

# Moderating Effect of Organisational Structure on the Relationship between Team Leadership and Growth of Pentecostal Churches in Kenya

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## Abstract

Organizational structure, a fundamental aspect of organizational behavior, has undergone significant evolution since the Industrial Revolution, continually adapting to modern needs. Flattened organizational structures, which emphasize team-oriented leadership, facilitate faster communication and decision-making processes. The interaction between team leadership and organizational structure is thus pivotal in making sense of the growth challenges Pentecostal churches face today. This study sought to clarify the extent to which organizational structure influences the effectiveness of team leadership for realizing growth of Pentecostal churches in Kenya. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The target population was 7,626 leaders comprising of bishops, reverends, and pastors. Questionnaires were successfully administered to 318 participants. Data was analysed using moderated regression analysis in SPSS. Results showed that organizational structure had a statistically significant main effect on church growth ( $\beta=.682$ ,  $p=.000$ ) but its moderating effect was insignificant ( $\beta=-.090$ ,  $p>.05$ ).

Keywords: Church Growth, Organisational Structure, Team Leadership

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## 1. Introduction and Background to the Study

Organizations, whether for-profit or nonprofit, religious or secular, require robust structures that facilitate efficient operations, foster interrelationships among various dimensions, and support the execution of strategic objectives (Ahmady et al., 2016; Ahmad et al., 2022; Albert, 2023; Wagner, 2021). In the context of Pentecostal churches, the interplay between organizational structure and team leadership significantly influences growth of Pentecostal churches. Studies have demonstrated that organizations transitioning from traditional hierarchical leadership to team-based approaches experience enhanced capability in managing complex tasks and expanding their influence (Craig, 2018; Billinger & Workiewicz, 2019; Deric, 2019). These organizations effectively achieve their goals through a harmonious alignment of structure and leadership, which ensures a collaborative environment where both human and technological resources are optimized (Burton & Obel, 2018; Reitzig, 2022).

Flattened organizational structures, which emphasize team-oriented leadership, facilitate faster communication and decision-making processes, which are crucial for church growth. Northouse (2016) and Mokgwane et al. (2020) highlight that such structures enhance creativity and adaptability, essential for navigating the dynamic environment within which Pentecostal churches operate. This alignment between team leadership and flattened

organizational structures fosters an environment where leaders can effectively delegate responsibilities, promote innovation, and engage members in meaningful ways that contribute to the church's growth.

Within a church setting, organizational structure delineates the flow of ministry work, departmental connectivity, and the distribution of administrative and leadership roles (Vanco, 2022). Effective team leadership within this framework is critical for driving growth, as it ensures that all departments work synergistically towards common goals. Awuku-Gyampoh and Asare (2021) and Okendo (2018) affirm that well-structured churches with clear leadership roles tend to exhibit higher growth rates. By leveraging team leadership, churches can enhance coordination, increase member participation, and create a cohesive vision that aligns with organizational goals, thereby fostering sustainable growth.

The selection of organizational structure as a moderating variable in this study stems from its proven impact on church growth (Awuku-Gyampoh & Sare, 2019; Jenssen, 2020). Departmentalization, a key component of organizational structure, involves grouping activities and personnel into specific departments (Ugoani, 2021; Grimsley, 2015). Effective team leadership within this context ensures that each department functions optimally, contributing to the church's overall mission. Watts (2012) underscores the importance of order and specialization, which team leadership can harness to foster expertise, streamline operations, and maximize human resources, ultimately leading to growth (Wyss & Preston, 2022).

The chain of command clarifies authority and accountability within the church (Malgorzata & Magdalena, 2020). Team leadership complements this structure by promoting clear communication and decision-making pathways, reducing confusion, and enhancing operational efficiency. A well-defined chain of command, supported by team-oriented leadership, ensures that power and responsibilities are effectively distributed, facilitating the smooth functioning of church activities and contributing to growth (Grasso, 2023).

Span of control, which determines the number of subordinates under one manager, is another critical element (Remenova et al., 2018). Effective team leadership ensures that managers are not overwhelmed, allowing for focused oversight and support. Studies suggest that optimal span of control enhances managerial efficiency and organizational performance, which is essential for the growth of churches (Bagautdinova & Validova, 2014; Bandiera et al., 2014; Jacobsen et al., 2022).

Work specialization involves breaking down tasks to enhance expertise and efficiency (Madieto et al., 2019). In the context of team leadership, this specialization ensures that each team member contributes their best, leading to improved performance and satisfaction (Adeyoyin et al., 2015). Churches that embrace this approach can better align their resources with their mission, fostering both spiritual and numerical growth (Kimani et al., 2020).

Unified organizational commitment, where all members are dedicated to the organization's vision, is pivotal. Team leadership plays a crucial role in cultivating this commitment, ensuring that all members are engaged and motivated to achieve the church's goals. Studies have shown that such commitment enhances teamwork and organizational success which are key drivers of church growth (Martono et al., 2020; Bashir & Gani, 2020; Mete & Sokmen, 2019).

The interaction between team leadership and organizational structure is pivotal in making sense of the growth challenges Pentecostal churches face (Randall, 2021; Njiru & Warue, 2019; Thiga et al., 2021). However, ambiguity in governance principles within these churches due to diverse structural models necessitates further investigation (Makinde & Ekundayo, 2021). While existing research has explored organizational structure and growth of Pentecostal churches, the moderating effect of organizational structure on the relationship between team leadership and church growth remains under-examined. This study sought to address this gap by investigating how organizational structure influences the efficacy of team leadership in driving the growth of Pentecostal churches in Kenya. In so doing, the study sought to clarify the extent to which organizational structure influences the effectiveness of team leadership for realizing growth of Pentecostal churches.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Empirical Literature

Literature suggest that organizational structure, a fundamental aspect of organizational behavior, has undergone significant evolution since the Industrial Revolution, continually adapting to modern needs (Galvan, 2019; Gartenstein, 2019). The literature identifies various organizational structures, each influencing how leadership functions within teams. Ahmady et al. (2016) distinguish between physical structures, such as buildings and locations, and social structures, which include people, roles, and departments. These structures shape team dynamics and leadership effectiveness, yet there is a lack of research specifically addressing how these structural components moderate the relationship between team leadership and the growth of Pentecostal churches in Kenya, highlighting a conceptual gap in the literature.

The interplay between organizational structure and team leadership is evident in the categorization of functional, divisional, flatarchy, and matrix models (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). Functional structures, with their bureaucratic nature, may constrain team leadership by enforcing rigid hierarchies, while divisional structures offer more autonomy, allowing team leaders to adapt strategies to their specific divisions. Flatarchy and matrix structures, by blending elements of hierarchy and flexibility, provide a conducive environment for team leadership to thrive, promoting innovation and collaboration (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). However, the contextual gap remains in understanding how these structures specifically affect team leadership within the unique cultural and operational framework of Pentecostal churches in Kenya.

In both profit and non-profit contexts, including churches, a well-defined organizational structure is essential for effective team leadership and overall organizational success (Kenton & Drury, 2021; Eze et al., 2017). Efficient structures facilitate clear communication, delineation of roles, and streamlined decision-making processes, enabling team leaders to guide their teams toward achieving organizational goals. In the case of churches, where team leadership often drives growth initiatives, appropriate structures support strategic planning and resource management, as highlighted by Okendo (2018) and Awuku-Gyampoh and Asare (2019, 2021). Despite these insights, a methodological gap persists in integrating statistical models to quantify the moderating effect of organizational structure on team leadership and church growth within Kenyan Pentecostal churches.

### 2.2 Theoretical Framework

Organizational structure theory, rooted in the sociological study of social organizations, examines the structures and operations within entities such as companies and bureaucratic institutions (Onday, 2016). It encompasses the analysis of productivity, organizational performance, and the behavior of employees and groups (Themsani et al., 2024). A pertinent branch of this theory, classical organizational theory, offers a foundational framework for understanding how tasks and relationships within organizations influence overall functionality and productivity. This theory, which emphasizes the systematic division of labor, scalar and functional processes, organizational structure, and span of control, was first developed by Frederick Winslow Taylor and later expanded by Max Weber and Henri Fayol (Bueno & Salapa, 2021).

Taylor's contributions focused on management efficiency, advocating for scientific methods in task execution, careful worker selection, and fostering cooperation to minimize conflict (Onday, 2016). Weber introduced a bureaucratic approach that emphasized structured hierarchies, functional specialization, procedural predictability, rational recruitment, and democratic principles. Fayol's administrative theory addressed task accomplishment through principles such as division of work, authority and responsibility, discipline, unity, and equity (Haveman & Wetts, 2018). These elements collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of organizational operations, making classical organizational theory a suitable lens for exploring the dynamics between team leadership and organizational structure.

Classical organizational theory has been employed in various scholarly inquiries to elucidate organizational behavior. For instance, McGuigan (2012) applied this theory to explore changes in academic libraries, while Ferdous (2016) analyzed its historical development, affirming its ongoing relevance in achieving efficiency, standardization, and specialization. Onday (2016) further demonstrated its applicability across hierarchical and horizontal organizational structures. Despite its age, classical organizational theory remains instrumental in explaining the structured interactions within organizations, offering a robust framework for examining how team leadership operates within organizational constraints.

However, the theory has faced criticisms for its rigidity and focus on individual performance over team dynamics. Critics argue that it reduces the human element to mechanistic functions, overlooks creativity and innovation, and fails to adapt to environmental changes, thereby supporting capital-intensive economies (Onday, 2016; Subramaniam, 1966). These limitations highlight the need for a nuanced application of the theory, particularly when examining the interplay between team leadership and organizational culture.

In the context of this study, classical organizational theory served as a vital framework for investigating how organizational structure moderates the relationship between team leadership and the growth of Pentecostal churches in Kenya. By focusing on the structured elements of organizational culture, this study aimed to bridge the conceptual gap in understanding how team leadership, within the constraints and facilitations of organizational structure, can drive church growth.

### 3. Methodology

Cross-sectional research design was used. This research design was used to provide a snapshot of the current dynamics, enabling the identification of patterns and correlations in the existing structural and leadership interactions within the church context. The target population for this study consisted of bishops, reverends, and pastors from 19 Pentecostal churches located across five counties in Kenya: Meru, Tharaka-Nithi, Laikipia, Embu, and Nyeri. The churches targeted for this study represented a broad cross-section of Pentecostal denominations across the country. The total population of church leaders in the selected counties included 371 bishops, 1,793 reverends, and 5,462 pastors, bringing the total to 7,626 individuals. From this, a stratified sample of 380 participants was drawn. Within each stratum, a purposive sample of those with at least ten years of experience were selected, as they were best positioned to provide informed insights into church leadership and growth dynamics.

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using Pearson correlation coefficient and moderated regression techniques. In order to test the moderating effect of organizational structure on the relationship between team leadership and church growth, a three-step model was adopted as follows:

$$\text{Model 1: } CG = \beta_0 + B_1TL + \varepsilon$$

$$\text{Model 2: } CG = \beta_0 + B_1TL + B_2OS + \varepsilon$$

$$\text{Model 3: } CG = \beta_0 + B_1TL + B_2OS + B_3TL \times OS + \varepsilon$$

Where:

CG = Church Growth

TL = Team Leadership

OS = Organization Structure

$\beta_0$  = Constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  = Regression coefficients

$\varepsilon$  = Error term

Statistical measures including the t-value, Pearson's correlation, R,  $R^2$ , F-ratio, and p-values were calculated. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected if the p-value was less than 0.05, indicating a significant moderating effect, and was not rejected if the p-value was greater than 0.05, suggesting no significant moderation.

#### 4. Findings

A total of 319 respondents successfully participated in the study out of the targeted 380, translating to a response rate of 84%. The demographic profile of the respondents reveals that the majority of participants were male (67.3%), reflecting the male-dominated nature of the clergy profession. In terms of marital status, 79.1% of the respondents were married, indicating a predominantly married clergy. The age distribution showed that the majority of respondents were between the ages of 31 and 50 (62%), suggesting that middle-aged clergy, with a mix of experience and vitality, predominantly occupy leadership roles in Pentecostal churches in Kenya. Regarding educational qualifications, 49.7% of the participants had a diploma, and 25.0% had completed high school, indicating that the majority of the clergy possessed mid-level qualifications. Furthermore, 32.1% of the respondents had served in the church for 6-10 years, with the majority (51.7%) holding the designation of pastor, followed by reverends (38.0%) and bishops (10.3%). This suggests that most respondents were mid-career clergy, with pastors having the most direct engagement with the congregation, thus offering valuable insights into the study's focus on leadership dynamics and church growth.

A Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the relationships between team leadership, organizational structure, and church growth in Pentecostal churches in Kenya.

Table 1 Interrelation between Team Leadership, Organizational Structure, and Church Growth

		Church Growth	Team Leadership	Organizational Culture
Church Growth	Pearson Correlation	1	.404**	.691**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	321	321	321
Team Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.404**	1	.569**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	321	321	321
Organizational Structure	Pearson Correlation	.691**	.569**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	321	321	321

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

The findings revealed a moderate positive correlation between team leadership and church growth ( $r = .404$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that improvements in team leadership are associated with increased church growth. This aligns with Mwenje's (2020) findings, which highlighted the significance of leadership styles in fostering church growth. Additionally, a strong positive correlation was observed between organizational structure and growth of Pentecostal Churches ( $r = .691$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that a favorable organizational structure is strongly linked to church growth. Furthermore, team leadership and organizational structure were positively correlated ( $r = .569$ ,  $p < .01$ ), implying that both factors are closely interconnected in driving growth of Pentecostal churches. These results reinforce the idea that leadership and organizational environment are mutually influential, as supported by Ji and Yang (2020). The output of moderated regression analysis is presented in table 2.

Table 1 Testing the Moderating Effect of Organizational Structure

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.404 <sup>a</sup>	.163	.160	.53540	.163	61.884	1	318	.000
2	.691 <sup>b</sup>	.478	.474	.42365	.315	190.897	1	317	.000
3	.691 <sup>d</sup>	.478	.473	.42429	.000	.072	2	316	.931
a. Predictors: (Constant), Team Leadership									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Team Leadership, Organizational Culture									
d. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Structure, Team Leadership, Interaction Term									
ANOVA <sup>a</sup>									
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F				Sig.
1	Regression	17.740	1	17.740	61.884				.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	91.157	318	.287					
	Total	108.897	319						
2	Regression	52.002	2	26.001	144.868				.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	56.895	317	.179					
	Total	108.897	319						
3	Regression	52.011	3	17.337	96.305				.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	56.886	316	.180					
	Total	108.897	319						
a. Dependent Variable: Church Growth									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Team Leadership									
c. Predictors: (Constant), Team Leadership, Organizational Structure									
d. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Structure, Team Leadership, Interaction Term									
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>									
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t		Sig.	
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	1.699	.307			5.537		.000	
	Team Leadership	.561	.071	.404		7.867		.000	
2	(Constant)	.786	.252			3.122		.002	
	Team Leadership	.021	.069	.015		.309		.757	
	Organizational Structure	.760	.055	.682		13.817		.000	
3	(Constant)	.543	1.135			.479		.633	
	Team Leadership	.080	.277	.058		.289		.773	
	Organizational structure	.825	.301	.740		2.740		.006	
	Interaction Term	-.016	.071	-.090		-.219		.827	

a. Dependent Variable: Church Growth

In Model 1, team leadership was found to be a significant predictor of growth of Pentecostal churches ( $\beta=.404$ ,  $t(318)=7.87$ ,  $p<.01$ ), accounting for 16.3% of the variance ( $R^2=0.163$ ). When organizational structure was added in Model 2, the explanatory power increased significantly to 47.8%, with organizational structure emerging as a strong predictor ( $\beta=.682$ ,  $t(317)=13.82$ ,  $p<.01$ ). In Model 3, when organizational structure was tested independently, it explained 47.7% of the variance ( $R^2=0.477$ ). The inclusion of the interaction term in Model 4 did not yield a significant improvement in the model. The positive correlation supports Okendo's

(2018) finding that organizational structure plays a crucial role in church growth. The interaction term had no significant impact ( $\beta = -0.090$ ,  $t(316) = -0.22$ ,  $p > .05$ ). These results indicate that while organizational structure is a key predictor of church growth, it does not moderate the relationship between team leadership and growth of Pentecostal churches.

## 5. Conclusion

The study concluded that while organizational structure plays a crucial role in growth of Pentecostal churches, it does not moderate the relationship between team leadership and growth. This underscores the significance of organizational structure in driving growth of Pentecostal churches, as it influences key aspects such as decision-making processes, resource allocation, and operational efficiency irrespective of team leadership. The rigidity of certain structural elements may limit the synergistic potential of team leadership styles. By extension, this is an indication that while classical organizational models provide a solid foundation, there is a need for greater flexibility in these structures to allow for more dynamic and effective leadership interactions. This flexibility could better align leadership strategies with the evolving needs of the church and its growth objectives. Broadly, the empirical evidence draws attention to the foundational role of organizational structure in supporting church operations and growth. Despite not moderating the relationship between team leadership and growth, organization structure remains a vital element that streamlines church management.

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