews to engage participants in an audio-recorded data collection process. The collection process is conducting and recording the semistructured interviews with the permission of each participant to ensure accurate responses (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). A well-structured data collection process and interview protocol (Appendix A) are necessary to avoid deviating from the research objective. In addition, an interview protocol is essential to ensure a researcher stays focused during the data collection (Yin, 2018).

I used methodological triangulation to ensure the validity of the findings. Fusch et al. (2018) noted that researchers could minimize researcher bias by using triangulation, increasing the depth and saturation of data collected (Ward et al., 2018). Noble and Heale (2019) encouraged researchers to use additional sources, including organizational documents, to supplement other data collected, ensuring the study's reliability. The pastors and other participants will provide relevant documents, including church

leadership reports to triangulate with the collected interview data. Comparing the interview and document findings with the existing literature will occur.

I used member checking, an interview protocol, and data triangulation to ensure the validity and reliability of the information. Member checking is a technique for ensuring the credibility and accuracy of a study by providing a summary of the interview responses of each answer to the participants for accuracy (Candela, 2019). To ensure that the information was accurate, I used member checking. Member checking includes sharing the summary of the responses by the participants (Fusch et al., 2018).

Researchers who use member checking offer participants the opportunity to clarify the answers to avoid misrepresenting facts (Iivari, 2018). Validating the participants' responses requires access to the final summary of the participants helps improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of the study (Yin, 2018). An interview protocol was a part of the data collection instruments that included five interview questions designed to capture interview responses, ensure consistency, and facilitate the recording of accurate transcriptions of the action taken by each leader (Appendix A).

Data Collection Technique

The semistructured interview served as the data collection technique for this study in a conference room provided by the participating church with the five interview questions and a review of all documents. Data collection gathers information from participants for the study (Yin, 2018). After participants responded to the invitation letter (see Appendix D), I scheduled a date and time appropriate for each participant.

Researchers should make prior arrangements regarding data collection to ensure

participants prepare ahead of time (Yin, 2018). I sent the participants a copy of the

interview questions to become familiar with the questions.

A pilot study is a preliminary small-scale study necessary for a researcher to

determine the strategy for conducting a large-scale research study (Lowe, 2019). The

pilot study can align with refining the research question leading to the best method, time,

and resources to complete a large-scale study (Pandey & Chawla, 2016). A pilot study

was not necessary for this study because this study was not on a large scale, and the small

number of participants represents the larger population.

In addition, member checking will be necessary for the reliability and validation

of the research questions. Finally, deciding where to conduct interviews helps establish a

comfortable atmosphere for the participants (Merriam, 2015). I arranged the use of a

private meeting room or zoom request and scheduled interviews 30 minutes apart to

maintain confidentiality by avoiding participants meeting one another going to or leaving

the interview. In addition, a notice on the outside door of the meeting room stating the

meeting is in progress to avoid interruptions and ensure privacy is necessary.

Creating trust and maintaining a good rapport is essential in obtaining

participants' trust (Durodola et al., 2017). Before the interviews, each participant read,

signed, and received a copy of the informed consent form (see Appendix B). Seeking

permission from the participants to record the interviews were necessary. Following the

recommendations of Lindlof and Taylor (2017) will allow participants to express their

viewpoints while actively listening to ensure accuracy and ask for clarifications when

appropriate.

Advantages and disadvantages exist in using semistructured interviews in a research study. One advantage of semistructured interviews is thorough information collected with more in-depth and robust information from participants (Durodola et al., 2017). Data saturation occurs when the questions are exhausted. I asked for additional information to make sure I reached data saturation. The advantage of semistructured interviews is appropriate to ensure the researcher interviews in a familiar place, the participants are comfortable, and the conversation is relaxing (Brannen, 2017).

The disadvantage of semistructured interviews is that the questions may seem complicated, and the conversation's flexibility may lessen reliability (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). The participants' schedules may receive interruptions. Participants may not want to answer the questions because of shyness, and the researcher may lack the ability to give a formal interview. The participants may not provide truthful information (Yin, 2018).

Using semistructured interviews is the most common way to collect data to analyze a case study (Brannen, 2017). Furthermore, researchers use interviews to capture the interviewees' social cues; therefore, semistructured interviews have a better outcome (Johnson et al., 2021). In addition, I incorporated follow-up questions to assist the participants in providing rich, detailed descriptions of their experiences.

I scheduled follow-up meetings so the interviewee could participate in member checking by reviewing the answers and responses for accuracy and completeness. Eliminating discrepancies requires making the necessary corrections to analyze responses (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017; Yin, 2018). The interviewees had a second opportunity to review the summary of the interview analysis. I used member checking to ensure the collection of

precise information, and member checking occurred throughout the verification of interview responses to the questions by the participants.

Semistructured interviews could develop a rapport and maintain the participant's full attention (Brown & Danaher, 2019). Semistructured interviews involve reaching participants for an onsite interview (Coulentianos et al., 2019). Researchers might influence the interviewees' responses during semistructured interviews, which could cause bias in the interview results (Johnson et al., 2021). Using the interview protocol, declaring personal bias, and constantly remaining constant are techniques to mitigate bias (Fusch et al., 2018). I used semi-structured interviews to understand each person's views on maintaining church membership.

The pastors provided documentation as a source of secondary data. Secondary sources in research are preexisting data to understand the research questions and provide new conclusions and interpretations (Sherif, 2018). Yin (2018) Indicated that secondary data allows a new perspective; however, ethical consideration exists when evaluating these sources' quality. The advantage of using secondary data is that the researcher can re-examine the participants' experiences. In addition, secondary data can help the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the context. Sometimes the participants are difficult to contact (Sherif, 2018). The secondary data can help protect the participants' identity with sensory issues. The researcher can save time and money collecting documents because the process can become expensive, and the researcher can gain skills as an independent researcher (Natow, 2020).

The disadvantage of collecting secondary data is that the data may not meet the researcher's objectives or the research question (Natow, 2020). The researcher may have

to change the research questions. In addition, the researcher may feel forced to change the data to reflect the new research questions. The secondary data may not be complete because the information may not have all the details the researcher needs for the analysis, primarily if the researcher does not collect secondary data (Yin, 2018). When the researcher is the person who collects the data, they could lack control, and bias can enter the research process. Collecting secondary data may require time by the researcher. Ethical considerations may occur from collecting secondary data because the researcher may collect sensitive information (Sherif, 2018).

Data Organization Technique

When collecting data, the researcher relies on the organizational members for accuracy when analyzing, reviewing, and reporting the information (Yin, 2018). Qualitative studies must follow strict guidelines when organizing data obtained from interviews (Fusch et al., 2018). This process may include maintaining journal notes, reviewing interviews, adding journal notes throughout the study when entering qualitative data analysis, and checking data (Gill, 2017). Data organization techniques help to support the validity and integrity of the information obtained, making accessing information more accessible.

I used an Apple iPhone 10 with 128 GB storage space to record the interview and upload the content into NVivo. Handwritten notes will occur during the interview process. The files created for each participant will include church documents that will receive coding following the interviews, interview transcriptions, consent forms, and other documents obtained during the study. A confidential master file will contain journal notes, transcripts, audio files, the data labeling system, and church documents, as Yin

(2018) recommended. Ensuring that data storage procedures align with Walden

University's IRB staff requirements is necessary to preserve confidentiality.

I served as the only person to access the participants' data. Electronic data storage

will occur on a password-protected external hard drive with a copy of the electronic data

in the cloud, as recommended by (Wolf & Beskow, 2018). Encrypting all data before

transferring the files to the cloud drive ensures high protection and preserves data

confidentiality and privacy (Le Nguyen et al., 2020). The hard copies of the data will

remain locked in a file cabinet, and the destruction of the data from the hard drive and the

cloud storage will occur after 5 years.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study is to explore the leadership

strategies Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders use to

sustain membership. After transcribing the data and member checking, analyzing the data

using the content analytical approach will occur. Content analysis is more flexible and

adaptable than thematic analysis, which adheres to a relatively rigid coding and theme

identification framework (Lainson et al., 2019). Yin (2018) introduced steps for analyzing

data in qualitative research. The steps include compiling, disassembling, reassembling,

interpreting, and concluding. Yin's (2018) steps will help the researchers ensure that the

thematic analysis is thorough and systematic.

Compiling- the data or transcribing makes the data easily seen by the researcher

(Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). I collected my data by rewriting the interview answers onto

a notepad so I could understand. For example, I took notes during the interview. I read

the interview notes thoroughly to understand what the participants express. Clarifying the

interviews will require asking the participants to repeat what they say. Yin (2018)

suggests that rereading the data creates familiarity. Using software such as NVivo to code

themes is another way to protect participants' confidentiality (Alam, 2020). NVivo

software assisted in inputting and storing data for coding, organizing data, analyzing

themes, and summarizing data collected during the interview. After compiling my data, I

disassembled my data.

Disassembling- taking the data apart by grouping and coding. Coding converts

raw data into usable data by identifying concepts, themes, or ideas to determine

similarities and differences (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Before coding, I reviewed the

literature to determine if similar studies share the same themes.

Castleberry and Nolen (2018) indicated that reviewing the literature is a priori to

establishing a coding strategy. Therefore, I coded the data with the assistance of NVivo

software by inputting and storing data for coding. NVivo 11 software is beneficial for

coding, organizing, analyzing, and summarizing data; therefore, I recommend this

software to other researchers (Alam, 2020). Hays and McKibben (2021) indicated that

qualitative research is an inductive process that derives meaning from coded or

disassembled data.

Coding data is essential in data analysis (Elliott, 2018). In the descriptive analysis,

researchers divide the data into smaller manageable units. Reading and rereading all

transcriptions, notes, and documents is the first step in data analysis. Next, researchers

develop preliminary groupings, codes, and themes. The coding process was not linear,

progressing from one stage to another, but a duplication, executed at various levels, from

general to gradually more specific levels (Elliott, 2018). I arrived at an informed conclusion by reviewing the data after dissembling and reassembling the data.

Reassembling is mapping the concepts to create themes (Yin, 2018). I used the NVivo software to assist with the mapping process. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) describe creating themes clustering similar codes into multiple levels. For example, lower codes generate higher codes. The higher codes provide a better view of the themes (Alam, 2020). Next, I divided the roles, themes, and emerging concepts into matrices. Matric helped to discover how each participant views leadership strategies for sustaining membership in Southern Baptist Churches.

Interpreting- the data is a critical stage in data analysis. I interpreted the data using NVivo software by identifying thematic patterns. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) indicated that data interpretation could occur during compiling, disassembling, and reassembling. Yin (2018) indicated that interpreting the data requires five qualities. The qualities include (a) complete, (b) fair, (c) accurate, (d) literature value, and (e) credible from peers. Completion requires the readers to see how the data began, the middle of the data, and how the conclusion occurred. Fairness comes from if other researchers reach the same conclusions in similar research if given the same data. Accuracy is when the interpretation represents the raw data (O'Kane et al., 2021). The literature review is when similar studies add value and understanding to the current topic. For example, I compared the literature on church leaders sustaining church membership. Credibility occurs when colleagues respect the data. Cross-data analyzing the research question from multiple perspectives (data sources) may reveal a deeper understanding of the data collected (Brinch et al., 2018). The methodological triangulation reflects stakeholders'

(participants) interests, knowledge, and experiences in the subject matter. I checked the validity and understanding of the participants' opinions using previous research and opinions from the participants.

After coding and reassembling the data, I developed a thematic map for comparison. Yin (2018) indicated that developing a map will identify patterns in the data. Data analysis includes organizing data into manageable units and discovering basic patterns as relevant and shareable information (Johnson et al., 2010). In addition, data analysis intends to find fundamental themes and subthemes that enable the researcher to notice commonalities (O'Kane et al., 2021).

NVivo 12 Plus software assisted with coding and organizing the data. NVivo 12 Plus software allowed the researcher to input and store the data for coding, organizing, analyzing themes, and summarizing data (Deterding & Waters, 2021). Using software such as NVivo to code themes is another way to protect participants' confidentiality (Alam, 2020). NVivo software will assist in inputting and storing data for coding, organizing data, analyzing themes, and summarizing data collected during the interview. NVivo 11 software is beneficial for coding, organizing, analyzing, and summarizing data; therefore, I recommend this software to other researchers.

Methodological triangulation benefits researchers through increased confidence.

Triangulation involves a deeper understanding of data but is time-consuming, necessitating more significant planning and organization (Guyadeen & Seasons, 2018). I used a methodological triangulation to confirm the validity of the results. The methodological triangulation allows cross-data for consistency, adding credibility and

reducing bias. Credibility came from the interviews, employer documents, and interview transcripts.

The review of extant theoretical research in chapter 2 will guide the data analysis process. The theoretical triangulation method includes multiple theories to assist the researcher in identifying the problem by using different lenses (Flick, 2018). Before data analysis, researchers use existing theoretical insights to develop codes and themes to identify and compare data (Skjott Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Researchers must maintain flexibility to adjust their theoretical insights considering findings from the data (Baškarada & Koronios, 2018). I used the correct data techniques to maintain research integrity and reliability. I answered the research question from the NVivo data analysis and the theories of the conceptual framework.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity exemplify the accuracy and precision of a research study (Yin, 2018). Researchers ensure reliability and validity by applying specific qualitative case study design measures. Validity refers to the integrity and application of the methods to ensure the accuracy of the findings. Reliability includes consistency within the employed analytical procedures (Kim et al., 2017). When the reliability and validity of findings are correct, the interpretation of the data can appear easier to understand. Researchers indicated that reliability and validity involve dependability, consistency, and repeatability (Johnson et al., 2020). Therefore, methodological triangulation occurred using an iPhone interview note and member checking for validity.

Ensuring reliability and validity through data collection and analysis is rigorous and concise for the interview process. Semistructured interviews with open-ended

questions, member checking, and follow-up probing questions were necessary to support a rich and descriptive information interchange between the participants and me. In addition, I documented each participant's statement. Researchers often consider trustworthiness the equivalence of reliability and validity for qualitative studies (Mays & Pope, 2020; Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). Four specific measures are associated with trustworthiness: dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Cypress, 2017). Trustworthiness is vital in a qualitative study, which involves confidence according to the study's rigor, for example, credibility. Evidence ensures the study's findings are persistent and replicable, for example, dependability. The validity of this study came from the participants' responses to transfer the findings from one context (Johnson et al., 2020; Urban & Van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018).

Dependability

Dependability is a measure of reliability. Dependability indicates the transparency and consistency of the research procedures (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). Researchers who are inconsistent during the data collection and analysis processes threaten the dependability of their study. Methods to safeguard a study against methodological discrepancy include using an interview protocol, carefully documenting interviews, and keeping detailed records of all activities about coding and analysis in NVivo (Forero et al., 2018). Peer debriefing may also appear suitable, involving another party to review the emergent coding and analysis to ensure the appropriate process (Forero et al., 2018).

Credibility

Credibility is similar to internal validity, signifying that the findings indicate the participants' realities and experiences (Bonazza et al., 2017). The study included member

checking and verification of transcripts to help reduce the possibility of transcription errors. However, Howard et al. (2019) and Candela (2019) cautioned against the member checking process, noting that it might appear problematic and not add the desired amount of clarity in verifying transcriptions. Loubere (2017) claimed that the disadvantages of member checking might outweigh its benefits, particularly when participants delete or rewrite valuable data while performing member checking. In addition to member checking, I checked the transcriptions by auditing the transcriptions against the digital audio recordings for accuracy.

As Candela (2019) suggested, instituting an audit trail using track changes on the transcriptions and inserting notes when clarifying necessary changes while checking the transcriptions. As part of the audit trail, field notes immediately occurred after completing the interview. Furthermore, asking for clarification and occasionally summarizing what the participant said confirms understanding. In this process, obtaining the trust and cooperation of participants is essential. To build rapport, thanking participants for their participation before the interview is necessary. Establishing a trusting relationship with the participants may offer further explanations if misconceptions occur during the interview. Mitigating the possibility of researcher bias will include declaring and creating an awareness of the ideas or opinions (Kafaee. et al., 2021). Mitigating bias requires constantly reminding of the potential biases and minimizing the impact by maintaining a neutral position. Mitigating researcher bias can involve implementing an interview protocol (Fusch et al., 2018).

Transferability

Transferability is the qualitative equivalent of external validity or generalizability (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Researchers support transferability in qualitative research by collecting thick and rich narratives from participants and obtaining in-depth detail (Alase, 2017). Providing participants with a primary level of detail empowers them to decide on the extent to which the study findings are transferable to other contexts (i.e., similar churches in different counties or states). The results can be transferable when selecting appropriate interviewees and asking relevant interview questions, making the findings understandable and transferable for other researchers (Sundler et al., 2019).

Confirmability

The objective of confirmability is to affirm the objectivity of the findings of a research study (Urban & Van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018). As the researcher effectively operates as a data collection instrument in qualitative studies, subjectivity is present during data collection and analysis (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). Therefore, outside parties are essential in confirming the researcher's findings, which is the principle of confirmability (Amin et al., 2020). In this study, I provided detailed descriptions of the coding and analysis process to support confirmability and all thematic patterns with direct quotes from the participants to show the significant findings from the data.

Data Saturation

Coding the participants' information will appear in a secret codebook to develop themes and subthemes until saturation occurs. Then, method triangulation, member checking, content analysis, and transcript reviews for saturation are necessary. Data

saturation occurs during interviews when no added information emerges from participants (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Transition and Summary

Section 1 contains the purpose statement and provides an overview of various aspects of the study. Section 1 included the research method, design, sample, interview, and participant selection process. The data collection instruments, techniques, data analysis, and elements will ensure the reliability and validity of the study that emerged in this section. Section 2 contains narratives on the role of the researcher and a description of the researcher's experience with the research topic. Section 2 contained several other aspects of the study with an overview of the ethical considerations relevant to the interviews, consent forms, confidentiality, and policy and procedures. Section 3 provided a concise summary of the interview questions, an overview of the data collection process, an analysis of the results, and suggestions for additional research for future consideration and conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership strategies Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders use to sustain church membership. In this section, I presented, discussed, and identified themes and patterns from the data analysis. The population for this study included nine participants from three churches in the MSA of Philadelphia who have sustained church membership for 3 years or longer. The individuals in this study held specific leadership positions in the churches. The data collection instruments consisted of in-depth face-toface interviews with member checking and secondary data from documents and literature. Member checking was a verification process to ensure the information gathered from the participants was correct and the interpretation of the responses was accurate.

Additional information was used until no additional themes, patterns, or codes occurred. Next, I used Yin's (2018) five-step approach process of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding to analyze data. Finally, using the methodological triangulation of my data sources, I used NVivo software for theme identification. Five themes emerged relating to leadership strategies Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders use to sustain membership: (a) understanding the vision, (b) being relational with both members and nonmembers, (c) understanding and providing for the needs of the community, (d) following up with members and nonmembers, and (e) pastoral leadership involvement and member involvement. The findings indicate methods Southern Baptist ministers can use to sustain church membership.

Presentation of the Findings

The central research question for this study was: What leadership strategies do Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and leaders use to sustain church membership? I used Burns's (1978) transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework for the study. Burns (1978) popularized transforming leadership in a study of political leadership and used the theory to describe leaders who set clear objectives, recognize and support others, exhibit fairness and integrity, understand people's emotions, encourage followers, and inspire individuals to reach their potential. The conceptual framework aligned with existing literature and themes generated from the findings. Each theme suggests a transformational strategy church leaders can use to sustain membership.

Data were collected through interviews with nine church leaders who have successfully sustained church membership. The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes each. I also reviewed available information from church documents to gather data. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, I assigned each interviewee a pseudonym (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, and P9). The findings revealed how church leaders used strategies to sustain church membership. After 5 years, I will destroy the collected data. Until then, the information will remain secured in a locked folder on a password-protected computer. I used NVivo to supply codes and themes. Five themes emerged from the data analysis: a) understanding the vision, (b) being relational with both members and nonmembers, (c) understanding and providing for the needs of the community, (d) following up with members and nonmembers, and (e) pastoral leadership involvement and member involvement.

Table 3 includes the data gathered and the themes. The findings resulted from an analysis of related themes concerning leadership strategies used by Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders to sustain church membership. The findings of this study may include leadership strategies that church leaders could adopt to increase membership and maintain or increase revenue. The congregation represents the customers in church settings, and tithes and offerings represent the revenues.

Table 3

Frequency of Themes Regarding Strategies for Church Leaders

Theme	n	% frequency
Understanding the vision, pastoral training	44	15%
Being relational, maintaining youth membership, technology	158	54%
Understanding and providing for the needs of the community	37	13%
Following up with members and nonmembers	17	.06%
Pastoral leader involvement and member involvement	35	.12%

Theme 1: Understanding the Vision, Pastoral Training

Each participant had a unique understanding of the vision, which was the focal point of guiding church members in understanding how church activities influence church vitality. Theme 1 relates to Interview Questions 1, 2, 6, and 7.

Willigenburg (2019) described the church as being in a decline, partly because of its superior segregation levels and religious vitality decline. Church leaders must find strategies to increase church membership to prevent unaffiliated membership. The U.S. church leaders' missionary potential to introduce church members to the Christian faith lost momentum in the 21st century (Shann et al., 2019). Early missionaries established the groundwork for churches, including Southern Baptists, as a viable church movement

(Jones, 2016). The members are of various ages, and each age group adds camaraderie to the church.

Participants 1, 3, 4 and 6 suggested strategies to help members focus on the church's vision, which could help sustain membership. Each participant agreed that church projects help members become active and involved in the church's vision. Participants 2 and 3 believe encouraging church members to believe in the church's mission creates an understanding of the importance of believing in the church. Participant 2 stated, "And then that was an opportunity for me to get to know other members, understand the mission of the church, and to get more involved." Participant 3 stated, "And then I also had each ministry come up with their mission and vision statement. I took them to a course of creating their mission and vision statement based on the church's mission statement."

Referencing the literature, a decline in church membership is costly for the organization. The number of church members has decreased by 200% since 2014 (Twenge et al., 2016). Leaders in churches must invest in strategies to maintain members. Successful leaders begin by building a unifying vision. Leaders reinforce the organization's mission and purpose (Shet, 2021). Pastors create a vision of the organization's future and make sure followers understand that vision. Leadership strategies include storytelling with emotion concerning situations. Followers work toward connecting to the vision. Creating a vision includes building relationships and helps define a leader's philosophy (Priest & Jenkins, 2019).

Participants 2, 4, and 6 indicated that involving young people could bring them toward the vision and help them become closer to believing in the vision. Participant 2

stated, "A young married couple with young children, connecting them with their member so that they could feel they have a friend at church—that sort of thing." As indicated in the literature, there is a need for intergenerational relationships or mutual dependence between the young and the church. Powell et al. (2016) identified several themes related to increasing youth church membership: (a) enabling young people to lead, (b) having compassion toward young people, and (c) building a Christ (Jesus) centered community; additional themes included (d) creating a warm and welcoming church community, (d) including young people in all aspects of the church and, (e) teaching young people to live as good neighbors. Powell et al. emphasized the importance of creating a vibrant faith in Jesus through sound teaching and living Jesus's life. Powell et al. stressed that a super modern church is not what young people need. Instead, young people need personal warmth that allows them to feel welcome and safe at church and empowers them to serve in different ministries to fulfill their desires (Powell et al., 2016). Young people, however, tend to resist participation, which leads to a decline in church membership. Participant 4 stated, "And once I sit and talk to the individual, male or female, a young man, young woman, I got to give me decisiveness to do you know what kind of manager after they join the church to plug them or to challenge them."

Participant 6 noted:

> The new family was to join the church. What would draw them to this church as a family? Okay, what do we have in place for young people? What do we have in place for teenagers? What do we have to help encourage the parents? Because I did not just want to minister to the children.

Participants 1 and 6 emphasized group projects to get members more involved in the

mission. Participant 1 noted,

> And I think a big thing that I wrote was that we relied on established relationships
>
> through the small group that was moving the pastor's vision forward. We built
>
> new ones because many of us just said "hi" to or we saw in the church work
>
> peripherally with, but … we got to be connected. And what a blessing that has
>
> been. I did not want to be a blank slate. So that first question, I wrote some bullets
>
> in each of them, but absolutely prayer vision of the pastor. I wrote down small
>
> group work, and some of us are older and wiser either, so we have to not look like
>
> the world, but we need to be able not to be so pious and high and mighty that we
>
> cannot connect and invite people away from the world.

Participant 6 said,

> We must get the leadership on board. The elder's ministry and its elders to the
>
> deacons—make sure that we understand and are actively involved, getting people
>
> to understand that we, once we as leaders understood that the next thing was to
>
> take legal training, and we broke that down into groups and the training and a
>
> transformation of the church.

Participant 7 indicated that continuous focus on the vision would help keep church

members engaged, creating vitality in the church. Religious vitality refers to church

members' participation levels in church activities (Kühle & Hoverd, 2018). The religious

vitality construct refers to realized joy and life obtained by connecting God, people, and

the community (Kühle & Hoverd, 2018). Jones (2016) defined the construct as expressing

an individual's relationship with God. A church with high vitality can facilitate the

spiritual maturity of its members by making them possess clear visions and interests for their future (Herrington et al., 2020). A loss of vitality is evidence of decreased community activities. Decreased interest and participation in ministries and the lack of outward community focus in the church leads to a loss of vitality (Rainer, 2014). These factors align with religious vitality because church leaders can create community outreach programs while teaching spiritual leadership. A decline in membership requires strategies associated with growth in vitality and enhancement of leadership effectiveness (Ehrkamp & Nagel, 2017; Gill, 2017).

In this study, I found that participants possessed the characteristics of transformational leaders. Legood et al. (2021) indicated that transformational leadership is associated with confidence. Trust is an excellent transformational leadership strategy because it inspires followers to believe in a vision. Pastors can use transformational leadership to encourage their members to believe in their vision. Transformational leadership has elements of a motivating source for pastors.

Theme 2: Being Relational, Maintaining Youth Membership, Technology

Interview Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 correspond with Theme 2. Participants 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8 agreed that forming relationships with members and nonmembers of the church is a strategy to motivate and sustain membership.

Table 4

Frequency of themes 2 regarding strategies for Church Leaders

Theme 2	*n*	*% Frequency*
Being Relational	28	15%

| Maintaining youth membership | 44 | 29% |
| Technology | 65 | 41% |

Note. n=frequency

The participants used the words *relational* and *relationship* interchangeably. Researchers may report signs of decay and little hope for church survival because the church is not a human-made institution (Abernethy et al., 2016). Participant 1 indicated that connecting with leadership is about relationships. Participant 2 noted:

Engage members and project participation to stimulate relationship building is a crucial example and create opportunities for relationship building through small groups, such as Bible study and discipleship. A few things are our relationships with building relationships with people at the church project and working on various projects.

Participant 4 stated,

You got to get people to have confidence in you and trust you. And that relationship you got—you got to build that relationship, and you got it. You got to. The cliché is that you got to catch the fish before you clean the fish.

Participant 4 stated that members must have a relationship with Jesus:

Do you have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you know who he is in, not just having a hit knowledge, but a heart knowledge? Some of the ways that we use it once, once we've talked to them, once we had some time to share with them for, say, in the words of God. If they if I can get their undivided attention,

they come and they don't come. I'll go for the next one. Again, I know everybody

that came to be with a ministry did. That can always be with us. No problem.

Church on belongs to me. Really belongs to the Lord.

Rainer (2014) described the centrality of the Great Commission in Matthew

28:19-20 in maintaining church membership. From Matthew 28:20, the church as the

body of Christ will exist until the end of the world and Jesus' second coming. In Matthew

28:19, Christians are responsible for increasing the Church's membership (Heinz, 2017).

In God's will, the church should grow, and its members should remain faithful until the

end of the world. Participants 1,5, and 6 emphasized the importance of family concerning

relations.

Participant 1 stated: "My relationships with the church members, they are an

extension of my family. My family lives in New York, so they're my family here locally.

invite to the home for a meal that's relational."

Participant 5 stated:

Well, that is when the relationship and the fellowship come in to enhance with

marriage fellowships, you can join relationship with couples and even with some

one-on-one men's fellowship just reaching out to that man. And then my wife,

Amy, reaching out to some of the women just having relationships within the

church that would gravitate and to let someone else on the outside hear about our

church and then let someone also hold on to our church as a family based church

and serving the Lord and to just like a good place to be to come and rejoice

together

Participant 6 stated: "We want to live the life relationships where we were intentional and not just knowing one another, but knowing the children, knowing the grandchildren, getting into really having a family experience of working." Participants 7 and 8 emphasized the importance of being available to members to create better relationships.

Participant 7 stated:

When using a relational approach, people need to be available for relational interaction. So, people's limited availability right to say if I reach out to someone to say, Hey, can we connect over coffee, right? It could take. You know, a month to get a date to connect with someone over coffee, so when you are building, you know, when you are approaching relationally, you need to you need to have time and availability. So that's one of the biggest challenges I think that I've encountered, I guess. Number two is also people who have not bought into the why, and so they are less inclined to accept some of the relational contact offers.

Participant 8 stated:

As a pastor of Christian Faith Fellowship, the leadership strategy that I use and it's more on a relational level. I invite the members personally, particularly during this COVID season, and the fears and phobias surrounding the legitimacy of the virus. But at the same time, it is not worse being in church because we share with people.

The church document reflected the greatest decline was during the COVID period. The participants indicated their membership decreased at least by 28 to 34%. All participants agreed that young people were the biggest decline in membership. Before the

COVID period, the churches experienced a decline in membership. Referencing the literature, Townes (2012) posited that the number of young people that have dropout has increased from 59 to 64 percent. The number of young people belonging to the nongroup increased in the same period from 16% to 23%. According to the 2015 census, young people between the ages of 18 and 29 make up 76% of the adult population in the United States (Powell et al., 2016). Three-quarters of this group professed atheism. Powell et al. (2016) discussed the idea of growing young, which indicates that young people should grow up in church and that the church leadership should alter their strategies to enable young people to feel at home and learn about a Christ-centered life. Powell et al. stressed that a super modern church is not what young people need. Instead, young people need personal warmth that allows them to feel welcome and safe at church and empowers them to serve in different ministries to fulfill their desires (Powell et al., 2016). However, young people do not want to participate, which leads to a decline in membership.

Participants 1,3,4,5,6, and 8 all agreed that technology is a way to bring members together, especially during COVID. Referencing the literature observing trends, and discussing the negative growth trends in the church, especially from a worldly perspective alone, will not fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus, documented in Matthew 28:20 (Jones, 2016). Opportunities exist to keep young people in the church. Churches do not have to look ultramodern and have technology resources to attract young people (Powell et al., 2016), and church leaders should not teach a diluted version of the Gospel. Church leaders must keep updated with modern trends but not compete with the material world because the church leaders offer Jesus. Social media is prevalent in churches to

keep members informed, enlighten new members, and facilitate group forming between ministry members (Gould, 2015).

Participants 1,5, and 6 relied on Zoom conferences to relate to members during the period of Covid.

Participant 1 stated: "We embraced, I would use the word, embraced social media, and I probably you may have heard about it, but zoom fatigue. But. We use it." Participant 5 stated:

That was a great draw, just to be able to come back together to see and no one thing was also, I say that the relationship that we have with one another, family members of church family members and even some that has come new members that I had joined due to pandemic to zoom in over others family members, they have reached out to them. So, it was just that I will say the number one thing, their relationship to able to fellowship one with another.

Participant 6 stated:

I'd say some guy has done an awesome thing through this pandemic because, like you said, it's not about the there, it's about going deeper in. And by us putting all these other things in and a period of time, we didn't have the building, but we still had the technology of Zoom. People really got into listening and studying and you can see the transformation in the body. You can see the light coming on.

Participants 1, 2, and 8 relied on social media during the COVID period. Participant 1 stated: "And that in other mediums of social media, Facebook to stay connected. "The commitment and use of social media were the strategies were the resources used to propel us forward to continue to accomplish the goals before us."

Despite using social media participant 2 indicated although using social media was a strategy a void exists because of a lack of personal connection. Referencing the literature online churches cannot provide a close unit and the interpersonal interaction characteristic of traditional churches (Hutchings, 2016).

Participant 2 stated:

I'm a people's person, and in spite of being able to stay connected through social media, I would never minimize the importance of human touch and direct communication, just interaction. So, the next best thing was what you and I are doing, and that helped tremendously. But there still was a void, so I would say just that. Lack of in-person connection.

Participant 8 stated, "the strategy that we have implemented has been through personal invites. Then we've used our social media chain as well."

Participant 3 indicated they had to form relationships with multimedia pastors to maintain relationships with members of the church. Participant 3 stated: "We wanted him to come up with a plan on how he was going to teach the church how to do evangelism, that he would have to partner with our multimedia ministry and doing evangelism outside of the walls."

Referencing the literature, millennial digital media users may use a form of electronics to attend church. This age group grew up with various forms of digital media and used them daily (Hutchings, 2016). Cyber or online churches may fulfill the needs of millennials who grew accustomed to them anytime, anywhere world of digital media. Social media is prevalent in churches to keep members informed, enlighten new members, and facilitate group forming between ministry members (Gould, 2015).

Theme 3: Understanding and Providing the Needs of the Community

Questions 2, 6, and 7 related to theme three.

Participants 1,3,4,6,8, and 9 emphasized the importance of providing for the needs of the community. Referencing the literature church vitality is essential for increasing membership. Research study results indicated that the decline in church membership created attention to church vitality, and the need for a positive connection between the church and the community (Rainer, 2014).

Table 5

Frequency of themes 3 regarding strategies for Church Leaders

Theme frequency	n	%
Understanding	12	32%
Providing the needs for the community	25	67%

 Note. n=frequency

Factors attributed to the decline in religious vitality. Church leaders should direct change gradually with community involvement and support to gain new members while maintaining and serving the current members. Powell et al. (2016) indicated creating a warm and welcoming church community is one of the themes to make young people feel welcome. According to recent studies, church leaders perform critical roles in their services to church members or followers in their care of people living in communities all over the world and in bringing justice to people (Akanbi & Beyers, 2017).

Participant 2 stated: "And so strategies we use as community evangelism, relational evangelism being present in the community, meeting individuals where they are, where they're at."

Participant 3 stated:

Discipleship is about transformation. Yes, membership of an organization, particularly philanthropic organizations, and nonprofits. Yes, it's about to help the community. Another strategy was prayer walks through the community. And we also have outdoor revivals at our church there every other year. And we also, with the help of Pennsylvania bring we would have churches from across the country who would come in and do mission trips in the city, and we would utilize them going into the community and block parties.

Participant 4 stated:", you got to know the demographic of your community, of your church. Once you learned the demographic of your church, then you can best fit yourself into the community."

Participant 6: "That's the one thing that you don't want to lose. You may have experienced it when you guys went. Then there's this sense of community."

Participant 8 stated: "So I had to start taking Deacon preachers on the steps of engaging in people, develop a relationship, visiting people in the community."

Participant 9 stated:

And then outside of that would be extracurricular activities, such as an event in the park to invite the community, barbecues, men, fellowship, ladies' fellowships, those events to help encourage attendance and or commitment. Or church intent or church membership? . One of the things they talked about was reaching the

community, having things in the community for a non-member to be attractive or having a ministry and having a ministry that would be apropos.

Referencing the conceptual framework, researchers explored the role of transformational leadership theory in churches in peer-reviewed studies and dissertations (Ortiz, 2015; Williams, 2014). For example, Ortiz (2015) claimed that transformational leadership theory could transform membership enthusiasm. Ortiz considered Abraham a transformational leader because of his ability to create a vision, possession of courage and confidence, capacity to care about people, and an intense sense of justice.

Theme 4: Following Up With Members and Non-Members

Questions 2,3,4,5,6, and 7 corresponded to theme 4.

Participants 1,2,4,6, and 9 used the strategy of following up with members and non-members to motivate and sustain membership. Referencing the literature, church leaders are experiencing a decline in denominational families, including Methodist, Lutheran, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians. The problem that church leaders experience is the disconnect of the followers. Church leaders must find a way to motivate their members toward increasing church membership. Cornette (2017) proposed practical organizational steps to increase and maintain church membership that includes motivating members to invite guests to the church and following up with each guest through the organizational structures of the church.

Table 6

Frequency of theme 4 regarding strategies for Church Leaders

Theme	n	% frequency
	17	.06%

Following up members -nonmembers

Note. n=frequency

Biblically based information can motivate members to provide sufficient opportunities to commit to the church. In developing the church into a close-knit unit, in which members feel they belong, the different church leaders must inform the church members about the new members and integrate new members into a Bible study unit where they can grow spiritually and socially (Cornette, 2017).

Participant 1 indicated that calling people back and apologizing is a way of following up with members and non-members. Participant 2 emphasized the need of being consistent is a part of following up with members. Participant 2 stated:

one of the things that Pastor encourages is consistency like people are going to look to see, OK, you read nice to me this time or are you going to be consistent in terms of how you engage and interact the follow ups and make sure that if you reach out to someone once a week that you keep that up? And then for the individual, you know, you never know what someone is struggling with. So, by us being consistent, they know, like if they're going to something, if you're still interacting with them, that same, having the compassion for them being key.

Participant 4 believed in giving members a call as a measure of showing concern and care. Participant 4 stated: "some of the things to get the hold in there, continue loving people, be concerned about them, calling them, getting to know them without it, without violating their identity, or that their individuality."

Participants 6, and 9 indicated that forming meetings was a way of following up with members. Participant 6 stated:

My treat means you're going to have a fellowship at the restaurant or me, you, and another member that we're comfortable with. We're going to meet at a restaurant, and we just want to just follow suit. We'll share scripture. We're going to pray. So, getting people to let go has hurt past this understanding.

Participant 9 stated:
So, we have a quarterly meeting with the Deacons, so it's a small group assessment and follow up. So, we're staying on top of deacons, making sure that they are following up with the members and their particular group or ministry group. Deacons essentially follow up with phone calls and or personal in-person meetings with as many members that are within their alphabetical groups.

Theme 5: Pastoral Leader Involvement and Member Involvement

Questions 3,4,5, and 7 corresponded to theme five. All participants agree that pastors must become involved as well as the member as a leadership strategy to sustain membership. Leadership strategies include getting all members on board, focusing on results, building innovation, and leading by example Leaders use strategies to gain trust and inspire followers to believe in the organization's future. The transformational leadership theories have characteristics that pastors can use as practical strategies to help curtail the decline in church membership.

Table 7

Frequency of theme 5 regarding strategies for Church Leaders

Theme frequency	*n*	*%*
Pastoral Leader Involvement and Member Involvement	35	.12%

Note. n=frequency

The participants stressed the importance of becoming involved with the members and guiding the members towards Christianity. Participant 6 indicated the importance of the pastors and members becoming involved. Participants 1 and 8, and 9 felt responsible for the church members. Participant 1 stated: "it's important for shepherds to take care of their flock. Right? But to go out and find those lost sheep is also our responsibility. And we're all ministers in our own way." Participant 8 stated: "So leaders and their responsibility is to check on the members and see how people are doing and asking what their prayer needs are and how the church can pray for them."

Participant 9 stated:

I believe it's me personally is as far as I'm concerned, are people looking at me and if I were to pastor is my personal walk, my personal life, my personal integrity because people see that. Mm hmm. And you know, people as they say, they want to follow. They want to follow the leader. They want a body they can trust. They want a body they can admire and be hooked up to that type of individual or that type of cap. So, I hate to put responsibility on a one person or two or three people for the whole church, but I think that's significant is our character and leadership.

Participants 2, 3, and 5 emphasized the importance of the pastor's role in the church. Participant 2 stated: "we stay focused on under the leadership of our pastor and let him know what was going on."

Participant 3 stated:

"You know what is, you know, I very much believe that members modeled behavior that they see, right? So, you're being treated a certain way." Referencing the literature, A pastor is a leader, a planner, and a decision-maker who works toward growing and sustaining membership. According to Carter (2009), pastors have multiple roles, although they are responsible for developing the church as an organization. The pastors function as administrators, counselors, resource managers, fundraisers, and shepherds (Carter, 2009). Participants 2, 3, and 4 emphasized the importance for pastors to go through training to become the best leader, therefore, they can better lead the members. Participant 3 trained other pastors to teach them how to lead. Participant 3 stated: "Now that was the strategy of using Jesus model, where he trained a small group who then will go out and train another group".

Participant 4 stated:

One of the most important things I had to educate by the grace of God, educate myself. I had to go back to school and get more biblical knowledge and the street knowledge. And growing up in history, I had to straighten out. I had to get biblical knowledge and study. The God's word had to get discernment of the spirit of God. How you motivate people to stay in the church.

Referencing the literature, Ingram (1981) outlined the standard hiring process for Southern Baptist pastors. Formalized and accepted denominational processes for becoming a pastor in a church are essential, including in Southern Baptist churches, where the absence of formal processes acts as a barrier to appointing suitable pastors. The success and growth of the church are dependent on the success of the pastor (Gregory, 2020). The selection process for pastors is usually like the hiring process in business organizations in secular settings. Congregations select candidates based on the candidates' trial sermon and make little or no effort to determine their leadership abilities (Wollschleger, 2018).

The conceptual framework is a guide to the characteristics of the participants. Outreach programs are potential solutions for pastors practicing transformational leadership in the church. Williams (2014) indicated that providing more outreach programs could align with training, recruiting, and supervising potential pastors. Transformational leaders know that transformation begins with the person or individual; therefore, they pay specific attention to motivating a person to change (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). This characteristic aligns with the perception that pastors constantly need people to connect while maintaining strong ties to the church. Moreover, many pastors believe people should invest through teachings and training, aligning with how transformational leaders invest in their followers (Mittal & Dhar, 2015).

Participants 6 and 7 emphasized the importance of members and the pastor becoming involved in the church activities.

Participant 7 stated:

You know, give some more insight into who I am as a leader, who I am as a

person, right? And so it is personal, is relational. And so I just shift context from a

ship context from the primary context where the gathering takes place to a

secondary context. Like I was explaining earlier secondary context where the

individuals are now, membership may already be, you know, engaging socially.

So I shift into a sort to the social context that is apart from the membership

context.

The participants related to the conceptual framework, transformational leadership.

The participants possessed the qualities of transformational leaders. Some church leaders

may use the transformational leadership style to maintain and attract church members.

Ortiz (2015) asserted that transformational leaders are one of the reasons some church

leaders can maintain the number of their congregations. In contrast, in a study of the

relationship between transformational church leadership and church growth, Brooks

(2018) found no significant relationship between church growth or non-growth and

transformational leadership style. Church leaders used transformational leadership to

guide themselves toward ethical reasoning and actions.

Additionally, church leaders inspire congregations and give them the hope of

religion they seek. Leaders functioned as role models for those in their congregation who

wanted to occupy different leadership positions in churches (Ortiz, 2015; Scuderi, 2014).

Church leaders who practice transformational leadership may help bring in more

members, increasing membership.

Scuderi (2014) noted that leaders' application of transformational leadership

theory increased church revenues through offerings and other church initiatives to boost

income bases. Scuderi researched the nature, use, and effects of transformational leadership. Williams (2014) researched how pastors serving congregations of 1,000 people or more learned and applied transformational leadership qualities from biblical scriptures to influence their leadership. Williams explored general data, such as pastors' moral actions, courage, motivation, practical problem-solving, and decision-making skills. The participants quoted the bible in their conversations. The participants included the strategies of leading the members towards the vision of the church mission, forming relationships with members and non-members, reaching out to the community, and becoming involved with members of the church. Again, the participants quoted the bible in their conversations. Researchers explored the incidences of transformational leadership concerning biblical scriptures.

Applications to Professional Practice

Sustaining church membership remains a struggle for church leaders and an ongoing conversation among church leaders. Identifying strategies is an ongoing concern in religious research. The findings in this study could support individuals, businesses, and social groups within the religious community. The community can increase integrity and morality through educational, civic, and social involvement. Church leaders may use the study findings to efficiently apply management skills by adopting revenue retention strategies to steer church activities and overcome challenges.

The findings aligned with the conceptual framework of the transformational leadership theory. The transformational theory includes the premise that leaders are in charge; however, they motivate and change the followers while the followers are partners with the leaders (Burn, 1978). Burns (1978) emphasized the mutual relationship between

leaders and followers and highlighted two significant leadership processes: transactional and transforming. Transactional leaders meet the needs and interests of their followers in separate ways from transformational leadership, including exchanging interests.

Transactional leaders benefit followers in exchange for commitment and loyalty (Burn, 1978). In a transforming leadership process, Burns (1978) defined the leader and the follower as boosting or raising each other to higher levels of motivation and morality. Leaders and followers do not share equal responsibility or status, despite the empowering nature of the leadership process. The transformational leader includes characteristics church leaders can follow. The leader remains in charge, motivating and changing the followers while the followers are partners with the leaders. Leaders are not to manipulate followers (Bass, 1985).

The leaders treat followers with attention to their mutual intent to achieve organizational goals (Burn, 1978). Burns (1978) defined transforming leadership as leaders making positive changes by transforming how people think at work. Burns stressed that transformational leadership includes reaching out to followers by aligning them in creating change by influencing their thoughts and actions. The critical social change from this study may include improvements in individuals' lives, families, communities, and the country. In addition, the study findings may have significance to other churches because church leaders might apply the study findings and recommendations on leadership strategies to improve attendance, leading to more contributions to the church. Regarding performance, the findings can be helpful in the implementation and execution of a ministry which affects the community.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this study may include leadership strategies that church leaders can adopt to increase the number of their memberships and maintain or increase their revenue. The congregation represents the customers in church settings, and tithes and offerings represent the revenues. Therefore, church leaders must ensure they prioritize members before the interests of other existing or potential stakeholders so the congregation retains revenues generated from direct operations with customers. The process will also increase in-person interactions catered to the individual members. Church leaders who apply the findings of this research may maintain their membership and strengthen their organization's financial position. Business leaders build trust to increase their customer bases, increasing revenue; church leaders could implement similar strategies to build and maintain church membership.

The findings from this study may include strategies for church leaders to retain parishioners and generate revenues by attracting and retaining members. The financial stability of the churches under study may further enable the leaders to contribute to social change by executing social actions comparable to businesses' corporate social responsibility. The social actions of churches are a tool to develop goodwill among community members to increase membership. In biblical terms, the church is responsible for its members and the community to relieve their affliction and support them in all their needs (Fung et al., 2021). Therefore, the community may enjoy the societal benefits the churches can provide.

Recommendations for Further Research

I researched successful strategies to explore leadership strategies of Southern Baptist senior pastors, metropolitan statistical area (MSA), who have sustained membership from January 2016 to January 2019. Recommendations on stainability strategies for church leaders emerged from the results of this study. The findings of this study may contribute to the growth and sustainability of religious organizations.

Leadership strategies are essential when sustaining membership in the church. Strategy is an old concept that began with the Greek people in 508 BC (Krasilnikoff & Angelakis, 2019). Strategy is a continuous and creative adaptive process (Ober, 2018). The study results can shape the future and is a means to an end people desire. The origin of strategy is from the Greek culture. Ten generals used strategy for war principles leading to effective leadership and clear objectives.

The strategy has a history in ancient Asia. The Asian leader Sun Tzu authored Art of War in 200 BC. Tzu's book has principles for leadership strategies (Ober, 2018). The principles included goals that leaders could follow to win. Modern executives and consultants still use the principles. The principles used are creating, implementing, and executing leadership strategies that are the leadership team's responsibility (Norenberg, 2020). While many activities exist that leadership teams can delegate to others, strategy is not one of them. The research finding could prove valuable for others, besides church leaders and other leaders in the Christian faith, as s model for business sustainability. The study results will be distributed at leadership conferences, journals, and among Christian leaders at routine meetings.

Reflections

I am grateful for having the opportunity to enter the Doctoral Business Administration degree with a concentration in Leadership. As I reflect on this study, I am thankful for having the chance to complete such a tremendous task. Working on the DBA degree has been a bittersweet experience. I will always be indebted to those who have helped me, encouraged me, and prayed for me to stay focused.

I chose to study leadership strategies to sustain church membership. The number of Americans having never attended church services increased by 200% from 2006 to 2014 (Twenge et al., 2016). In identifying the specific business problem, some Southern Baptist senior pastors, ministerial staff, and ministry leaders lack effective leadership strategies to sustain membership, as I analyzed the study results without biased perceptions about church maintaining members.

I explored the results of the data to understand church leadership strategies without prejudice and desired to understand the data in a translucent manner. I work in the industry and conduct research interviews with participants with no expectations or bias on how they answered the interview questions. I plan to share this study's results with other senior pastors and churches to help and assist them in the strategies to sustain their membership.

These pastors and leaders could use the recommendations from the results of this study to enhance membership sustainability. In addition, I expect that sharing this study's results may benefit other churches seeking leadership strategies to increase their profit and sustain their membership growth. Finally, as I have associations with local churches,

conferences and associations, and other professional groups, I will present the findings to them for consideration.

Obtaining additional educational degrees in business and church ministry experience will help prepare me for lecturing, sharing, and communicating the positive strategies for sustaining church membership. Since starting this doctoral journey, my life changed drastically in many ways. The experience in this program began in 2009 with some roadblocks. These roadblocks caused me to want to walk away from moving forward. In addition, I went through some physical challenges that forced me to leave the program for several years. However, I chose not to leave, but to dedicate myself to moving forward and completing the research. I developed professionally, spiritually, and academically through the challenges and rewards of a DBA program. I am thankful for the guidance and mentorship of several Walden University faculty, especially my department chair, and I received encouragement and inspiration from many Walden colleagues that I now call a friend.

Conclusion

Church leaders lack strategies to sustain membership. The findings from this study may include strategies for church leaders to retain parishioners and generate revenues by attracting and retaining members. The financial stability of the church's understudy may further enable the leaders to contribute to social change by executing social actions comparable to businesses' corporate social responsibility. Church membership has declined, with the number of Americans identifying themselves as having no religious affiliation increasing 300% between 1978 and 2018.

The number of Americans that never attend church services increased by 200% from 2006 to 2014 (Twenge et al., 2016). This study focused on Southern Baptist churches in Philadelphia's metropolitan statistical area (MSA) that sustained membership from January 2016 to January 2019. The participants proclaim that the youth is the largest group to decline in membership. Some researchers studied why church membership declines, and others focused on developing and maintaining the interest of the youth in attending and participating in church activities (Pew Research Center, 2015). The findings of this study revealed that successful church leaders use strategies to sustain church membership. The strategies identified were some of the leadership qualities portrayed by transformational leaders. The leaders treat followers with attention to their mutual intent to achieve organizational goals. Burns (1978) defined transforming leadership as leaders making positive changes by transforming how people think at work. Burns stressed that transformational leadership includes reaching out to followers by aligning them in creating change by influencing their thoughts and actions. This study's findings may contribute to revealing that successful church leaders use strategies to sustain church membership. The strategies identified were some of the leadership qualities portrayed by transformational leaders. The leaders treat followers with attention to their mutual intent to achieve organizational goals. Burns (1978) defined transforming leadership as leaders making positive changes by transforming how people think at work. Burns stressed that transformational leadership includes reaching out to followers by aligning them in creating change by influencing their thoughts and actions. The findings of this study may contribute to the growth and sustainability of religious organizations.

References

Abernethy, A. D., Grannum, G. D., Gordon, C. L., Williamson, R., & Currier, J. M.

(2016). The pastors' empowerment program: A resilience education intervention

to prevent clergy burnout. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice, 3*(3), 175–186.

https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000109

Adams, C. J., Hough, H., Proeschold-Bell, R. J., Yao, J., & Kolkin, M. (2017). Clergy

burnout: A comparison study with other helping professions. *Pastoral*

Psychology, 66(2), 147–175. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-016-0722-4

Adhabi, E., & Anozie, C. B. (2017). Literature review for the type of interview in

qualitative research. *International Journal of Education, 9*(3), 86–97.

https://doi.org/10.5296/ije.v9i3.11483

Akanbi, S. O., & Beyers, J. (2017). The church as a catalyst for transformation in the

society. *HTS Theological Studies, 73*(4), 1–8.

https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4635

Akkaya, B. (2020). Review of leadership styles in perspective of dynamic capabilities:

Empirical research on managers in manufacturing firms. *Yönetim Bilimleri*

Dergisi, 18(36), 389–407. https://doi.org/10.35408/comuybd.681427

Alam, M. (2020). A systematic qualitative case study: Questions, data collection, NVivo

analysis, and saturation. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management:*

An International Journal, 16(1), 1–31. https://doi.org/10.1108/QROM-09-2019-

1825

Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A guide to a good
qualitative research approach. *International Journal of Education and Literacy*

Studies, 5(2), 9–19. http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.5n.2p.9

Alegbeleye, I. D., & Kaufman, E. K. (2020). Relationship between middle managers'

transformational leadership and effective followership behaviors in organizations.

Journal of Leadership Studies, 13(4), 6–19. https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.21673

Alsayed, A. K., Motaghi, H. M., & Osman, B. (2013). The use of the multifactor

leadership questionnaire and communication satisfaction questionnaire in

Palestine: A research note. *International Journal of Scientific and Research*

Publications, 2(11), 2–9. http://doi.org/10.1.1.299.4342

Amin, M. E. K., Nørgaard, L. S., Cavaco, A. M., Witry, M. J., Hillman, L., Cernasev, A.,

& Desselle, S. P. (2020). Establishing trustworthiness and authenticity in

qualitative pharmacy research. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy,*

16(10), 1472–1482. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2020.02.005

Ansoff, H. I. (1964). A quasi-analytic approach to the business strategy problem.

Management Science, 4(1), 67–77. https://doi.org/10.1287/mantech.4.1.67

Antonakis, J., & House, R. J. (2013). Addendum: A re-analysis of the full-range

leadership theory: The way forward. In B. J. Avolio & F. J. Yammarino (Eds.),

Transformational and charismatic leadership: The road ahead 10th-anniversary

5(2), 35–37. http://doi.org/10.1108/s1479357120130000005007

Asbari, M., Santoso, P. B., & Prasetya, A. B. (2020). Elitical and antidemocratic

transformational leadership critics: Is it still relevant? (A Literature Study).

International Journal of Social, Policy and Law, 1(1), 12–16.
https://doi.org/10.8888/ijospl.v1i1.10

Ashour, M. L. (2018). Schools thought of competitive advantage. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention, 7*(2), 1–7.www.ijbmi.org

Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What is qualitative in qualitative research. *Qualitative Sociology, 42*(2), 139–160. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7

Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. (2013). *Multifactor leadership questionnaire*. Academic Solutions.

Baah, D. K. (2015). Resilient leadership: A transformational-transactional leadership mix. *Journal of Global Responsibility, 6*(1), 99–112. http://doi.org/10.1108/JGR-07-2014- 0026

Barends, E., Littell, J. H., & Rousseau, D. M. (2021). Priming the pump at the Campbell Business and Management Coordinating Group. *Campbell Systematic Reviews, 17*(1), e1147. https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1147

Barna Group. (2009, December 7). Report examines the state of mainline protestant churches. *Leaders & Pastors*. https://www.barna.com/research/report-examinesthe-state-of-mainline-protestant-churches/

Barnett, D. (2017). Leadership and job satisfaction: Adjunct faculty at a for-profit university. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies, 4*(3), 53–63. https://doi.org/10.17220/ijpes.2017.03.006

Barnham, C. (2015). Quantitative and qualitative research: Perceptual foundations. *International Journal of Market Research, 57*(6), 837–854. https://doi.org/10.2501/IJMR-2015-070

Baškarada, S., & Koronios, A. (2018). "The 5S organizational agility framework: A dynamic capabilities perspective, International Journal of Organizational

Analysis, 26(2), 331-342. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-05-2017-1163

Baškarada, S., Watson, J., & Cromarty, J. (2017). Balancing transactional and

transformational leadership, International Journal of Organizational Analysis,

25(3), 506-515. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-02-2016-0978

Bass, B. M. (1985). Leadership and performance beyond expectations. Collier

Macmillan.

Bass, B. M. (2005). Transformational leadership. Psychology Press.

Bass, B. M., & Bass, R. (2009). The Bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and

managerial applications. Simon and Schuster.

Bell, E., Bryman, A., & Harley, B. (2018). Business research methods. Oxford University

Press.

Bergen, N., & Labonté, R. (2020). Everything is perfect, and we have no problems:

Detecting and limiting social desirability bias in qualitative research. Qualitative

Health Research, 30(5), 783–792. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732319889354

Bligh, M. C., Kohles, J. C., & Yan, Q. (2018). Leading and learning to change: the role of

leadership style and mindset in error learning and organizational change. Journal

of Change Management, 18(2), 116-141.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2018.1446693

Blomberg, J., Giacomi, J., Mosher, A., & Swenton-Wall, P. (2017). Ethnographic field

methods and their relation to design. In Participatory design (pp. 123-155). CRC

Press.

Bloomfield, J., & Fisher, M. J. (2019). Quantitative research design. Journal of the

Australasian Rehabilitation Nurses Association, 22(2), 27–30.

https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.738299924514584

Boerl, C. W. (2014). The death and resurrection of the American religious marketplace. International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church, 14(1), 260-276. http://doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2014.900254

Bonazza, N. A., Smuin, D., Onks, C. A., Silvis, M. L., & Dhawan, A. (2017). Reliability, validity, and injury predictive value of the functional movement screen: systematic review and meta-analysis. The American journal of sports medicine, 45(3), 725-732. https://doi.org/10.1177/0363546516641937

Brannen, J. (Ed.). (2017). Mixing methods: Qualitative and quantitative research. Routled

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). To saturate or not to saturate. Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. Qualitative research in sport, exercise, and health, 13(2), 201-216. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1704846

Brayda, W. C., & Boyce, T. D. (2014). So, you really want to interview me? Navigating "sensitive" qualitative research interviewing. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 13(1), 318-334. http://doi.org/10.1177/160940691401300115

Breevaart, K., Bakker, A., Hetland, J., Demerouti, E., Olsen, O. K., & Espevik, R. (2014). Daily transactional and transformational leadership and daily employee engagement. Journal Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 87(1), 138-157. http://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12041

Brinch, M., Stentoft, J., Jensen, J. K., & Rajkumar, C. (2018). Practitioners understanding of big data and its applications in supply chain management, The International Journal of Logistics Management, 29(2), 555-574. doi.org/10.1108/IJLM-05-

2017-0115

Brooks, R. A. (2018). The relationship between transformational leadership practices of

pastors and church growth in Assembly of God Churches in Tennessee.

(Publication no. 10828007) [Doctoral dissertation, Northcentral University].

ProQuest Dissertations.

Brown, A., & Danaher, P. A. (2019). CHE principles: Facilitating authentic and

dialogical semi-structured interviews in educational research. International

Journal of Research & Method in Education, 42(1), 76-90.

https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2017.1379987

Burns, J. M. (1978). Leadership. Harper & Row.

Campbell, R. D., & Winchester, M. R. (2020). Let the church say; One congregation's

views on how the black church can address mental health with Black Americans.

Social Work & Christianity, 47(2), 105-122. http://doi: 10.34043/swc.v47i2.63

Candela, A. G. (2019). Exploring the function of member checking. The Qualitative

Report, 24(3), 619-628. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-

journals/exploringfunction- member-checking/docview/2213787326/se-

2?accountid=14872

Carter, K. (2009). My continuing education as a pastor. Clergy Journal, 85(3), 18-19.

http://www.worldcat.org

Castleberry, A., & Nolen, A. (2018). Thematic analysis of qualitative research data: is it

as easy as it sounds? Currents in pharmacy teaching and learning, 10(6), 807-815.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2018.03.019

Chan, K. W. C. (2021). Servant leadership optimal experience and meaningful life.

Servant Leadership: Theory and Practice, 8(1), 47–58.

https://csuepress.columbusstate.edu/sltp/vol8/iss1/4

ChanSovacool, B. K., Axsen, J., & Sorrell, S. (2018). Promoting novelty, rigor, and style

in energy social science: Towards codes of practice for appropriate methods and

research design. Energy Research & Social Science, 45, 12-42

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2018.07.007

Chatira, F., & Mwenje, J. (2018). The development of management skills for effective

church management in pastoral preparation programs in Zimbabwe. African

Journal of Business Management, 12(5), 103-120.

https://doi.org/10.5897/AJBM2018.8500

Cheong, P. H. (2017). The vitality of new media and religion: Communicative

perspectives, practices, and changing authority in spiritual organization. New

Media & Society, 19(1), 25-33. http://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816649913

Chopra, V. (2020). Focused ethnography: a new tool to study diagnostic errors?

Diagnosis, 7(3), 211-214. https://doi.org/10.1515/dx-2020-0009

Christopherson, J. B. (2014). The role of transformational leadership in the revitalization

of plateaued and declining churches. (Publication No. 3617036) [Doctoral

dissertation, The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary].

Coleman, D. (2004). Leadership that gets results. Harvard Business Press.

Cornette, C. S. (2017). Five practical steps for increasing church membership: A case

study of First Baptist Church of Venice, Florida. (Publication no. 10265106)

[Doctoral dissertation, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary]. ProQuest

Dissertations.

Cote, R. (2017). Vision of effective leadership. International Journal of Business

    Administration, 8(6), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijba.v8n6p1

Coulentianos, M., Rodriguez-Calero, I., Daly, S., Burridge, J., & Sienko, K. (2019).

    Medical device design practitioner strategies for prototype-centered front-end

    design stakeholder engagements in low-resource settings. Proceedings of the

    Design Society: International Conference on Engineering Design, 1(1), 957-964.

    http://doi:10.1017/dsi.2019.101

Crane, S., & Broome, M. E. (2017). Understanding ethical issues of research participation

    from the perspective of participating children and adolescents: A systematic

    review. World Views on Evidence-Based Nursing, 14(30), 200-209.

    http://doi.org/10.1111/wvn.12209

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing

    among five approaches. Sage.

Cypress, B. S. (2017). Rigor or reliability and validity in qualitative research:

    Perspectives, strategies, reconceptualization, and recommendations. Dimensions

    of critical care nursing, 36(4), 253-263. doi: 10.1097/DCC.0000000000000253

Danielson, M. D. (2017). A correlation quantitative study of servant leadership practices

and pastoral engagement in evangelical churches in Montana. (Publication no. 10682914)

[Doctoral dissertation, Lancaster Bible College—Capital Seminary ProQuest Dissertations

database.

Darwish, T. K., Zeng, J., Rezaei Zadeh, M., & Haak☐Saheem, W. (2020).

    learning of absorptive capacity and innovation: does leadership matter? European

    Management Review, 17(1), 83-100. https://doi.org/10.1111/emre.12320.

DeJonckheere, M., & Vaughn, L. M. (2019). Semistructured interviewing in primary care research: a balance of relationship and rigour. Family medicine and community health, 7(2), e000057. https://doi.org/10.1136/fmch-2018-000057

Deterding, N. M., & Waters, M. C. (2021). Flexible Coding of In-depth Interviews: A Twenty-first-century Approach. Sociological Methods & Research, 50(2), 708–739. https://doi.org/10.1177/004912411879937

Downton, J. V. (1973). Rebel leadership: Commitment and charisma in the revolutionary process. Free Press.

Drury, S. (2003). Handbook of leadership theory for church leaders. Regent University. Durodola, O. O., Fusch, P., & Tippins, S. (2017). A case-study of financial literacy and well-being of immigrants in Lloydminster, Canada. International Journal of Business and Management, 12(8), 37-50. http://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v12n8p37

Dworkin, S. L. (2012). Sample size policy for qualitative studies using in-depth interviews. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 41(6), 1319-1320. http://doi.org/10.1007/S10508-012-0016-6

Dyson, C. A. (2021). Exploring African American Christian Millennials' Subjective Well- Being and Attitudes toward Religiosity (Order No. 28721335). Available from ProQuest One Academic. (2579549128). https://www.proquest.com/dissertations- theses/exploring-african-americanchristian-millennials/docview/2579549128/se- 2?accountid=14872

Ehrkamp, P., & Nagel, C. (2017). Policing the borders of church and societal membership: Immigration and faith-based communities in the US South.

Territory, Politics, Governance, 5(3), 318-331.

http://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2017.1290545

Elkington, R., Pearse, N. J., Moss, J., Van der Steege, M., & Martin, S. (2017). Global

leaders' perceptions of elements required for effective leadership development in

the twenty-first century, Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 38(8).

1038- 1056. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-06-2016-0145

Elliott, V. (2018). Thinking about the coding process in qualitative data analysis. The

Qualitative Report, 23(11), 2850-2861.

https://www.proquest.com/scholarlyjournals/thinking-about-coding-process-

qualitative-data/docview/2155621346/se-

2?accountid=14872

Flick, U. (2018). Triangulation in data collection. In The sage handbook of qualitative

data collection (pp. 527-544). SAGE Publications Ltd,

https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526416070

Foohey, P. (2014). When churches reorganize. American Bankruptcy Law Journal, 88(3),

277-306. https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu

Forero, R., Nahidi S, De Costa J, Mohsin M, Fitzgerald G, Gibson N, McCarthy S,

Aboagye- Sarfo P. (2018) Application of four-dimension criteria to assess rigour

of qualitative research in emergency medicine. BMC Health Serv Res 18(1),

111120. doi: 10.1186/s12913-018-2915-2.

Fountaine, T., McCarthy, B., & Saleh, T. (2019). Building the AI-powered organization.

Harvard Business Review, 97(4), 62-73. Hbr.org

Fowler, D., Musgrave, J., & Musgrave, J. (2020). A traditional protestant church experiencing substantial membership decline: An organizational strength analysis and observations to attend or leave the institution. International Journal of Organization Theory & Behavior, 23(3), 207-223. http://doi.org/10.1108/IJOTB-02-2019-0012

Franck, R., & Iannaccone, L. (2014). Religious decline in the 20th century west: Testing alternative explanations. Public Choice, 159(3-4), 385-414. http://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-013-0103-9

Fung, W. L. A., Mirhom, M., Okamoto, T., & Shepherd, V. A. (2021). Principles and practice in educating Christians about mental health: A primer. In: Peteet J. R., Moffic H. S., Hankir A., & Koenig H. G. (eds). Christianity and Psychiatry. http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-80854-9_16

Furman, K., Venable, J. A., Mae, L. K. L., Whitebear, L., & Lambert, R. J. (2021). Women in the religions of North America. Women and Religion: Global Lives in Focus, 1.

Fusch, P., Fusch, G. E., & Ness, L. R. (2018). Denzin's paradigm shift: Revisiting triangulation in qualitative research. Journal of Social Change, 10(1), 19-32. http://doi.org/10.5590/JOSC.2018.10.1.02

Galdas, P. (2017). Revisiting bias in qualitative research: Reflections on its relationship with funding and impact. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16(1), 1-2 https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917748992

Gardner, W. L., Karam, E. P., Alvesson, M., & Einola, K. (2021). Authentic leadership theory: The case for and against. The Leadership Quarterly, 32(6),101495.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2021.101495

Gautam, A., & Enslin, E. (2019). Transformational leadership and work engagement in the automotive retail industry: A study of South Africa. International Business Research, 12(5), 133-141. https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v12n5p133

Gill, R. (2017). The 'empty' church revisited (Explorations in practical, pastoral, and empirical theology). Routledge.

Gill, R. (2018). The 'empty' church revisited. Routledge.

Gould, M. (2015). The social media gospel: Sharing the good news in new ways. Liturgical Press.

Grandy, G. (2013). An explanatory study of strategic leadership in churches. Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 34(7), 616-638. http://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-08-2011-0081

Greenleaf, R. K. (1970). The servant as leader. The Robert K. Greenleaf Center.

Gregory, W. T. (2020). Towards a Model of Transformational Pastoral Leadership: A Socio- Rhetorical Analysis of Paul's Letter to the Philippians (Doctoral dissertation, Regent University).

Grim, B. J., & Grim, M. E. (2016). The socio-economic contribution of religion to American society: An empirical analysis. Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion, 12(3), 1-31. http://www.religjournal.com/

Grisaffe, D. B., VanMeter, R., & Chonko, L. B. (2016). Serving first for the benefit of others: Preliminary evidence for a hierarchical conceptualization of servant leadership. Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 36(1), 40-58. http://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.2016.1151303

Gustafsson, J. (2017). Single case studies vs. multiple case studies: A comparative study. Academy of Business. Engineering and Science, Halmstad University, Halmstad, Sweden, 12(1) https://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:1064378/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Guyadeen, D., & Seasons, M. (2018). Evaluation theory and practice: Comparing program evaluation and evaluation in planning. Journal of Planning Education and Research, 38(1), 98–110. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X16675930

Hays, D. G., & McKibben, W. B. (2021). Promoting rigorous research: Generalizability and qualitative research. Journal of Counseling & Development, 99(2), 178-188. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12365

Heelas, P. (2017). Predicting religion: Christian, secular and alternative futures. Routledge.

Heinz, A. D. (2017). Assessing the relationship between lead pastor servant leadership and organizational commitment of church members. (Publication no. 10623092) [Doctoral dissertation, Northcentral University]. ProQuest Dissertations.

Hendren, K., Luo, Q. E., & Pandey, S. K. (2018). The state of mixed methods research in public administration and public policy. Public Administration Review, 78(6), 904- 916. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12981

Herrington, J., Bonem, M., & Furr, J. H. (2020). Leading congregational change: A practical guide for the transformational journey. Fortress Press.

Howard, K., Katsos, N., & Gibson, J. (2019). Using interpretative phenomenological analysis in autism research. Autism, 23(7), 1871–1876.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361318823902

Hughes, P. (2016). Identifying new models of church in contemporary Australia.

Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association, 26(3), 7-8.

https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=350875925988761;res=IE

LHS S

Hunt, E. K. (2017). Humane orientation as a moral construct in ethical leadership

theories: A comparative analysis of transformational, servant, and authentic

leadership in the United States, Mexico, and China. International Journal on

Leadership, 5(2), 1. http://www.publishingindia.com

Hutchings, T. (2016). The dis/embodied church: Worship, new media, and the body.

Christianity in the Modern World. Routledge.

Hvidtjørn, D., Hjelmborg, J., Skytthe, A., Christensen, K., & Hvidt, N. C. (2014).

Religiousness and religious coping in a secular society: The gender perspective.

Journal of Religion and Health, 53(5), 1329-1341. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-
013-9724-z

Iivari, N. (2018). Using member checking in interpretive research practice: A

hermeneutic analysis of informants' interpretation of their organizational realities,

Information Technology & People, 31(1), 111-133. https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-

07-2016-0168

Ingram, L. C. (1981). Leadership, democracy, and religion: Role ambiguity among

pastors in Southern Baptist churches. Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion,

20(2), 119- 129. http://doi.org/10.2307/1385610

Jambawo, S. (2018). Transformational leadership and ethical leadership: their

   significance in the mental healthcare system. British Journal of Nursing, 27(17),

   998-1001. https://doi.org/10.12968/bjon.2018.27.17.998

Jennie, B. (2016). The relationship between cultural intelligence and transformational

   leadership: A study of people leaders (Publication no. 10003176) [Doctoral

   dissertation, Biola University]. ProQuest Dissertation.

Johnson, B. D., Dunlap, E., & Benoit, E. (2010). Structured qualitative research:

   Organizing mountains of words for data analysis, both qualitative and

   quantitative. Substance Use & Misuse, 45(5), 648-670.

   http://doi.org/10.3109/10826081003594757

Johnson, D. R., Scheitle, C. P., & Ecklund, E. H. (2021). Beyond the in-person interview?

   How interview quality varies across in-person, telephone, and Skype interviews.

   Social Science Computer Review, 39(6), 1142-1158.

   https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439319893612

Johnson, J. L., Adkins, D., & Chauvin, S. (2020). A review of the quality indicators of

   rigor in qualitative research. American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education,

   84(1). https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe7120

Joiner, A. V. (2020). Perceptions of burnout among black pastors of small churches: A

   phenomenological study (Doctoral dissertation). Academic. (2437937683).

Jones, R. A. (2016). Exploring challenges of church vitality in the general culture of

   declining membership: A case study (Doctoral dissertation). (UMI No. 10604819)

Joyner, R. L., Rouse, W. A., & Glatthorn, A. A. (2018). Writing the winning thesis or

   dissertation: A step-by-step guide. Corwin Press.

Kafaee, M., Marhamati, H., & Gharibzadeh, S. (2021). "Choice-supportive bias" in science: Explanation and mitigation. Accountability in Research, 28(8), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/08989621.2021.1872377

Kalu, F. A., & Bwalya, J. C. (2017). What makes qualitative research good research? An exploratory analysis of critical elements. International Journal of Social Science Research, 5(2), 43-56. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijssr.v5i2.10711

Kelly, B., Margolis, M., McCormack, L., LeBaron, P. A., & Chowdhury, D. (2017). What affects people's willingness to participate in qualitative research? An experimental comparison of five incentives. Field Methods, 29(4), 333-350. http://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X17698958

Khan, S. N. (2014). Qualitative research method: Grounded theory. International Journal of Business and Management, 9(11), 224-233. hppt://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm. v9n11p224

Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S., & Bradway, C. (2017). Characteristics of qualitative descriptive studies: A systematic review. Research in nursing & health, 40(1), 23-42.

Koveshnikov, A., & Ehrnrooth, M. (2018). The cross-cultural variation of the effects of transformational leadership behaviors on followers' organizational identification: The case of idealized influence and individualized consideration in Finland and Russia. Management and Organization Review, 14(4), 747-779. http://doi:10.1017/mor.2018.27

Krasilnikoff, J., & Angelakis, A. N. (2019). Water management and its judicial contexts in ancient Greece: a review from the earliest times to the Roman period. Water Policy, 21(2), 245-258. https://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2019.176

Kühle, L., & Hoverd, W. (2018). " Introduction: The Critical Analysis of Religious Diversity". In The Critical Analysis of Religious Diversity. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004367111_002

Lainson, K., Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Being both narrative practitioner and academic researcher: A reflection on what thematic analysis has to offer narratively informed research. International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work, (4), 86–98. https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.846799716151082

Lam, J. (2020). Mediating Effects of Interpersonal Trust, Organizational Identification, and Organizational Commitment on the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (Order No. 28262784). Available from ProQuest One Academic. (2479029892). https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/mediating-effects-interpersonal-trust/docview/2479029892/se-2?accountid=14872

Leeman, J. (2017). Church membership. Marks International Ministries.

Legood, A., van der Werff, L., Lee, A., & Den Hartog, D. (2021). A meta-analysis of the role of trust in the leadership-performance relationship. European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 30(1), 1. 22. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2020.1819241

Le Nguyen, B., Lydia, E. L., Elhoseny, M., Pustokhina, I., Pustokhin, D. A., Selim, M. M., & Shankar, K. (2020). Privacy preserving blockchain technique to achieve secure and reliable sharing of IoT data. Computers, Materials & Continua, 65(1), 87-107. http://doi:10.32604/cmc.2020.011599

Levi-Belz, Y., Krysinska, K., & Andriessen, K. (2021). "Turning personal tragedy into triumph": A systematic review and meta-analysis of studies on posttraumatic growth among suicide-loss survivors. Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy, 13(3), 322–332. https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000977

Levin, J. (2020). The Faith Community and the SARS-CoV-2 Outbreak: Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution? Relig Health 59, 2215–2228 https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-01048-x

Li, Y. I., Woodberry, R., Liu, H., & Guo, G. (2020). Why are women more religious than men? Do risk preferences and genetic risk predispositions explain the gender gap? Journal for the scientific study of religion, 59(2), 289-310. https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12657

Liang, E. P. (2018). Lifelong learning in Christian business education: A framework and case study. Christian Business Academy Review, 13(1), 1341-1347. https://cbfa-cbar.org/index.php/cbar

Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Liao, C., & Meuser, J. D. (2014). Servant leadership and serving culture: Influence on individual and unit performance. Academy of Management Journal, 57(5), 1434-1452. http://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2013.0034

Lifeway Insights. (2017). Annual church profile statistical summary.

Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2017). Qualitative communication research methods. Sage.

Loubere, N. (2017). Questioning transcription: The case for the systematic and reflexive interviewing and reporting (SRIR) Method. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 18(2), 22. https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-

18.2.2739

Lowe, N. K. (2019). What is a pilot study? Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal

Nursing, 48(2), 117-118. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jogn.2019.01.00.005

Loyd, R. (2009). The adaptive work of Trinitarian leadership: A case study of pastoral

transition (Doctoral dissertation). (UMI No. 3378293)

Manning, C. (2015). Losing our religion: How unaffiliated parents are raising their

children. NYU Press.

Mays, N., & Pope, C. (2020). Quality in qualitative research. In qualitative research in

health care . https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119410867.ch15

McCall, C. (2019). Pastoral Transformational Leadership: Influences on

AfricanAmerican Churches (Order No. 13425535). Available from ProQuest One

Academic. (2181631308). https://www.proquest.com/dissertationstheses/pastoral-

transformational-leadership-influences/docview/2181631308/se-

2?accountid=14872

McKeown, D., Brindle, M., Harris, K. R., Sandmel, K., Steinbrecher, T. D., Graham, S.,

& Oakes, W. P. (2019). Teachers' voices: Perceptions of effective professional

development and classwide implementation of self-regulated strategy

development in writing. American Educational Research Journal, 56(3), 753-791.

https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831218804146

Merriam, S. B. (2015). Qualitative research: Designing, implementing, and publishing a

study. Handbook of research on scholarly publishing and research methods.

Merriam, S. B., & Grenier, R. S. (Eds.). (2019). Qualitative research in practice:

Examples for discussion and analysis. John Wiley & Sons.

Merwe, V., Grobler, M., Strasheim, A., & Orton, L. (2013). Getting young adults back to church: A marketing approach. HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies, 69(2), 1- 12. http://doi.org/10.4102/hts. v69i2.1326

Mintzberg, H. (1989). Mintzberg on management: Inside our strange world of organizations. Simon and Schuster.

Miska, C., & Mendenhall, M. E. (2018). Responsible leadership: A mapping of extant research and future directions. J Bus Ethics 148(1), 117–134 https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2999-0

Mittal, S., & Dhar, R. L. (2015). Transformational leadership and employee creativity: Mediating role of creative self-efficacy and moderating role of knowledge sharing. Management Decision, 53(5), 894-910. http://doi.org/10.1108/MD-07-2014-0464

Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People, 7(1), 23-48. https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/85654/

Natow, R. S. (2020). The use of triangulation in qualitative studies employing elite interviews. Qualitative Research, 20(2), 160-173. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794119830077

Neumayr, M., & Handy, F. (2019). Charitable giving: What influences donors' choice among different causes?. Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, 30(4), 783-799. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-017-9843-3

Newark, D. (2018). Leadership and the logic of absurdity. Academy of Management

Review, 43(2), 198-216. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2015.0186

Ngozwana, N. (2018). Ethical dilemmas in qualitative research methodology:

Researcher's reflections. International Journal of Educational Methodology, 4 (1),

19-28. http://doi: 10.12973/ijem.4.1.19

Niessen, C., Mäder, I., Stride, C., & Jimmieson, N. L. (2017). Thriving when exhausted:

The role of perceived transformational leadership. Journal of Vocational

Behavior, 103, 41-51. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.07.012

Noble, H., & Heale, R. (2019). Triangulation in research, with examples. Evidence-Based
Nursing 22(3), 67-68. http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/ebnurs-2019-103145

Norenberg, D., (2020). Superficial versus senseful strategy. In: Executive Ownershift.

Management for Professionals. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-

030-35828-0_7

Ober, J., (2018). Institutions, Growth, and Inequality in Ancient Greece. In:

Anagnostopoulos G., Santas G. (eds) Democracy, Justice, and Equality in Ancient

Greece.

Philosophical Studies Series, 132. 15-37 Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-

319-96313-6_2

O'Kane, P., Smith, A., & Lerman, M. P. (2021). Building transparency and

trustworthiness in inductive research through computer-aided qualitative data

analysis software.

Organizational Research Methods, 24(1), 104-139.

https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1094428119865016

Ortiz, J. (2015). Transformational leadership from a Christian perspective. Grace College of Divinity.

Otto, K., Geibel, H. V., & Kleszewski, E. (2021). Perfect leader, perfect leadership? Linking leaders' perfectionism to monitoring, transformational, and servant leadership behavior. Frontiers in Psychology, 12, 1290. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.657394

Pandey, S., & Chawla, D. (2016). Using qualitative research for establishing content validity of e-lifestyle and website quality constructs. Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, 19(3), 339-356. http://doi/org/10.1108/qmr-05-20150033

Patterson, C. (2018). Constructing narrative and phenomenological meaning within one study. Qualitative Research Journal, 18,(3), 223-237. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-D- 17-00033

Pattnaik, S., & Sahoo, R. (2021). Transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior: the role of job autonomy and supportive management, Management Research Review, 44(10), 1409-1426. https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-06-2020-0371

Pew Research Center. (2015, May 15). America's changing religious landscape. http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/

Pillay, J. (2017). The church as a transformation and change agent. HTS: Theological Studies, 73(3), 1-12. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-8d76bb231

Pöhls, K. (2021). A complex simplicity: The relationship of religiosity and non religiosity

    to life satisfaction. Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 60(3), 465-481.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12723

Powell, K., Mulder, J., & Griffin, B. (2016). Growing young: Six essential strategies to

    help young people discover and love your church. Baker Books.

Priest, K. L., & Jenkins, D. M. (2019). Developing a vision of leadership educator

    professional practice. New Directions for Student Leadership, 14(3),56- 62.

    https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20355

Queirós, A., Faria, D., & Almeida, F. (2017). Strengths and Limitations of Qualitative

    and Research Methods. European Journal of Education Studies, 3(9), 371-387

    http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v0i0.1017

Rainer, T., & Rainer, S. S. (2008). Essential church? Reclaiming a generation of

    dropouts. B&H Publishing.

Rainer, T. S. (2014). Autopsy of a deceased church: 12 ways to keep yours alive. B&H

    Publishing Group.

Ramchunder, Y., & Martins, N. (2014). The role of self-efficacy, emotional intelligence,

    and leadership style as attributes of leadership effectiveness. SA Journal of

    Industrial Psychology, 40(1), 1-11. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v40i1.110

Reid, W. A. (2020). The mind of the transformational leader. Springer International

    Publishing

Rogers, M., & Konieczny, M. E. (2018). Does religion always help the poor? Variations

    in religion and social class in the west and societies in the global south. Palgrave

    Communications, 4(1), 1-11. http://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-018-0135-3

Ross, P. T., & Zaidi, N. L. B. (2019). Limited by our limitations. Perspectives on medical education, 8(4), 261-264. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-00530-x

Roulston, K., & Shelton, S. A. (2015). Reconceptualizing bias in teaching qualitative research methods. Qualitative Inquiry, 21(4), 332-342. http://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414563803

Rowold, J., & Borgmann, L. (2013). Are leadership constructs really independent? Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 34(1), 20- 43. http://doi.org/10.1108/01437731311289956

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. R. (2016). Empowerment series: Research methods for social work. Cengage Learning.

Samian, R., & Budihardjo, A. (2021). Why employees endorse abusive leaders: The role of trust. Human Resource Development International, 24(2), 133-150.https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2020.1810475

Scuderi, N. F. (2014). Servant leadership and transformational leadership in church organizations. George Washington University.

Shann, C., Martin, A., Chester, A., & Ruddock, S. (2019). Effectiveness and application of an online leadership intervention to promote mental health and reduce depression- related stigma in organizations. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 24(1), 20–35. https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000110

Sherif, V. (2018, May). Evaluating preexisting qualitative research data for secondary analysis. In Forum: qualitative social research 19(2), 26-42. Freie Universität Berlin. https://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/download/2821/4211?inline=1

Shet, S. V. (2021). Leadership: Making an impact, inspiring organization, and getting to the next level. Human Resource Development International, 24(2), 234-239. https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2020.1732732

Shirin, A. V. (2014). Is servant leadership inherently Christian? Journal of Religion and Business Ethics, 3, Article 13. https://via.library.depaul.edu/jrbe/

Sielaff, A. M., Davis, K. R., & McNeil, J. D. (2021). Literature Review of clergy resilience and recommendations for future research. Journal of Psychology and Theology, 49(4), 308-323. https://doi.org/10.1177/0091647120968136

Sim, J., & Waterfield, J. (2019). Focus group methodology: Some ethical challenges. Quality & Quantity, 53(6), 3003-3022. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-019-00914-5

Singh, E. H., Dorji, N., Zangmo, L., Rigyel, Wangchuk, N., Tamang, L. D., & Zangmo, N. (2021). A study on the relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership styles, and perceived leadership effectiveness in Bhutan. Global Business Review, http;//doi.org/10.1177/0972150920978121

Sirris, S. (2019). "The pastors' dilemma" revisited. Religious leaders connecting the spiritual and organizational realms through conceptual work. Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion, 16(3), 290-313. https://doi.org/10.1080/14766086.2019.1574599

Skjott Linneberg, M., & Korsgaard, S. (2019). "Coding qualitative data: a synthesis guiding the novice", Qualitative Research Journal, (19)3 259-270. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-12-2018-0012

Smith, G. A., & Cooperman, A. (2016). The factors driving the growth of religious

'nones' in the U.S. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/14/thefactors-

driving-the- growth-of-religious-nones-in-the-u-s/

Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and

guidelines. Journal of business research, 104, 333-339.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039

Sousa, M., & van Dierendonck, D. (2017). Servant leadership and the effect of the

interaction between humility, action, and hierarchical power on follower engagement.

Journal of Business Ethics, 141(1), 13-25.

http://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2725-y

Stans, S. E., Dalemans, R. J., Roentgen, U. R., Smeets, H. W., & Beurskens, A. J. (2018).

Who said dialogue conversations are easy? The communication between

communication vulnerable people and health□care professionals: A

study. Health Expectations, 21(5), 848-857. https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.12679

Sullivan, S. C. (2019). Religion, gender, and social welfare: Considerations regarding

inclusion. Social Inclusion, 7(2), 44-47. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v7i2.2259

Sundler, A. J., Lindberg, E., Nilsson, C., & Palmér, L. (2019). Qualitative thematic

analysis based on descriptive phenomenology. Nursing Open, 6(3), 733-739.

https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.275

Surmiak, A. D. (2018). Confidentiality in Qualitative Research Involving Vulnerable

Participants: Researchers' Perspectives. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung /

Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 19(3). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-19.3.3099

Timans, R., Wouters, P., & Heilbron, J. (2019). Mixed methods research: what it is and what it could be. Theory and Society, 48(2), 193-216. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-019- 09345-5

Townes, S. (2021). A theology of gratitude for rising generations. Anglican Theological Review, 103(3), 347–359. https://doi.org/10.1177/00033286211023901

Tran, D. Q., Spears, L. C., & Carey, M. R. (2020). Building relational bridges: The inclusive Spirit of servant-leadership. New horizons in positive leadership and change, 127- 142. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38129-5_7

Trzebiatowska, M. (2018). Sovereign of Herself: Women's Narratives of 'Lived Atheism'. Secularism and Nonreligion. 7(2). 1–11, DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/snr.88

Twenge, J. M., Sherman, R. A., Exline, J. J., & Grubbs, J. B. (2016). Declines in American adults' religious participation and beliefs, 1972-2014. Sage Open, 6(1), 1-13. http://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016638133

Twenge, J. M., Sherman, R. A., Exline, J. J., & Grubbs, J. B. (2016). Declines in American adults' religious participation and beliefs, 1972-2014. Sage Open, 6(1)13.http://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016638133

Tyczkowski, B., Vandenhouten, C., Reilly, J., Bansal, G., Kubsch, S. M., & Jakkola, R. (2015). Emotional intelligence (EI) and nursing leadership styles among nurse managers. Nursing Administration Quarterly, 39(2). 172-180. http://doi.org/10.1097/NAQ.0000000000000094

Urban, J. B., & Van Eeden-Moorefield, B. M. (2018). Establishing validity for qualitative

    studies. In J. B. Urban & B. M. van Eeden-Moorefield, Designing and proposing

    your research project (pp. 119–127). American Psychological Association.

    https://doi.org/10.1037/0000049-010

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). The Belmont report: Ethical

    principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research.

    https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report

Van Dierendonck, D., & Patterson, K. (2015). Compassionate love as a cornerstone of
servant leadership: An integration of previous theorizing and research. Journal of

    Business Ethics, 128(1). 119-131. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2085-z

Vasilagos, T., Polychroniou, P., & Maroudas, L. (2017). Relationship between

    supervisor's emotional intelligence and transformational leadership in hotel

    organizations. In Strategic, innovative marketing (pp. 91-95).

    http://doi.rog/10.1007/978-3-319- 56288-9_14

Wahyuni, D. U., Christiananta, B., & Eliyama, A. (2014). Influence of organizational

    commitment, transactional leadership, and servant leadership to the work

    motivation, work satisfaction, and work performance of teachers at private senior

    high schools in Surabaya. Educational Research International, 3(2), 82-96.

    http://www.erint.savap.org.pk

Ward, J. K., Comer, U., & Stone, S. (2018). On qualifying qualitative research: Emerging

    perspectives and the "Deer"(descriptive, exploratory, evolutionary, repeat)

    paradigm. Interchange, 49(1), 133-146. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-018-9313x

Wart, M. V. (2013). Lessons from leadership theory and the contemporary challenge of

    leaders. Public Administration Review, 73(4), 553-565.

    http://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12069

Washington, R. R., Sutton, C. D., & Sauser, W. I., Jr. (2014). How distinct is servant

    leadership theory? Empirical comparisons with competing theories. Journal of

    Leadership, Accountability and Ethics, 11(1), 11-25. http://www.na-

    businesspress.com/jlaeopen.html

Williams, W. (2014). A comparison of pastor leadership behavior in churches of 1,000 or

    more members to transformational leadership behavior as identified in the

    Transformational Leadership Skills Inventory (Doctoral dissertation). ProQuest

    Dissertations database. (UMI No. 3668810)

Willigenburg, T. (2019). Why is Sunday morning the most segregated hour? A

    sociopsychological inquiry into the barriers and opportunities for ecumenical

    unity. Journal of Ecumenical Studies 54(2), 210-228.

    http://doi:10.1353/ecu.2019.0009.

Winston, B., & Fields, D. (2015). Seeking and measuring the essential behaviors of

    servant leadership. Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 36(4), 413-

    434. http://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-10-2013-0135

Wolf, L., & Beskow, L. (2018). New and improved? 21st-century cures act revisions to

    certificates of confidentiality. American Journal of Law & Medicine, 44(2-3),

    343- 358. http://doi:10.1177/0098858818789431

Wollschleger, J. (2018). Pastoral leadership and congregational vitality. Review of

    Religious Research, 60(4), 575-585. http://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-018-0352-7

Wright, D. (2017). Megachurches: A growing community anchor. Cornell Real Estate Review, 15, 68-77. https://baker.realestate.cornell.edu/choose-cornell/crer/

Yang, H., & Yang, J. (2019). The effects of transformational leadership, competitive intensity, and technological innovation on performance. Technology Analysis & Strategic Management, 31(3), 292-305. https://doi.org/10.1080/09537325.2018.1498475

Yardley, S. J., Watts, K. M., Pearson, J., & Richardson, J. A. (2013). Ethical issues in the reuse of qualitative data: Perspectives from literature, practice, and participants. Qualitative Health Research, 24(1), 102-113. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732313518373

Yaslioglu, M., & Selenay, N. (2018). Transformational leaders in action: Theory has been there, but what about practice?. IUP Journal of Business Strategy, 15(1), 42-53. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324602033

Yin, R. K. (2018). Case study research and applications: Design methods (6th ed.). Sage.

Yukl, G. (2012). Effective leadership behavior: What we know and what questions need more attention. Academy of Management perspectives, 26(4), 66-85. http://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2012.0088

Zaccaro, S. J., Green, J. P., Dubrow, S., & Kolze, M. (2018). Leader individual differences, situational parameters, and leadership outcomes: A comprehensive review and integration. The Leadership Quarterly, 29(1), 2-43. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2017.10.003

Zuckerman, P. (2016, May 12). Religion declining, secularism surging. Huffington Post.

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/phil-zuckerman/religion-declining-

secula_b_9889398.html

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Introduce self to the participant (s).

The present consent form goes over contents, answering questions and concerns

of participant(s).

Participant signs consent form.

Give the participant a copy of the consent form in an unmarked envelope.

Turn on the recording device.

Follow procedure to introduce participant(s) with pseudonym/coded

identification, note the date and time.

Start the interview from question 1 to question 8.

Follow up with additional questions from participants.

End interview sequence; discuss member checking with the participant(s).

Thank each participant(s) for their contributions.

Emphasis on the contact numbers in case of questions or concerns.

End protocol.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1.   What leadership strategies did you use to motivate church members

towards church attendance?

2.   What leadership strategies did you use to motivate non-members to

become members?

3.   What challenges did you encounter in using the leadership strategies to sustain members?

4.   How did you overcome the challenges you faced in using the leadership strategies to sustain members?

5.   How did you implement the leadership strategies to sustain membership?

6.   How did you implement the leadership strategies to increase non-membership?

7.   What leadership strategies did you use for long-term membership sustainability?

8.   What additional information would you like to share regarding the leadership strategies you used to sustain members?

Appendix C: Invitation to Participate in the Study

Date:

Name:
Address:

Hello,

My name is George L. Blount Jr, and I am a student at Walden University working on my Doctored Business Administration (DBA) degree. According to Walden's Policy, the student must conduct a doctoral research study to fulfill the requirement. My research topic is "Exploring Strategies for Sustaining Membership in Southern Baptist Churches" in the Metropolitan Statistical Area of Philadelphia. The contribution for the study is to provide churches with strategies to sustain membership when revenues are declining.

This study also gives some information to pastors and leadership ways to increase revenues when membership is declining. As a senior pastor, student, and CEO, I would like to invite you to participate in this research study.

Please read carefully the enclosed consent form and you may ask any questions that you may have before accepting the invitation. This interview will include four open- ended questions (attached with this letter) that you can provide your opinions and suggestions. I appreciate and thank you in advance for your valuable time and your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,
George L. Blount Jr.