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Strategic Lay Leadership Involvement in the Social Mission of a Western Ontario Denomination

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Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Isaac Osei-Akoto

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Strategic Lay Leadership Involvement in the Social Mission of a Western Ontario

Denomination

by

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MBA, Eastern University, 1999

BA, University of Cape Coast, 1990

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

August 2017

Abstract

Several Ontario communities face challenges requiring harnessing multisectorial partnerships to bring about community transformation. The church has the capacity to contribute to the community transformation needs of its community, but a particular denomination in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) appeared to be unaware of how to fulfil its social mission of community transformation. The purpose of this case study was to understand how members of the clergy perceived the lay leadership vacuum in the denomination and how these perceptions appear to inhibit the denomination's achievement of its social mission. The theoretical framework was Akingbola's strategic nonprofit human resource management theory. A qualitative case study was employed, using semistructured interviews of 10 clergy in the GTA. Data from the interviews were coded and categorized for thematic analysis and constant comparison. Findings indicated a lay leadership vacuum in the studied denomination. Participants concurred that the vacuum was influenced by the perceptions of the clergy, which inhibit the denomination's capacity to address the needs of the community. The results of this study could lead to positive social change through providing an understanding of the obstacles denominations and similar nonprofit organizations may need to overcome to effectively identify, nurture, and deploy their volunteers for the benefit of community transformation.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Mrs. Paulina Gertrude Osei-Akoto, for encouraging me to bring this journey to a successful completion. I dedicate this dissertation to my children, Veronica-Keren and Rebeckah for allowing me to complete this project by taking away from them the valuable time I could have spent with them. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my deceased mother, Veronica Afua Serwa Akoto, for her hard work and encouragement that laid the foundation for my education. The ultimate praise for completing this project goes to God who provided me with all the tangible and intangible resources not only to cross the finish line, but also to be able to leave a legacy for the local church as it pursues strategies to live out its community transformational mission.

Acknowledgment

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Community transformation is a global issue to which many governments commit substantial financial and other resources every year. Between 1998 and 1999, the British government commissioned its New Deal for Communities project, partnered with 39 pathfinder agencies, and spent approximately £2 billion with the objective of improving local services and increasing community capacity to enable people to do more for themselves (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2010). In 2005, the federal government of Canada made budgetary allowance for improving communities by providing municipalities with a share of gas tax revenues, renewing existing infrastructure programs as necessary, and increasing contributions to the Green Municipal Funds (Department of Finance, Canada, 2005). As the number of economically disadvantaged or impoverished communities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) continues to grow (United Way of Greater Toronto and The Canadian Council on Social Development [UWGTCCSD], 2004) and provincial and local governments seek to partner with non-profit organizations to bring about community transformation, the strategic leadership role of the church in community transformation has also become very pertinent.

The church plays different roles in a community, most typically as a moral transformation agent (Seong, 2014). However, the question I examined in this study was how the church in the GTA is going to contribute to the reconstruction and

transformation of the economically disadvantaged communities in the GTA. For example, in Scarborough where the crime rate is high, high school graduation rate for the youth is below the provincial standard, and many people live in poverty, according to UWGTCCSD (2004) report.

Historically, the church is known to be an effective third sector organization that has worked well in partnership with the public and the private sectors to bring about community transformation in many deprived communities. According to Monroe (2012), the church is the lifeline and a medium of social change for individuals and communities as well as a unique agency for meeting their spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. As a social service agency, the role of the church in the life of its community includes providing services like counseling to those in need, and seminars and sermons to help attending and nonattending members to navigate through the various challenges of life; for example, educating single parents in the community on effectively managing their teenagers (Monrose, 2012).

The government of Canada recognizes faith-based organizations, including churches, as key partners in community transformation. According to Hutchinson (2013), the Canadian government extends charitable status to religious organizations, (e.g., churches) with the expectation that they will go beyond the spiritual to provide social benefits to their communities. From the point of view of the Canadian government, the list of examples of such societal needs includes education, halfway houses for people on probation, refugee services, feeding programs for the poor and the hungry, and support

for pregnant women and senior citizens (Hutchinson, 2013). According to Watson and Stepteau-Watson (2015), churches that have social service or outreach ministries can intentionally design, develop, and implement them to improve or enhance the quality of life of its members and the community residents alike. According to Butler-Ajibade, Booth, and Burwell (2012), faith-based organizations, including churches, can develop interventions for depression in the community.

Wood (1995) has indicated that the church is an example of private legislature that provides an institutional base for public discourses that contribute to building a civil society. In post-communist Ukraine, the church has contributed to building and empowering a civil society (Zorgdrager, 2012). Among the poverty-stricken South African communities, faith-based organizations, including the church and religious societies at large, are credited with helping to improve the conditions of the poor over the past 20 years in the post-apartheid era (Thesnaar, 2014).

To accomplish these significant milestones and serve its purpose in the community, the church needs to have a strategic leadership development plan that will help to ensure that the church is well represented and connected to its larger community. Nelson (2011) indicated that over the years, the laity who are members of the church and who also live and work in the community in a variety of capacities have served the church well in functioning as its volunteers in the community. According to Nelson, the laity are the volunteers of the church and the medium through whom the church plays its role in the community, including community transformation activities (Arinze, 2013).

As a nonprofit organization, the benefits the church derives from its laity cannot be overemphasized. Volunteerism in Canada, according to Vézina and Crompton (2011), is growing at a faster rate than Canada's population. They indicated that in 2010, 15% of the 66% of Canadians who volunteered for the sports and recreation and social services sectors were religious volunteers who contributed an average of 117 hours per head. As volunteers of the church the laity serve in various capacities that can advance the cause of their faith and the *raison d'être* of the church as well as to preserve tradition for the benefit of others and as a means of serving God (Nelson, 2011). In effectively playing their role, for example, as teachers, counselors, and community advocates (Arinze, 2013), the laity represent the church in the community and help to carry out the social mission of the church in the community.

The critical role of the laity in the mission of the church notwithstanding, the structure of church leadership places authority in the hands of the clergy or ordained ministers who work full time in the church, while the laity and the ministers who combine circular work portfolios with Christian ministry roles are left out of the overall strategic approach to attaining the mission of the church (Carroll, 1981). As a result of the centralization of church leadership and authority in the person of the clergy, the clergy continue to receive training and education that help them to carry on their responsibilities while the laity receive little or no formal education and training to support them in carrying out their volunteer roles (Makau-Olwendo, 2009). Consequently, Nelson

(2011) noted that whereas clergy formation is a well-documented concept, formation for the laity is not widely described in church documents.

The benefits the church could derive from its laity and volunteers seem to be little understood or to have eluded the leadership of most denominations. According to Rehnborg, Bailey, Moore, and Sinatra (2009), today's volunteers have unlimited potential to benefit their nonprofit organizations of choice, for example, serving as teachers, accountants, and lawyers in the community. This observation notwithstanding, Barna (2001) observed that instead of the church using the skills of the laity to advance its mission and to contribute to community transformation, the contemporary church leadership continues to attempt to play its role in the community without properly harnessing its wealth of internal human resources, namely, the laity who are the volunteer base of the church and have the potential to lead the church in its community transformation initiatives.

In this study, I assumed that a lay leadership vacuum, a chronic problem facing many denominations and their affiliated suburban local assemblies, exists in the Western Ontario District of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (WOD-PAOC) churches in the GTA and seems to be influenced by the perceptions and decisions of the clergy. For the WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA to fulfill their social mission in the community, they may have to change the organizational culture that underutilizes their laity or volunteers and start to recognize and nurture them for the benefit of the church organization. Nurturing the laity through formalized education and training will equip the laity to better

function as the volunteers and agents of the church in community transformation leadership roles. Consequently, the question that I addressed in this dissertation was how the clergy perceived the existing lay leadership vacuum that appears to inhibit the denomination's achievement of its social mission role. The results of this study may help WOD-PAOC district executives and their affiliated pastors to understand the role of the laity and the benefits the church can derive in making them an essential part of its strategies to reach and to contribute to the community transformation efforts of the denomination in the GTA.

Background

Over the past decade, many Canadian communities including the GTA have seen significant demographic changes. According Sorenson (2015), interested parties in community transformation in Ontario (e.g., marketers, politicians and community organizers) continue to explore strategies for community transformation in the province, particularly in the GTA, by seeking to understand how people live, work and think. Through research and the implementation of new and strategic systems, local and provincial governments partner with the private sector to address the challenges these demographic changes introduce to the GTA.

According to UWGTCCSD (2004), in 2003 residents of Toronto expressed mixed feelings about their neighborhoods. When they expressed the need for a better life for their children they tied it to a concern about the onset of urban decay, lack of services and opportunities for the youth, and the fear that poorer communities in the GTA will be

abandoned. This situation notwithstanding, the WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA do not seem to know how to respond and contribute to the ongoing discussion on community transformation in the GTA.

As a denomination, the PAOC does not seem equipped to support the local and provincial governments' community transformation efforts (WOD-PAOC, 1991). This apparent lack of preparation on the part of the WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA is a direct reflection of their human resource practice of underutilizing their volunteers, the laity, who live and work in the communities in various capacities and therefore have direct access and opportunities to impact their communities. Underestimating the importance of cross-cultural studies and training for their laity who are in daily contact with the new and emerging cultures in the province (Gibbs & Bolger, 2005), is partly the reason why the WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA do not seem to understand the emerging cultures within their precincts.

In most denominations and local churches, the skills and other professional competencies of the laity are underutilized. Among the body of literature that highlights the subject of the laity, Nelson (2011) indicated that whereas the clergy benefit from institutionalized and continuous education that help them to perform their responsibilities, the laity are handicapped and ill prepared to participate in any aspect of the social mission of the church. Nelson described any training the laity receive as routinely random, unstructured and largely unmonitored. According to Carroll (1981), the problem of underutilization of the laity directly results from the nature of the relationship

that exists between the clergy and the laity. To succeed in achieving its social mission of contributing to transforming its community, Nelson indicated that the church must take steps to appreciate, attract, and nurture its volunteers, the laity, by ensuring that they are retooled and have the required skills set to start and sustain their engagements in the community.

Although research has indicated that the laity are underutilized, there is a lack of literature regarding how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to lay leadership vacuum in a denomination. In this dissertation, I conducted in-depth interviews of 10 members of the clergy in WOD-PAOC to understand how they perceived the laity and how they utilized lay leadership in their respective WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA. In other words, in this study I sought to understand how the perceptions of the WOD-PAOC clergy drove their decisions about the role of the laity in the social mission of the church and contributed to the lay leadership vacuum in the denomination. Makau-Olwendo (2009) has argued that lack of training for the laity is the reason for the ineffectiveness of the church in achieving its social mission, maintaining that limiting knowledge to the few – otherwise known as the clergy – will minimally help the majority, if at all. According to Makau-Olwendo (2009) empowering the laity through the medium of formal and properly-structured systems of training and leadership development will properly position the church to attain its social mission.

Problem Statement

When the laity are identified, recognized and properly equipped to play their role in the community, they contribute to building healthy communities because they serve in different capacities in the community. Typically, the laity serve in the community in different roles including teaching, advocacy, social work, and healthcare (Arinze, 2013), to mention but a few. As the Canadian society becomes more and more secular (Monrose, 2012), involving the laity by training and using their skills as the volunteers of the church is the way forward for the church to continue to impact and influence its community and effectively participate in bringing transformation to poor communities in the GTA. The general problem was that this ideal situation has not happened yet. Moreover, how the perceptions of the clergy about the laity influence the human resource decisions of the denomination and subsequently contributes to the lay leadership vacuum in churches is unknown (Arinze, 2013; Nelson, 2011; Stark, 2012). Lay leadership development is an imperative for the church. According to Nelson (2011), when the laity are developed they can better serve the church and the community because they can connect the social mission of the church to the needs of the larger community. For example, trained laity serve the homeless, the poor, and street kids better than untrained laity (Nelson, 2011). Trained laity can connect the mission of the church to the needs in the community and hasten the wheels of community transformation.

Volunteers make a significant impact when they represent their organizations in the community. Arinze (2013) indicated that more lay ministers and ministries of the

church can make significant contributions to community transformation. This is important for public policy and administration because religion is a contributor to morality and a bedrock of good citizenship. According to Stark (2012), in America and elsewhere, religion has contributed to community transformation by positively impacting communities in several areas including lowering crime rates; strengthening understanding and appreciation for family life and stronger marriages; sexuality, mental and physical health and wellness, and leading to much higher levels of charity, philanthropy, and overall prosperity. Stark argued that the cumulative effect of a high degree of religiosity of the North American community is that when compared with western European nations, the United States emerges superior in many ways.

The specific problem was that in the province of Ontario, particularly in the GTA, there are challenges that require harnessing public, private and third sector partnerships and resources to bring about community transformation as needed in several communities. This need notwithstanding, there was a lack of involvement of the laity (lay leadership vacuum) in the efforts being made by the WOD-PAOC executives and their affiliated pastors to connect with and contribute to the socio-economic development and the community transformation needs of their larger communities in the GTA (Horak, 2013; Stark, 2012; Zehr, Patterson, & Kowal, 2013). Unfortunately, the underlying reasons why a lay leadership vacuum exists in WOD-PAOC have not been studied and therefore remains unknown. Understanding the perceptions of the clergy about the laity may help the appreciation of why, despite their diverse talents, educational attainments,

and roles in the community, the laity are neither recognized nor strategically involved in the community transformation efforts of WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA. It is unknown how the perceptions of the clergy may contribute to the existing lay leadership vacuum that appears to inhibit the denomination's achievement of its social mission.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how the clergy perceived the lay leadership vacuum that exists in WOD-PAOC in the GTA and how their perceptions appear to inhibit the denomination's achievement of its social mission. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 WOD-PAOC pastors and district executives in the GTA to fulfill this purpose. For the purpose of this study, I defined lay leadership involvement in the community transformation mission of the church as recognizing the volunteer role of the laity as relevant and distinct from the clergy's, and therefore, building lay leadership capacity by providing leadership development training to the laity through mediums including workshops, seminars, and retreats.

Research Questions

I designed the study to answer the following research question: What are the perceptions of the clergy in relation to lay leadership in the WOD-PAOC?

I also developed the following sub-questions (SQs) to guide the study:

SQ1: How do WOD-PAOC affiliated pastors and district executives perceive the laity's role in the human resource decisions of the denomination?

SQ2: How do WOD-PAOC affiliated pastors and district executives perceive the lay leadership vacuum that exists in WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA?

Theoretical Framework

In this study, I used the theory of strategic nonprofit human resource management (SNHRM; Akingbola, 2012) to attempt to understand how the perceptions of the WOD-PAOC district executive and their affiliated pastors regarding the laity contribute to the lay leadership vacuum in the denomination in the GTA. The theory draws from multiple sources including organizational theories like the resource-based view (RBV; Shaw, Park, & Kim, 2013), resource dependence model (Salamon & Anheier, 1998), behavioral perspective (Jackson, 1987), cybernetic models (Wright & Snell, 1991), agency/transaction cost theory (Jones & Wright, 1992) and institutional theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The RBV and the resource dependence theory of strategic human resource management (SHRM) theory (Akingbola, 2013), however, are the two most influential sources of the SNHRM. As an extension of SHRM theory (Akingbola, 2012), SNHRM theorizes about how nonprofit organizations can effectively combine and deploy their human resources – the skills, knowledge, behavior and social networks of employees and volunteers – and their human resources management (HRM) systems to facilitate the attainment of the social mission and strategic goals of the organization (Akingbola, 2012).

Human resource challenges in nonprofit organizations are a pertinent issue that plagues many third sector organizations. According to Akingbola (2012), research in

HRM has identified human resource challenges as a major problem in non-profit organizations. To address these challenges in nonprofit organizations, SNHRM theorizes on how non-profit organizations could link their human resource pool with their human resource practices and align them to improve their overall organizational performance (Akingbola, 2013). The contingency perspective of SHRM, one of the many sources of the SNHRM theory, indicates that human resource is very important to organizational strategy and the organizational capability to adapt to change and to the goals of the organization (Akingbola, 2013). SNHRM theory gives valuable insight into how non-profit organizations can achieve efficiency and competitive advantage (Akingbola, 2012).

Nature of the Study

I designed his study as a qualitative case study. The case study design was the appropriate design for this study because it limits the researcher's ability to control the events and yet provides an opportunity for the researcher to discover important information that is easy to understand (see O'Sullivan et al, 2008). Pursuant to this idea, a case study was the most appropriate design for this study because as the researcher, I did not have control over the events of this research and yet I needed in-depth information as data for analysis to understand the phenomenon of how the perceptions of WOD-PAOC clergy influence the lay leadership vacuum at WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA.

The case study design helped me gain an appreciation of the nature of the lay leadership vacuum at WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA (see O'Sullivan et al,

2008). Furthermore, since the case study design has the capacity to suggest causality (O'Sullivan et al, 2008), using this design in this study helped me to explain the reasons for the lack of lay leadership development programs at WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA. Using the case study design for this dissertation was more appropriate than using any other designs (e.g., cross-sectional or time-series designs) because the phenomenon that I investigated in this research is ongoing (see O'Sullivan et al, 2008). Moreover, a case study can help to obtain rich data about a phenomenon that is underexplored and is also appropriate for analyzing real-life organizational problems (Raeburn et al, 2015). A case study design was suitable for this study because it provided flexibility in data collection, leading to a more comprehensive perspective on the research problem being addressed (see Yin, 2014). Ultimately, the case study design was the way to go with this study because it brought along with it a set of new approaches to handling the phenomenon of lay leadership vacuum at WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA and aided me in proposing helpful ways to improve the quality of lay leadership development in the denomination (see O'Sullivan et al, 2008) that will enable WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA to partner with private and public agencies to bring about community transformation in the GTA.

Operational Definitions

Clergy: The collective noun for all clerics who have been received, usually by means of ordination or the sacred rite instituted by the church, into the ranks and files of the holy order (Fanning, 1908).

Community: Defined from a sociological perspective, a community is made up of living human beings who interact with one another within shared geographic boundaries and therefore learn from each other (Bartel, 2007). The six dimensions of a community, include technology, economy, political power, social patterns, shared values, beliefs, and ideas that are not transmitted by biological means, but by learning (Bartel, 2007).

Credential: The certification attesting that an individual is qualified to practice as a minister of the gospel. A credential helps WOD-PAOC ministers to serve with integrity and professionalism. The four categories of credentials issued by the denomination are Ordained, Licensed, Recognition of Ministry, and Church Related. The category of a WOD-PAOC minister's credential determines whether they have voting rights or not (Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 2015a).

Denomination: A religious group that has many local churches (ProCon.org, 2008).

Greater Toronto Area (GTA): A Canadian metropolitan area in the province of Ontario covering an area of 5,905.71 square kilometers and with a population of 5,583,064 as of the 2011 census (Statistics Canada, 2015). Essentially, it is Toronto, the capital of Ontario, and its surrounding cities and regions.

Laity: All ordained or not ordained religious worshippers who hold circular job positions in addition to their ministry roles. Distinct from the clergy, the laity have limited ministry rights and are only permitted to participate as auxiliaries when

authorized by the clergy. Interference in the clerical office, at certain times, is punishable with censures and penalties (Boudinhon, 1910).

Local assembly: A church plant in a community with its own pastor(s). Usually a local assembly may have its own building but in some cases, it could also rent space (Boudinhon, 1910).

Ordained: To be invested with the ministerial functions and have the right to perform certain function in the church, (e.g., blessing of marriage and the administration of the Holy Communion; Ahaus, 1911).

Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC): A Christian denomination with about one thousand churches across Canada. Its membership is about 234,000. About 3,584 hold pastoral and other ministry related credentials through this umbrella organization. The raison d'être of this organization is to facilitate the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ in Canada and elsewhere through a variety of ways including Sunday church services and relief to the needy (PAOC Fellowship Statistics, 2016).

Western Ontario District (WOD): This is the district of the PAOC in the western part of the province of Ontario, Canada. The WOD is the largest of the PAOC districts, having about 317 affiliated churches and about 700 credential holders (PAOC Fellowship Statistics, 2016).

Assumptions

The process of conducting a research study is not always premised on verifiable facts. According to Simon (2011), assumptions in a study are the things over which the

researcher does not have control and yet can render the study irrelevant if not considered. Consequently, I premised this study, designed to gain an in-depth understanding of how the perceptions of WOD-PAOC district executive and their affiliated pastors contribute to the lay leadership vacuum that exists within the denomination in the GTA, on some assumptions. For instance, regarding the nature and role of WOD-PAOC district executive and their affiliated pastors in the GTA who would participate in the study, it was assumed that they are interested in understanding how their perceptions of the laity contribute to the nature of the lay leadership vacuum that exists in the denomination.

Based on the biographical and professional information available on the group of persons from which the research participants were drawn, I assumed that they would be suitable candidates to participate in the interview process because they would be interested in exploring ways to help the WOD-PAOC to find appropriate strategies to play its role in contributing to community transformation in the GTA. It was further assumed that the individuals selected to participate in the study would be able to provide the rich and thick data needed to develop the case study (see Patton, 2015). In addition, it was assumed that the individuals I chose would agree to participate willingly or on a voluntary basis and would be candid and honest in their responses to the interview questions. Finally, I assumed that, if necessary, the participants selected through purposive sampling would be willing to refer other suitable individuals who would agree to participate in the study.

Scope of the Study

Without a clear demarcation of the boundaries within which a study will fit, it would be very difficult to know where it begins and ends and what is included and what is not included. The scope of a study is the clear definition of the parameters within which the problem being addressed will fit, including the factors that are within the accepted range of the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). The domain of this study included a participation invitation to WOD-PAOC district executives and their affiliated local church pastors in the GTA. I drew these study participants from the denomination's semi-annually published list of lay and clerical credential holders. I invited three WOD-PAOC district executive members and seven local church pastors in the GTA to participate.

Delimitations

The delimitations of a qualitative study are the limitations in the scope of the study, along with the intentional decisions made by the researcher during the development of the study plan (e.g., the methodological framework, the methodology, and the choice of participants; Simon & Goes, 2013). Among the delimitations of this study, participation was limited to three WOD-PAOC past and present district executive members and seven local church pastors in the GTA. This presented a delimitation because a different decision to include more or less participants or use a different methodology could have led to totally different results. Another delimitation of this study was geographic. Limiting the geographical coverage area of the study to only the GTA instead of the entire district of about 317 local assemblies, 700 credentialed ministers,

and 235,000 members (PAOC, 2016) was considered a significant delimitation of this study.

Limitations

Researchers do not always have every aspect of their research under their control. Resulting from the implicit characteristics of methods and design, Simon and Goes (2013) indicated that the limitations of a qualitative study are the issues that arise during the study that are beyond the researcher's control. These have the potential to limit the extent to which the study can go and at certain times affect the results and the conclusions that could be drawn from the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). In a qualitative study, such as this one, only having access to a specific population – WOD-PAOC district executive and affiliated pastors in the GTA – is a significant limitation that subsequent studies may overcome (see Simon & Goes, 2013).

There were several limitations to this study. One main limitation was that a priori knowledge or understanding of the concepts of laity and clergy were not necessary for participation. Participants' awareness or understanding of lay and clerical ministries was not a requirement for participation. Participants described their perceptions of the leadership practices in their local churches and in the WOD-PAOC as an organization. In addition, another limitation was that the participants were members of WOD-PAOC affiliated local assemblies and aged 18 years of age or older. The age of 18 is the legal age of majority in the province of Ontario where I conducted the interviews. The invitation letter clearly stated that only members 18 years and older could participate.

One more important limitation was that I did not take into consideration a pastor's prior dissatisfaction with WOD-PAOC and/or its leadership in this study. The instructions on the survey asked participants to answer the questions according to their perceptions of what they believed to be true about the leadership practices in WOD-PAOC as an organization. Moreover, I did not take into consideration the various socioeconomic indicators of the participants this study. Participants remained anonymous and were not asked to provide any personal information or identifiers.

Significance of the Study

In this study, I defined and described the nature of the lay leadership vacuum from the point of view of the participants – WOD-PAOC district executive and their affiliated pastors in the GTA – and how that impacts the community transformation efforts of the denomination in the GTA. Lay leadership development is how churches equip their volunteers to reach out to the larger community and bring about community transformation. The findings of this study could also benefit other PAOC churches outside of the GTA that are attempting to contribute to community transformation but may be faced with lay leadership challenges.

The results from this case study of a lay leadership vacuum in the community transformation activities of WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA shed light on the obstacles to overcome to put structures in place and facilitate lay leadership development and involvement at WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA. I used interviews as the data collection methodology. Data collection focused on different data including the

individuals' experiences, views, and recommendations for addressing the problem of a lack of lay leadership development program and involvement in the community transformation activities of WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA.

The field of public policy and administration is impacted by a variety of disciplines and related studies. This study is important to the field of public policy and administration because with it I aimed to understand how the perceptions of the district executives of WOD-PAOC and their affiliated pastors in the GTA impact the quality of lay leadership's role in the denomination to achieve their mission and vision of contributing to community transformation (see O'Sullivan, Rassel & Berner, 2008). O'Sullivan et al (2008) have indicated that a denomination is a specialized public or group of people whose leadership challenges are worth being studied as a public policy and administration issue because its involvement in or withdrawal from the community has significant implications for the public.

On this point, it is worth noting that as non-profit and charitable organization the WOD-PAOC and their affiliated churches in the GTA have federal government tax exemption status (Canada Revenue Agency, 2016). Consequently, they are required to be accountable to their stakeholders, including the provincial and federal governments. Monroe (2012) has emphasized the significant role of the church in the community by comparing the church to a one-stop super centre that exists for reasons beyond meeting the spiritual needs of its members. According to Monroe, in addition to meeting the

spiritual needs of its members, the church exists to provide for the socio-economic needs of its community.

The benefits governments derive from partnering with community transformation agents are critical in determining the flow of funds. Consequently, the results of this study will benefit the local and provincial governments in affirming that in partnership with the government and the private sector, the church has the potential to contribute to community transformation (UWGTCCSD, 2004). The results of this study have the potential to direct government funds to strengthen the efforts of community transformation agencies in the GTA.

Several communities in the GTA are struggling and could benefit from community transformation initiatives of non-profit organizations, including the church. According to Stark (2012), over the past several years, as the number of poor neighborhoods grow in the GTA, crime rates and related social vices have soared. Studies about poverty in the GTA found that poor neighborhoods are growing exponentially, with most of them lacking access to public infrastructure (Horak, 2013; Zehr et al., 2013). The widening chasm between the rich and the poor has several implications. For instance, extensive growth of poor neighborhoods supplants the strength of a community and renders its residents vulnerable, especially children, single parents, newcomers, and visible ethnic minorities (Horak, 2013; Zehr et al., 2013). Another implication for poor neighborhoods, according to the report, is the human costs on individuals as families. Residents in poor neighborhoods struggle to survive and to participate fully as citizens of

their immediate local economies (Bramwell, 2015; Vahabi & Damba, 2015). Finally, poor neighborhoods decline fast because of increasing crime rates and abandonment by residents and businesses alike (Bramwell, 2015; Vahabi & Damba, 2015). Addressing the problem of lay leadership vacuum has the benefit of training and releasing the laity to bring their skills and other resources to help poor and needy communities in their areas of professional competencies and giftedness; and lead to community transformation.

Summary

This study was designed to lead to an understanding and a description of how the perceptions of the district executive and the WOD-PAOC affiliated pastors contribute to the lay leadership vacuum that exists in the denomination in the GTA. To properly position itself to lead the way in community transformation, the denomination may have to reposition itself by focusing on lay leadership formation as a means to contribute to community transformation. If the denomination addresses the existing lay leadership vacuum by identifying, equipping, and effectively deploying the laity who are the volunteers of the denomination, it will be in a better position to contribute to community transformation in the GTA. In developing the laity who are the volunteers of the church, the denomination could build effective relationships with its communities and thus lead the way in contributing to community transformation in the GTA. What we do not know, however, is how the laity are perceived by the clergy in WOD-PAOC, hence the need to understand how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to the lay leadership vacuum in the denomination. Addressing the issue of how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to

the existing lay leadership vacuum in WOD-PAOC churches is significant because at this point even though the WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA are struggling to make a contribution to the community transformation needs in the GTA, no studies have been carried out to determine whether or not the clergy have the understanding that the laity are the volunteers of the church and therefore need to be identified, nurtured, and effectively deployed (Akingbola, 2012).

This study may help WOD-PAOC district executives and their affiliated pastors to understand the nature and the role of the laity in building effective church-community relationships that leads to community transformation. This study may also help WOD-PAOC district executive and their affiliated pastors to identify areas in which education and training may be necessary to equip the laity to be able to play their volunteer role in the community and to help the denomination to lead the way in contributing to community transformation. It was envisaged that the result of this study will lead to a social change whereby WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA and similar non-profit organizations will be able to overcome the challenge of volunteer involvement and lay leadership vacuum that seems to inhibit their effort to contribute to community transformation the GTA.

Improved ethical behavior or moral integrity and economic development are directly linked to the involvement of the church in the life of its community. Thus, the involvement of the church in the life of the community through the professional practices of the laity will directly contribute to the development of ethically sound leaders who will

lead their communities in different leadership roles in the GTA (Boston, Bradstock, & Eng, 2010). For example, if the laity or the volunteers of the church who are social workers, educationists, and politicians are well trained to represent the church in the community, they could contribute to reducing unethical behaviors in the workplace and in the community and consequently lead to transformed communities in the GTA.

As the volunteers of the church (Nelson, 2011), the laity are a critical group to lead the way and help WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA to play their role in contributing to community transformation. The laity are endowed with the skills necessary to engage the dominant culture and could be used by the church to influence its community in better, authentic and more incisive ways (Arinze, 2013). The laity are the means by which the church articulates its vision of humanity and society (Pope Benedict, as cited in Arinze, 2013). The role of the laity in building stronger communities shows in different areas of a community's life (Arinze, 2013). In the field of education, for example, many lay persons have confirmed their importance by bringing life back into otherwise run down and hopeless communities in countless number of ways. For instance, the Roman Catholic Church and other denominational universities and colleges have produced men and women of creativity and scholarship who have impacted their immediate and larger communities in a variety of professions, including scientific and technological research, as well as in the humanities (Arinze, 2013). Other activities of the laity that have contributed to transformations in the community include community-health programs (Thomas, Quinn, Billingsley, & Caldwell, 1994), youth drug-use

prevention programs (Sutherland & Harris, 1994), the civil rights movement (Schueneman, 2012; Swain, 2008), feeding the poor (Kwarteng & Acquaye, 2011), and community development (Littlefield, 2005).

Chapter 1 contained an overview of the study, including the background, problem statement, research questions, theoretical framework, scope and limitations, and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 will include a detailed literature review regarding the nature and role of the laity. In Chapter 2, I will address the gap in the literature, with the objective of seeking to understand the clergy's perception of the laity as well as describe how such a perception might influence the lay leadership vacuum in a denomination. Chapter 3 will contain a detailed description of the research methodology to be used.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

There has been extensive research conducted from different perspectives about the laity. These include biblical, historical, global, denominational, social, theological, personal and stipendiary perspectives (Danielson & Vega, 2014; Hunt, 2014). Researchers have observed and reported on the nature and role of the laity (Arinze, 2013). There is, however, a paucity of literature that addresses why in most denominations the laity are neither carefully identified nor nurtured and are mostly underutilized as the church makes the effort to attain its social mission and contribute to community transformation. Additionally, no research had specifically been carried out to understand how the perceptions of the clergy about the laity contribute to the lack of lay leadership in the church. To address this gap in the literature, with this study I sought to understand the clergy's perception of the laity and describe how such a perception might influence the lay leadership vacuum in a denomination.

The objective of my literature search was to identify a gap in the literature and to identify theories that could serve as the foundation for this study. I used databases and search engines including Academic Search Complete, Thoreau, Google, Google Scholar, and ProQuest Central to complete a search of peer-reviewed literature and dissertations between the years 2012 and 2016. I conducted the research using the following keywords: *laity, lay ministers, non-stipendiary ministers, stipendiary ministers, teams, boards, healthy church, nonprofit, nonprofit organizations, Christian leadership,*

Evangelical, church, clergy, Christian, churches, religious, religion, volunteer, tenure, culture, theology, social change, community development, PAOC view of the laity, Pentecostal laity, organizational leadership, strategic human resource management, HR architectures, strategic nonprofit human resource management (SNHRM), human resource management (HRM), resource-based view (RBV) theory, and resource dependence theory.

The following literature review will include five sections and in-depth review of scholarly theoretical and empirical literature about the laity. The five sections include the identity and role of the laity in the church and in the community, the church's role and leadership of the laity, leadership development among the laity, human resource management of volunteers, and the laity of the WOD-PAOC. I will conclude Chapter 2 concluded with a summary of the researched body of literature.

Background

A non-profit organization can hardly exist and attain its social mission without the help of a team of volunteers who represent the organization in the community. Well-trained volunteers represent a non-profit organization to the public at a greater capacity than those who are left to represent the organization without training (Bronstein & Mason, 2013; Vos et al., 2012). Among others, the trained volunteers of a non-profit organization understand the nexus between the organization's social mission and the needs of the community. Therefore, they are better agents to lead the organization's community transformation efforts than untrained volunteers.

Nelson (2011) pointed out that non-profit organizations rise or fall depending on the importance they attach to recognizing and nurturing their volunteers. Furthermore, Nelson (2011) indicated that well-trained and integrated volunteers have close connections to the community and are able to link the organization's social mission to the needs of the community and thus bring about community transformation. Unfortunately, in the church, volunteers are either not recognized or nurtured or both (Makau-Olwendo, 2009). The limited involvement of the laity in the church is, in part, reflected in the sporadic formation the laity receive and the limited use to which the church puts the laity and their talents and other skills, creating a lay leadership vacuum. The ultimate effect of the existence of lay leadership vacuum or underutilization of the laity by the church is that the community does not benefit from the social mission of the church. According to Arinze (2013), lay people in a denomination have an important role to play in the community and should therefore be equipped by the church to enable them to properly play that role. Even though as volunteers of the church the laity are motivated and are action-oriented or ready to participate in the social mission of the church, Nelson (2011) observed that random, unstructured and unmonitored training and limited involvement of the laity in the social mission of the church is hurting the community because of the lay leadership vacuum which is expressed through the lack of identification and adequate preparation of the laity to meet the needs of the society.

Theoretical Foundation

A theoretical framework consists of concepts and theories that are established in literature and function as guide for conducting research (Akingbola, 2012). The strategic nonprofit human resource management (SNHRM) theory was used as the theoretical framework for this study. A product of organizational strategy, SNHRM proposes that organizations could achieve competitive advantage through their internal resources and competences. The source of the SNHRM model could be traced to the theoretical perspectives of SHRM theory, the resource-based view (RBV) and the resource dependency theories (Akingbola, 2012).

Background of the SNHRM Model

Specifically, the SNHRM model is based on two major theories. First, it is grounded on the RBV which posits that the capability of an organization to acquire, develop, combine, and effectively deploy its organizational resources – human, tangible, and intangible – provides critical value and competitive advantage to the organization (Shaw et al., 2013; Taegoo et al., 2013). Second, it is grounded on the resource dependence theory, which indicates that organizational effectiveness is a function of the exchange of relationship and the control of valued resources between an organization and other actors or organizations in the environment (Pfeffer & Cohen 1984).

From the big picture point of view, however, the basic tenets of the SNHRM model draw from six theoretical models, namely, RBV of the firm, resource dependence models, behavioral perspective, cybernetic models, agency/transaction cost theory, and

institutional theory (Akingbola, 2013). I provide brief explanations of these theoretical models in the following subsections.

RBV of the firm. According to the RBV of the firm an organization's competitive advantage is determined by several variables. The RBV approach, indicates that an organization's competitive advantage depends on its managers' ability to effectively acquire, develop, combine and effectively deploy human, physical resources. These resources, according to the RBV, must be deployed in ways that are difficult for competitors to imitate (Shaw et al, 2013).

Resource dependence model. This theory indicates that organizations are impacted by their external environment. The resource dependency theory advances the perception that organizations are dependent on their limited resources that originate from the organization's external environment (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). The theory postulates that because of an organization's dependence on one or more external stakeholders, its strategic and operational decisions will be influenced, at least in part, by such entities (Salamon & Anheier, 1998).

Behavioral perspective. This theory emphasizes the importance of employee behavior to organizational strategy. According to the behavioral perspective, the behavior of the employee is the mediator between the firm's performance and the firm's strategy. The SHRM context of this theory is that organizational strategy must be a symphony of different HRM practices that will reinforce behaviors that will improve the firm's performance (Schuler & Jackson, 1987).

Cybernetic models. This theory focuses on the exchanges that take place between organizations and their environments. According to the cybernetic models, organizations can be described as input, throughput, and output systems involved with transactions with the environment. In each of these parts, the firm's strategy will be developed. In the cybernetic model, Wright and Snell (1998) argued that SHRM consists of two responsibilities, namely, competence management and behavior management.

Agency/transaction cost theory. Controlling employee behavior is the focus of this theory. According to the agency/transaction cost theory, exploration of transactions serves as a means of controlling employee behavior (Jones & Wright, 1992). The transaction cost approach is useful in understanding the rationale for human resource practices. In the context of SHRM, it seems possible that the strategy of the organization could influence the nature of work.

Institutional theory. According to the institutional theory, many structures, programs, and practices in organizations attain legitimacy because of the social construction of reality (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). In this theory, individuals come to accept a shared definition of social reality. The task of SHRM might be to address the institutional aspects of HRM practices.

The fundamental premise of SNHRM is that HR are critically important to an organization's strategy as well as the organization's capability to adapt to change and to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Akingbola, 2013). Even though the theory has not yet been used by newer studies, it has been able to provide evidence that formally

incorporated social economy organizations and non-profit organizations are influenced greatly and shaped by the social mission of their members, as indicated by the findings of Quarter et al. (2009). The theory, then, is appropriate for studies examining the organizational behavior in the informal social economy, including this study.

Promoting an alignment between HR and firm strategies has always been the focus of the HR field. Consequently, in their definition of strategic human resource management, Wright and McMahan (2011) indicated that to attain its goals, a firm must endeavor to intentionally create a pattern between its HR deployment and its activities. This implies that the focus of SHRM should be on promoting the alignment between HR and firm strategies. While the definition of SHRM and its processes in different settings have varied through time and use, literature on SHRM has been unified by the assumption that further insights on HRM can be identified through research where the various activities involved in managing the workforce are considered as a set of interrelated activities that is properly aligned with the needs of the organization (Jackson, Jiang, & Schuler, 2015). SHRM can be described as the study of sets of HRM elements and how they interrelate with the other elements of an organizational system, both those from the internal (employees and their managers) and external (owners, customers, society, other organizations) stakeholders, who evaluate the organization's effectiveness and determine its long-term survival (Jackson et al., 2015). The common HRM elements are planning and appraisal, individual and team development, career planning, hiring,

career pathing, succession planning, job design, classification, and compensation (Aldamoe, Yazam, & Ahmid, 2012).

Applications to Similar Studies

While the bases of the SNHRM model, the RBV, the resource dependence theory, and the SNHRM theory, were developed from studies about for-profit organizations, there have been many studies where these theories were utilized in exploring HR management in nonprofit organizations (Ridder, Piening, & Baluch, 2012; Walk, Schinnenberg, & Handy, 2014). Ridder et al. (2012) used these models and theories in conducting an exploratory multiple case study to identify current HRM trends in various nonprofit organizations. Results of the analysis of the multiple cases showed that both strategic orientations (how HR systems are managed in line with organizational objectives) and HR orientation (how employees are managed) influence the HR architecture of nonprofit organizations and that each of the four established architectures were represented by the studied organizations (Ridder et al., 2012).

In other words, depending largely on a nonprofit organization's mission, objectives, and resources, managers may use one of the four HR architectures, namely, motivational HRM, values-based HRM, administrative HRM, and strategic HRM as a basis of their decisions. The foregoing notwithstanding, further analyses showed that the HR orientation of motivational HRM dominated among nonprofit organizations. This implies that employees in nonprofit organizations strive for excellent performance and the achievement of organizational outcomes because of general humanistic principles and

their intrinsic motivations to serve, and not by monetary motivations (Ridder et al., 2012). In such cases, performance-based outcomes continue to improve despite any financial restraints brought about by commercialization and marketization (Ridder et al., 2012).

In a more recent study, Walk et al. (2014) utilized the SHRM theory in examining the effect of HR practices on worker performance in a nonprofit organization through a qualitative study. The researchers noted the importance of optimum HRM, especially in human service nonprofit organizations, because the quality of services rendered to clients is highly dependent on the quality of employees (Walk et al., 2014). Based on an analysis of semistructured interviews with HR managers and employees against the SHRM theory as a framework, Walk et al. learned that managers and workers acknowledge the value of effective HRM, which is perceived to improve organizational outcomes and employee motivation and satisfaction (Walk et al., 2014).

However, managers also noted that nonprofit organizations faced unique struggles in implementing HR strategies. They traced this to the scarcity of financial resources, which is often affected by external factors such as legal requirements and the presence of competitors in the provision of services (Walk et al., 2014). Consequently, the researchers suggested four strategies for HR managers in nonprofit organizations. First, HR managers in nonprofit religious organizations may seek to recruit volunteers or employees from schools or universities that are affiliated with the same religion because such workers are already inherently motivated through religion (Walk et al., 2014).

Second, despite uncertainty regarding the availability of funds in the future, HR managers are encouraged to employ long-term workers as the presence of such committed and qualified young employees may improve the nonprofit organizations' chances of gaining funding from donors and sponsors (Walk et al., 2014).

Next, as nonprofit organizations have little flexibility in providing wages due to their limited financial resources, it was suggested that HR managers increase employee motivation and engagement by improving working conditions, such as offering flexible work hours and allowing autonomy in decision-making, and by providing professional development opportunities (Walk et al., 2014). Finally, the researchers suggested the use of appraisal interview before intake. The benefit of this is that it will allow HR managers to focus and align professional development with the recognized strengths and weaknesses of workers (Walk et al., 2014).

As the studies by Ridder et al. (2012) and Walk et al. (2014) showed, the bases for the established frameworks are helpful in examining HRM practices in nonprofit organizations. Thus, the chosen model for the theoretical framework was deemed appropriate for the study, specifically, in examining how clergymen in the WOD-PAOC manage the laity. The laity are the volunteer personnel of the church whose activities directly benefit the community through community transformation.

Rationale for Use in Proposed Study

The SNHRM theory was considered a rich framework for analyzing the lay leadership challenges facing WOD-PAOC churches, which can be considered as

nonprofit organizations, in their effort to contribute to community transformation in the GTA. The SNHRM model has the capacity to shed more light on the research question and lead to a deeper understanding of how the perceptions of the district executive of the WOD-PAOC and their affiliated pastors contribute to the lay leadership vacuum that exists in the denomination. I chose the SNHRM model because it focuses on how non-profit organizations can use their internal resources to improve their performance (Chmelik, Musteen, & Ahsan, 2016). This theory helped me to understand the studied phenomenon: how the perceptions of the WOD-PAOC district executives and their affiliated pastors contribute to the lay leadership vacuum in the denomination.

According to Wright and McMahan (1992), SHRM is the macro-organizational approach to viewing the role and function of all the various practices used to manage people in organizations, also known as HRM, in the larger organization. Thus, SHRM focuses its attention on all the activities that affect the behavior of individuals in their efforts to formulate and implement the strategic needs of the firm. For this reason, it is important to understand how the problem of the lay leadership vacuum in WOD-PAOC churches is viewed through the theoretical framework for this study. This is important because Wright and McMahan (1992) stated that SHRM is the pattern of HR deployment and activities that are intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals.

Effectively managing volunteers is an uphill task for most non-profit organizations, especially for religious ones like the WOD-PAOC. In their effort to play their role in the community and contribute to community transformation in the GTA, the

laity in WOD-PAOC have received little or no attention from WOD-PAOC, the organization where they volunteer, in terms of preparing them to be able to play their role and contribute to community transformation. According to Rehnborg et al (2009), nonprofit organizational managers' mythological views about volunteers are at the root of this limited attention to the appropriate identification, nurturing and involvement of volunteers in nonprofit organizations. According to these authors one of these myths is that most nonprofit organization erroneously perceive their volunteers and the services they provide as free and therefore of little value because they do not receive market-value compensation. Rather than perceiving volunteers and the services they render as being free, Rehnborg et al. argued that since serious organizational initiatives require planning in areas including strategic vision, time and infrastructure, nonprofit organizational managers would do better if they considered their volunteers as valuable resources and therefore gave them the needed attention by providing them with the necessary leadership tools to equip them to be effective in their community involvement roles. According to SHRM, managers of nonprofit organizations position their organizations to become competitive when they regard their HR, including volunteers, not only as valuable but that they can be leveraged to achieve organizational competitive advantage. Thus, from the point of view of SHRM, the lay leadership vacuum that exists in WOD-PAOC could be the result of a lack of adequate understanding and alignment of the HR – including volunteers – management practices of the WOD-PAOC with its strategic organizational management (Wright & McMahan, 1992).

Consequential to the above, Rehnborg et al. (2009) indicated that nonprofit managers have a challenge in investing their financial resources in developing their volunteers because volunteers' activities do not seem to generate any return on investment. This non-profit managerial perspective of volunteers' conflicts with SHRM's horizontal emphasis on coordinating the various practices through a pattern of planned action (Wright & McMahan, 1992). Rehnborg et al. contended that rather, in the same way non-profit organizational leaders invest in strategies that will increase the visibility of their organizations and make their services tangible, they should also be ready to invest in their volunteers. Among the reason for arguing in favor of investing in volunteers, Rehnborg et al. pointed out that volunteers are mainly responsible for connecting nonprofit organizations to critical resources within the organization's environment. According to the cybernetics model of SHRM, organizations are open systems involving in input, throughput, and output transactions that are controlled by the activities of individuals, for example, the volunteers who are a link between the organization and its environment. From the point of view of SNHRM, therefore, it is shortsighted on the part of nonprofit managers to want to attain the mission of their organizations and yet ignore the importance of developing their volunteers.

Unlike the traditional HR strategy paradigm that focused a firm's competitiveness on external factors, the RBV of SHRM indicates that competitive advantage results from the ability to link organizational strategy with the firm's internal resources (Wright & McMahan, 1992). Thus, according to SHRM, an organization's competitive advantage is

firm-focused as opposed to the industry-environment focus of the traditional strategic analysis paradigm. By application, nonprofit organizations that learn to effectively harness their internal resources, including their volunteers, will be able to attain their organizational goals more effectively than those who do not. The phenomenon of lay leadership vacuum that exists in WOD-PAOC, therefore, runs contrary to SHRM principles. Seeking to understand the lay leadership vacuum that exists at the WOD-PAOC and how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to it through the theoretical framework of SNHRM, therefore, was appropriate. This was appropriate because it could help to improve our understanding of the nature of the lay leadership problem as well as give us insight into the challenges to overcome to address the problem. This could help the district executive and affiliated pastors of WOD-PAOC to create an effective strategy to achieve their social mission of contributing to community transformation by aligning their human resource practices with their organizational goals.

Seen through the lens of SNHRM, it is questionable whether or not the district executive and affiliated pastors of WOD-PAOC in the GTA understand the rarity of their laity as HR that could be exploited to achieve the organization's social mission of community transformation. According to the SNHRM theory, unique or rare resources are assets to their organizations because they provide sustained competitive advantage to the firm (Wright & McMahan, 1992). Rehnborg et al. (2009) indicated that nonprofit organizations, including religious organizations, have access to volunteers who are rare and unique resources and have unlimited potentials to help their organizations of choice

to achieve their mission. According to Vézina and Crompton (2012), in Canada religious organizations benefit from a variety of volunteers who provide services by giving, participating and volunteering for religious reasons. Underutilizing the services and the skills of the laity in WOD-PAOC affiliated churches while the clergy seek to achieve the denomination's social mission is, therefore, an anomaly that is incongruent with the theory of SNHRM. Studying the phenomenon through the lens of SNHRM was therefore worth the exploration because it helped to bring clarity to the question of how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to lay leadership vacuum in a denomination.

Given that the WOD-PAOC has a social mission to attain, it becomes inconceivable that the organization would violate the tenets of the SHRM theory. Using this theoretical framework to attempt to understand how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to the problem of lay leadership vacuum in WOD-PAOC affiliated churches was therefore appropriate. This was appropriate because it contributed to understanding the nature of the problem of lay leadership vacuum and how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to it.

A model to guide research is selected for reasons including how or why it relates to the study being conducted and how the research question relates to, challenges, or builds upon the selected theory or model. I chose the SNHRM model to guide this study for several reasons. First, SNHRM relates to the present study because WOD-PAOC is a nonprofit organization that has a social mission and provides economic value. Utilizing this model helped in understanding how WOD-PAOC affiliated churches could craft

strategies that could help the denomination to gain competitive advantage and lead the way in contributing to community transformation (Greco, Cricelli, & Grimaldi, 2013). In general, an organization's competitive advantage is directly related to its capacity to formulate a strategy that takes the organization's unique environmental variables into consideration (Greco et al., 2013). Competitive advantage, in this context, would be defined as the WOD-PAOC churches getting better at achieving their social mission of community transformation as opposed to the current situation where they are facing challenges seemingly because of the lay leadership vacuum that exists in the denomination.

Next, I selected this model because its perspective on the role HR can play in creating competitive advantage for organizations. The model provides suggestions on how nonprofit organizations can use their internal resources to achieve their mission, especially when they are valuable, rare, inimitable, and have no substitutes (Wright & McMahan, 1992). The laity in the WOD-PAOC affiliated churches constitute an internal resource that could be deployed for the benefit of the organization, if properly identified and nurtured. The laity are important to the denomination as a non-profit organization because they meet the four-point criteria that must exist for organizational resources to be considered as sustained competitive advantage (Wright & McMahan, 1992). According to Wright and McMahan (1992), human resources that can contribute to the organization's sustained competitive advantage must be valuable to the organization in terms of their ability to provide services that could be calculated in financial terms; rare,

by providing superior or high abilities to the organization; inimitable because they bring unique historical, causal ambiguities, and social complexities to bear upon their role and relationship with the denomination; and finally not substitutable because they are indispensable.

The SNHRM model indicates that an organization's competitive advantage is shaped by its capacity to acquire, develop, combine, and effectively deploy its physical, human, and organizational resources (Akingbola, 2012; Greco et al., 2013). Using this model in this study helped me to conduct a field research that shed more light on the HR practices of the WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA. The study specifically focused on how the denomination can effectively acquire, develop, combine, and deploy their physical, human, and organizational resources, regarding the laity who are a significant internal resource for the denomination. This exploration provided a better understanding of how the perceptions of the district executive and their affiliated pastors contribute to the lay leadership vacuum that exists in the denomination. SNHRM theory was a fitting theory for this study because it places emphasis on volunteers as critical HR for nonprofit organizations like the WOD-PAOC and their affiliated churches. Akingbola (2012) observed that human capital – knowledge, skills, and capabilities of members – is the core resource of nonprofit organizations. In this regard, the SNHRM model was a fitting theoretical framework because it proposes that volunteer involvement is an effective way for nonprofit organizations to achieve their social mission (Akingbola, 2012).

A major concern within WOD-PAOC is that the district executives and their affiliated pastors do not maximize the involvement of the laity in their efforts to achieve their social mission of contributing to community transformation in the GTA. In the light of this, the SNHRM theory was also an appropriate theory for this study because it emphasizes the value or importance of nonprofit managers' perceptions in creating successful organizational strategies. Managers use such knowledge and experience to efficiently appropriate organizational resources to ensure organizational success as well as employee motivation and satisfaction (Enríquez-de-la-o, 2015; Sweke, Kobayashi, Makino, & Sakurai, 2016). Human capital, according to Akingbola (2013) is used by nonprofit organizations to build relationships and social networks to support their mission and access or acquire more resources such as volunteers and funding. In this study, the WOD-PAOC district executives and their affiliated pastors were considered as the nonprofit managers whose perceptions, knowledge and experience are the strategic decisions making inputs in the denomination about the organization's internal resources, for example the laity. Using the SNHRM model to guide this study to understand how the perceptions of the WOD-PAOC district executive and their affiliated pastors contribute to the lay leadership vacuum that exists in the denomination in the GTA was therefore appropriate. The rationale for this is that as managers of the denomination, the WOD-PAOC district executives and their affiliated pastors are responsible for making important decisions about all the organization's resources including the laity. This is critical

because as volunteers, the laity are the main type of human capital that support the activities of the denomination as a nonprofit organization.

The Identity and Role of the Laity

In this section I provide a discussion of literature on the definition and role of the laity and the perception of the church, in scripture and practice, on such role. In this discussion, I provide evidence of a leadership vacuum among the laity in many Christian congregations. In the final part of this section I provide alternative means to fill this lay leadership vacuum as suggested in recent literature.

Even though members of a church or congregation can easily distinguish the laity and lay ministers from the ordained ministers or clergymen, a review of literature spanning decades showed that there is no generally agreed-upon definition and classification of lay ministers and the laity across all religions (Anderson, 2013; Nel, 2015). However, in the Pentecostal tradition, there is no clear distinction between the religious practice of the laity and professional clergy because all members of the congregation, regardless of sex, race, class, and age, actively participate in the liturgy (Nel, 2015). Indeed, it was in the Pentecostal tradition that the dichotomy between the clergy and the laity was broken down (Anderson, 2013). Such indiscrimination was the result of the Pentecostal tradition's emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, which also provided leniency in terms of adaptation to different cultures and societies (Anderson, 2013). However, for the purpose of this study, the laity was distinguished

from the clergy through profession. In other words, the laity was defined as nonordained members of a church or congregation.

Francis (1998) indicated that different authors have described the lay ministry in different ways: self-supporting ministry, tent-making ministry, nonstipendiary ministry, voluntary ministry, honorary ministry, supplementary ministry, auxiliary ministry, worker-priest ministry, ministry of the baptized, and ministry in secular employment. Such variation in terms reveals the diversity of perspectives that different people bring to the subject and indicate that a lack of consensus exists regarding the nature and role of the laity in the church. Additionally, this variability of perspectives sets the stage for researchers to explore different views or perspectives on the laity, depending on the background of the author.

Regardless of definition, the differences between laity and clergy may be overemphasized. Everist (2011) has indicated that the vocation of priesthood in the New Testament is premised on salvation and forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; as such, all ministers are equal whether they are clergy or laity. Everist argues specifically that, since the purpose of salvation is to reach out to the world and impact it with the Christian gospel message, it only makes sense that the church mingles with its community. In essence, the laity is the church's arm that reaches out to the community. Thus, they must be given the honor and the recognition they deserve from the church.

This idea is borne out by analysis of the language used to describe the laity. To Everist (2011), each one of the terms used in describing the concept of the laity is an

image that conveys the wisdom of the unordained. Examples include *laikos* in ministry; ministry of the baptized; priesthood of all believers; ministry in daily lives; and ministry of the whole people of God. Greeves (1960) agreed with Everist and Francis (1998) that the use of *kleros* (clergy) and *laikos* (laity) meant differently to the first century Christians than they do to most twenty-first century Christians. According to Greeves, in the first century the two words were used interchangeably to denote the same people. However, the first century understanding has since been lost and has been replaced with an entirely different one for many in the twenty-first century church. Thus, Greeves contends that the first century meanings of the two biblical concepts of *kleros* and *laikos* are essentially different from *clergy* and *laity* as we know today. Specifically, according to the New Testament, all Christians belong to the *laikos*, the chosen people of God, as well as to the new community in Christ because they are incorporated in the Son (1 Peter 2:9f).

Wendlinder (2014) observed that in addition to affording the vocabulary for exploring the identity of the Roman Catholic laity, the use of the phrase “People of God” in Vatican II documents indicated a dramatic turnaround in ecclesiology, especially regarding the three biblical titles of *Prophet*, *Priest*, and *King*. A careful look at these titles from their Hebrew and Christian roots, according to Wendlinder (2014), should help our understanding of the identity of the laity and open new avenues for empowering the laity for the purpose of transforming the church and its community. According to this author, in *Lumen Gentium* (LG) the phrase “People of God” is used to refer to both the

laity and the clergy by virtue of their new birth in Christ rather than based on their callings and vocations in Christ as professional clergy or otherwise. Thus, according to the language used in LG, the laity can also perform functions that used to be within the purview of the clergy.

The extension in meaning granted to the laity in the LG acknowledged that, like the clergy, the laity share in Christ's triple function of Prophet, Priest, and King. Thus, this author extended the meaning of the phrase "People of God" to include all other nations. Wendlinder's basis for such extension was the Hebrew Bible's notion of Israel as the chosen people of God, which included not only Israel but also all other nations. Eventually, God's plan for choosing Israel was to extend his grace to all nations. Wendlinder's argument is that the extension of meaning given to the phrase "People of God" is an incentive for the laity in terms of their acceptance and recognition by the church to function as they are designed to. Wendlinder further argued that the LG does not limit the use of the phrase "People of God" to only Roman Catholics, but rather extended it to include non-Christians, as well, because all humanity is formed in the image of God and belongs to the people of God. The question remains, though, as to the need for God to call some people his, if everybody was already his.

A further exploration may provide an answer to this question. Zatel (2013) conducted research into the historical underpinnings of how and when the clergy-laity divide started. Historically, there was no distinction between clergy and laity. He argued that from the onset of Christianity, the use of the Greek word *laos* in the New Testament

was translated as the people of God and it did not have any discriminatory connotations between the clergy and the laity until towards the end of the first century. According to Zatel when the early Christians used the term laos, they meant all Christians. Two main external factors, according to Zatel, lead to the rise of the phenomenon of a distinction between the clergy and the laity, namely clericalism and professionalism. Zatel indicates that clericalism was influenced by *secularism*, *sacerdotalism*, and *sacramentalism* while professionalism was influenced by the adoption of Latin as the language of liturgy by the Roman Catholic Church and the so-called clericalization of some functions in the Christian community. Sacerdotalism refers to the transfer of Old Testament priesthood into New Testament Christianity with emphases on the need for an intermediary between God and mankind. Thus, the distinction between the kleros (the clergy) and the laos (the people) is nothing more than a transfer of the order of priesthood in the Old Testament into the New Testament era, without regard for the newness of the order of the priesthood in the New Testament. Sacramentalism refers to the need for a priesthood that had unique credentials to preside over the Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper as a result of increased popular piety among the Christians in the tenth century.

Stevens (2000), a pastor-scholar and a well-known advocate for the whole people of God or the laity, argued against the idea of clericalism. Stevens used theological, structural, and cultural reasons to prove that lay people are the objects of ministry. Stevens' book, *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective*, was written from a protestant point of view, in which Stevens refined Zatel's

(2013) position on the laity by arguing that there is no theological basis for clergy-laity division. Stevens encouraged the laity to rediscover their place in ministry in both the church and in the community as all Christians are called to live in faith, hope, and love and to do God's work both within the church and in the community.

Hunt (2014) pointed out that the 1917 Code of Canon Law aptly captured Pope Pius X's view of the Roman Catholic Church as almost an unequal society where the clergy always have precedence over the laity. The demarcation between the clergy and the laity as expressed in the 1917 Code of Canon Law simply prevented the laity from performing any acts of jurisdiction or order. Given an ecclesiology that assumes a pyramidal model of church leadership, ministries pertained to the ordained while the laity were without a mission and had nothing more than the status of dependent children who were to submit and receive from their parents – the clergy, in this case. Among the issues surrounding the 1917 Canon Law, Hunt observed that the language used to describe the nonordained laity was undeveloped because it connoted the idea of a lack of expertise or qualification, compared with those with professional competence and authority – the clergy. Hunt explained that it was the distaste in the 1917 Code of Canon Law that led to the momentous effort of Vatican II to correct the Roman Catholic Church's view of the laity by acknowledging that the laity have an apostolate and the right and the duty to actively participate in the liturgical rites performed by the clergy.

Zatel (2013) indicated that in formulating a theology of the laity, two opposing schools of thought exist between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics. Unlike the

Roman Catholic Church's position that supports the clergy-laity division, the protestant point of view is convinced that there is no scriptural support for any distinction between the clergy and the laity. Zatel explained that the Greek word laos is used to refer to all God's people without any distinction between clergy and laity. In other words, any behaviors of the church outside of sound theology is unethical behavior. Consequently, if Zatel's argument is right, then any denomination is wrong in superimposing the clergy over the laity. Therefore, unless Zatel is wrong, then any denomination – the Roman Catholic Church or Protestant – that suppress the laity must reconsider their views on the laity and give them the full recognition they need to function both in the church and in the community.

In this perspective, Zatel's (2013) propositions and Akingbola's (2012) SNHRM theory supported the rationale for this study: to understand how organizational culture and the perceptions of the clergy contribute to lay leadership vacuum in a denomination. Subsequently, this rationale was intended to address two questions. First, how WOD-PAOC district executives and their affiliated pastors in the GTA will be able to change their organizational culture by understanding the importance of the laity and their special role as the link between the church and the community. Second, how the church can reach out and contribute to community transformation in the GTA by means of the leadership provided by the laity in their various capacities.

Additionally, Zatel's (2013) propositions have a few implications. First, they imply that the concept of the laity is variously understood across and within

denominations. Next, the variability of understanding creates challenges for the laity in their effort to be integrated into the life of the church for the benefit of the community. This is one possible reason behind the difficulties WOD-PAOC district executives and their affiliated pastors face with respect to optimizing their use of the skills and services of the laity in their efforts to reach out and effectively contribute to community transformation within the GTA.

The Church on the Role and Leadership of the Laity

Disagreements regarding a distinction between the clergy and the laity are mirrored by similar controversy about the role of the laity. Saward's (2001) article *The Theology of the Laity* was written in defense of the Roman Catholic Church's position which argues that there is a distinction between the clergy and the laity. Consequently, Saward rejected the popular Protestant position espoused by authors like Zatel (2013) regarding the language used in the New Testament to describe the clergy and the laity. According to Saward even though the laity are incorporated into Christ by baptism and share in all the threefold offices of Christ, the laity are neither clerics nor do they belong to any religious order. Saward stated that in God's divine wisdom, the church is established as a hierarchical structure. Contrary to this view, I would like to argue that while it is true that Jesus Christ is the head of the church and all Christians are the body of Christ, there is no coherent rationale or reasoning for continuing to split the body of Christ into two and subjecting one to the other.

This further demarcation is more than a simple intellectual issue. Baum (2011) investigated two possible reasons behind two important questions: First, why the Roman Catholic Church has been so deeply divided since Vatican II; and second why so many people have left the Roman Catholic Church, especially in Western Europe, since Vatican II. Baum observed that one important part of the answer to both questions involves the laity. Specifically, Vatican II's promise of freedom to the laity based on their baptism and qualification to fulfill all the threefold functions of "Prophet," "Priest," and "King" was not fulfilled. Instead of Vatican II delivering on its promises, Baum indicated that in August 1997, with the publication of the Instruction on the Collaboration of Nonordained Faithfuls in the Sacred Ministry of Priests by several Roman Catholic local churches and Pontifical Council of the Laity, the laity lost their privilege to exercise ministry in the church and could also not be referred to as pastors, chaplains, coordinators or moderators. These titles became strictly associated with the clergy. Baum indicated that according to this publication, the laity could be assigned decision-making responsibilities in the diocese only under special circumstances, such as when there was a shortage of priests. This article clearly delineates the lack of unified denominational understanding of the laity and if the denominations are ready to release the laity to perform their role.

Denominational perspectives. Francis (1998) posited that, in recent times different denominations including the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion, the Methodist Church and the Church of the Brethren have taken positions on the role of the laity. In addition, among the plethora of issues and areas of the lay

ministry, the various denominations have discussed the diversity of the lay ministry and the corresponding difficulty of harmonizing them; the debate about how appropriate it is to continue to describe the lay ministry in monetary terms, for example “non-stipendiary”; that most of the secular employment positions of the laity is middle-class occupations; whether or not the laity should be ordained; and the question of selection and training. Francis’ (1998) editorial commentary conveys the depth and the breadth of the challenges faced by denominations as they attempt to address issues about the laity. This commentary clearly shows how inundated and confused the denominations are about the laity. This confusion may indicate that the denominations are dealing with an issue that they can never fully comprehend or bring under total control. The denominations may therefore be better off if they allowed the laity to function as they are designed and rather partnered with them than to seek to bring them under control by using strategies including lack of recognition and underutilization of the laity and their skill for the benefit of the community.

Roman Catholic Church’s view. Zatel (2013) indicated that Vatican II was the Roman Catholic Church’s response to the Protestant Reformation regarding the universal priesthood of all believers. From the point of view of the Roman Catholic Church, as expressed by Vatican II, the laity are equally exalted as the clergy and therefore have the responsibility for doing their part in ministry. Specifically, the laity must help the clergy in defending and explaining the Christian faith in their various professional practices, for example as lawyers, teachers, accountants, and social workers. Per Zatel, the Roman

Catholic view of the laity as expressed by Vatican II permitted them to play the role of the clergy in administering the Eucharist, and to train parishioners in the Catholic theology when necessary, such as in catechism, faith formation and missionary activities. It is my contention in this study that this permission has not been acted upon sufficiently by the Catholic Church, and therefore the laity are still underutilized in these areas, thus leading to lay leadership vacuum not only in the Roman Catholic Church but also in many other denominations.

Hunt (2014) discussed how Vatican II treated the subject of the laity by exploring the significant development in the role and identity of the laity. According to Hunt, Vatican II did not expect the laity to be merely passive recipients or docile observers of liturgical rites that the clergy perform. Instead, the identity, rights, and duties of the laity as expressed in LG which adopted a working definition that gave a description of the distinctiveness of the laity in their secular character. On one hand, according to Hunt, Vatican II understood that all the baptized – lay and clergy, male and female – share in the threefold office of Christ – priestly, prophetic and royalty – and therefore have roles to play in the mission of the church in the world and in the church. However, on the other hand, Vatican II indicated that not everyone participates in the mission of the church in the same way.

To clarify Vatican II, LG distinguished between the role of the clergy and the role of the laity (Hunt, 2014). According to the Vatican II documents, the nexus was that the clergy were responsible for teaching in the name and by the power of Christ, while the

laity were more responsible for representing Christ and the church in the public places through their secular employment. According to Vatican II, the laity are synonymous with the church in the world (Hunt, 2014). I argue that even though the Roman Catholic Church could strike a balance in their view of the clergy and the laity, the laity is still subservient to the clergy, and this problem has proven difficult to resolve. The effect of this deficiency is grossly felt in the community where the laity is supposed to be active in bringing about community transformation.

Francis (1998) provided a possible solution and rationale to resolve the impasse. Specifically, on the issue of ordination, a Roman Catholic review using subjects from Africa and the United States of America indicated that it would be appropriate to ordain the laity for three reasons: First, ordination raises the profile of the laity from the level of a mere support to the priesthood to a distinctive order; second, it ends any long standing battle to unduly protect the position of the clergy by limiting non-stipendiary ministers to lesser orders; and finally it settles the important issue that ministry in secular employment is more suitably related to the laity based on the fact that secular ministry is lay in scope. The unwillingness of the Roman Catholic Church to ordain the laity is difficult to understand, particularly if that is what it takes for them to be recognized and become effective in their community witness and representation of the church. This refusal is especially troubling, as Vatican II stated that the laity has an apostolate that is different from the clergy.

Hagstrom (2010) wrote from a Roman Catholic Church point of view and sought to explain the spirit of Vatican II and LG. Merely seeking to clarify Vatican II, Hagstrom acknowledged that through baptism, the laity are admitted into the ecclesial community and therefore have the right to participate in the mission of the church. He traced his roots back to the Old Testament and analyzed the universal call to holiness and its importance to the mission and vocation of the laity. According to this author, the laity have gifts to share by playing unique roles in the secular world of work where the clergy and sacred orders cannot work.

Some variations exist within the Catholic Church, however. Some branches of the Roman Catholic Church more closely approach the direction provided by Vatican II. Hai (2012) conducted research on the support that the Asian Roman Catholic Church laity receive from the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) and the importance of the laity to the Asian Roman Catholic churches and their clergy. As a means to that end, the article discussed the FABC's theology of the church and the laity and their underpinning ecclesiological foundations. A key finding of Hai's study was that, for Asian bishops, evangelization for the purpose of building the kingdom of God in the world is the highest priority of the church. According to Hai, beyond their understanding of world evangelization as the major preoccupation of the church, Asian bishops understood that the laity are not just the bridge to reaching out to the community, but rather the embodiment of the church in the community. To the Asian bishops, therefore, the laity are the principal agents of the redemptive mission of the church and must be

recognized and supported in all ways necessary for them to achieve their destiny. Furthermore, Hai observed that first and foremost, the FABC considered the laity as Christians and therefore part of the church. This primordial consideration allowed the Asian bishops to further consider the laity as the people of God whose identities are based on their baptism and its consequential participation in the priestly, kingly and prophetic roles of Christ – just like the clergy (Wendlinder, 2014). These views are a significant departure from other views in the Roman Catholic Church. As such, the subject of the laity creates problems that are not easily resolved even within a single denomination.

Everist (2011) indicated that the common-sense place for the church to make impact is in the community where the gospel message of the church is much needed and can speak to specific human conditions. Even though men and women have been called and have faithfully served God in all generations, full recognition of the laity by the various denominations continues to be an issue that is impeding the growth of the church and its ability to impact the community. To show that the work of the laity is the heart of ministry Everist described them in community-friendly terminologies and recommended that the church removes all impediments, including a lack of recognition through ecclesiastical or clerical politics, and fully recognize and provide resources for the laity to function in the community.

The central importance of the laity has been explored in other research studies as well. Christofides and Meiring (2012) used interviews and questionnaires to collect data

for their research across several denominations in South Africa with the objective of understanding the status of the laity. The objective for their research was to encourage Baptist churches in South Africa to become truly missional churches that make a difference in their immediate communities and in the rest of world. Thus, the study was intended to help Baptist churches in South Africa to rediscover the importance of the laity as a means to empower the church to face its contemporary diverse opportunities and challenges. The results of their research painted pictures of the laity and a belief system of lay Christians in South Africa that run contrary to general expectations. Specifically, the study observed that the laity in South Africa lacked strong, clear, and consistent beliefs and understanding of their faith largely because they do not possess a coherent biblical worldview. Summarily, Christofides and Meiring's research emphasized the importance of the laity in any successful church-community efforts. However, the questions that remain to be answered are, first who is responsible for equipping the laity? and secondly, what structures exist to train them.

Laity in the Pentecostal church. Fettke (2011) wrote from a Pentecostal perspective to attempt to determine how the clergy and the laity could find their unique places in God's plan. Without doing much to defend his position on how the clergy and the laity are different, his point of departure was that each has their own place in ministry. Not only did Fettke lament the status quo where the clergy have usurped all leadership roles in ministry and subjected the laity to clerical instructions but also bemoaned the ignorant and nonchalant position of the laity that has turned them into passive or

dependent recipients of clerical instructions and directions. The thesis of Fettke's book is that the laity has a place in ministry just like the clergy and therefore the clergy must learn to train and release the laity for the work of ministry in their various professional settings in the community.

Unlike the protestant perspective that does not seem to see any line of demarcation between the clergy and the laity, Pentecostals and the Roman Catholic Church seem to agree that there is distinction between the clergy and the laity. The difference between the Roman Catholic Church and the Pentecostals, however, is that whereas the Roman Catholic Church has gone a step further to carefully consider the issue at their highest level of authority and issued a position paper with steps to combat it, the Pentecostals have done little or nothing in that direction (Fettke, 2011). That notwithstanding, the status quo is that both the Roman Catholic Church and the Pentecostals have a common problem on hand. They both struggle about how to effectively harness the resources that the laity bring to the church and the community for their mutual benefit and for the church to impact its community.

Recent discourse and literature have shown that the clergy-laity distinction is unhealthy and not theologically sound (Fettke, 2011; Russell, 2014). As such, there is a need to provide both clerics and the laity equal opportunities to preach and serve the community. However, the literature shows that utilizing scripture has been inadequate for clergymen to effectively harness the leadership potential of the laity. Pastors have since sought alternative means to acquire the skills needed to enable such leadership

development. Such alternative methods to develop the leadership potentials of the laity are discussed in the following section.

HRM of Volunteers

The importance of HR to non-profit organizations requires that it is strategically managed. HRM is a management function used to optimize HR towards the achievement of organizational goals (Mitchell et al., 2013). As a process, HRM typically involves defining and coordinating work positions, workforce planning, recruitment and selection of new employees, training and development of personnel, performance management and compensation, and resolution of legal issues (Buettner, 2015). These processes and the role of HRM in the functioning of an organization have been widely studied in various business settings and commercial organizations (Buettner, 2015; Mazi, 2015), and, as defined, are largely in parallel with the goals of commercial organizations. However, as evidence-based studies have shown the positive effects of SHRM on personnel development, motivation, job satisfaction, and overall organizational outcomes, many nonprofit organizations have also utilized strategic HRM in maximizing personnel efficiency and optimizing organizational performance (Buettner, 2015). Such has also been the case in numerous religious organizations.

The use of SHRM is critical in nonprofit organizations because the quality of their services and products rely heavily on the quality of their employees and volunteers (Walk et al., 2014). However, the application of SHRM in nonprofit organizations can be different from its application in commercial organizations and businesses primarily

because of the scarcity of financial and material resources, as well as the reliance on volunteers in nonprofit organizations (Walk et al., 2014). In a study on the use of HRM on hospital volunteers, Rogers, Jiang, Rogers, and Intindola (2015) examined the relationship between hospital strategy, volunteer management practices, volunteer workforce attributes, and patient satisfaction. The study was grounded on the perception that utilizing HR management theory would aid in improving the volunteer-patient relationship, which would subsequently improve patient outcomes and satisfaction (Rogers et al., 2015). Using structural equation modeling, results of the analysis showed a positive association between volunteer resource management and hospital outcomes (Rogers et al., 2015). In other words, hospitals that utilized SHRM for their volunteers reported improved hospital outcomes as related to patient well-being and satisfaction. Results of the structural equation modeling also showed that utilization of low-cost strategies, such as verbal recognitions and the creation and use of a policy manual for volunteers, enhances the commitment of volunteers, which helped improve volunteer performance and satisfaction (Rogers et al., 2015).

Mazi (2015) similarly emphasized the importance of HRM in nonprofit organizations. Particularly, nonprofit organizations acquire and improve their technology, processes, and competitive advantage through their human resources. As such, HRM is critical for a nonprofit to provide services, uphold its mission, and ultimately to survive. In a study of HRM for volunteers, Mazi surveyed and interviewed volunteers from various nonprofit organizations in Istanbul to examine their satisfaction and motivation as

outcomes of various HRM practices. Results of the statistical analyses showed a strong positive relationship between the level of HRM application and volunteer satisfaction (Mazi, 2015). Further analysis showed that all seven HRM-related factors, i.e. human resource planning, job analysis and placement, education, evaluation, wage and rewarding, job security, and communication, were correlated with five volunteer satisfaction factors, i.e. satisfaction, performance, willingness, feedback, and teamwork (Mazi, 2015). However, as the significance levels between and across factors are close, the relative strength of the HRM factors in the improvement of the satisfaction factors cannot be determined readily.

In addition to nonreligious nonprofit organizations, religious organizations and churches have also utilized human resource management techniques and processes in managing the clergy, paid workers, and volunteers. In one study, Adubah (2012) investigated the effectiveness of HRM of the clergy in the Methodist church in Ghana. As part of the church's ten-year plan to develop the church's HR to improve the quality of services provided across all church departments, church leaders studied, designed, and implemented an improved HRM plan. Adubah surveyed and interviewed 500 Bishops, ministers, and other administrative personnel. While the church leaders' HR policies were well developed and well planned, these policies and their associated rules for implementation were not well communicated to ministers and other administrative personnel. Thus, the policies were ineffective as a means to improve church services (Adubah, 2012). Additionally, Adubah identified that the church's ministerial transfers

system was poorly designed and therefore was not functional. Specifically, ministers were posted and given assignments arbitrarily without regard for individual strengths and specialties. Suggested improvements for the HRM policy thus included conducting a thorough background profile of all personnel such that each individual minister's strengths, weaknesses, and specialties were considered in determining their assignments (Adubah, 2012). It was also suggested that the church hones the potential of young members – to recognize and fully utilize their gifts and graces – and use them in the social mission of the church (Adubah, 2012).

Studies on HRM in nonprofit organizations and churches show how the use of business management techniques and practices can be effective in managing workers and volunteers in a wide array of nonprofit settings. However, care must be taken in the planning and implementation of HRM policies as these must be suited to the specific context of the organization, especially adhering to the philosophical and religious dispositions of organizational leaders, members, and volunteers.

Leadership Development Among the Laity

As the unhealthy divide between the clergy and the laity in terms of leadership and spirituality continues, many researchers and clergymen have sought for ways to break down this demarcation and allow lay people to grow as leaders in the Church with skills to contribute to community transformation. Resulting from an in-depth study of a Presbyterian church in South Korea, Bae (2012) developed a protocol to help church leaders to create a leadership development program for the laity. In creating a leadership

development program, Bae emphasized the need to focus efforts in developing the three strengths or capabilities needed in a spiritual leader. First, spiritual leaders' character, specifically their integrity and humility, should be developed if they are to be inspiration and role models to others within the church and in the community (Bae, 2012). The second capability is knowledge, which encompasses all relevant information that an individual may use in performing his roles and responsibilities as a leader (Bae, 2012). The last capability to be developed would be individual's skills, which will allow him to use his knowledge to do good (Bae, 2012).

In addition to focusing efforts on developing these capabilities, Bae (2012) also suggested that church leaders should keep in mind the seven Ps or seven important principles in the planning, designing, and implementation of leadership development program. First, church leaders should agree on the purpose or the rationale behind the need for lay leadership development. Such purposes often include improving the effectiveness and efficiency of church ministry and improving the health and growth of the Church (Bae, 2012). Second, church leaders must establish a singular philosophy, which would include core values, a mission statement, and a vision statement (Bae, 2012). Third, church leaders should identify the best people that they believe can move forward the purpose of such a leadership development program, which should include both the laity and the clergy (Bae, 2012).

The fourth stage involves the actual implementation of the leadership development program, which should already have a refined process that would lead to

better practice. After the actual implementation, progression should be advanced, i.e. church leaders should regularly evaluate the leadership development process as well as the lay leaders themselves such that drawbacks or shortcomings may be identified and subsequently addressed (Bae, 2012). Lastly, church leaders should recognize lay leaders for their efforts and their influence in the ministry to further motivate them in their spiritual leadership (Bae, 2012).

In another study, Taylor (2014) studied the status of lay leadership in several churches to determine if they had lay leadership programs and to explore their methods and main philosophies. Analyses showed that most of the churches in the study did not have an established lay leadership development program, and while a few other churches did have programs, they were poorly planned and underdeveloped (Taylor, 2014). The author subsequently provided suggestions to improve lay leadership programs, which were like the recommendations forwarded by Bae.

Taylor (2014) also emphasized the need to contextualize lay leadership development methods. In other words, church leaders should design development programs that would be appealing to and effective in the local communities (Taylor, 2014). It was also suggested that the creation and implementation of a lay leadership development program should not be the sole responsibility of an individual; rather, a lay leadership development team should be formed so that methods are optimized (Taylor, 2014). Taylor also identified common barriers to the establishment of a lay leadership development program, which included external factors, individuals' unwillingness, and

limitations in resources. Taylor subsequently implied that such obstacles could be overcome through the lead pastor's own leadership.

The Phenomenon of the Study

The GTA community is dealing with increasing numbers of poor communities. To address the situation, local and provincial governments are making funds available to partner with public, private and third sector organizations to tackle the situation from all angles. Even though the Christian church has a long history of community transformation credit, it seems that the WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA are out of touch with how to step in and play their role as agents of community transformation. The community transformation leadership challenge facing the WOD-PAOC churches is likely because of the underutilization of their rich and valuable HR, the laity. The laity are the volunteers of the church and could represent the church (Nelson, 2011) in the community and lead the way in the denomination's community transformation social mission. This phenomenon of underutilization of the laity is perceived to be at the root of the lack of success on the part of WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA in achieving their social mission of community transformation. Since strategic decisions about the denomination and the execution or implementation of such strategies is the prerogative of the district executives of the denomination and their affiliated pastors who are the managers of the denomination (Lockett, Thompson, & Morgenstern, 2009), this study sought to examine how their perceptions contribute to the lay leadership vacuum that exists in the WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA.

The Laity of the Western Ontario District of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

In 1991, WOD-PAOC published *LifeLink: Ministry beyond Maintenance* in response to their observation that many of their pastors were at a loss regarding how to make their churches relevant to their communities by connecting with and engaging them in their social needs. In the introduction to *LifeLink*, the committee charged with the responsibility for producing the handbook indicated that pastors of WOD-PAOC churches needed to change their approach to connecting with and engaging their community. The purpose for publishing the manual was to help local church pastors to take the church out of the building and make it relevant to the community by meeting the basic needs of the community, including their economic and social needs. The handbook acknowledged that even though the church has the capacity to influence its community, its energy has become latent. To meet its challenge, the WOD-PAOC acknowledged that it will require entire congregations to respond to the needs of their respective communities instead of just the pastor or leadership of the congregations responding. The major deficiency of the publication, however, was that the authors attempted to solve the problem without studying the root cause to determine the appropriate solutions to solve the problem. Thus, this research was intended to fill that gap by studying and understanding the underlying reasons why the WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA continue to experience challenges in connecting with and engaging and impacting their communities. As well, based on the data that were collected and analyzed in the light of Akingbola's SNHRM theory, this study sought to determine the HR principles, practices,

and policies on the laity in the WOD-PAOC and to identify ways through which these may be improved in order to optimize the potential of the laity in the district and move the affiliated churches in the direction of connecting with their communities and contributing to community transformation.

Summary and Conclusions

It is evident from the body of literature reviewed that a clearly unarguable biblical support for a distinction between clergy and laity is nonexistent. At best, the language or choice of words that have been interpreted as clergy and laity have been variously interpreted along historical and denominational lines. What is worse, some denominations have accepted that the two concepts are one and the same in meaning and yet have failed to implement any decisions or conclusions that will be consistent with or true to their understanding. The net effect of this distinction between the clergy and the laity, unfortunately, is a hurting community that could otherwise benefit so much from the church and its laity. Because of this distinction and the starvation of the laity from effective identification, equipping, and deployment by the church, the wheels of community transformation through the church are turning very slowly – at best.

What is clear, however, is that as an organization, the church does not need only one kind of workers. It certainly needs full time employees as well as volunteers who work in the community and contribute to moving the church towards achieving its social mission. Instead of finding nonexistent explanations to justify a clergy-laity division, therefore, like any other nonprofit organization, the church needs to consider its

volunteers, also called the laity, as very important and therefore equip them to be able to carry out their functions in the community.

Different denominations and different members of the clergy are yet to demonstrate a consistent understanding of the important role of the laity in the mission of the church. Even though the role of the laity is pivotal in Christian mission today, particularly in community transformation (Christofides & Meiring, 2012), the church is yet to recognize the laity and their ministries as tools for community transformation (Russell, 2014). From definition to theology, there is a lack of unanimity or consensus among denominations regarding the laity. To regain its place in the community and prepare itself to face the challenges and opportunities by influencing and directing economic and community transformation in the GTA, Christofides and Meiring (2012), indicated that the church should rediscover an in-depth understanding of the laity and the benefits of their involvement including the role they play in the community transformation efforts of the church. Recognizing all believers as being called to different ministries and therefore being accepted by the church as such, according to Christofides and Meiring, should be standard practice to the church for the benefit of the community.

Even though several studies have been conducted about the place of the laity in the church and in the community, there were no such studies pertaining to WOD-PAOC district executive affiliated pastors in the GTA. Therefore, in this study I intended to specifically focus on understanding how WOD-PAOC district executive and their affiliated pastors' perceptions of the laity contribute to the current lay leadership vacuum

in the denomination. To further understand the phenomenon, I sought to understand how the clergy in WOD-PAOC perceive the lay leadership vacuum in the denomination.

In Chapter 3, I will discuss my research design and rationale. I will also discuss the methodology that I will use to analyze the data. In addition, I will disclose my role in the research. Finally, I will discuss issues of trustworthiness including the ethical procedures that I will follow.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand how the perceptions of the clergy might contribute to the existing lay leadership vacuum in WOD-PAOC that appears to inhibit the efforts of the denomination's district executives and their affiliated pastors in the GTA to contribute to the community transformation needs. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 WOD-PAOC pastors and district executives in the GTA to fulfill this purpose. For this study, lay leadership involvement in the social mission of the church was described as recognizing the importance of the volunteer role of the laity and identifying and equipping them by providing leadership development opportunities through mediums including workshops, seminars, and retreats. This is important because according to Fettke (2011), the laity are distinct from the clergy and their role as volunteers of the church in bringing transformation to communities is critical and relevant.

This chapter will include the research design and rationale, and the methodology that I used to analyze the data. In addition, I will disclose my role in the research. Finally, I will discuss issues of trustworthiness including the ethical procedures that I followed.

Research Design and Rationale

I used a qualitative design to achieve the purposes of this study. The main research question was: How do the perceptions of the clergy contribute to a lay leadership vacuum in a denomination? The SQs I developed to allow the research question to be

expanded upon were:

SQ1. How do WOD-PAOC pastors and district executives perceive the laity's role in the human resource decisions of the denomination?

SQ2. How do WOD-PAOC pastors and district executives perceive the lay leadership vacuum that exists in WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA?

In this study, I addressed what I perceived that the WOD-PAOC missed in their 1991 publication. To catch what the publication missed, I conducted this study in order to understand the underlying reasons why WOD-PAOC churches are unable to effectively participate in and contribute to transforming their communities. According to PAOC Fellowship Statistics (2016), the WOD is a significant district in the PAOC denomination. It is the largest of the eight districts in the PAOC family with 345 of the 1,164 national denominational congregations (PAOC Fellowship Statistics, 2016). What is more, the GTA congregations of the WOD are leaders in the policies and practices of the entire PAOC denomination (PAOC Fellowship Statistics, 2016). Any changes in how the district executives and pastors of WOD-PAOC perceive and involve their laity because of this study could significantly impact many GTA communities that need to experience community transformation, and potentially lay the foundation for more PAOC districts and their congregations to consider making similar changes. The result of this study, therefore, have the potential to change the way the PAOC and possibly other denominations understand and utilize the skills of their laity or volunteers for the benefit of their communities, although the findings cannot be easily assumed as generalizable.

In conducting this qualitative case study, I used a purposive sampling strategy (see Patton, 2015) and thematic coding (see Willig, 2013) to analyze the data collected. The case study design appeared to be the most appropriate strategy of inquiry because it afforded me the opportunity for me to empirically investigate the central phenomenon within its real-life context (see Hsieh, 2004). Using the case study design, according to Merriam (2009), can result in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. Additionally, Baxter and Jack (2008) and Yin (2014) have indicated that using the case study design has certain benefits that also apply in the case of this research. First, these authors indicated that case study design is used to answer *how* and *why* questions. Next, case study design prevents the researcher from manipulating those involved in the study. Third, case study design helps the researcher to prioritize and cover contextual conditions because the researcher knows that they are relevant to the phenomenon being studied. Finally, case study design brings the phenomenon and its context so close together so that they are hardly separable from each other.

Research Design

My choice of a qualitative case study research design to address the problem of lay leadership vacuum in WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA was motivated by the quest for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied (see Stake, 2010). Maxwell (2013) has indicated that a qualitative case study research design is synonymous with an iterative process in which the researcher plays an integral role. By its very nature qualitative inquiry tends to be interpretive, experiential, and situational (Stake, 2010)

because among the main features of the research design for qualitative case study is the purposive sample drawn from key stakeholders.

A qualitative case study design was the most appropriate one for this study for a few reasons. First, it was appropriate because I did not have control over the events and yet I needed in-depth and rich data for analysis to understand the underlying factors for the phenomenon of a lay leadership vacuum at WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA. A qualitative case study design has the capacity to suggest causality (O'Sullivan et al., 2008), and therefore helped this study to arrive at the necessary understanding of the phenomenon of lay leadership vacuum at WOD-PAOC churches.

The qualitative case study held more appeal to me and seemed to be the most appropriate qualitative design that could be used to address the research question and achieve the purpose of this study. The case study method held a stronger appeal to me because of its benefits. For example, according to Stokrocki (1997) the case study method affords the researcher the opportunity to conduct a study that helps to understand idiosyncratic and complex cases. Thus, the case study method meshed well with this study because the nature of the problem being studied namely, how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to lay leadership vacuum in a denomination, was a complex one that transcends the WOD-PAOC in the GTA. According to Barna (2001), the problem that was addressed in this study is more of a global nature and seems to affect more than one denomination. A qualitative case study design for this dissertation was more appropriate

than using other designs because the central phenomenon that was investigated in this study was and is ongoing (see O'Sullivan et al., 2008).

Ultimately, a qualitative case study design was an ideal approach with this dissertation for two reasons. First, a qualitative case study design facilitated the study of the phenomenon of lay leadership vacuum at WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA in depth and in detail. Secondly, it brought along with it a set of new approaches to handling the phenomenon of lay leadership vacuum at WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA that will help to improve the quality of leadership in the organization (see O'Sullivan et al., 2008; Patton, 2015).

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in a qualitative study is very critical. According to Fink (2000), the researcher is the most significant instrument in a qualitative study. The qualitative researcher is important because the field research is an interaction between the researcher and the subjects of the research (Patton, 2015). This implies that in qualitative research, the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon being studied is critical because it can have significant effect on the analysis of the data collected. Maxwell (2013) has indicated that in qualitative research the observations, descriptions, and interpretations are carried out through the medium of the researcher.

Consequently, my role as researcher was integral to the process from the data collection stage throughout the interpretation, analysis, and findings presentation stages (Stake, 2010). In this study, I developed the interview protocol and questions, selected

participants, conducted the interviews, interpreted and analyzed the data, and compiled the report based on my findings. This highly personal role notwithstanding, I made every effort to ensure that the data were gathered, analyzed, and presented in an objective manner (see Stake, 2010). Stake has argued that the studying and questioning implicit in research usually lead to both objective and subjective interpretations, and both should be facilitated. Given the highly personal role of the researcher in the qualitative tradition, Stake has highlighted the importance of explaining the biases that the researcher might encounter in the process of interpreting the views and experiences of the participants in the study.

Researcher Bias

Researcher bias in a qualitative study must be carefully watched and addressed to ensure that the study reflects the views of the participants than any preconceived mindset of the researcher (Panucci & Wilkins 2010). A term drawn from quantitative research, bias refers to a systematic error that could lead researchers to draw conclusions that may not be supported by the data (Panucci & Wilkins 2010). It is considered a significant issue in qualitative studies because the qualitative researcher is part of the process and all researchers are different. Panucci and Wilkins defined bias as any tendency which prevents unprejudiced consideration of a question. In a qualitative research, such tendencies could occur at different stages including the data collection and data analysis. It could also occur at the sampling stage or by either selecting or encouraging one

outcome over another (Panucci and Wilkins, 2010). A grossly-biased research study has several negative implications.

The conclusions drawn in any qualitative study is a product of how the data were interpreted. Panucci and Wilkins have indicated that bias could influence a study's conclusions. Shenton (2004) has pointed out that biased research affects the overall trustworthiness and credibility of the study. Even though credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are mostly used to evaluate quantitative research, they are equally important in a qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). Even though generally speaking qualitative research findings are not intended to be transferable because they are about specific phenomena with references to specific populations that may be so unique in all their idiosyncrasies, Shenton indicated that minimizing bias in a qualitative research holds a lot of promise for the study and therefore should also be a matter of concern for the qualitative researcher. According to Panucci and Wilkins (2010), bias will always be present in qualitative research because bias is not a dichotomous variable. Consequently, the important thing for the researcher to consider is the necessary steps to minimize it.

Bias in a qualitative study could be minimized in several different ways. One way to minimize bias is through a proper study design, implementation, and data analysis (Panucci & Wilkins, 2010). In order minimize bias in my study, I avoided selection bias by ensuring that my population was clearly defined, accessible, and reliable (Panucci and Wilkins, 2010). I made the effort to minimize bias in my proposed research by adhering to Guba's (1981) four-point approach – dependability, credibility, transferability, and

confirmability – to dealing with potential trustworthy issues in qualitative studies as follows. I addressed dependability issues by carrying out audit trials and triangulation and address credibility issues by demonstrating that I was presenting a true picture of the phenomenon being studied. Next, to counter potential transferability issues I provided enough details about the fieldwork. This will afford other researchers the opportunity to determine that the environment of my study compares with theirs before considering transferring knowledge from my research to theirs. I addressed any possible confirmability issues by demonstrating that my research findings emerged out of the data collected and analyzed. Additionally, I endeavoured to minimize obvious and avoidable sources of bias by spreading my sample to cover the broad GTA area instead of confining all the fieldwork to one social group or small geographic location within the GTA.

I took steps to recognize my own personal views as a member of a WOD-PAOC local assembly and the researcher (Panucci & Wilkins (2010)). I recognized the fact that as an ordained bivocational minister in the denomination, I may have preconceived notions of the laity. To avoid or minimize bias, I set aside these roles when gathering and analyzing the data. Neither being a pastor of a local church, a leader, nor a manager within the WOD-PAOC, and therefore, not wielding authority over any of my research participants helped me to manage any potential and related bias (see Walden University, 2015). The WOD-PAOC encourages research of the kind I conducted (Walden University, 2015) because it helps the organization to continuously improve at no financial costs to them. According to Janesick (2011) a researcher's biases, beliefs, and

values must be disclosed as part of a description of the researcher's role. My self-disclosure in this section was necessary because qualitative researchers come to their studies with some degree of a priori knowledge of the phenomenon they study, and thus create the platform for the possibility of bias (see Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Self-disclosure, therefore, is a means to minimize bias in qualitative research.

Methodology

Choosing the appropriate research method for a qualitative study is important for several reasons. Poor choice and or use of methodology could be recipe for disaster in any study. EIPPE (2011) indicated that generally, the research question and the availability of resources are the most significant determinants of the choice of the appropriate methodology to be used in data collection. Maxwell (2013) confirmed the view about the research question-methodology nexus by indicating that there is a strong interrelationship between the research question and data collection strategies. According to Maxwell, the choice of research methodology must be related to the research question, the situation, and the strategy that is most likely to be effective in the given context and facilitate the required data to be collected. Given that the purpose of the study was to understand how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to the lay leadership vacuum that exists within the PAOC, I considered the qualitative methods the most suitable and most likely to produce an answer to the research question.

Participant Selection Logic

The quality of a qualitative study hinges heavily on how the researcher determines the research participants. According to Emmel (2013), sampling methods and sample size are very significant components of qualitative studies although qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, is not intended for generalization (Stake, 2010). Sampling methods and sample size considerations in qualitative studies involve a series of decisions including how many individuals to include in a study, how to select them and the conditions under which the selection will take place (Emmel, 2013). Rather than hiding sampling methods and sample size considerations in qualitative studies, Curtis, Gesler, Smith, and Washburn (2000) underscore the importance of taking the necessary steps to define the sampling method and sample size. They indicate that the qualitative researcher has the additional responsibility to be explicit about the sampling method used and how the researcher arrived at the sample size. As well, they indicate that the researcher must consider the way the sampling decisions will affect how the results will be interpreted. In qualitative studies researchers are required to carefully reflect on the reasons why they choose their sample size out of their overall population (Emmel, 2013). Among the factors to carefully consider before arriving at the sample size of a qualitative study, Emmel drew attention to the case and the units of data, for example, observation, and interview respectively. The former refers to the size of the population while the latter refers to the number of the data collection strategies that will be used. In other words, qualitative researchers are urged to consider the size of the research population vis-à-vis

the different types of data collection strategies to be used to arrive at an acceptable sampling and sample size (Emmel, 2013).

Given that the purpose of this study was to gain in-depth understanding of how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to lay leadership vacuum in a denomination, a purposive sampling method and a sample size drawn from the population of WOD-PAOC district executives and WOD-PAOC affiliated pastors were deemed the most appropriate sampling strategies. The rationale for the purposive sampling method, according to Patton (2015), is to help the researcher to gain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied, based on the data collected from information-rich participants. Thus, in purposive sampling, researchers carefully choose their study participants based on their ability to provide quality information to help bring out the expected in-depth understanding. The population and subsequent sample for this study consisted of WOD-PAOC district executives and WOD-PAOC affiliated pastors in the GTA. These individuals are the decision makers in the denomination whose roles, involvement, beliefs, behavior and overall perceptions drive or determine the status of lay leadership. I did not interview any lay leaders because they are neither managers nor decision makers in the organization and therefore their perspectives do not matter in this study. Rather they are resources to the organization.

There are rules that serve as guidelines for making sample size decisions. These rules include the purpose of the study, available resources, time, and the interests of the parties involved in the research (Patton, 2015). Thus, the decision of an appropriate

sample size depends on multiple factors, ranging from the research design and objective to access to resources, for example, time and funding

Since the data collected and analyzed are what lead to the conclusions drawn by researchers, it is important to understand that decisions about how much data to collect are impacted by the research objective and the available resources – including time and funding (Patton, 2015). For example, on one hand, it is possible for a researcher to scale down on the amount of data to be collected for a proposed research because of lack of funding, while on the other hand a research could be stretched because of availability of resources and the interest of the parties involved. Of course, not only would the results of such studies be different than if the originally intended data had been collected and analyzed, but also their usefulness may not be the same.

For this study, I considered small sample size ideal for understanding how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to a lay leadership vacuum in a denomination. Recruitment, however, continued until data saturation was achieved. According to Onwuegbuzi and Leech (2007), the sample size should be large enough to enable the researcher to obtain rich and comprehensive material from the participants but small enough so that information saturation can be achieved. Data saturation refers to the time when the researcher cannot determine new themes through continued data collection (Vandall-Walker, Jenson, & Oberle, 2012) or no information different from what is obtained from those interviewed earlier (Gerring, 2011).

According to Patton (2015), the qualitative researcher achieves depth by addressing detail, context, and nuance. Also, I considered a small sample size appropriate for this study because it was a self-sponsored doctoral dissertation that was carried out under a tight budget and time crunch. To attain the objective of this study, therefore, the sample size was small as opposed to large. Consequently, I purposefully sampled my population by carefully selecting a small number of information-rich (Patton, 2015) participants from the research population. My sample size, therefore, 10 information-rich individuals selected to represent a cross section of WOD-PAOC district executives and WOD-PAOC affiliated pastors in the GTA. I defined information-rich individuals as those who had experienced the lay leadership vacuum phenomenon and therefore had information to share that would contribute to deeper and enduring understandings of the phenomenon.

Case study has been successfully used in different disciplines over a long period. As Soy (2006) has affirmed, case studies have been successfully used as a strategy of inquiry in a cross section of disciplines, including the social sciences, to examine contemporary real-life situations and to provide understanding to otherwise least understood phenomena. In line with the specifications and guidelines for conducting case study research as outlined by Yin (2014), specific boundaries were established for this study by limiting the unit of analysis and the location of the study to the WOD-PAOC and the GTA respectively.

Instrumentation

Qualitative researchers use a variety of devices or instruments to collect data from their participants. According to Biklen and Bogdan (2003), data are the raw materials by which research findings come alive to the researcher. The different techniques used in collecting qualitative research data include interviews, observation, existing documents, and focus groups (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Thomas, Nelson & Silverman, n.d.). According to Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008), of all the qualitative data collection techniques, interviews and focus groups are the most commonly used. In this study, I used interviews as the main data collection technique because of the different purposes it serves in a qualitative case study and for that matter the appeal it holds for helping to achieve the objective of this study. There are three distinct types of interviews, namely, structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Gill et al. 2008).

Effective ways of collecting data for qualitative studies have been much written about. Janesick (2011) recommended that for qualitative interviews as a data collection strategy to be effective, the researcher must develop and test a data collection tool prior to administering it to the research participants or samples. Using interviews as an example of a data collection tool, Janesick indicated that the researcher must first develop the tool by preparing a list of questions that follow a certain format. According to Janesick, the three different types of questions that should be asked in an interview are: basic, descriptive, big-picture questions; follow-up questions; and comparison, contrast or

structural questions. Once the tool is ready the researcher follows a certain protocol (Janesick (2011). First, the researcher should ensure that all recording devices are available and have been tested for functionality. Next, Janesick recommended that the researcher ensures that back-up devices and related resources are in place.

The next important recommendation in the process is that the researcher field-tests the data collection tool before administering it to the participants of the study. This means to administer the tool to someone else or a group other than the research participants prior to administering it to the participants or samples. The benefit of this step is to get feedback that may help the researcher to adjust and realign some of the questions for reasons including clarity and better focus on the research question(s) and purpose. In addition to all the above steps in the process, researchers must secure participants' written permission (Janesick, 2011), as required by Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) on qualitative researchers.

To collect data for this research, I developed and used an open-ended interview protocol (Appendix F). This open-ended interview protocol was of immense benefit to the objective of this research in seeking to understand the factors that may have contributed to the lack of lay involvement in the activities of WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA. According to Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec, and Vehovar (2003) there are two types of open-ended questionnaires: one that is intended to discover individuals' spontaneous responses to the interview questions, and another that is intended to avoid

bias that may result from the interviewer advertently or inadvertently suggesting responses to the interviewee.

An open-ended interview protocol as a data collection tool was suitable for collecting data that shed light on this research objective of understanding the contributory factors to the phenomenon of lay leadership vacuum in WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA for several reasons. Among the benefits, open-ended interviews permit an unlimited number of possible answers – an opportunity to avoid bias; afford respondents the opportunity to qualify and clarify their responses and thus give them room to be detailed in their responses as well as allow for a wide range of possible themes to arise from the issue being discussed; could lead to discovering unanticipated findings; allow enough answers to complex issues; make allowance for creativity, self-expression, and richness of detail; help the researcher to appreciate the interviewee's logic, thinking process, and frame of reference; allow for depth and breadth of interviewee responses, thus providing richness of detail; put interviewees at ease; reveals avenues for further questioning which may otherwise go untapped; and make allowance for spontaneity (Kendall and Kendall, 2013; University of Waterloo, 2015).

Data Collection Procedures

Getting organized and following recommended steps have been tested and proven to yield good results in qualitative data collection. According to Janesick (2011), the researcher initiates the data collection phase by developing and testing a data collection tool. To use interviews as the data collection technique, the researcher prepares a list of

questions that follow a standard structure or format of three types of questions namely, basic or descriptive or big-picture questions; follow-up questions; and finally, comparison or contrast or structural questions.

The written consent of participants is considered an important step in any research. Therefore, before conducting the interviews for both the pilot and research proper, the researcher must secure the participants' written permission (Janesick, 2011). According to Janesick (2011), research participants' permission has become so important so that IRBs have heightened the degree or the extent to which they demand it from qualitative researchers.

The next important step in the process after the preparation of the tool is the piloting of the study. At this stage, the researcher field-tests the data collection instrument or tool before administering it to the participants of the study. This means that the researcher administers the tool to someone else or a group other than the research participants prior to administering it to them. The benefit of this step is to get feedback that may help the researcher to adjust and realign some of the questions for reasons including clarity and better focus on the research question(s) and purpose. For this step, I recruited four pilot participants by getting two from the population of WOD-PAOC district executives and two from the WOD-PAOC affiliated pastors through e-mail communication with the secretary-treasurer of the organization, using the research announcement flyer as found in Appendix B. They were not part of the participants after they participated in the pilot study. The responses from these individuals were not

reported as part of the data for the final dissertation. No pilot interviews were conducted until IRB approval was received. Once IRB approval was received, I used the interview protocol found in appendix F for the pilot study. These questions were based on Akingbola's SNHR theory. After reviewing the transcripts of the pilot, I followed a certain protocol to administer the interview to the participants with the help of my recording devices.

Prior to the interview, I connected with the interviewees through e-mail and telephone to confirm the appointment. According to the secretary-treasurer of the organization, to interview WOD-PAOC executives and their affiliated pastors the researcher must make individual contacts with the prospective research participants and discuss the objective and timeframe to get their independent informed consent (Appendix D). Throughout the recruitment process and on the day of the interviews the researcher must travel to the participants to reduce the participants' commitment as much as possible. Finally, the researcher must commit to share the findings of the research with the participants once the study is over.

On each interview day, I dressed appropriately and arrived a little earlier than scheduled (Kendall & Kendall, 2013) as a way of affirming the importance I attached to the interview appointment. Also, I ensured that all recording devices were available, had been tested for functionality and that back-up devices and related resources were in place. During the recorded interview, I will take some notes for important reasons including to aid recall of important questions and interview trend, to keep alert, to show my interest in

the interview, and to show my preparedness (Kendall and Kendall, 2013). I began all my interviews by a firm handshake with my interviewees, a self and subject introduction and a pleasant conversation. I closed my interviews with a handshake, and told my participants that the opportunity existed to add anything else they found important as well as to set up future appointments and concluded by thanking them for their time (Kendall & Kendall, 2013). I sent them the transcript of the interviews and requested them to review and confirm their accuracy.

There are variations of how to prepare and administer interview questions. Kendall and Kendall (2013) have refined Janesick's (2011) model for how to prepare and administer interview questionnaire as a qualitative research data collection tool. According to these authors, qualitative research data collected through interviews lead to better understanding of the phenomenon being studied when the researcher avoids leading questions or questions that either imply or suggest answers. They pointed out that two problems are directly related to leading questions. First, such questions have the tendency to lead respondents to give the responses desired by the interviewer. Secondly, they increase bias and compromise the reliability and validity of the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

After collecting data, they must be analyzed to bring out their overt and covert meanings and implication. Zaki (2012) defined qualitative data analysis as the range of processes and procedures involved in moving qualitative data collected from the field into some form of explanation, understanding, or interpretation of the people and situations

being investigated. Qualitative research requires that the researcher analyzes the data in a way that is both sensible and honest.

The primary technique used to achieve this is coding (Zaki, 2012). According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), qualitative researchers code or label segments of their data for purposes including categorizing, looking for themes and identifying the patterns that may be developing in the data collected. Adu (2013) agreed with the above definition of coding by indicating that it is a process that is designed to capture the essence or the features of qualitative research data, for example interview transcripts, documents, artifacts and field notes. According to Adu, at the coding stage, the qualitative researcher reduces the data collected, with the objective of understanding the phenomenon being studied and yet without losing its meaning. Adu further pointed out that coding, when properly carried out, could lead to the development of constructs or mental definitions of variable properties of events of objects which are normally expressed in theoretical, qualitative or subjective terms.

Even though the underlying assumption of the foregoing is that data collection will always precede coding, it does not always happen like that. In other words, at certain times, qualitative researchers generate codes before collecting data. Precoding is the establishment of “‘start list’ of codes” prior to commencing fieldwork (Miles et al, 2014, p. 81). Certainly, there are advantages and disadvantages for using precoding structures in qualitative research. According to Miles et al. (2014), the sources of precoding codes include conceptual framework, list of research questions, hypotheses, problem areas and or key

variables the researcher brings to the study. A consequential benefit of precoding structures, therefore, is that they permit researchers to test their a priori knowledge about the research issue. In other words, since researchers bring some knowledge to their studies, pre-coding structures give them the opportunity to confirm or reject their expectations that are based on their a priori knowledge of the studies they are conducting. Among the possible disadvantages for using precoding, less skillful researchers may force their data to fit their precoding codes, feeds into researcher bias in one way or another, and thus raises questions about the credibility or trustworthiness of the research. The disadvantages notwithstanding, I used a precoding strategy in my dissertation. The preliminary codes appear in Appendix H.

Following are additional steps I followed to complete the data analysis stage of this research. First, I engaged a third-party transcription service provider to transcribe all the interview data I obtain from the field. Bailey (2008) has observed that data transcription is the process of representing audible and visual data in written format. According to Bailey, simple as data transcription may seem, it involves making judgments, at least in three different dimensions, namely, what level of detail to choose, for example, whether to include or to omit non-verbal dimensions of interaction; data interpretation, for example, distinguishing 'I don't, no' from 'I don't know'; and data representation, for example, representing the verbalization 'I was ur day?' as 'How was your day?' Two recommended software that I may use to assist in transcribing the data collected for this proposed study will be Dragon Speak and Audacity (Dedoose, 2013). I used the services of a third-party transcription service provider and ensured that I personally reviewed all transcribed

transcripts to be able to capture any data that the transcriptionist may not have understood as well as any nuances that was lost in the process of transcription. I accomplished this by listening to and reviewing the transcribed interviews. I asked the person to sign the confidentiality agreement (Appendix G).

Second, I organized the data. Data organization is classifying and arranging data to make it more useful (Techopedia, 2015). In organizing my data, I assigned labels or codes to groups of data that seemed to fall under common themes, patterns, or relationships (Adu, 2013). Next, I read each code or cluster of data and make personal notes and comments based on my reflections. Some guidelines that assisted me to sift through the data to reflect and comment substantially on my codes were similar phrases used by different interviewees, patterns, themes, and common sequences (Holm-Hansen, 2008; Zaki, 2012). In the next step in my data analysis, I summarized the key emerging themes across the interview transcripts and then synthesized them with the help of Microsoft Word (Holm-Hansen, 2008; Zaki, 2012). I then presented the data in relation to the themes and frequency of coded data.

Issues of Trustworthiness

There are different schools of thought regarding the trustworthiness of qualitative studies. According to Shenton (2004), positivism and constructivism are two such schools of thought on whether a qualitative study can be trustworthy or not. According to the positivist school of thought, the validity and reliability of quantitative studies could be easily proven by mathematical computation. To the contrary, qualitative research data, by their nature, are susceptible to researchers' manipulation

and predisposition without being discovered, at least in the short run. This positivist criticism is further strengthened by the fact that in qualitative studies, the researcher is the main instrument in data collection and analysis, thus making it plausible for qualitative researchers to influence the data by their personal biases and predispositions.

The challenge of how a qualitative research could be accepted as trustworthy and credible notwithstanding, Shenton (2004) posits that several authors have satisfactorily demonstrated that qualitative research can pass the test of trustworthiness. To distinguish qualitative studies from quantitative studies and set the former apart in the discussion of trustworthiness, Guba's four-point criteria (Shenton, 2004), namely, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability have been universally acclaimed and used by qualitative researchers.

There are standards to determine the credibility of qualitative studies. For a qualitative study to be credible, its findings must be congruent with reality (Shenton, 2004). In other words, the study must have a significant degree of confidence and be able to prove to have tested what it is intended to test. Guba and Lincoln (1989) argued that this is significant for evaluating the trustworthiness of any qualitative study. To achieve credibility for my proposed research, I spent enough time in the field with my research subjects to learn or understand the phenomenon of interest (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The interviews lasted for about an average of 45 minutes. Spending time enough in the field with my participants had several benefits that strengthened the credibility of

my study. First, it helped with my orientation to my participants' situation in order to appreciate and understand their context. Next, it prepared me to be able to detect and account for any distortions that might be in the data. Third, it helped me, as a researcher, to rise above my own perceptions. Finally, my prolonged engagement with my research subjects helped me to build trust with them (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Other strategies I used to achieve credibility were triangulation, a method used by qualitative researchers to validate or verify that an account is rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed; peer debriefing, a process of exposing myself to a disinterested peer for the purpose of getting to the bottom of what might otherwise only remain implicit within the inquirer's mind; and finally, member-checking or testing data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions with my research participants from whom I collected the original data. Among the importance of these strategies, they gave my study participants the opportunity to correct errors and challenge what they perceived as wrong interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) of their responses to the interview questions.

Transferability of qualitative research refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents (Anney, 2014) to show that the study has applicability in other contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Generally, findings of qualitative studies are not intended to be transferable (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), however I improved the trustworthiness of this proposed study by means of thick description (Anney, 2014). Thick description refers to

painstakingly giving a detailed account of the field experience so that it becomes possible for other researchers to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Purposively sampling my research participants and giving a detailed description of the study were steps in the direction of thick description with the objective of increasing the transferability of my research findings (Anney, 2014).

I used the peer examination strategy to increase the dependability of the research findings. Using the peer examination strategy, I discussed my research findings with neutral colleagues. Using this strategy helped me to be more honest about the study, and helped me to identify uncovered categories of my study, or identify any negative cases that existed in the data (Anney, 2014).

Qualitative researchers are held to high standards of ethical behaviour. Ethics is the study of good conduct and of the basis for making judgments about what constitutes a good conduct (Stevens, 2013). Ethical principles upheld in qualitative studies included respect for persons, honesty, benevolence, to do no harm and justice (Stevens, 2013). Following Fritz's (2013) ethical principles of a good qualitative research, I ensured that the participants were well informed about the research they were being asked to participate in, the risks associated with their participation, the benefits that might accrue to them because of their participation and finally informed them of their right to make fearless and independent decisions including pulling out, without any consequences. Thus, I made the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of my research

participants my primary consideration in the research study because the only good research is the ethical one (Stevens, 2013).

Another dimension of trustworthiness is informed consent. According to Halai (2006) researchers are required to obtain informed consent from their subjects as an indication of how the research subjects are respected. I requested the written informed and voluntary consent of my research subjects in my research in care of written consent forms which identified the necessary elements of the research. This included, for example, the purpose of the research, procedures, time, risks, benefits and a clause indicating the voluntary nature of the research and that participants may opt out at any time (Halai, 2006). Further to this, I emphasized the principle of confidentiality for my research participants through assurance of confidentiality of information (Halai, 2006). In this connection, I used anonymity or pseudonyms instead of revealing the identity of the individuals and institutions involved in the study (Halai, 2006). As further proof of respect for my research subjects, I upheld the principles of beneficence and doing no harm by informing them of the risks and benefits for participating in the research while regarding reciprocity. I did not give them any gifts for participating in the study.

To reduce the risks associated with qualitative research while working with my research subject, I followed the guidelines that have been laid down by Walden University's IRB. According to Labaree (2010) IRBs exist to examine the initial plans of research studies that involve human subjects and to ensure that they are not exposed to unreasonable risks that run contrary to the expectations of ethical research. In this

research, I collected data from WOD-PAOC district executive members and their affiliated pastors.

I provided several assurances to meet the guidelines of the university's IRB. First, my purposive sampling of participants was designed to select information-rich participants (Patton, 2015) who are members of my research population, but are not my friends. This strategy took care of the potential for any social desirability of responses due to friendship or biased responses due to cognitive priming or biased responses due to personal agendas (Walden University, 2015). Also, I am neither a pastor of a local church nor a leader nor a manager within the WOD-PAOC and therefore do not wield any authority over any of my research participants (Walden University, 2015).

The WOD-PAOC encourages research of the kind I conducted (Walden University, 2015) because it helps the organization to continuously improve (Walden University, 2015) at no financial costs to it. I secured the organization's agreement through a letter (Appendix A). As well, the WOD-PAOC district office only required that I follow the internal protocols of the organization. The WOD-PAOC district office and individual pastor-participants needed be comfortable to see this type of data collection under their own policies and procedures (Walden University, 2015). Gaining access to WOD-PAOC sites and personnel rather depended on the individual research participants than it did on the district office of the WOD-PAOC.

Equally important as planning and collecting qualitative research data is how to keep it after it has been collected. According to Riviera (2010), how researchers handle

qualitative research data is a critical part of the overall research process. To manage the research data efficiently and ethically, I archived or stored soft copies at two locations, namely an external drive and my personal computer requiring a password to access (Morefield Jr., 2013). Hard copies of all the data I collected from my research participants were also be kept under lock and key in my house. Eventually, I will purge all electronic and hard data 5 years after the study has been completed (Morefield Jr., 2013).

Summary

In this chapter, I have provided the rationale for the use of a qualitative research design. The unit of analysis for the proposed case study was the WOD-PAOC. In addition, my interest in obtaining a deeper understanding of how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to lay leadership vacuum in a denomination formed the basis for justifying the choice of the qualitative design. A small purposively selected sample and open-ended interview questions, were the qualitative techniques used in the study. The subjectivity associated with the qualitative approach, and particularly the integral role of the researcher, appeared to give rise to some concerns about the trustworthiness and validity of the study.

To address the concerns and increase the trustworthiness of the study, a number of strategies were utilized in an effort to address the concerns related to subjectivity and possible bias. The disclosure of personal interest from the onset, obtaining informed consent of research subjects, use of anonymity or pseudonyms instead of revealing the

identity of the individuals and institutions involved in the study, and the steps that were taken to address criteria such as credibility, dependability, and transferability were among the strategies I used in this regard. The choice of the qualitative methodology facilitated the collection and analysis of the data required to adequately address the issues raised by the research question. In Chapter 4, I will detail how the data collection process unfolded and what data analysis steps were taken and the results of the case study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to lay leadership vacuum in a denomination. In this study, I focused on understanding how the clergy perceive the lay leadership vacuum that exists in the WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA and how their perceptions about the laity appear to impact the achievement of denomination's social mission in the community. In Chapter 4, I will present the results of the study, along with a detailed analysis of the interview narrative responses. I conducted semistructured interviews with 10 WOD-PAOC pastors and district executives in the GTA were conducted to fulfill this purpose. I used a digital voice-video recorder to capture their verbatim responses for accuracy, then transcribed the digital files, with the help of a professional transcription service, and used them to identify emerging themes. I listened to all the recordings and compared them to the transcripts to ensure that the transcripts agreed with the recordings. Direct quotes were used to give weight to the stories. To assure confidentiality, I used numerical identifiers for each of the participants.

Pilot Study

I conducted a pilot study to test the procedures and interview questions prior to carrying out the actual study. For the pilot study, I contacted four WOD-PAOC pastors who were unrelated to the final study participants to schedule a time and

date to interview each one of them. To replicate the setting of the final interviews, I met with the participants individually, with the purpose of explaining the study to each one of them. I asked them five qualifying questions, 10 main research questions, and two wrap up questions. They were asked to answer the interview questions as thoroughly as possible. The interviews lasted for an average of 40 minutes per session.

I used the pilot study to obtain feedback regarding confusing, awkward, or redundant questions. As a result of the pilot study, the research instrument and data analysis strategies did not need to be revised. The pilot test feedback aided in evaluating how each interview question aligned with the research questions and the purpose statement. The results of the pilot study confirmed that the in-depth interview questions were easily understandable.

Setting of the Study

To conduct the face-to-face interviews for this study, each participant chose a location that was convenient for them. All the local church pastors chose to be interviewed in their church offices, while the district executives chose to be interviewed in the conference room of the WOD-PAOC office. The participants were familiar with their chosen interview spaces, and therefore, could talk freely with minimal prompting. I established a rapport with each participant by thanking them for agreeing to participate in the study and explained to each participant that participation in the study was completely voluntary and could be stopped at any time.

I asked each participant the qualifying questions and fully explained the purpose of the study. This resulted in their willingness to answer the study questions. There were no personal or organizational constraints that influenced their participation.

Demographic Information

I used the qualifying questions to gather personal background information about the participants. To meet the criteria of the study, each participant needed to be past or present district executive, or retired or current senior or associate pastor in a WOD-PAOC local assembly in the GTA. I collected data, using semistructured interviews questions, from 10 clergy made up of one former and one current district superintendent, one interim lead/senior pastor, six lead/senior pastors, and one copastor. All the churches represented by these participants were in the GTA in Ontario. The range of participants' pastoring experience was between 2 and 60 years, while that of district superintendent and/or district executive was between 7 and 17 years. Participants' rating of their knowledge of the laity varied, ranging from low-medium to high. Regarding participants' knowledge of the laity, one participant rated his/her knowledge as between low and medium, one rated his/her knowledge of the laity as medium, one rated his/her knowledge of the laity as medium to high, and seven (7) participants rated their knowledge of the laity as fairly high or high.

Data Collection

After receiving IRB approval on December 20, 2016 (IRB approval # 12-20-16-0246900), I took steps to locate the participants. I accomplished this by placing an e-mail request to the secretary-treasurer of the WOD-PAOC in which I explained the nature of the project and provided guidelines about the profile of potential participants. The secretary-treasurer, based on the information I provided to him, provided me with a list of potential participants. I e-mailed copies of the research announcement flyer (Appendix B), letter of introduction (Appendix C), and informed consent (Appendix D) to them and requested them to respond by indicating their consent or otherwise to participate in the study. I received 11 responses indicating their consent to participate, and I immediately contacted them to qualify them for the study.

Of the 11 clergy that volunteered to participate, one person declined to participate because of changes in his/her circumstances. This left me with the minimum participant size of 10 that I needed for this study. I followed-up with the prospective participants to schedule dates and locations for the interviews. Each of the participants chose their own convenient interview location. During the interviews, I clearly explained the research purpose, confidentiality, and informed consent to the participants. I provided the participants with an opportunity for questions and reemphasized that participation was voluntary.

The interviews with participants to whom I had given informed consent occurred between January 4th, 2017 and February 16, 2017 and lasted for an average of 40 minutes each. The longest interview lasted for 75 minutes while the shortest lasted for 25 minutes. The interview protocol consisted of 10 open-ended questions and two wrap up questions (see Appendix F). I opened each session with a brief explanation of the purpose and details of the interview procedure and explained that there were no right or wrong answers, and thus gave the participants the flexibility for open, authentic responses. There were no variations in the data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3.

All the participants answered the questions and no one appeared to be distressed during the interviews. I recorded the data were recorded using a digital audio-video recorder. After the fifth interview, it became evident that I had reached data saturation because the themes were just getting repeated by the other participants. Despite reaching saturation, I continued the interviews up to the 10th participant.

I used a professional transcription service to transcribe each recorded interview. I prepared each interview transcript by reading through it and fixing any transcription errors and then e-mailed each participant's transcripts to him/her for their review and validation. I gave each participant a 5-day window within which to confirm the validity of the transcripts to me, including bringing any changes necessary to my attention.

Data Analysis

To collect data on clergy perceptions of the laity, I developed the semistructured interview protocol to include a series of 10 main interview questions and two wrap-up questions. The questions covered the following broad categories: background questions used to establish definitions, follow-up questions to probe further and gain a rich and substantial responses, and wrap-up questions to gain understanding of projections by the clergy and to achieve closure. The following are a list of the questions along with my rationale for why they were developed:

Q1: To the best of your understanding who are the laity? Could you briefly define and describe the laity?

My rationale for asking this question was that according to Arinze (2013), a definition is important because it hits at what is considered essential regarding the defined thing, person, group, or concept.

Q2: What is your personal experience with the laity? Could you share some stories about your experience with the laity over the course of your ministry life?

I asked this question because study participants' experiences help the researcher to better understand the phenomena under study.

Q3: Could you discuss some contributions your local church makes towards its immediate community? Do you have a community transformation strategic plan?

I designed this question to establish a base for determining the success of church as contributor to community transformation in care of lay participation, first in the church and then in the community.

Q4. How significant have the laity been in your own ministry as a pastor or clergy? Kindly elaborate on some typical experiences that come to mind. How important were these experiences to the social mission of the church?

I designed this question to guide the interview toward the anticipated key themes by making references to specific examples.

Q5: Would you please tell me [more] about...?

My rationale for asking this question was to probe into the following:

- What role the laity play in the social mission of the local church?
- How important are these roles relative to the mission of your local church and denomination?
- How important are the laity who perform these roles to your local church and denomination?

Asking Question 5 involved prompting with additional probes. I used this for interviewees who might not have touched upon a targeted theme with their first answer(s). Consequently, when a respondent thoroughly covered a topic without prompting, the question was not used verbatim.

Q6: How do you incorporate lay leadership development into your work as a pastor or district executive?

The following served as probes for Q6:

- How do you promote lay leadership development in your local assembly?
- What form does lay leadership development in your local assembly take: formal or informal (i.e., do you have a department for leadership development and follow a curriculum)? Be specific.

Q7: What opportunities exist in your local church and the denomination to prepare the laity to contribute to the social mission of the denomination?

Q8: How many of the PAOC-affiliated training institutions have lay leadership development programs?

The following served as probes for Q8:

- If there are, could you tell me a little bit about the structure of these programs in terms of curriculum design and implementation?
- Compare any lay leadership development programs of the WOD-PAOC with those that are designed for pastors. What conclusions can you draw?

Q9: How can the laity be nurtured to represent the church and play leadership roles in the community?

Combined, I developed Questions 9 and 10 to invite suggestions and recommendations from respondents who had indicated earlier that their churches did not have community development plans or programs.

Q10: Do you have an idea of how many different professional groups are represented in your church? What opportunities are available to them through the church to represent the church in the community?

Along with Question 9, Question 10 was developed to recapture the respondents' characterizations of the laity in their respective churches and to extend the question of how the laity contribute to community transformation.

Q11: What do you perceive to be the future of the role of the laity in your local church and in the denomination?

Q12: How do you think the community would benefit from such a relationship? What must change, if anything must change?

I designed Questions 11 and 12 to reinforce my understanding of the role of the laity in the social mission of the church through the respondents' perceptions and experiences.

Following the interviews, I engaged a third-party transcription service provider to transcribe all the interview data obtained. In this process, I acknowledged that data transcription is a process of representing audible and visual data in written format and involved making judgments in at least three different dimensions, namely determining what level of detail to choose, determining whether to include or to omit nonverbal dimensions of interaction, and data representation of verbalization (Bailey, 2008). At this stage of the process, I personally reviewed all transcribed texts to be able to capture any data that the transcriptionist may not have understood as well as any nuances that could

have been lost in the process of transcription. I did this by listening to the recorded interviews while simultaneously reviewing the transcribed interviews.

Data Analysis Procedures

Zaki (2012) defines qualitative data analysis as the range of processes and procedures involved in moving qualitative data collected from the field into some form of explanation, understanding, or interpretation of the people and situations being investigated. After data were collected, I analyzed them to sensibly and honestly bring out their overt and covert meanings and implications. The primary technique used to achieve this was coding or labeling of segments of the data in progressive units for purposes of categorizing, looking for themes, and identifying the patterns were developing in the data collected (Miles et al 2014; Zaki, 2012). As Adu (2013) asserts, this process of coding is designed to capture the essence or the features of qualitative research data such as interview transcripts, documents, artifacts, and field notes. Further, Adu has indicated that at the coding stage, the qualitative researcher reduces the data collected, with the objective of understanding the phenomenon being studied without losing valuable meaning. When properly conducted, such a process can lead to the development of constructs or mental definitions of variable properties of events of objects which are normally expressed in theoretical, qualitative or subjective terms (Adu, 2013). Following a review of the transcribed interview transcripts, I organized the data by classifying and arranging them in a way that would make them most useful (Techopedia, 2015).

Qualitative data collected from the interviews, which were recorded using audio recorder and transcribed texts, were then coded and analyzed for patterns in themes relevant to the study. Coding procedures began with a categorization of the respondents' definitions and descriptions of the laity and continued with key topics embedded in each set of questions and responses. Once the questions and the 10 participants' responses were abbreviated and logged onto the coding sheet, the data became manageable. At the second level, characterizations of the laity and of the pastor as shepherd were noted in the context of church and Bible doctrine. Finally, at the third level of analysis, the data were synthesized to derive the themes. The definitions; roles; developmental opportunities; and contributions to mission, church, and community were tagged as meaningful coded units. At this stage I developed working themes that could stand alone and then also those that would be further analyzed for relationships as shown in Table 1. The themes are as follows:

1. Personal definitions of the term laity;
2. Perceived characterizations of the laity based on personal experiences of the interview respondent;
3. The social mission of the church toward community transformation, strategic plans for community transformation, and perceived resultant contributions by the church to the greater community;
4. The function, role(s), and perceived importance/significance of the laity in fulfilling the social mission of the church;

5. The training and development opportunities/lack of opportunities for the laity to contribute to the church/community and, where there is a lack, the perceived potential solution;
6. Perceived vacuums in utilization of the laity and suggested changes;
7. Perceived future role of the laity, perceived vacuum in utilizing the laity, and proposed solutions; and
8. The resulting benefits to the community of proper development and utilization of the laity to fulfill the social mission of the church.

Two interesting discrepancies arose during the coding and analysis process. First, when respondents were asked to define and describe “laity,” it was anticipated that definitions and descriptions of the laity would automatically fit into a category with no issues arising. However, because 4 of the 10 respondents took issue with the nomenclature, a subcategory had to be devised. That is, one theme was now split in two dimensions, capturing perceptions of laity and capturing attitudes about the use of terms for the laity. Second, Questions 3, 9, 10, and 12 were designed to elicit responses that would lend to a picture of (a) distinct contributions by the church, with its social mission; (b) distinct contributions by the laity to the social mission of the church; and (c) distinct benefits to the community by the church and by the laity. As a result of the above expressed expectation, I had precodes for coding categories that would reflect these separate picture parts (a), (b), and (c). However, once coding procedures were in progress, what emerged was a paradigm, one containing a separate overarching theme

that encompassed the three sub-themes and that revealed an interdependent and cyclical relationship. In this interdependent and cyclical relationship, I observed that after the church has contributed to the community, the community members become the laity in the church. The new laity, participating in the social mission of the church, then begin to contribute to the community (See Figure 1). This was a welcoming finding. Due to the willingness of the pastors to be forthcoming and to elaborate their responses, for example to speak to the role of the pastor as leader of the laity, as opposed to merely answering questions about the role of the laity went beyond, I could develop findings and results that also speak to the interdependent relationship of and its value to all parties involved in efforts of community transformation.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Throughout the research process of developing the interview protocol and questions, selecting participants, conducting the interviews, interpreting and analyzing the data, and compiling the synthesized report based on findings, I made every effort to ensure that the data was gathered, analyzed, and presented in as objective a manner as possible (Stake, 2010). This was intended despite the tendency for the findings to lend themselves to both objective and subjective interpretation (Stake, 2010). Within the systematic paradigm established in this study, measures were taken to increase trustworthiness implemented strategies for viewing the data through several lenses (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Dependability Measures

To address and counter dependability issues, I used triangulation to increase validity of the findings and to check the integrity of the interpretations (Wargo, 2013). Additionally, to increase the dependability of the study, I discussed data with neutral colleagues. This helped to assist me in being honest about the study and to uncover categories of the study or identify any negative cases that may exist in the data (Anney, 2014).

Credibility Measures

To address credibility issues, I used the lens of the study participants to conduct member checking, a most “crucial technique” for establishing credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). This involved providing the participants with the transcribed interviews so the study participants could confirm their accuracy. This was important because it aided in presenting the study as authentic representation of the phenomenon being studied.

Transferability Measures

To achieve this, the work was put through an external lens of the readers of the study. I accomplished this by way of the providing several layers of details, by purposive sampling, and by maximizing the data in relation to the Christian denomination context. In this way, readers will be able to determine if the environment of my study — regarding the WOD-PAOC, but also the Christian church in general — compares closely enough with theirs to support transferability.

Confirmability measures.

I addressed confirmability issues in a few ways. While working through the lens of the researcher (Creswell & Miller, 2000), I addressed any potential confirmability issues by demonstrating that the research findings emerged out of the data collected and analyzed from the interview transcripts. The transcripts are replicated in the appendix.

Researcher Bias Measures

Given the highly personal role of the researcher in the qualitative tradition, Stake (2010) has highlighted the importance of explaining the biases that the researcher encounters in the process of interpreting the views and experiences of the participants in the study. In this regard, I endeavored to minimize obvious and avoidable sources of bias by spreading the study sample to cover the broad GTA, instead of confining all the fieldwork to one social group or a small geographic location within the GTA. Additionally, I took steps to recognize my own personal views as a member of a WOD-PAOC local assembly. I recognized the fact that as an ordained bi-vocational minister in the denomination, I may have come to the task with preconceived notions of the laity. To avoid or minimize such potential bias, I put aside any preconceptions when gathering and when analyzing the data. Being neither a pastor of a local church nor a leader nor a manager within the WOD-PAOC and therefore not wielding any authority over any of my research participants (Walden University, 2015) helped to keep subjective and preconceived ideas manageable and to a minimum.

Results of the Study

From the qualitative content analysis of data collected through the interview questions, 8 themes (and their sub-themes) emerged. These included (a) personal definitions of the term laity; (b) perceived characterizations of the laity based on personal experiences of the interview respondent; (c) the social mission of the church toward community transformation, strategic plans for community transformation, and perceived resultant contributions by the church to the greater community; (d) the function, role(s), and perceived importance/significance of the laity in fulfilling the social mission of church; (e) the training and development opportunities/lack of opportunities for the laity to contribute to the church/community and, where there is a lack, the perceived potential solution; (f) perceived vacuums in utilization of the laity and suggested changes; (g) perceived future role of the laity, perceived vacuum in utilizing the laity, and proposed solutions; and (h) the resulting benefits to the community of proper development and utilization of the laity to fulfill the social mission of the church. Each theme was coded by relevance and recorded by frequency as in Table 1 below.

Respondent Definition(s) of the Term Laity

Four of the 10 participants expressed discomfort with the use of the term “laity.” According to Participant #1, the use the term “laity” creates unnatural organizational and spiritual divide. Participant #6 stated that “...as soon as you give a separate term for somebody in a group of individuals that serve in church you isolate them and create division or hierarchies that are troublesome...” Participant #10 said he does not think

that “laity” is a Biblical term and that the Bible does not make distinction between people in the church. According to this participant, “...We are all one body of believers.”

Participant #8 contended that their church does not use the term “laity” because they “... try to elevate each follower of Jesus to the level of individuals who God has called and gifted to be equipped by the pastors to serve.” But for the sake of understanding, and as a working term for the interviews, the participants did agree that the laity are the people who do not hold official, paid ministry positions in the church, in contrast to the clergy, but are members of the church and followers of Christ and of the spiritual leaders. These men and women are blessed to receive the gifts of Christ; they are individuals whom “...God has called and gifted to be equipped by the pastors to serve” (Participant #8).

According to Participant #2, “The pastor lets them know that he/she can always find some of them who will support him/her by helping to hold his/her [pastor’s] hands up—like Aaron and Hur holding up Moses' hands in the battle.” Participant #7 stated that “The importance of the laity should and must increase; [there is also a need for] more cohesiveness in how the churches work together, perhaps starting with greater laity-clergy interaction and/or role dispersion.”

Table 1

Aggregate Frequency

Code	Frequency	Occurrences out of 10 participants
Defining and characterizing laity work positions		
Laity comprised of minority doing, majority watching	4	3
church cannot function without the laity	8	8
Social mission of the church toward community transformation		
Strategic workforce plans for community transformation	14	6
Significance of the laity workforce fulfilling social mission of church	17	10
Training and development of personnel	10	10
Performance management perceived benefits		
Community outreach	5	4
Physical resources	6	6
Community empowerment	13	4
Perceived barriers to the establishment of a lay leadership development program:		
External factors	14	8
Individual's unwillingness	4	3
limitations in resources	0	0
<i>Emerging Code: Cyclical Relationships</i>	34	10

Respondents' Perceived Characterizations and Importance of the Laity

Some respondents applied the 80/20 rule to the laity in an interesting way that essentially implied that fewer laity participate by actively engaging in the services they are required to engage in. Thus, according to those participants, only 20 percent of the laity does the work while the remaining 80 percent are mere bystanders. Participant #2 summarized it by stating that “Everybody's willing: 80% are willing to let the 20% ... do the work.” Participant #3 elaborated on this by stating that “According to the Barna Institute, a Christian research organization, statistically speaking, 20% are involved while 80% are not....” Participant #6 explained the above observations by his/her own experience. He indicated that with growth in size comes the phenomenon of fewer people doing more of the work. To demonstrate, more than half of the respondents described the laity in terms of their capacity for leadership. Those respondents indicated that the laity could be further classified as individuals and teams who are involved in ministry of the local church. Those individuals who have followers could be considered as leaders. Such lay leaders could be considered as part of the working 20 percent while their followers could be classified as part of the spectating 80 percent.

A clear majority of the participants emphasized that the church cannot function without the laity. Participant #3 explained that the clergy and the laity work together for the Lord. He/she further explained this by indicating that the clergy cannot do it all without the laity because the laity are “the pillars of the church.” Participant #1 succinctly indicated that there is no ministry without the laity. According to Participant

#10, "...the function in ministry just does not happen without the laity," while Participant #8 added that as volunteers, the laity are "everything"—equipped to serve and so important that without them the church "...would just... merely have an ecclesiastical compound of religious hierarchy." concerning the laity, this participant stated that

They are why we are here as a church to see them equipped to worship, to teach them to be caring for each other, and to be reaching out to the community and the world through their activities and active participation.

Participant #9 elaborated on the importance of the laity with examples as follows:

[Our church] would have never made it without the laity, because the whole mission of the church, besides taking care of the poor, is to be able to come together and reach out and without, for example, the laity of the invited 20 churches—Baptist churches, Evangelistic churches, independent churches, and Pentecostal Assembly of Canada churches—who come together to feed the community, there would be no way the pastors could perform, doing God's work such as serving over 200 people a night, seven days a week, without closing our doors even for one night in 18 years.

Participant #3 explained the importance of the laity as follows,

We would not have any prayer meetings if it wasn't for the laity. We wouldn't have a Sunday morning service if it wasn't for the laity. We wouldn't have outreach if it wasn't for the laity... Jesus said..., "I've come to seek and save those that are lost." That's the laity.

In addition to Participant # 5's credit to the laity for being "... the straw that stirs the [ministry's] drink," Participant #1 added, "There's no way you can engage the social mission of the church without the empowerment and the release of the laity... They're not just consumers. They're not just supporters of the local church by their title."

[The laity engages in the mission of the church to fight popular cultural "iconicism" at the same time as they fill the roles of higher expectations, significance, living out their personal call to] the social mission of light and salt, and in turn, [beyond just engaging in social programs, influencing and impacting the community]—preaching gospel every day, using words if necessary, as Saint Francis of Assisi would say.

Social Mission of the Church

The next theme is the social mission of the church toward community transformation, strategic plans for community transformation, and perceived resultant contributions by the church to the greater community.

For all the respondents, the crux of the social mission of church toward community transformation is to target the local community (and sometimes the larger global community) and to teach, lead, and guide them toward Christ as well as to serve them through community outreaches and provision of physical supplies including but not limited to meals, groceries, clothing and shelter for the under-resourced, and or on-site efforts and events. Of the 10 participants, Participant #9 most directly and extensively

discussed community outreach. Participant #1 has made his/her churches outreach-focused, for example, by "...renting buses and visiting the community, knocking on every door, chatting with some people, praying with others, gathering and bringing children to church and equipping the saints by showing them how they can reach out to the community." According to Participant #1 this was achieved through the practice of discipleship, whereby rather than just telling people what to do, the pastor takes potential leaders along with him/her and instructs them to watch, participate, do outreach on their own, and then take others along and teach them in the same manner, *ad infinitum*.

Likewise, Participant #3 identified the church's outreach programs, including a program the church operates in downtown Mississauga called TAC Physiotherapy Clinic and daily prayer meetings inviting the neighborhood. Participant #8 mentioned that their five campuses or satellite churches are involved in community connections through social programs and in multi-generational outreaches, involving, for instance, outreach programs that include an Alpha program, youth Bible studies, basketball clinics, and children's programs.

Serving by providing material necessities for the needful populations was explicitly noted by 6 of the 10 interviewees. While he/she felt unqualified to address specifics given his/her position was only two weeks old at the time of the interview, Participant #2 had already observed that without prompting, one member began collecting warm clothes for the needy, in anticipation of the cold winter. This participant further indicated that one of the pastors at their church is involved with a poverty

alleviation project and that the church is very motivated toward the Samaritan's Purse project. The participant noted that these efforts "...demonstrate [that] the church's community consciousness extends beyond the [geographical] borders/limits of the city of Toronto where the church is located." Participant numbers 3 and 8 directly mentioned food and clothing banks for the needy, with Participant #8 stating that the main campus of the five satellite churches is one of the largest food bank distributors in the city of Toronto, where on every Thursday night they see about 300 individuals including about 200 Syrian refugees who come for meals, clothing, and groceries. All the services and programs, according to Participant #8, give the church and its satellite locations an opportunity to explain the love of Jesus Christ.

On-site efforts and events were directly mentioned by 5 of the 10 interviewees. Participant #3 described inviting the neighborhood for daily prayer meetings, youth events in the large gymnasium at the church, holiday special events, including plays performed at Christmas and at Easter. As well, Participant #3 described a yearly summer camp special for children — a plan that has been very successful for several years, with the most recent summer camp session enrolling more than 80 children. Participant #9 described launching a Bible studies series the church takes to group homes for the mentally ill, while Participant #10 noted that the church has outreaches and efforts that include community dinner for and with 150 to 175 under-resourced individuals. Participant #4 explained how in the Region of Peel, the church is engaged in running a Sunday school called Kids' Club or Kids' Bible Club and in conducting devotions for the

adults as well as operating a Vacation Bible School since 2014. Such services, says Participant #4, are made as contributions to whatever needs the people might have as the church addresses and serves needs as they arise, with interventions such as Craft whereby the ministry introduces Christ in informal ways, for example, singing carols, having fellowship, and making a variety of Christmas crafts to bring service and joy to the families in the community.

While four of the 10 participants either did not directly address any strategic plans for community transformation or note that they do not have established strategic plans for community transformation, six participants alluded to or specifically outlined their ongoing strategies, their reengineering plans, or their plans for developing and having plans for community transformation through outreach, service, and lay involvement. Having started weekly prayer meetings (to seek divine guidance for vision and outreach strategy), Participant #4's church has divided the region around the Living Arts Center and its immediate area into nine neighborhoods, targeted with prayer walks, outreaches, and related engagements of several kinds. Besides launching a Bible studies series for group homes for the mentally ill, Participant #9's church includes several different strategic community transformation plans, including reaching out to, communicating with, and serving the newly arriving immigrants. Following an inverted strategy philosophy of developing from bottom up rather than from top down, Participant #10 and the church follow an inverted strategy. Participant # 10 explained that

[While]...many churches believe that if you build a great church then you'll fulfill the mission and the purpose of Jesus, which is [to] make disciples, in [his] opinion, Jesus told us to make disciples and through that you get a great church.

Participant #6 also discussed a well-defined approach using a decentralizing strategy, explaining that a decentralizing strategy is "...effective in waking up those who have been sleeping." For Participant #6, the church has a strategy that functions on four levels, analogized with a building metaphor where the foundation, which comprises personal and family development, establishes the strength to move on to engage the community. Participant #6 stressed that, "When a church is not engaged in the community, it is a sign that there is an unhealthy foundation." According to this participant's building analogy,

The second level, the first floor, makes up small group development, including development of small groups such as hospitality groups, discipleship groups, meeting groups, theme groups, divorce care groups, and alpha groups. The third level is the congregational level, which is typically where the church focuses first on the Sunday morning service, the larger gatherings, and, again, the serving of the community. True change happens at the foundational level; while change at the second level is attempted, real, meaningful, radical change—which doesn't happen

at the larger church level, really—is to be had by development at the foundational level. The church is in the process of reengineering strategy at this level, as not as much of the foundation is being developed.

Participant #8 reiterated that contribution strategy involves following a protocol and process whereby when there is a great enough new response, the main church in turn establishes another satellite church in a process akin to the process that occurred in Biblical times. Participant #6 compared this to Paul's statement in II Timothy 2:22 which says 'I poured into you, and I want you to go find people to pour into that will be people that will pour into people,' disciple people, who will disciple others.' This confirms Participant #10's view about the laity that

Nothing happens without them. They're just fundamental, crucial, integral, they inspire every one of the church's programs and activities, they develop it, they dream it, they live towards it, they ... In fact, every aspect that can be imagined, they're important to it.

Respondents' Perceived Function

The next theme is respondents' perceived function, role(s), and importance/significance of the laity in fulfilling the social mission of church. All the participants spoke to the engagement of the laity in the social mission of church through social action and outreach; through prayer meetings; through providing for all needs of

the community; through inspiring, developing, and carrying out social programs; and through expressing the love of Christ. Participant #8 noted that because the five campuses or satellite churches are involved in community connections through social programs and in multi-generational outreaches, "...the laity will be responsible for going and meeting those needs: the laity will determine the carrying out of a program and will determine the success of that program— [be it a proposed] basketball clinic, a backyard children's program, or a clothing and food distribution program." Participant #9 asserted that the laity play a very large role in serving the community especially in "...just talking to people like they have found a brother or a sister..." Participant #4, who said that "Without the laity, we would do very little," also pointed out that his/her church of about 40 to 50 members has a strong desire to serve the community and to do so through social action. He/she stated that

[The social role of the church is to meet the community needs for food, clothing, shelter; the community needs to see the church in action] ...needs to see the love of Christ expressed. The lay people provide that action, preach and pray and sing but also practice what they preach and serve.

Participant #2 provided an analogy of the role of the people in performing social actions of caring as follows:

In the Book of Acts after the revival, in the scenario with the Holy Spirit, the entire body of Christ was spiritually impacted and then

[the people] demonstrated a deep sense of love toward each other to the extent that they actually sold their properties and used the proceeds to take care of the poor. I cannot picture a genuine move of the Holy Spirit that doesn't have that facet to it – the facet of caring for the community.

“Depending on local leadership and local leadership vision,” added Participant #2, the churches who have mobilized themselves to contribute to transforming their communities [have] first realized that the social dimension is part of their mission.” Following this, these churches seek out and make use of the individuals with the calling and gifts or skills to carry out that mission. For example, putting on a Christmas banquet for the parents and kids of the bus ministry of more than 300 people from the community. In this example, the church will initiate or float the idea and then the laity will take on the role of actively mobilizing the necessary resources and implementing the program.

All the participants addressed the importance of the laity in carrying out the social mission of the church. Stressing that the laity “...are the straw that stirs the [ministry’s] drink,” Participant #5 highlighted how the laity “...work 40 hours a week at secular jobs and then they come to the church and add an additional 15 hours a week in their ministry position for no financial or material gains – no pay! – just to volunteer.” Participant #6 explained that

It is very important to know and understand what spiritual gifts God has given to people and how God [has] shaped them--what

specific spiritual gifts, what habits, what passions ... they have and experience...they have. Based on this information, you train or equip them and then release them into that. Very, very important.... In Pentecostal circles, there's also an importance [of], an emphasis on, the prophethood of all believers.... God speaks to individuals and gives individuals tasks for the advancement of the Kingdom; equipped and empowered to spread his word and action to the next individual believers.

Likewise, Participant #10 stressed,

[With more than 700 volunteers in the church who make these ministries function and work], nothing happens without them. They're just fundamental, crucial, integral. They inspire every one of the church's programs and activities. They develop it, they dream it, they live towards it.... In fact, every aspect that can be imagined, they're important to it.

Moreover, many of the participants emphasized the implications of the role(s) of the laity as being the substance of the church, the reason for the existence of the church as an entity contributing to the social transformation of the community and as the community in turn becomes part of the church. The interpretation of this phenomenon points to the cyclical dynamics of discipleship as it engages in social action: the church seeks out and trains the laity as disciples; the disciples seek out and help the community;

and the community in turn comes to the church and contributes to the church as the new laity and eventually as the new disciples, thus repeating the process and engaging in the social mission of the church. Participant #1 explained that through support and training, the laity engage in the mission of the church to fight popular cultural “iconicism” at the same time as they fill the roles of higher expectations, significance, living out their personal call to “the social mission of light and salt,” and in turn, beyond just engaging in social programs, influencing and impacting the community by preaching gospel every day, “...using words if necessary, as Saint Francis of Assisi would say.” In the words of Participant #3,

We would not have any prayer meetings if it wasn't for laity. We wouldn't have a Sunday morning service if it wasn't for the laity. We wouldn't have outreach if it wasn't for the laity.... Jesus said..., “I've come to seek and save those that are lost.” That's the laity. That's people, people in general, people... I want to see...come to Christ...what the Bible calls sheep... [becoming] part of the fold..., the sheep [then bearing] sheep.”

The church mission develops and grows by way of involvement of laity, by laity passing the word, by receivers of the word experiencing Christ and passing it on to the next people who become the new laity or sheep bearing new sheep in turn and the church making a difference in the world.

Participant #7 connoted the above by reiterating that “...the laity bring charisma, knowledge, and professionalism to share the message of Christ, help others, disciple others, and at the same time and in turn contribute to the growth of a church, [which contributes to the community].” Figure 4.1 demonstrates the perpetual cycle of social mission work through the church, the laity, and the community.

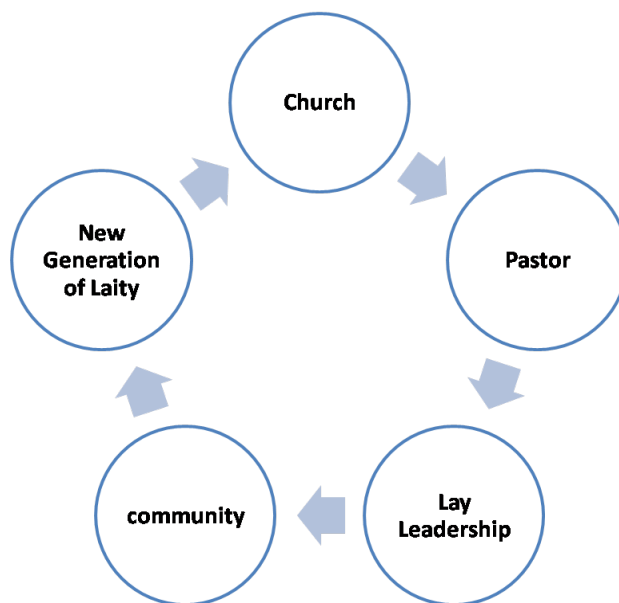


Figure 1. The perpetual cycle of social mission work through church, laity, and community. (Osei-Akoto, 2017)

Training and Development Opportunities

The next discussion is respondent-identified training/development opportunities or lack of opportunities to contribute to the church/community and potential solutions.

All the participants reported that they have a general or specific developmental scheme that provides training opportunities for the laity. Four of the ten interviewees described a general developmental scheme. Participant #2 noted that empowerment,

training, and incorporation depend upon need and desire: the church has in the past sought leaders to seek out gifted people and train them in certain ministries. For example, as the pro-life movement gained momentum, lay leaders were trained to staff pro-life clinics as an alternative to abortion clinics. As an associate to a pastor with a strong television ministry, Participant #2 was a leader of 43 lay people who were trained with a four-month course in telephone outreach. Thereafter, Participant #2 trained other lay leaders for other ministries, including training them in how to penetrate the community through bus ministry and home visitation and hospital ministry beyond their denomination, and overseeing the training of people for visiting prisons to help disenfranchised youth.

Participant #3 explained that his/her church has training and follow-up programs, but believes that incorporating the laity starts with, and requires, leading with a vision that originates with the senior pastor, followed by the requisite motivation of the people who become learners because they find substance, purpose and significance in their leadership. As Participant #3 explained, people followed Paul "...because they saw the power of God in his life..., they saw Jesus in [his] ministry, they saw purpose, they saw significance, they saw anointing, they saw God's blessing." Participant #4 explained that while his/her church is still quite young, they have launched intentional discipleship strategies where they are implementing materials from Global University's School of Discipleship and Evangelism and are benefitting from their guidance and encouragement. Discussing the intention and purpose of building the laity by giving them "...a chance to

be prayer warriors, pastors, administrators...all the time all [working] as one,” Participant #9 indicated that discipleship opportunities for the laity of the church should involve more than just text and training materials. The pastor referenced the attitude of professionals such as doctors to suggest that discipleship should start from the heart—the fruit of the disciple: “...we have brains in our head but do you know that we also have brains in our heart? We're children: we listen to the brain of our heart.”

The remaining six interviewees explained a specific developmental scheme that provides training opportunities for the laity. Now retired pastor and former superintendent, Participant #1 had developed an entire transition module for churches in transition to strengthen the role of the local leadership committee. This transition module comprised principles informing communication mechanisms, including how to talk to the church, how to communicate with the church, and how to create an opportunity for churches to communicate back and get their questions answered. Within the transition period of 6 – 12 months, the church built a management style of first, empowering the laity in releasing to the church and then building unity among them. The former superintendent also empowered the lay leadership by creating a numeric attendance system that, according to a church growth expert, was one of the finest numeric systems in North America. In terms of how the system worked, on Sunday everyone signed in using a small form that was put in the offering plate, after which a lay team would gather the forms and record the attendance patterns. Along with this system was a communication network, also made up of caring lay people. If in the first system it was

determined someone had been missing for a few weeks, the absence was communicated to the second system (the communication network), and caring lay leaders would follow up. A third system was developed for prayer requests. A prayer request binder was created for each region, with a page dedicated to each family in the congregation; a team of retired ladies in each region would meet on Mondays to record the prayer requests in the respective binder. In addition, another set of support teams, made up of two teams of four or one team for each district, met on Monday and Tuesday nights to solicit prayer requests by phone. These requests were also recorded in the prayer request binder(s). The participating lay leaders were made zone leaders by the pastor and eventually upgraded to become lay pastors.

Participant #5 outlined how some WOD-PAOC affiliated institutions that are specifically designed for the laity include-ministry opportunities for training within the local church departments. He cited examples including a chaplaincy program under a chaplain director, a Birkman Assessment program leadership, and a coaching program assistance are offered for all church leaders, including lay people who want to become coaches; eldership training; youth ministry training; children's ministry training; and membership training. These programs, explained Participant #5, follow outlines based on the principles of the church constitution and are focused on the role of a member, how to train members, and how to prepare new members to become active members of their respective local churches. Also, regarding the Birkman Assessment Training Program, Participant #6 noted that the rationale is to disciple people who will disciple others as

found in II Timothy 2:2 which says that “I poured into you, and I want you to go find people to pour into that will also pour into people,” “Additionally, the WOD-PAOC organizes lay leadership development programs in summer based on Birkman Assessment Training for board and is open to the laity and the clergy alike.

Along the same lines as highlighted above, Participant #7's indicated that in his/her church the importance of the laity is highlighted by hosting specific training programs for different ministries, including Care Teams for small group ministries. According Participant #7, the most recent lay leadership launch involved a team of 10 to 15 people in the church. After the training, each trainee received the names of family members and was tasked with the responsibility of providing basic care, follow-up care, and urgent care as needed. Participant #8 described pastors on staff who oversee different areas of volunteer teaching and training. This participant indicated that the training programs are categorized as age-specific or role-based. Participant #7 cited examples of such training programs as outreach, mission, music and arts ministry. Other areas of volunteer training are training are Plan to Protect for those who take care of early childhood education in the children's department, youth coaching with the junior high or senior high, and the prayer team. As Participant #7 reiterated, the focus of all their training programs is to help people who would in turn help others. According to this participant, it is the senior pastor's responsibility to guide the pastors so that they could guide the laity by preparing them as resources to guide the people.

Participant #10 described how his/her church is in the throes of a development system that involves the Leadership Path. This is a ministry that is rather a map than a menu. Specifically, this model considers lay leadership as “‘tour guides’ as opposed to ‘trip recommenders,’” while the map-ministry “... help[s] people know where they are [and] who they are so that as a tour guides, the leaders can walk the members through the process of [their] ministry to develop them to live out the anointing that God's called them [to].” Within the Leadership Path is the Leadership Pipeline, where they have identified key roles and areas involving the team members, the ministry leaders, the coaches, the directors, and the facility coordinators or facilitators. Team leaders, for example, oversee groups of team members. Each level will have an apprentice that walks along with the level underneath and is guided by the group leader, also known as the “... tour guide helping people walk along the map of leadership development.” Directors have oversight for the coaches, who oversee ministry leaders, who in turn oversee the team members. This system/process was developed to take the burden off ministry leaders at a time in the past when there were very few coaches who were trying to fill both roles at the same time. In this regard, Participant #5 places the emphasis on the important role of the laity in the following words:

[With a continued emergence of people getting committed to Christ, with a great falling away but also a great coming together, the revival needed will come from the laity]. Gone are the days when such move of the Spirit of the Lord could only be through the

activities of paid evangelists, TV evangelist, three-day revival services....

Participant #7 reiterated the important role of the laity and therefore the need to develop them through effective training by stating that:

Hiring quality staff who have great skills and abilities can contribute to the growth of a church. They come with charisma, knowledge, and professionalism that can help a church to grow. The challenge with that approach is that when those quality leaders move on to other positions they leave a vacuum that is difficult to fill and often lead to a decline.

Perceived Future Role of the Laity

The next discussion is respondent-perceived future role of the laity, perceived vacuum in utilizing the laity, and proposed solutions.

The interview participants spoke to their perceived future role of the laity in terms of the perceived vacuum in underutilizing the laity and then, where applicable, offered their proposed solutions for what would need to be done. Two of the ten respondents — Participant #1 and Participant #2 — determined that the vacuum will exist in underutilizing the multicultural diversity of the laity, thus leading to a lack of diversity of representation of in the church. Participant #1 explained that “[What is critical] going forward...is engagement of pastors modeling in their own individual life with authentic communication what it means to be a believer and inspiring that in the life of the

congregation.” Participant #2 elaborated on this by stating that the church “...will be lacking in cultural diversity that reflects the community at large, [making the church] not nearly as effective as we could be.” For instance, the participant has noticed that the multicultural composition of the WOD-PAOC churches notwithstanding, the Camps Committee is white. As a result, Participant #2 predicted that WOD-PAOC churches may not survive if they do not learn to identify their constituent cultural groups and train them to reach their own cultural groups. Similarly, Participant #8 predicted that the vacuum will continue to exist if the WOD-PAOC churches continue to underutilize two demographic groups of the laity in leadership roles. According to this participant these are the senior members and the millennials, who the participant noticed, are underrepresented whether as laity or as lay leaders.

Participant #7 predicted that the vacuum will exist because of the lack of emphasis on the importance of the laity and hence the lack of engaging them as leaders. Similarly, Participant #4 predicted that the existing vacuum will exist in the form of limited training to prepare the laity to lead. According to Participant #6 the vacuum will exist in the surplus of micromanagement of the laity on the part of the church, while two participants, #5 and #9, determined that the vacuum will exist in the need for mobilizing and empowering the laity in preparation to lead the church in the ensuing revival and community transformation. Participant #9 noted that the laity and the clergy will each have their own work, but if pastors lead and lay people follow, we will see a revival. To elaborate, Participant #9 stated that “The future of our churches and the legacy of our

churches is based on the strength of the laity, the ones who do all the work.” “The laity,” said the former pastor and superintendent, “is the future resource for revival. With a continued emergence of people getting committed to Christ, with a great falling away but also a great coming together, the needed revival will come from the laity.”

Where the vacuum was found to be in underutilizing of the multicultural diversity of the laity and hence in a lack of diversity of representation of the church, Participant #1 offered the following recommendation:

“[We need to] start having conferences and camps with a lay leadership that reflects the composition of the churches. Participant #2 reinforced this by recommending that the church (es) “...start having conferences and camps with a lay leadership that reflects the composition of the churches, thus bringing leadership to the lay persons or lay persons’ culture[s] ...”

For these participants, doing so would lead to fostering inclusion and prompting a sense of belonging and ownership, and in turn would result in greater participation from a greater number of people.

Where the vacuum was found to be in the underutilizing of two specific demographic groups for lay leadership, the senior members and the millennials, Participant #8 suggested that the church(es) should

...take greater care to engage millennials and seniors—[where] millennials tend to disconnect from what they see as organized religion [and where] older persons

[might have less than perfect health but have] ...resources and knowledge that they can provide for ministry to the community and to the church community.

Where the vacuum was found to be in the lack of emphasis on the importance of the laity and hence in the lack of engagement of the laity to lead, Participant #7 emphasized that "...the importance of the laity should and must increase; [there] needs to be greater engagement of laity." In considering the future direction of the church, Participant #7 had a history of "... [opening] that up to the entire congregation, not just the membership..., [so] anybody attending at the time [could] be a part of that conversation." To ground his/her perspective, the participant used a business approach called 'appreciative inquiry,' which is an approach that looks at the positives of what has come out of any specific environment or workplace. Participant #7 noted "...more cohesiveness in how the churches work together, perhaps starting with greater laity-clergy interaction and/or role dispersion" could be a good starting point.

Where the vacuum was found to be in the limited extent of training of the laity to lead, Participant #4 suggested that there is the need to emphasize training and experiences in training and that the church needs to train the laity to lead. He stated that "We need to train and release them to lead. That way the gospel goes out further, wider and further into the community, leading to community transformation." Alternately, where the vacuum was found to be in the surplus of micromanagement of the laity on the part of the church, Participant #6's recommendation included this reminder:

Ministry in hands of laity and the church needs to [forego] micromanaging and engage in a releasing of what God has called the lay people to do: if we look at the beginning of the Book of Acts, it says the apostles or disciples testified powerfully. We think, “Yeah, most of the ministry in the Pentecostal churches in the Western Ontario District in the Pentecostalism of Canada, most of the effective ministry, happens in the hands of ordinary people or the laity as opposed to the clergy.” [The shepherds spreading the gospel, the Samaritan woman testifying, the unsung heroes like Lazarus all will be] the ones to spread the word. ...In the New Testament, [when people have begun attacking the church, John the writer of the Gospel of John, writes that] he doesn't micromanage them. He just affirms them. He says, “You have an anointing that's in you. You have a deposit of the Spirit in you. You know the way. You continue what God's called you to. You don't need all these teachers. The Holy Spirit will guide and teach you.

The church needs that, said Participant #6, suggesting that “Rather than micromanaging, [the church] needs a releasing of what God's called them to do.”

Where the vacuum was found to be in the need for mobilization of the laity that would empower them as those leaders embracing and modeling the perspectives of the church for the ensuing revival, Participant #5 reiterated,

The future of our churches and the legacy of our churches is based on the strength of the laity, the ones who do all the work. The laity is the future resource for revival. With a continued emergence of people getting committed to Christ, with a great falling away but also a great coming together, the revival needed will come from the laity.

Benefits to the Community

The next section addresses respondents' perceived benefits to community of proper development and utilization of laity to fulfill the social mission of the church.

Provided the vacuum as characterized by the respondents is addressed, and provided the recommendations by the respondents are heeded, their perceived benefits would be manifold. Together, the interviewees' perceptions of the future of the laity made for a composite of results: seeing the church(es) fostering inclusion; establishing greater representation of community/church; empowering the community; prompting greater sense of belonging, greater sense of ownership, and greater motivation/participation; transforming the life of community. According to Participant #8, "Jesus specializes in a new life, a new birth, a new identity, which results in community transformation."

Summary

Participant numbers four and six made statements that summarize the clergy's perceptions about the laity as borne out by the results of the interviews conducted to seek to understand the clergy's perceptions about the laity and how they contribute to lay leadership vacuum in a denomination.

Asked to provide their definition(s) of the terminology "laity" and to describe their understanding of the laity, some participants challenged the use of term "laity" but conceded to a working definition of the terminology as nonpaid members of the church who are engaged in serving the church and its community. According to the participants, even though all lay people follow Christ and spiritual leaders, fewer lay people actively help than not. Without being prompted early in the interview, about 80% of the participants added that without the laity, the church cannot function and would not exist. Asked to describe the social mission of the church toward community transformation, any strategic plans the church has/churches have in place for community transformation, and the participants' perceived resultant contributions by the church to the greater community, more than half of the respondents (60%) divulged that their churches have strategic plans in place, while almost all (80%) asserted that their churches make contributions toward community transformation—including engaging in community outreaches, providing physical supplies (meals/groceries, clothing) and/or shelter for the under resourced, and engaging in and inviting the community to the churches for on-site efforts and events.

Asked to explain their perceptions of the function, role(s), and importance or significance of the laity in fulfilling the social mission of church, all the participants asserted that the laity engages in the social mission of the church through social action and outreach, for example, prayer meetings; providing for physical and other needs of the community; inspiring, developing, and carrying out social programs; and expressing the love of Christ to the community. More than half of the respondents (70%) also explained that their churches seek out and train the laity as disciples; the disciples seek out and help the community; and the community in turn comes to the church and contributes to the church as the new laity and eventually as the new disciples, thus repeating the process and engaging in the social mission of the church. This was a prevailing theme touched upon by the participants throughout the interviews.

Regarding identification of training and/or development opportunities for the laity aimed at preparing them to contribute to the church and the community, four out of 10 (40 %) of the participants discussed general plans that their churches had for the laity to contribute to the church and to the community, while the remaining six respondents (60%) described specific developmental schemes their churches had for providing training opportunities for the laity. In instances where respondents identified a lack of opportunities for the laity to contribute to the church/community, some respondents discussed potential solutions, which were reiterated in detail in response to the later questions regarding the future role of the laity.

When the study participants were asked to discuss what they perceived to be the future role(s) of the laity, without additional prompting they pointed to what the church lacks and therefore makes developing the laity to play these roles a challenge. According to the different perspectives, the laity are underutilized, for example, cultural diversity is not reflected in the use of lay human resources, and there is the need (in one instance) for more effective training of the laity. In these respects, the study participants pointed made suggestions for their respective churches that included greater efforts to mobilize the laity; greater emphasis on training; increased emphasis on the importance of the laity; having more multicultural representation; engaging millennials and seniors, foregoing micromanaging and engaging in a releasing of the laity to do what God called them to do; and increasing engagement of the laity by using the appreciative inquiry and other tools. It is noteworthy, here, that these recommendations offered were specific to individual churches or groups of churches in response to the individual pastor's or superintendent's opinion about specific deficits in training the laity, thus transferability is not guaranteed. It follows that when they were asked to give their perceptions of the benefits to the community of proper development and utilization of the laity to fulfill the social mission of the church, many respondents (70 %) alluded to the benefits of making up for the deficits or vacuum in how the laity were regarded, how the laity were trained, and to what extent the laity were underrepresented given the diversity of the community at large. In these respects, it was interpreted that the same majority of study participants were pointing to the recommendations for solutions to this vacuum or these deficits as those

solutions that would likely result in fostering inclusion; establishing greater representation of community/church; empowering the community; prompting greater sense of belonging, greater sense of ownership, and greater motivation/participation; and transforming the life of the community.

From the emerging theme of interdependence and a cyclical relationship, an overarching statement might again be made about the roles and contributions of the pastor, the lay person, and the community member as each one builds upon the other. As indicated in Figure 1 and by several of the interview participants who discussed or alluded to the theme in terms of a social mission cycle, the pastor leads the laity, the laity serves, the community receives benefits including support from these two forms of church leadership, and the community, becoming the next lay people in the church, gets guidance from the first group(s) and in turn serve the next people from the community at large. Or, as several participants repeatedly mentioned, this role of the laity is supported, promoted, and guided by the pastor in his/her role as a facilitator to the people so they can carry out their role(s) and conceptualize, release, and maximize God's call or their God-given gifts; and this phenomenon contributes to the life cycle of the church: supported by the church, the pastor taps the God-given gifts of lay leadership; the laity are trained; as leaders the laity ministers to the community; and the community returns to the church to contribute. In the process, what potentially occurs is community transformation. I will more fully discuss the interpretations included in this chapter and

the implications of these findings will be fully discussed in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

A lay leadership vacuum exists in WOD-PAOC churches GTA. The laity or volunteers in WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA are underutilized. Consequently, in this study I aimed to understand how the clergy perceive the lay leadership vacuum in WOD-PAOC churches and how these perceptions contributed to the lay leadership vacuum in the denomination. The existence of lay leadership vacuum in a denomination contributes negatively to the effectiveness of the denomination and its affiliated churches in carrying out their social mission to their outlying communities. As leaders and managers of the church, the perceptions of the clergy about the laity inhibit the effectiveness laity in playing their role as conduits of community transformation. As managers, the clergy who have influence over the activities of the laity, should proactively provide the laity with training and guidance that will make them more effective volunteers of the church, and therefore, agents of community transformation. Involving the laity in the social mission of the church has several benefits including community transformation leadership role for the church because the laity have diverse professions and skills that are needed in the community transformation process. Maximizing the laity's skills, their connections and manpower can help the WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA in their social mission.

Based on the views of the clergy, the results this study affirmed that the laity have an important role to play in the church regarding the advancement and the attainment of its social mission. Throughout this study, the clergy participants provided insight on their

understanding of the role of the laity and the possible solutions that could be implemented to fully maximize the skills and other potentials of the laity. The findings of this study can also be used by the churches to determine the role that the clergy must play to address the lay leadership vacuum or the underutilization of the laity that exists in WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA. By understanding the importance of the laity, the clergy could identify and implement the necessary strategies to fully utilize the various skills and competencies of the laity.

Interpretation of the Findings

I conducted semistructured interviews were conducted with 10 clergy from churches in the WOD-PAOC in the GTA. The interviews lasted about 40 minutes each with a fixed number of 10 main questions and two concluding or wrap up questions. I summarized the findings as:

- All interviewees agreed that the laity were non-paid church volunteers who help by serving the church and the community in various ways.
- Most of the interviewees (80%) recognized that the church cannot function without the laity and that, while all laity follow the church, the clergy and Christ, not all laity actively participate in serving the church and its community.
- The clergy's perception of the laity, as provided by the clergy interviewed, showed that the clergy view the laity as important members of the church

and that the church would neither exist nor achieve its social mission without the laity.

- Most of the study participants also said that their local churches have specific developmental objectives for their laity, further proving and recognizing the importance of the laity.
- Some respondents elaborated on training opportunities that their laity were given to help them to become effective in playing their roles. This supported the assumption of the importance of the laity in community transformation and in the activities of the church.
- While all study participants agreed that the laity are important to the church in its effort to achieve its social mission of community transformation, evidence still existed that there was a lack of training opportunities for the laity to fully maximize their skills and talents. This lack of opportunities and underutilization of the laity for community transformation can be traced back to the church and the perceptions the clergy hold about the laity.
- In many churches (100%), clergymen and clergywomen underutilized the laity instead of leveraging their skills and providing them further training to equip them to contribute to community transformation. As leaders and managers of the church the clergy are responsible for providing solutions on how to leverage the skills of the laity and maximize their potentials. For example, through the HR activities like workshops and seminars, the clergy

must provide for the skills development needs of the laity who are the volunteers of the church.

The interviews lead to two unexpected findings. First, the term laity was contested by four participants. They explained that they believed the term created a division and a hierarchy among church members. This showed that not all the participants had the same understanding or knowledge about the laity and their role in the church and in the community and how both tie in to the attainment of the social mission of the church.

Second, a majority of the interviewees explained a cycle between the laity and the cyclical effects of their activities. This social mission cycle (see Figure 1) begins with the church and the pastor guiding lay leadership, followed by lay members becoming more effective members of the church and helping in the communities, then the communities joining the churches as the new generation of laity because of the positive experience with the laity and church. This cycle, explained by most interviewees, blended the aim of Interview Questions 3, 9, 10, and 12 together and seemed to have led to a common answer.

Generally, the interviewees' responses supported many of the finding of previous literature relating to this topic. For example, the interviewees agreed with the findings of Bronstein and Mason (2013) that for non-profit organization like churches, well-trained volunteers are advantageous and invaluable because they help in advancing the organizational mission. Eighty percent of the study participants identified the laity as important factor for the church to reach out to its communities and carry out the church's

social mission. This supports the claim of Nexus (2011), who stated that the success of the church's social mission and community transformational role and activities depend largely on the laity. More developed and trained laity usually translates into more effective church-community transformation activities. If the laity were better equipped, they would be better able to engage their community with their skills when entering the communities, and become more effective in their interactions with their communities towards community transformation. This perception of the clergy was highly important finding of the study because it confirmed the assumption that the laity are important for the church's social mission and must, therefore, be recognized and trained so that the community could experience the full benefits of the laity, all things being equal.

The SNHRM theory was also supported by the respondents. Although they did not directly mention the SNHRM, agreeing with Akingbola (2013), the clergy emphasized that HR activities such as workshops, training and guidance from church leaders were important steps in the process of WOD-PAOC churches' effort to attain their social mission objective in the GTA. For nonprofit organizations, a common good or social mission greatly motivates and increases the performance of its members (Quarter et al., 2009). This is important because when volunteers are provided with an intrinsic motivation they improve performance due to their genuine desire to achieve the social mission of the non-profit organizations they serve (Quarter et al., 2009). The alignment between the HR activities and the societal mission of the church is, therefore, advantageous for improving organizational effectiveness (Wright & McMahan, 1992).

The results of the study confirmed many previous studies and supported the SNHRM theory in other ways. For example, under the training and development of personnel code, the SNHRM theory was confirmed by 100% of the respondents who recognized that proper training for the laity will help to make the churches activities to their communities more effective. This provided evidence on the importance of recognizing the laity as indispensable for church activities. The effectiveness of a church in reaching out to its communities and contributing to community transformation hinges heavily on the effectiveness of its laity. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of the clergy, as managers of the church, to recognize the importance of the laity and to provide them with the appropriate support they need to carry out their tasks more effectively. As proven by SNHRM theory, for nonprofit organizations, aside from financial or technological investments, it is the proper HR practices of the clergy that would improve the effectiveness of the laity in playing their community transformational roles.

While the results of the study mainly confirmed many of the previously established studies, a major divergence between the literature and the findings of this study was the usage of the term, laity. Even though there was generally no agreed upon definition for the term *laity*, all the participants agreed that the laity are the volunteers of the church. Four out of the 10 respondents, however, preferred not to use the term. Responses from the interviews extended our knowledge in an understanding of the role of the laity in the social mission of the church. More than just volunteers who help in the church, the laity play an integral function in the community such that the church would

not survive without their help and impoverished communities would see little or no church leadership role in their transformation. Most of the respondents summarized the role of the laity in a cycle of church activities that exists among the clergy, laity and community as indicated by Figure 1. Beginning with the church, the pastors run the church activities as managers or decision makers by providing leadership for the church and its volunteers. The laity are then tasked to carry out the activities of the church into the community based on the guidance and training they receive from the clergy. When the communities respond to the engagement of the laity, then the community respondents become the new laity of the church who begin to follow the programs and participate in the church.

Some respondents in the study shared that their respective churches have training and development programs for the laity. Understanding the important role of the laity in effectively advancing the social mission of the church, the clergy perceived the laity as being indispensable in any church-community relationship and activities. However, while the importance the clergy attach to the laity was unquestioned, involving the laity in church activities and adequately preparing them to contribute to community transformation was not prioritized. Often, tension existed between the clergy and the laity in terms of leadership roles in which the laity did not get the attention or the resources that they needed. The ultimate effect of the underutilization of the laity is that the communities do not benefit from the social mission of the church. While most respondents mentioned that their local churches had programs for the laity, often these

programs were outdated and not effective for the laity and their communities. In a study of churches and their lay leadership programs, Taylor (2014) found that many churches had ineffective or underdeveloped programs for the laity. Consequently, Taylor (2014) recommended that to be truly effective, lay leadership programs for the benefit of community transformation must be well contextualized and highly specific. Many respondents provided suggestions on how to bridge the gap between the underutilization of the skills and potentials of the laity. Some participants discussed specific lay leadership development programs where the clergy provide the skills the laity need to perform their community development tasks (e.g., utilizing their professional networks to connect to other parties).

This case study and a majority of the studies used for the literature review used similar methods and achieved similar results. Researching different but overlapping topics, similar methods were used to obtain data such as first-hand interviews of clergy or active church members, and grouping of interview responses into similar themes. The theoretical framework for this research, SNHRM theory, was also utilized in previous studies to analyze the effectiveness of the church in achieving its social mission. Arinze (2013), in accordance with the SNHRM theory, established that lay people should be equipped by the church to enable them to properly serve in their church and community. While this study did not change the findings of related literature, it added new information on the clergy's perception of the laity. It established that the laity are invaluable members of the church and are highly necessary for its operations. The clergy

believed that the church would not function without the laity and that it is the responsibility of the clergy to provide the leadership needed by the laity, especially as the clergy function as managers of the church. With this understanding, the focus is shifted to how the clergy must provide leadership to the laity. It is no longer a question of whether the laity are important or if they should be provided training and invested in. Rather, as important members of the church, the laity must be given the proper guidance and training to be effective in their role as community transformation agent. A lay leadership development and training program must be provided to the laity by the clergy who manage the church. This will be highly beneficial in improving the effectiveness of attaining the social mission objective of the church. Public, private, and third sector partnerships can easily be tapped to aid the church's mission through the increased manpower, specialized professions and diverse networks of the laity.

Limitations

In the world of research, there is no such thing as a study without limitations. The Edang Group (2015) identified three types of potential qualitative research study limitations, namely, study design limitations, where constraints on the study population may ultimately affect the study outcomes; impact limitations, where study results are impacted by factors such as strong regional focus, being too population-specific, or the field being only conducive to incremental finding; and finally data limitations, where the researcher is not able to collect enough data as intended, or faces challenges with participant enrollment than was expected.

One limitation of the study was the sample size used. Even though a sample size of 10 participants is acceptable for such a study, it could also be argued that it represented a very small percentage of the population, considering that there are over 700 WOD-PAOC credentialed ministers. Thus, a sample size of 10 participants was not enough to represent the views of all or most of the population. Another limitation was that in a few instances, some participants allocated inadequate time for the interviews, hindering a full exploitation of experiences. As well, the geographic location of the study was concentrated in the GTA, and therefore limited the influence data from other parts of the province could have had on the study. Another limitation of the study was that the interviewees were randomly chosen without consideration of any personal or background information. Specifically, the sample was not screened but rather was chosen as random representatives of a small group. Consequently, it is unknown whether their personal information or background had any effect on their responses. It is not known in this study if there were any factors that affected or impacted their responses, for example socio-economic situations and geographic locations. The data collected from the participants were reliable because they were clear and also all the participants understood who they were when discussing the interview questions. A final limitation encountered in the study was as a result of the interview process. As a semistructured interview, questioning was limited and the opportunity to fully expound on the ideas and give complete details were sometimes not provided. While interviews were perfect for this case study, this

methodology of only conducting interviews was also a limitation due to the possibility of getting incomplete and limited information as data for the study.

Recommendations

The findings of this study supported the presence of the common theme of lay leadership vacuum in the WOD-PAOC denomination. One of my recommendations for future research studies is that a quantitative study that uses numerical ratings of ideas or survey method to interview a larger pool of participants to generate diverse responses or highlight different ideas, or surveys be considered. A larger sample size could result in dissimilar responses that could change the research results. According to Horton (2015), when a sample set of the larger population is not inclusive enough, representation of the full population is skewed. To address this issue, additional sample techniques must be employed (Horton, 2015). Faber and Fonseca (2014) have indicated that two investigations with different sample sizes may have different results that may point researchers in different directions. Another recommendation for future studies that may be interesting and enlightening is to conduct a study in which the participants are screened. It is important to note that even though screening activities do not necessarily result in data that are used to evaluate study outcomes (University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 2017), they help to identify information-rich participants (Patton, 2015) and also afford the opportunity to understand how participants' socio-economic situations and geographic locations and experiences may impact the results of a study.

Implications

The results of this study indicate that this research has some implications. According to the SNHRM theory, volunteers of nonprofit organizations, including the church, represent their organizations better when they are trained. It is implied that equipping the laity in the WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA by the clergy will go a long way to help the denomination to achieve its social mission. For nonprofit organizations like churches, emphasizing the humanistic principles and intrinsic motivations that boost morale and performance could be effective in nurturing the laity to advance the social mission of the denomination and contribute to community transformation. Rather than financial motivation, it is their religious belief and the token of gratitude for the investments in training programs that would push the laity to perform their duties and thus contribute to community transformation. The SNHRM theory indicates that proper development programs, and nonmonetary investments, are the keys to improving the laity's performance and the effectiveness of the church in attaining its social mission. Many of the study respondents supported the SNHRM theory by suggesting that proper training of the laity would be beneficial to establishing closer ties between the WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA and their communities.

This study is especially useful for churches and the clergy for understanding how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to lay leadership vacuum in a denomination. Specifically, this will be most useful to churches who may not have any specific or well-planned development programs for their laity. This study showed that the laity provide

vital services to churches and their communities. Training and developing the laity could, therefore, enhance the skills and competencies of the laity to advance the social mission of the church. Churches and their clergy who find themselves ineffective in their social mission or may want to improve their current social transformation involvement in their communities must invest in the laity for the reasons cited in this study. The SNHRM model has proven effective in the church setting where proper human resource activities for the laity could provide the needed improvement. Through the training and utilization of the skills of the laity, the clergy of WOD-PAOC and their affiliated churches could effectively attain their social mission. The laity are a significantly large human resource reservoir through whom the church may reach its community and effectively contribute to community transformation because of their professions and community networks.

This implications for positive social change resulting from this study may include an improvement on how the church contributes to community transformation in the GTA. The in-depth understanding of the nature of the lay leadership vacuum that exists in WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA that is derived from this study may help WOD-PAOC pastors and clergy of other denominations to effectively leverage the skills and talents of their laity through lay leadership capacity building to reach out to their communities and contribute to community transformation. The understanding of the lay leadership vacuum in a denomination gained through this study could be a basis for the clergy of WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA and other denominations as well as similar nonprofit organizations to develop training programs to bring their volunteers up to speed for the

benefit of impoverished communities that need transformation. The results from this case study shed light on the obstacles to overcome to help put structures in place to facilitate lay leadership development and involvement at WOD-PAOC affiliated churches in the GTA and in similar nonprofit organizations.

This study has implications for the field of public policy and administration because as a public policy, the Canadian government is interested in understanding the role that churches and denominations, as specialized publics or group of people, play in the Canadian economy. According to the Canadian government (Hutchinson, 2013), the community leadership challenges of organized churches are worth being studied as a public policy and administration issue because the involvement of the church or its withdrawal from the community has significant implications for the public. This is particularly the case because churches in Canada get tax exemption benefits from the government which does not merely require them but rather obliges them to contribute to their communities and be accountable to their stakeholders, including the provincial and federal governments.

Governments are always interested in determining the most effective places to invest. This study will benefit the local and provincial governments in affirming the a priori knowledge that in partnership with the government and the private sector, the church has the potential to contribute to community transformation (UWGTCCSD, 2004). Thus, the results of this study have the potential to direct government funds to strengthen the efforts of community transformation agencies in the GTA.

Conclusion

Using a qualitative method and a case study design, I explored the phenomenon of how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to lay leadership vacuum in a denomination through the eyes of ten WOD-PAOC clergy in the GTA. The purpose of this study was to understand how the clergy perceive the lay leadership vacuum that exists within the PAOC in the GTA and how their perceptions appear to inhibit the denomination's achievement of its social mission role. I used semistructured interview questionnaire to collect data by conducting face to face, digitally recorded interviews with 10 WOD-PAOC pastors and district executives in the GTA. With the help of Microsoft Word and primary techniques of coding or labeling of segments of the data in progressive units for purposes of categorizing, looking for themes, and identifying patterns, I analyzed the data to sensibly and honestly bring out their overt and covert meanings and implications. The study concluded that a lay leadership vacuum exists in churches in the WOD-PAOC in the GTA, due to the perceptions of the clergy who are considered as the managers of the local church and therefore have responsibility for making human resource decisions and managing the workforce of the church, including volunteers. The underutilization of the laity or volunteers in WOD-PAOC churches in the GTA was expressed in terms of the lack of the appropriate training or guidance to equip the laity to effectively advance the social mission of the church through service to their communities that will lead to community transformation.

The results of the study confirmed the SNHRM theory by demonstrating that as a non-profit organization, the church could improve its effectiveness in achieving its social mission by focusing on properly identifying and nurturing the laity. To attain this end, the study identified that the clergy have responsibility to the laity to ensure that human resource activities such as workshops, training and guidance take place regularly. Among the benefits, the study determined that for nonprofit organizations like the church, its volunteers derived intrinsic motivation to improve performance due to their genuine desire to achieve the social mission of the church and the alignment between the human resource activities and the social mission of the church, which comes through training.

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Appendix A: Organization Letter of Agreement

Western Ontario District of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada
Contact Information

September 20, 2016

Dear Sir,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled A Case Study of Strategic Lay Leadership Involvement in the Social Mission of a Western Ontario Denomination within the WOD-PAOC. As part of this study, I authorize you to advertise participation of the proposed study in our publication. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: participating in the interviews as honestly as possible. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Authorization Official
Contact Information

Appendix B: Research Announcement Flyer

Research Announcement



Attention: I am seeking participants for a research study entitled. I am looking for past and present district executive members, and pastors of **Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada** churches in the Greater Toronto Area.

Participants must be over the age of 18, hold credentials with the PAOC, and be or have been in charge of local assemblies for a minimum of five years.

Interviews will last for approximately one (1) hour.

The results of the study may be used to introduce effective means of identifying and nurturing the laity to effectively represent and help the denomination to achieve its social mission in its larger community. There will be no payment for participation.

If you would like to participate or have any questions, please feel free to email me at isaac.osei-akoto@waldenu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your interest.

Appendix C: Introduction Letter

You are invited to take part in this research study if you are a past or present district executive member or a full time senior or associate pastor in a PAOC local assembly in the GTA. This study is being conducted by Isaac Osei-Akoto, who is a doctoral student in the School of Public Policy and Administration at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to understand how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to lay leadership vacuum in a denomination. I will ask about your understanding of the laity, their role in the social mission of the church, and how they are included in the life of the local assembly where you are the leader.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Review and sign the informed consent form.
2. Answer five qualifying survey questions.
3. Participate in a face to face, in-depth interview session.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that you can discontinue the interview at any time. You may also skip any question that you feel is too personal.

Risks and Benefits

Potential risks include being vulnerable in sharing your views on a sensitive topic that some pastors may not want to discuss. A benefit is that your input could help

understand how the perceptions of the clergy impact the laity and the larger community of the local church. Your participation could help the denomination to effectively contribute to community transformation in an effort to attain the social mission of the church.

Compensation

There will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained during this interview will be kept confidential. I will not use your information for any purposes outside this research project and will not reveal your name or any other information that could identify you.

I appreciate you considering being a part of this study.

Isaac Osei-Akoto

isaac.osei-akoto@waldenu.edu

416-456-2673

My faculty advisor is Dr. Anne Hacker. If you have any questions later, you may contact me at 416-456-2673 or isaac.osei-akoto@waldenu.edu or the faculty advisor by emailing Anne.Hacker@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you may call Dr. Leilani Endicott, who is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 800-925-3368, extension 1210.

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study because you are a past or present district executive, or retired or current senior or associate pastor in a WOD-PAOC local assembly in the GTA. This form is part of a process called “informed consent,” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to participate or not to participate. This study is being conducted by a researcher named Isaac Osei-Akoto, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to understand how the perceptions of the clergy contribute to lay leadership vacuum in a denomination.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

Answer the open-ended interview questions.

The questions will be about your experiences about how, as a district executive or pastor, you make decisions about lay leadership involvement in your local assembly and how these decisions affect the attainment of your organization’s social mission in the larger community.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one involved with this study will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still

change your mind later. You may stop at any time. You may withdraw from participating at any time without being penalized.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Potential risks include being vulnerable in sharing your views on a sensitive topic that some pastors may not want to discuss. You may discontinue the interview at any time. A benefit is that your input could help the denomination to effectively contribute to community transformation in an effort to attain the social mission of the denomination. The results of the study could help the denomination to effectively contribute to community transformation in an effort to attain the social mission of the church.

Payment:

There will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. No identifying information will be collected. To help protect your confidentiality, there will not be any information that will personally identify you. The results of this study will be reported in the aggregate, used for scholarly purposes only, and may be shared with Walden University representatives.

I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure in a locked box. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

My name is Isaac Osei-Akoto. If you have any questions now or if you have questions later, you may contact me by phone at 416-456-2673 or email: isaac.osei-akoto@waldenu.edu. My faculty advisor is Dr. Anne Hacker. You may reach my faculty advisor by email at Anne.Hacker@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 800-925-3368, extension 1210.

Walden University's approval number for this study is IRB will enter approval number here and it expires on IRB will enter expiration date.

Please keep the consent form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below and completing the interview, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of the Participant	
Date of consent	
Participant's Signature	
Researcher's Signature	

Appendix E: Qualification Questions

THIS INFORMATION WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR TH PURPOSE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION. THE INFORMATION WILL NOT BE USED IN ANY WAY TO IDENTIFY YOU. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FORM, EMAIL ME AT

isaac.osei-akoto@waldenu.edu

1. Age: 18-25 ___ 26-35 ___ 36-55 ___ 56-65 ___ over 65 ___
2. What is your leadership position at your organization? (district executive, retired district executive, senior pastor, associate pastor, retired pastor) ___
3. For how many years have you been in your position? _____ years
4. Where is your church of affiliation located?
5. How would you rate your knowledge about the laity? Low ___ Medium ___ High

Appendix F: In-Depth Interview Questions

THIS INFORMATION WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION AND WILL NOT BE USED IN ANY WAY TO IDENTIFY YOU. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FORM EMAIL ME AT: isaac.osei-akoto@waldenu.edu.

1. To the best of your understanding who are the laity? Could you briefly define and describe the laity?
2. What is your personal experience with the laity?
3. How significant have the laity been in your own ministry as a pastor or clergy?
4. What role do the laity play in the social mission of the denomination? What is their importance?
5. How do you incorporate lay leadership development into your work as a pastor or district executive? How do you promote lay leadership development in your local assembly? What form does it take: formal or informal? i.e. do you have a department for leadership development and follow a curriculum? Be specific.
6. To what degree would you say that the laity have been emphasized and focused on enough to enhance their ability to contribute to the social mission of the denomination?
7. Of the training institutions that are affiliated with the PAOC, how many have programs for lay leadership development? What is the structure of these programs in terms of curriculum design and implementation? Compare any lay leadership

development programs of the WOD-PAOC with those that are designed for pastors. What conclusions can you draw?

8. Tell me about the district's (WOD) lay leadership programs? How about your local assembly?
9. How can the laity be nurtured to represent the church and play leadership roles in the community?
10. Do you have an idea of how many different professional groups are represented in your church? What opportunities are available to them through the church to represent the church in the community?

Appendix G: Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Signer:

During the course of my activity in collecting data for this research: “----transcriber-----”

I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement, I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.

7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix H. Preliminary Codes for Data Analysis

The precodes will make the coding of the responses easier. A consequential benefit of pre-coding structures, therefore, is that they permit researchers to test their a priori knowledge about the research issue. In other words, since researchers bring some knowledge to their studies, pre-coding structures give them the opportunity to confirm or reject their expectations that are based on their a priori knowledge of the studies they are conducting. Among the possible disadvantages for using pre-coding, less skillful researchers may force their data to fit their preliminary codes, feeds into researcher bias in one way or another, and thus raises questions about the credibility or trustworthiness of the research. The disadvantages notwithstanding, I will use a pre-coding strategy in my proposed dissertation.

RQ1. *Laity' Role in Human Resource Decisions*

1. defining and coordinating work positions
2. workforce planning
3. recruitment and selection of new employees
4. training and development of personnel
5. performance management and compensation
6. resolution of legal issues

RQ 2. *Perceptions of Lay Leadership Vacuum*

1. The beliefs, attitudes, and actions of pastors and district executives Pentecostal church lead to ineffective community transformation

2. There common barriers to the establishment of a lay leadership development program:
 - a. external factors
 - b. individuals' unwillingness
 - c. limitations in resources