Servant Leadership, Socio-Cultural Factors and Church Growth: the Church of Pentecost in Focus

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Abstract
This study examined three complex intersecting issues within the discourse of leadership research where much empirical knowledge is required: the applicability of servant leadership style within a Ghanaian ecclesiological organization; the nature and impact of social-cultural factors on servant leadership; and the impact of servant leadership on organizational growth. Using the church of Pentecost as a case study, the study collected qualitative data from purposively sampled lay leaders of the church from the Ahenema Kokoben District. The study shows how the church's preference for *"lay leaders"*— mostly untrained and working as servant leaders— coincided with a favorable socio-cultural environment to build the church into an enviable global model in terms of membership and finance. The study reveals that the servant leadership style is workable within the Ghanaian socio-cultural context and possess a magnetic appeal that rally subordinates around a central theme and focus of an organization (thus in this case, the Church of Pentecost)
Keywords: Servant Leadership, Socio-Cultural Factors, Laity and "Dwanetoa"

1. Introduction

> *"I am more afraid of an army of 100 sheep led by a lion than an army of 100 lions led by a sheep".* — Talleyrand

Leadership; "the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision or set of goals" (Robbins & Judge, 2013) remains the heart beat of every organization. Organizations require strong leadership and management for optimal effectiveness. Organizational leaders are required in contemporary times to challenge the status quo, create visions of the future, and inspire organizational members to the attainment of organizational success. Consequently the search for personality, physical, social, or intellectual attributes that distinguish leaders from non-leaders have dominated the earliest stages of leadership research (ibid); giving us a barrage of literature about traits, behaviors, styles and different models of leadership strategies adopted by successful organizations and their leaders. Historically, strong and effective leaders have been described in terms of their traits. Accordingly, research in organizational leadership has mostly focused on various attempts to isolate the most successful leadership traits; a mission which has largely been unsuccessful resulting in several dead ends (Robbins & Judge, 2013). For instance in a late 1960s review of 20 different studies, nearly 80 leadership traits were identified with only five (5) common to four (4) or more of the investigations. Extra efforts to replicate these studies in the 1990s were only successful in so far as showing that most leaders *"are not like other people",* but the specific traits that characterized them varied from review to review (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

In recent times, much attention has been shifted from the possession of specific leadership traits to the focus on specific socio-cultural factors that influence the successful application of a particular leadership style. Accompanying this development has been the conspicuously typical question about the applicability of the various leadership models and styles in different cultural context, particularly in the global south since a chunk of the literature on leadership have evolved from western countries.

To what extent are the various leadership styles and models applicable within the socio-cultural context of African societies? What is the relationship between the effective application of a leadership style and the socio-cultural factors that may influence the outcomes of a particular choice of leadership style? Robbins and Judge (2013) have noted that the successful application of a particular leadership style is directly proportional to the social-cultural factors that mediate the implementation of the said leadership style. Accordingly, this paper examined the applicability of the servant leadership style within a Ghanaian ecclesiological organization (The Church of Pentecost).

The Church of Pentecost— to be referred hereafter as COP— has recorded phenomenal growth in respect of membership, finance and infrastructural assets since its establishment in 1937 (Gyimah, 2013). The church's tremendous growth and development has been championed largely by unpaid lay leaders who have served voluntarily with next to nothing in respect of material rewards. Much remains to be discovered in terms of how the leadership style of the church; which is mostly rooted in the philosophy of servant leadership became successful within the Ghanaian socio-cultural context resulting in the expansion of the church across the borders of Ghana. The study sought to examine this interesting nexus.

1.1 Statement of Problem

The history of leadership research has initially been an adventure of personality traits discovery (Robbins & Judge, 2013). The plethora of early research undertakings in organizational leadership focused on isolating the most effective and efficient personality characteristics that were favorable to organizational leadership in the 1960s. Persistent effort to replicate this in the 1990s yielded next to nothing; only showing dissimilarity between leaders and non-leaders in terms of uniqueness (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Subsequent attempts from researchers entailed organizing personality traits around the Big Five personality framework (extraversion, agreeableness, Emotional intelligence and openness to experience). Following after this, attention in leadership studies and research shifted to a behavioral focus, which called for the training of people to become leaders (Fleeson & Gallagher, 2009). For instance, studies undertaken by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center revealed two behavioral dimensions: the employee-oriented leader and the production oriented leader analogous to the concept of consideration and initiating structure respectively (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

Subsequently, leadership research culminated in the development of specific typologies (leadership styles) that were thought to be effective with numerous studies focusing on the efficacy of a particular style of leadership (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Whilst most of the studies on leadership styles have adequately contributed to our understanding of leadership generally, the socio-cultural context within which these styles operate have seen underwhelming exploration in literature. For instance Robbins & Judge (2013) have asserted that whilst the numerous studies on leadership styles represent key steps in elucidating ways of achieving organizational success**,** leadership styles operate on the rail of cultural factors; consequently assessing leadership styles and theories as stand-alone factors would lead to misguided predictions about their efficacy. Thus leadership styles/theories do not operate in vacuums, but are rather moderated by cultural factors that require further investigation.

Nonetheless, extant leadership literature has been lacking in respect of the interrogation of the socio-cultural variables that exert a considerable influence on leadership styles. Robbins & Judge (2013) have lamented the paucity of literature in respect of the successes or otherwise of different leadership styles in for instance Africa giving her rich cultural values. Similarly, majority of the research undertakings carried out on the growth of COP have paid little attention to the church's leadership style (particularly on the lay leaders) and the favorable cultural factors that propelled the church's growth. Previous studies by Omenya (2002) and Gyimah (2013) explored the church's growth amidst a Pentecostal methodological approach, with little attention to the leadership styles of the lay leaders who constitute the majority in terms of the church's leadership structure. Consequently, this study sought to address this major gap in literature in respect of leadership studies.

2.1 LEADERSHIP AND SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS; *A cursory Review of literature*.

2.1.1 Styles of Leadership

Much of the discussion on leadership has mostly followed the identification of a particular *"style"* of leadership within specific contexts. Prominent among the leadership styles are; transactional leadership, laissez faire type of leadership, transformational leadership and servant leadership. This section entails a brief discussion of these styles.

2.1.2 Transactional Leadership

Mostly explained as a cost-benefit exchange between leaders and their followers (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987), transactional or exchange leadership involves something of worth between what the leader has or controls and what the follower desires in return for his/her services (Yukl & Fleet, 1992). Emphasis is placed on leaders expounding on goals and objectives, communicating to arrange tasks and activities with the collaboration of their employees to guarantee that wider organizational goals are attained (Bass, 1990; 1998). It is based on the supposition that subordinates and systems perform better under a clear chain of command. The mainstay of transactional leadership is that people are motivated by rewards and penalties and that interpersonal relation is at best described as more or less rational exchange between agents exercising the power of choice. In that regard, transactional leaders would motivate followers to conform to the leaders' desires and organizational role through an exchange process, whereas for instance transformational leaders mostly motivate followers by encouraging them to go above their self-interests for the sake of the shared goals of an organization (Marturano & Gosling, 2008). The drawback of this leadership style ultimately lies in its weakness to encourage individuals to give anything beyond what is clearly codified in their contract since transactional leadership encourages specific exchanges with a close connection between goals and rewards.

2.1.3 Laissez faire

Laissez-faire leadership is the evasion or absence of leadership. Laissez-faire leaders are apathetic and have a *'hands-off – let –things-ride'* approach toward the workers and their performance (Marturano & Gosling, 2008). Laissez faire leaders overlook the needs of others, they avoid making decisions, hesitate in taking action and are absent when required (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The laissez-faire leader mostly avoids active involvement in the task of goals setting, reinforcing expectations, organizing priorities or becoming involved when leadership

direction is considered necessary (Eden et al., 2008). Whilst this style of leadership may serve as a catalyst for innovative initiatives, the lack of support for followers may also stifle the full potential and growth of inexperienced followers. For instance, Omolayo (2007) notes that because laissez-faire involves a non-interference policy, and allows complete freedom to all workers, subordinates under a laissez-faire leader have to search for other sources inspiration and support in making final decisions.

2.1.4 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders seek to move beyond people's needs and desires, in so doing encouraging their real needs and values. Transformational leaders appeal to the moral values of their followers in an attempt to raise their consciousness about ethical issues and to marshal their energy and resources to change and develop institutions (Yukl, 2002). Transformational leaders are solitary, visionary and inspirational figures devoted to exceedingly particular ideals and goals (Bass, 1990). Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) have argued that, leadership is strictly transformational if priority is given to the interests of followers, other than that of the leader's self-interest. Bass (1990) asserts that, there are four behavioral components that make up transformational leadership: charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Transformational leadership starts with different beliefs about oneself and others. Firstly, there is the belief that leadership is not a job but a way of being. The second is directly related to the first; whereas in some circles, leadership signifies power and control over others, in transformational leadership a desire to enable others to realize their own power and leadership potential is the most important concern. Nonetheless, this approach has been criticized for its inherent overlaps in respect of the various strands it presents; charismatic, inspirational etc. For instance Nwenje (2015) has argued that the approach lacks clarity; as most of its concepts are used synonymously.

2.1.5 Towards a Servant Leadership Model: *from Ethics to Service*

In recent times much attention has been drawn to the value of ethics and trust (authenticity) in leadership. Primarily, authentic leadership is a trust exuding style of leadership. Authentic leaders share information, encourage open communication, and stick to their ideals. As a result…..."people come to have faith in them" (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Accordingly, researchers have paid much attention to the ethical implications of leadership given the growing interest in ethics throughout the field of management. Renowned global organizations like Boeing have in recent times tied executive compensation to ethics to highlight the symbiotic relationship between the right way of doing things and performance (Ibid).

This has given rise to a new dimension in the study of ethical leadership with scholars focusing on servant leadership as the new strand of ethical leadership (Robbins & Judge, 2013). A concept originally introduced by Greenleaf in his article *''the servant as leaders''*, this leadership style argues that a leader should see himself as a servant first. Servant leadership can be broadly defined as a desire from leaders to motivate, guide, offer hope, and provide a caring experience by establishing a quality relationship with the followers and subordinates (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002).

Servant leaders go beyond their own self-interest, focusing on opportunities that facilitate the growth and development of followers. Power is not a means to an end for servant leaders, but emphasis is rather placed on persuasion by appealing to the ethical framework of the group via the individual's ethical make-up. Characteristic behaviors include listening, empathizing, persuading, accepting stewardship, and actively developing followers' potential (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Thus, there is a move away from the command-control leadership styles with much emphasis on teamwork, egalitarianism and strong ethical behaviour which involves subordinates in decision making with sacrificial provision of direction to followers (Spears, 1996).

Because servant leadership focuses on serving the needs of others, research has focused on its outcomes for the well-being of followers. Walumbwa et al (2010) have reported in their study of 123 supervisors that servant leadership resulted in higher levels of commitment to the supervisor, self-efficacy, and perceptions of justice, which were all related to organizational citizenship behavior. Nonetheless, there remains a lot more research to be conducted on this emerging style of leadership as Robbins and Judge, (2013) notes that much is not known empirically about its efficacy in organizations especially within different global cultures. Thus, this paper sought to contribute to the body of literature on servant leadership.

2.2 Leadership in the Church of Pentecost

The polity and leadership style of the church of Pentecost is quite complex and difficult to pin down in respect of couching a single leadership image. Although the church professes to practice the "*Presbyterian*" model of leadership which is structured to entrust ultimate decision making in the presbyteries (a group of officers mostly in layers of hierarchy), other forms of polity such as Episcopal or Congregational practices become prevalent when the need arises (Darko, 2015). Notwithstanding, the church's polity is dominantly Presbyterian with a few paid full time ministers who depend largely on the Laity to accomplish the church's vision. The most significant aspect of the organizational structuring is the leadership image it has couched for its full-time ministers and the Laity. Leaders are told from the onset that they have been called to serve a need (Darko, 2015). This image of a "*servant*" runs parallel along the various levels of the leadership hierarchy. However, this paper placed much

emphasis on the Laity (elders, deacons and deaconesses) whose overwhelming numbers complement the work of the full-time ministers. Significant in this regard is the nature of the unpaid services the laity renders to the church.

2.3 Leadership and Socio-cultural factors

Leadership styles and their choices are not as effective as the environments that call for them in every dispensation. Even charismatic leaders rise in response to specific *"triggers"* necessitating their emergence. Thus, leadership styles are not exercised in *"vacuums"*, but rather as argued by Darko (2015)……… "the practice is informed by the condition on the ground in every particular situation".

Robbins and Judge, (2013) have noted that Servant leadership may be more prevalent and more effective in East Asian cultures than the United States of America given the prototype of US leaders as those who prefer to be in front of the group, giving orders to followers. In contrast Singaporeans tend to draw leaders at the back of the group, and would prefer to gather group opinions in total in order to unify them from the rear (Menon et al, 2010). Thus, prevailing cultural factors exert considerable influence on the success of a particular leadership style in organizations. For instance, Akuoko (2008) notes that employees and Human Resource (HR) managers in particular are influenced by the socio-cultural practices and values of the larger society they reside. The manager's daunting task is his ability to successfully solve the constant dilemma of how to effectively "marry" socio-cultural considerations with organizational codes of conducts (ibid). Most organizational leaders in Ghana face this challenge and must effectively rethink their chosen styles of leadership vis-à-vis organizational standards for efficient and effective organizational performance.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

This is an exploratory study which adopted the basic qualitative study design. The basic qualitative research design represents a generic and simple framework that allows for flexibility in respect of time and methods (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) notes that qualitative researchers employing the basic qualitative study design are primarily interested in constructing meaning and interpreting the world of the study participants. Thus, a central characteristic of this design and all qualitative studies is that individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds. Consequently, the researcher is interested in understanding the meaning a phenomenon has for those involved. As observed by Crotty (1998)………… "Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting" (Crotty, 1998: Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Accordingly,   researchers employing a basic qualitative study design are basically interested in (1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Given the fact that this study sought to understand how the laity of the Church of Pentecost make sense of their leadership experiences and lives, the choice of the basic qualitative research design was appropriate.

3.2 Study Population

The study population included all presbytery members of the Ahenema Kokoben District of the Church of Pentecost. This group entailed the elders, deacons and deaconesses of the church.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

This study employed non-probability sampling methods, particularly, purposive and snowball sampling techniques in recruiting study participants from the population. Given the study's focus in understanding the constructed realities of research participants, the researcher expertly selected study participants who had served as presbytery members for at least ten (10) years. This sample included retired presbytery members of the church who were recommended by other study participants because of their immense years of experience. In all, twenty (20) participants from three different groups (elders, deacons and deaconesses) were interviewed.

3.4 Data Collection

Basic qualitative study designs mostly collect data through interviews, observations, document analysis or a combination of these data collection techniques (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Accordingly face-to-face interviews were conducted with the selected participants of the study. Interviews were conducted with the aid of a semi-structured interview guide. Interview questions were based on the study's objective which was to ascertain the relationship between servant leadership, socio-cultural factors and church growth. Some of the issues discussed included; the experiences of participants as leaders, community perception about the participant's role as church leaders, status change of the study participants since their ordination as church leaders. The interviews were mostly conducted at the homes of the participants or the church premises, and audio taped with the consent of the participants. The study complemented the interview data with a documentary analysis of church reports

covering church statistics.

3.5 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data in the basic qualitative research design entails identifying recurring patterns that characterize the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Findings entail these recurring patterns or themes supported by the data obtained from the interviews. The overall interpretation represents the researcher's understanding of the participants' understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Ibid). The researcher conducted the interviews in the Twi language which is the local language of the people in Ahenema Kokoben. Audio-recorded discussions were transcribed verbatim by the researchers. Following the transcription of the data, the researcher read through the transcribed data to identify with the pattern of responses in the data. Similar codes were allocated to familiar ideas and responses. According to Gläser and Laudel (2013), "the function of codes is to indicate what is talked about in a segment of text as it supports the retrieval of text segments, which in turn can be used to group them according to thematic aspects of the data they contain." Subsequently the codes were grouped into categories which were additional linked together by themes. Connecting themes were re-aligned in order to simplify the analysis and generate a summary of the findings.

3.6 Ethical Issues

Ethical clearance was sought and obtained from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology's Institutional Review Board before the fieldwork. The researchers respected the rights of the respondents and ensured that written informed consent was completed prior to the conduct of the interviews.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of the study was that data was collected from a small sample of church leaders. Had the study covered more districts, a holistic picture could have been gained but this was not possible due to limited resources. Given the small sample size, the researcher did not intend to generalize the findings. This did not in any way affect the quality of data and the corresponding conclusions made in this study.

4. Analysis and Discussion of Findings

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of study participants. The female participants (45%) were slightly outnumbered by their male participants (55%). Additionally, majority of the participants (90%) were married as at the time of this study, with the remaining two (10%) indicating that they were single. In respect of the age categories, nine (45%) of the respondents were within the age range of 35-45 years, five (25%) reported that they were within the age range of 46-55 years whilst four (20%) indicated that they were within the age range of 55-65 years. The remaining two (10%) participants reported that they were at least sixty six years of age. Furthermore 40% of participants reported that they had completed basic education, whilst five (25%) of the study participants were second cycle school leavers. Similarly, 25% of the study participants had completed tertiary education, whilst the remaining two (10%) had no formal education. Moreover, 50% of the study participants were elders of the church, with 25% each of the two remaining participants indicating that they are deacons and deaconesses respectively. This is summarized in table 1 below.

Table 1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Sex of Respondents		
Male	11	55
Female	9	45
Marital Status of Participants		
Single	2	10
Married	18	90
Age Range of Respondents		
35-45	9	45
46-55	5	25
55-65	4	20
66 and Above	2	10
Education		
Basic Education	8	40
Secondary Education	5	25
Tertiary Education	5	25
No Formal Education	2	10
Office of Participants		
Elders	10	50
Deacons	5	25
Deaconess	5	25

4.2 The Growth of the Church of Pentecost; *a brief statistical Overview*
Table 2 and 3 below presents the "decadal growth" and the "comparative growth" of the church of Pentecost from 1953 to 2007, and 1998 to 2006 respectively (Gyimah, 2013). The results show interesting trends over the years and *beg* for questions that require answers from the personalities connected to these figures.

Table 2 Decadal Growth Rate of the Church of Pentecost

PERIOD	ADULT MEMBERSHIP GROWTH	DECADAL GROWTH RATE
1953-1963	13,940 – 40, 595	192%
1963-1973	40, 595 – 65, 773	62%
1973-1983	65, 773 – 135, 690	107%
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP GROWTH (ADULT, TEENAGE AND CHILDREN)		
1983 - 1993	188, 699 – 479, 300	154%
1993 - 2003	479, 300 – 1,126, 791	135%
1995 - 2005	589, 268 – 1,290, 712	119%
1997 - 2007	711, 426 – 1, 468, 726	93.3%

SOURCE: The Church of Pentecost Headquarters, Annual Reports to the General Council Meetings and Council Meeting Minutes from 1953 – 2007 (Gyimah, 2013).

Table 3 Church Growth in Ghana

DENOMINATION	1998 MEMBERSHIP	2006 MEMBERSHIP
The Methodist Church Of Ghana	507, 442	634, 689
The Presbyterian Church of Ghana	412, 705	611, 009
The Apostolic Church of Ghana	145, 384	350, 000
The Church of Pentecost	779, 199	1, 375, 496

SOURCE: Foli (2006; Gyimah, 2013), Christianity in Ghana: A comparative church growth study, 155 – 165, and 197.

COP experienced a remarkable growth from an estimated membership of 50 (Gyimah, 2013) in 1937 to 13, 940 in terms of adult population in 1953 as shown in table 1. This represented 27, 880% growth increase for the first 15 years. Also noteworthy, was the church's sustained growth between 1953 and 1963 even though Gyimah reports that the period was accompanied with intense crises, conflicts, court cases and confiscation of some of the church's valuable assets including church buildings. The post-crises period (1963 – 1973) witnessed a reduction in the DGR to 62%.

It is also evident from the figures presented above that the COP had doubled her membership between 1998 and 2006, outperforming other churches (especially other Pentecostal and charismatic churches). Significant as this may be in terms of numbers, little is known about the leadership and socio-cultural undertones underlying this growth rate.

4.3 Leadership Style of COP: *Perspectives from the Laity*

Some selected members of the Laity were asked to indicate the leadership style of the COP in respect of the church's growth rate. An overwhelming number of the respondents said the church's growth over the years could be attributed to the servant leadership style adopted by the church. What is more interesting about this revelation was respondent's perspective of servant leaders. Respondents defined servant leadership as an unlimited investment of the leader's time and resources (human, financial, assets etc) without a reward. As revealed by some of the responds;

"We were told from the time of our ordination that we have been called to serve and not to be served, as such we were encouraged to expect a reward in heaven. The mention of heaven urged us to work tirelessly. (Church deacon, individual interview).

"My understanding as an elder of the church was to work hard and lay down my life like the people of the biblical times. This included making my money and artisanal skills available to the church free of charge anytime it is required". (Church elder, individual interview)

Although respondents lamented that the *servant leadership* style is gradually waning across the divide of the church, they attributed the church's growth rate over the years partly to the church's servant leadership style and the supernatural.

4.4 Socio-cultural Factors, Servant Leadership and the Growth of the COP

As has been revealed earlier, an organization's choice of a particular leadership style is at best described within the environment within which the leader operates. This paper among other objectives sought to understand the socio-cultural environment within which "servant leadership" operated within the Ghanaian context to deliver increasing growth for an ecclesiological organization.

4.4.1 Servant Leadership, Social Mobility and the Growth of COP

Colonialism had significantly altered the complexion of Ghanaian religiosity with a significant number of people converting to Christianity (Assimeng, 1981). Whilst Christianity remains a means to an end (social mobility), the occupancy of a higher status position in itself was a defining factor in the life of such personalities just as traditional religious leaders were highly revered in the traditional society. Respondents in this regard reported that their appointment to several leadership roles within COP had significantly placed them among the community leadership and expedited their mobility on the social ladder. Consequently, respondents (particularly the church elders) were motivated to intensify their efforts to "win" more souls in a bid to expand their territorial control. The following quotations give credence to this fact:

"But for my position as an elder of the church, I would never have been revered in my family and community. The position altered my status completely in my family and community making me a leader in the community which motivated me to intensify the service I was required to offer to the church". (Church elder, individual interview).

"My status in the community changed dramatically when I was ordained as a deacon of the church. I am no longer considered an ordinary person as most of the teenagers approach me for counsel". (Church deacon, individual interview)

Just as leadership in the traditional religious societies *"counted"* in terms of the structure of stratification, leadership in the Christian church acted as a significant impetus in altering the status of some individuals. With their social mobility closely tied to their leadership status in the church, most of the laity were eager to maintain their newly attained social status by intensifying their service to the church.

4.4.2 Servant Leadership, Cultural Shock and the Growth of COP

Closely related to the above is the post experiential social environment of most of the respondents after their elevation to a leadership position in COP. The experience can be best described as sudden and shocking for most of these leaders who had not entirely prepared for such an elevation. Nonetheless, respondents reported that the sudden "*shock*" that accompanied the change motivated them to work harder than they ever did in any role. This is exemplified in the quotations below.

"After my elevation to the position of an elder of COP, I still could not believe after many years that I was leading a group of about hundred individuals. It was a shocking experience and I had never dreamt of it in my life. Nevertheless this sudden change and shock motivated me to work hard because I thought I could never have attained it on merit and achievement. It was just by the grace of God". (Church elder, individual interview)

"It was an interesting experience when I was first ordained as a deaconess. Traditionally, men are the only individuals who lead people in my family and I least expected that I could lead over fifty women in my life. Although this seemed like a dream initially, it rather urged me to give my all as a servant for the women ministry". (Church deaconess, individual interview).

Described by Sociologist as cultural shock— the feeling of surprise and disorientation experienced when people witness cultural practices different from their own (Schaefer, 1992)—respondents report that it accounted for their servant leadership style and the growth of COP in general.

4.4.3 Servant leadership, "Dwanetoa" and the growth of COP

Whilst it is quite difficult to pin down a single socio-cultural factor that provided the requisite impetus for servant leadership to thrive within the COP environment, much premium can be placed on "dwanetoa" which endorsed most of the laity's position within the church and community. According to Akuoko (2008) "dwanetoa" entails a customary practice within the traditional Ghanaian society where a third party seeks redress on behalf of another. In church practice, it generally entails consulting a church leader ("dwanetoa") who will either intervene physically, socially or spiritually on behalf of a member. The laity of the COP is always inundated with visits from members who present a myriad of problems (spiritual, marital and family issues) with a view to obtaining pragmatic direction ("akwankyere"—the giving of a specified solution to a specific problem or challenge presented to religious leaders). The laity by virtue of their status performs reconciliatory roles, undertake spiritual exorcism and provide financial support to members. The following quotations summarize the experiences of the study participants.

"I have been overwhelmed over the years in respect of the countless problems that have been presented by members to me. My doors are always opened to them and this effectively helped in addressing a lot of issues that where hitherto shrouded by the members. This has contributed in part to the growth of our numerical strength since I even receive non-members as well". (Church elder, individual interview)

"Our prayer meetings on Tuesdays are devoted to the spiritual challenges of the members of the women ministry. During such meetings, members are delivered from spiritual bondage and dumbfounding testimonies are recorded countless number of times. This has attracted significant number of unbelievers and Christians from other denominations to our church". (Church deaconess, individual interview)

Assimeng (1981) notes that the central focus of religious activity in traditional Ghanaian society is to ward off evil spirit ("honhom fi"). Evidence from this study shows that even though most people have converted to Christianity from traditional religion, their focus still remain within the context of warding evil spirit off. Consequently, the socio-cultural concepts of "dwanetoa" and "akwankyere" have contributed in no small way to the growth of COP.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of socio-cultural factors on the servant leadership style of the Church of Pentecost as well as analyzing how socio-cultural factors and the servant leadership style has contributed to the growth patterns of the church. The composition of the study participants were fairly balanced in terms of sex even though the male participants were slightly outnumbered by their female counterparts. The study revealed that most of the participants had only completed basic school even though few others reported that they had completed secondary and tertiary level education respectively. Clearly, educational attainment is not necessarily tied to one's rise to the laity in the church. This finding is consistent with the observation made by Darko (2015). Darko (2015) notes that, lay leaders of the Church of Pentecost are servant leaders who are dedicated and committed to their duties as church leaders.

The study revealed that COP has experienced remarkable growth since its establishment in 1953 with the least percentage growth being 62% (1962-1973). The church's numerical strength (including adults, children and teenagers) improved remarkably with a percentage increase of 154% between 1983 and 1993. Gyimah (2013) has attributed this phenomenal growth within the Church of Pentecost solely to the "supernatural" with little or no reference to the laity. However this study has revealed that the efforts of the Laity—some of whom have even sold their properties to finance the church—played an indispensable role in the sustenance of the church's remarkable growth rate.

Generally, leadership in traditional religious societies was tied to the social mobility of the personalities in the traditional Ghanaian society (Assimeng, 1981). This study affirms this finding as most of the respondents confirmed that their rise to COP leadership had significantly placed them among the community leadership and expedited their mobility on the social ladder. Accordingly, church elders were motivated to intensify their efforts to win more souls in a bid to expand their territorial control. This is a very important finding given the sole attribution of the church's growth and expansion to the "supernatural" by extant studies such as Gyimah (2013). Whilst members of the laity may hold supernatural and eschatological views in respect of what they stand to gain, they are equally motivated by the alteration in their social status.

Related to the above is the experiential atmosphere associated with the change in social status. This is mostly the case when an individual experience an alteration in his social environment. Thus, the *"cultural shock"* that accompanied the change in social status for most leaders on the assumption office as members of the laity motivated them to work tirelessly since they least expected the sudden change in their personality. Thus, newly ordained lay leaders of the church were prepared to go an extra mile in order to sustain their newly elevated status. This was manifested in their behavioral and attitudinal change including the managing of their personality to fit the status of the office. Conventionally, the concept of cultural shock has been employed by sociologists to explicate the difficulties individuals encounter when they are exposed to an entirely new cultural

environment (Ferrante, 2014). This study has gone an extra mile to demonstrate how the concept of cultural shock relates to motivation within organizations.

Finally, this study reveals that the socio-cultural practice of *"Dwanetoa"*— consulting a church leader who will either intervene physically, socially or spiritually on behalf of a member— remains an important factor in the growth and development of the Church of Pentecost. The practice has resolved numerous spiritual and social predicaments of individuals who had consulted the study participants (mostly the elders of the church). This attracted a significant number of people to the church, and affirms Assimeng's (1981) finding that the central focus of religious activities in traditional Ghanaian society is to ward off evil spirit. It appears that years of urbanization has done little to derail this traditionally held rationale for religious engagement—the potency of warding off evil spirit.

6.1 Conclusion

This study sought to establish a relationship between servant leadership, socio-cultural factors and the growth of COP. The paper argues on the basis of the qualitative data derived from field interviews that the COP has achieved tremendous growth over the years because of the adoption of the servant leadership model for its full time ministers and the laity. The servant leadership style thrives successfully within the Ghanaian socio-cultural context and possesses a magical appeal that rally subordinates around a central theme and focus of an organization (thus in this case, the Church of Pentecost). Accordingly, the study recommends the intensification of the servant leadership model as the basic leadership component upon which all other leadership styles rest in COP.

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