

Leadership styles used in the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi, Kenya

Stephen Omucheni Shisia^{1*}

Crispinous Iteyo²

Elijah. O.S. Odhiambo³

^{1*} shisiastephen@gmail.com

^{1,2,3} Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Leadership styles is an integral part of a leader consequently creating either positive or negative dynamics within the organization depending on the manner they are used. The Anglican Diocese of Nairobi, Kenya, has experienced recurring conflicts; disputes over leadership succession, church property and legal battles. Different leaders within the Diocese have used different styles of leadership that has resulted into conflicts, often leading to a clash of expectations and a lack of clear-cut conflict resolution mechanisms. The study interrogated the leadership styles in the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi, Kenya. The study was justified in three-fold: academic, policy and philosophical taking the scope into consideration. The literature was done thematically adopting the contingency theory of leadership. The study adopted the descriptive and evaluative research designs. The study area was the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi, Kenya. The simple random sampling was used to select the parishes and respondents from the selected parishes while purposive sampling was used to select the key informants. The sample size comprised of 256 respondents. The participants included Bishop, Archdeacons, and Vicars, Curates, Parish Church Council (PCC), Mother's Union, Kenya Anglican Men's Association (KAMA) and youth. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect primary data. Desk top review was used to collect secondary data. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics via SPSS Version 30. Validity and Reliability of research instruments, limitations of the study, and ethical considerations were taken into consideration. The findings were presented in frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation. Qualitative data was processed via thematic and content analysis. The findings indicated transformational leadership style was the most used style of leadership in the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi, Kenya. The study findings would contribute to helping policymakers in the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi, in coming up with new policies or improving the existing ones to address the various conflicts that are occasioned by leadership styles. The study recommends that Clergy are given the orientation of the parishes that they are serving by being given the historical background that includes the culture of the parish, strengths and weaknesses of the parish, financial status of the parish and the demographics of the parish.

Keywords: Anglican Diocese of Nairobi, Anglican Church of Kenya, Conflicts, Leadership Styles

I. INTRODUCTION

Churches around the world have historically been among the most tranquil settings for Christian worship of God and holistic fellowships. Nonetheless, several recent investigations have shown that a substantial change in the situation has occurred. Numerous waves of church conflicts are occurring in churches all throughout the world as a result of several circumstances (Peter et al., 2024). One of the factors that can lead to conflicts in the church is the leadership style applied by the leader/s. Leadership styles are an integral part of a leader consequently creating either positive or negative dynamics within the organization depending on the manner they are used. Leadership and conflicts are deeply intertwined phenomena across institutions worldwide. Leadership styles—ranging from authoritarian to transformational—shape organizational culture, decision-making processes, and conflict dynamics (Northouse, 2022). Globally, religious institutions have not been exempted from internal conflicts, often arising from doctrinal differences, governance disputes, and leadership struggles. Studies show that leadership approaches such as participative and transformational leadership tend to reduce conflict intensity by promoting inclusivity and dialogue, whereas autocratic leadership often exacerbates tensions (Yukl, 2013). In faith-based organizations, leaders are expected to embody moral authority, yet leadership failures can trigger divisions, as seen in various church schisms across Europe and North America (Gifford, 2009). Thus, the nexus between leadership styles and conflict is a critical area of inquiry in both secular and religious contexts.

In Africa, leadership challenges within religious institutions often mirror broader socio-political dynamics, including ethnicity, governance deficits, and power struggles (Mbiti, 2017). Churches play a central role in social cohesion, but leadership conflicts have increasingly emerged, particularly in Anglican, Pentecostal, and Catholic institutions. Research across Sub-Saharan Africa indicates that hierarchical and centralized leadership styles frequently

contribute to disputes over authority, resources, and doctrinal interpretation (Kalu, 2008). Conversely, inclusive leadership models rooted in African communal values (Ubuntu philosophy) have been associated with better conflict management outcomes (Ncube, 2010).

In East Africa, religious institutions are influential in peacebuilding and governance. However, they also experience internal conflicts linked to leadership transitions, accountability, and resource control. Within Anglican dioceses in countries like Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya, leadership disputes have occasionally led to factionalism and weakened institutional cohesion (Ward, 2006). The region's socio-cultural diversity further complicates leadership dynamics, as ethnic and political affiliations may influence leadership decisions and conflict patterns (Haynes, 2019). Studies suggest that collaborative and servant leadership styles are more effective in mitigating such conflicts within East African church contexts.

In Kenya, the church remains a powerful social and moral institution. The Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) has historically contributed to education, healthcare, and governance discourse. However, it has also experienced internal conflicts related to leadership succession, resource allocation, and doctrinal differences (Gifford, 2009). The study focuses on the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi, located in Nairobi. As one of the most prominent dioceses in the Anglican Church of Kenya, it serves a diverse urban population and plays a significant role in religious and social affairs. The Diocese has experienced leadership-related tensions, including disagreements over administrative decisions, clergy management, and governance structures.

The Anglican Church of Kenya formed by different dioceses in Kenya has had divisive conflicts for a time. The late Archbishop Habakkuk Festo Olang was hauled out of office in 1980 because of leadership wrangles. It was claimed that he was in office illegally because he had attained the mandatory retirement age but to the amazement of many, the person who was chosen to act in his place was his age mate (Etemesi, 2004). According to Odhiambo (2017), the Anglican Church of Kenya is a product of the conflict-based subdivisions and has experienced complex conflicts that have led to further split or sub-divisions. Instructional, administrative, and mission efforts are lost because churches are filled with conflicts that Dioceses and Parishes manage poorly. The frequency and severity of conflicts seem to be increasing. The battle for the Anglican Diocese of Katakwa is an example of the conflict for religious freedom. The Iteso community had no intention of seceding from the Anglican Diocese of Nambale but they were prompted to do so because of the mistreatment of Katakwa clergy by the Nambale Diocese. They were incensed by the fact the Bishops of Maseno and Nambale could come to Katakwa Diocese and give their sermons in Kiluhya. This fueled the urge to de-link and form a diocese for the Iteso. The height of their struggle was between 1986 and 1991 when they went on hunger strike and camped at the All-Saints Cathedral, Nairobi, forcing the then ACK Archbishop, the late Manasses Kuria, to appoint two commissions to sort out the problem. After a long struggle, the Diocese of Katakwa was finally carved out of the Diocese of Nambale in 1991 (Olita, 2012).

The Anglican Diocese of Maseno North has had several social conflicts, most of which have been linked to church leadership (Odhiambo, 2017). Christians globally live under the expectation that the church should be different from other secular institutions since it is under theocratic rule. They expect that the church should be a place of harmony. It is therefore paramount that the peaceful coexistence of Christians, regardless of their differences in denominations, doctrines, and leadership structures be observed. This ought to result in sustainable peace between the Church leadership and Christians regardless of the challenges. This ideal scenario is not so within the global Anglican Communion. Most of the Anglican Dioceses in Kenya, are a product of conflict-based subdivision, the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi, being among them. Despite church leaders in the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi having attended seminars and training on leadership, conflict continues to be experienced.

The Anglican Diocese of Nairobi has also experienced the nexus between leadership styles and conflicts, for instance, at St. Mark's Church Westlands, as cited in the Standard online newspaper, titled "Land dispute threatens to split ACK Church. Gumbihi (2019), reports from the online article that some members of ACK St. Mark Church Westlands were accusing the head office of scheming to grab land belonging to the parish which had an existing building on it. The church had demanded a specific amount of figure but the head office insisted that it could only raise a lower amount. The members felt that the leadership style that was used in the whole process, did not give them room for negotiation thus creating tension. In addition, the employment and labor relations court Judge had ordered the church in the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi to compensate a cleric a specified amount of money for unfair termination of employment (Gumbihi, 2022).

The Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi is comprised of clergy of different carders led by the Bishop at the top, followed by the Vicar General, the Archdeacons and Canons, The Administrative Secretary, Vicars and Curates, and the Standing Committee of the Synod, and Church board members in various parishes. Leadership styles are exercised by the mentioned groups. It is a dangerous fallacy to think that because we are Christians, conflicts do not occur. In churches, parachurch organizations, or any place where people come together, conflicts are inevitable. This is because we are all individuals with different temperaments, ways of thinking, ambitions, desires, likes, and dislikes. It is on the basis of this that this study intends to interrogate the nexus between leadership styles and conflicts in the church.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Rubin et al. (2009) states that Christians globally live under the expectation that the church should be different from secular institutions since it is under theocratic rule. The church should be a place of harmony with a peaceful coexistence of Christians, regardless of their differences in denominations, doctrines, and leadership structures. This ideal scenario is not so within the global Anglican Communion. The Anglican Diocese of Nairobi has experienced recurring conflicts, including leadership succession, church property and legal battles, which have at times led to tensions and legal battles (Karanja, 2018; Orobias, 2021). While various factors contribute to these conflicts, a significant yet underexplored dimension is the role of leadership styles. Different leaders within the Diocese have used different styles of leadership that has resulted into conflicts, often leading to a clash of expectations and a lack of clear-cut conflict resolution mechanisms.

Despite the critical role of the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi in spiritual guidance and social development, it has experienced recurring internal conflicts linked to leadership practices. These conflicts manifest in disputes among clergy, divisions within congregations, and challenges in decision-making processes. The leadership within the Diocese is characterized by a mix of traditional approaches (autocratic, authoritarian) and modern (transformative, servant leadership, democratic, and laissez faire styles) and democratic, often leading to a clash of expectations and a lack of clear conflict resolution mechanisms (Ngaruiya, 2019). Autocratic leadership, for instance, suppresses dissent and ignore diverse perspectives, causing grievances to fester and eventually erupt into open conflict. Conversely, a lack of clear direction from overly laissez-faire leadership can lead to power vacuums and internal competition among clergy and lay leaders (Kamau, 2020). While leadership is expected to foster unity and stability, certain leadership styles may inadvertently contribute to tension, mistrust, and organizational fragmentation. Existing studies have largely focused on church growth and social impact, with limited attention to how leadership styles specifically influence conflict dynamics within Anglican dioceses in Kenya. This gap underscored the need to interrogate the leadership styles in the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi.

1.2 Research Objective

Interrogate the leadership styles in the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi, Kenya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Contingency Leadership Theory

The contingency theory of leadership was developed by an Austrian Psychologist, Fred Edward Fiedler. According to Harrison (2018), he states that contingency theory proposes that there is no optimum style of leadership. Effective leaders will use different styles based on the contingencies of the situation; hence, a style of leadership that was ideal in the past might not be of great use in the present. This model of leadership has appealed to many researchers, the most prominent of whom is Fiedler, who proposed the contingency theory in the late 1960s (Gill, 2011). Fiedler's theory suggests that leadership effectiveness depends on how well the personality fits the situation or context. Fiedler proposed the least preferred co-worker (LPC) scale, with which the personality of the leader could be measured as being relationship-motivated or task-motivated. Fiedler suggested that situational favourableness can be characterized by leader-member relations, task structure and position power. A situation is highly favourable when there is a good relationship between the leader and the group, a clear-cut structure, and when the leader has a strong position of power. The contingency theory proposed by Fiedler does not require that leaders be effective in every situation; instead, only those who are ideal for that situation should be allowed to lead, and a leader with the wrong attributes could cause an operation to fail.

In this study, the contingency leadership theory was used to examine the leadership styles used in the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi, and to evaluate how leadership styles contributed to conflicts in the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi and emphasized that the use of leadership styles is dependent on the given situation.

2.2 Empirical Review

In the Anglican Church, the Church is Episcopally led and Synodically governed" (Fape, 2010). Meaning that the Bishop is vested with the authority to lead the Church, and this authority is provided by the Diocesan Synod. This kind of leadership is universal in the Anglican communion however different kinds of leadership styles manifest as a result of clergy in doing their work. Some of the leadership styles would stem from their personalities, situations, and the working environment. The nexus between leadership styles and conflicts can both hamper or impede and facilitate or strengthen the functioning of individuals, groups, and larger social systems. The nature of leadership style can start and escalate conflicts badly depending on how it is handled. In normal circumstances conflicts are not bad at all because

they operate as a window to perceive things differently and in a positive way. If the nature of conflicts is left unaddressed, they can have dire consequences and cause economic resources to stagnate and bring inequality.

As stated by Im (2020) in his thesis, in the Korean Church, there are two types of conflicts, internal and external. The internal factors are the divisions between pastoral perspective and pastoral leadership, ranging from the sermons, the issue of policy division and acceptance derived from the institutionalization of pastoral structure, financial problems, pastoral ethics issues, chapel building problems, generation conflicts, and cultural differences. An emerging problem within the church is a matter of policymaking and its acceptance. Some pastors want the centralization of power. But lay believers wish to decentralize. Therefore, they want to reflect their opinions in determining church policy. This can also cause conflicts between pastors and lay believers. Complaints against pastors begin to build up, especially when they feel alienated from church policies, decisions, and performance processes. This leads to conflict in the church

Oluwaseun (2018), asserts that in Nigeria, the local Baptist Churches, (LBC), cooperating under the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC), have been experiencing several forms of conflict, such as conflict over substantive pastors, conflict with the pastorate, the conflict between the pastor and church members, the conflict between the pastorate and diaconate. Leadership style can also create conflict when a new pastor has a different style from his or her predecessors. Pneuma (1986, as cited in Oluwaseun, 2018), separates leadership style into two basic categories- the pastor is either task-oriented or relationship-oriented. If the congregation has been accustomed to their pastor's spending significant time visiting families and developing good relationships with individuals, this expectation is carried on to the next pastor, leading the church. A task-oriented successor will run into difficulty with this congregation. Much may be accomplished, and many new programs implemented, but without the focus on people. A new pastor may face tension due to the conflicting expectations, within the congregation which is brought about by his or her leadership style.

Kenya is not unique when it comes to leadership styles in the church. A case in point is the Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK), which was involved in a succession of disputes that broke the sixty-year-old unity from 1949, which it had enjoyed. This dispute effectively split the church into two factions namely the main FGCK and a faction called Worldwide Full Gospel Churches (Gathuki, 2015). Earlier in the year 2000, similar conflicts had split the Gospel Outreach Church of Kenya forming a new faction called Gospel Revival Centre (GRC). In 2014, the Deliverance Church Nyeri branch, which had about 300 members, got involved in leadership wrangles, coupled with different leadership styles, that influenced conflicts, by making them split a large group of members of about 500 led by the deputy pastor left this church and established a church called Prime Ministry International (PMI) (Gathuki, 2015).

The battle for the Anglican Diocese of Katakwa is an example of the conflict for religious freedom. The Iteso community had no intention of seceding from the Anglican Diocese of Nambale but they were prompted to do so because of the mistreatment of Katakwa clergy by the Nambale Diocese. They were incensed by the fact the Bishops of Maseno and Nambale could come to Katakwa Diocese and give their sermons in Kiluhya. This fuelled the urge to de-link and form a diocese for the Iteso. The height of their struggle was between 1986 and 1991 when they went on hunger strike and camped at the All-Saints Cathedral, Nairobi, forcing the then ACK Archbishop, the late Manasses Kuria, to appoint two commissions to sort out the problem. After a long struggle, the Diocese of Katakwa was finally carved out of the Diocese of Nambale in 1991 (Olita, 2012). The Anglican Diocese of Maseno North has had several conflicts, most of which have been linked to church leadership (Odhiambo, 2017). It is also good to note that leadership styles have a way of either drawing people to participate with the clergy for development projects or keeping people away from participating in the projects.

In the 2019 alone, protracted wrangles and divisions were witnessed in numerous churches, for example, Methodist Church, African Independent Pentecostal Churches of Africa (AIPCA), Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, African Inland Church (AIC), Pentecostal Church and Full Gospel Church, to name but a few (Atieno, 2019; Wangui, 2020). The wrangles were so dramatic that they were even broadcasted by the voice media and published in our local newspapers. So, it is not a secret any more that church leadership in Kenya is in rubbles and characterized by wrangles. From wrangles over leadership and money to outright defiance pitting church leaders against each other, churches are now full of rhetorical and theological drama (Atieno, 2019). These wrangles not only threaten the major churches like Methodist Church of Kenya, SDA and the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA) as often broadcasted; even the very new and minority churches (for example, Kenya Mennonite Church, Lyahuka Church of East Africa, Maranatha Faith Assemblies) are having internal wars on leadership related issues. The wrangles sometimes go beyond church confines and involve several denominations.

Leadership style is the manner or the way a person is leading by which people are directed and motivated by a leader to achieve realistic and achievable goals in the organization. Leadership style is viewed as a combination of different characteristics, traits, and behaviours that are used by leaders for interacting with their subordinates (Mon Mitonga Monga *et al.*, 2012). Harris *et al.* (2007), give the opinion that leadership style can be defined as the kind of relationship that is used by an individual to make people work together for a common goal or objective. According to modern leadership styles, leadership styles can be categorized as follows: (1) transformational leadership style, (2)

transactional leadership style, (3) culture-based leadership, (4) charismatic leadership, and (5) visionary leadership (Harris *et al.*, 2007).

Transformational leadership focuses on developing the followers and considering their needs. The managers that focus on transformational leadership focus particularly on developing the overall value system of the employees, development of moralities, skills, and motivation level. Transformational leadership acts as a strong bridge between the followers and leaders, to develop a clear understanding associated with the motivational level, values and interests. In other words, such kind of leadership style serves the interests of people. It doesn't carry the badge of selfishness (Bass & Riggio, 2006). As said by Bass (1985), a transformational leader can be defined by the influence he can exert on those following him. Transformational leaders, according to Bass, evoke trust, and respect, and get admiration from their followers. Bass also suggested that there are three key components of effective leadership. The first one is *intellectual stimulation* which states that transformational leaders not only challenge the current situation but also seek to stimulate and encourage the creative approach to the work of those they lead. Secondly, *inspiring motivation* must necessarily be among the leadership competencies of the transformational leader. They clearly understand how to articulate plans and tasks for employees. Such a leader can also help others get enough motivation to perform these same tasks. Lastly, we have *idealized influence* which purports that a transformational leader must be a role model for his followers.

According to Schultz and Schultz (2020), there are three identified characteristics of a transformational leader: Charismatic leadership has a broad knowledge of the field, a self-promoting personality, a high/great energy level, and a willingness to take risks and use irregular strategies to stimulate their followers to think independently. Individualized consideration. Transformational leaders recognize the needs of organization and staff and also stimulate and provide higher level needs inside a person. Transformational leaders encourage people to be unified to pursue higher goals with the aim of a positive important change in an organization (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016).

Transformational leadership has been widely exercised in the Anglican Church in Butare in the country of Rwanda as cited in (Deo & Shitote, 2023), they affirm that transformational leadership would be essential in the church of Butare as it will spur hope, motivation and pursue of purpose for the congregants by looking at what the church had gone through in terms of hardship, transformational leadership, stands as a tool of change and growth. Leaders, who move the church toward the future, become more evident, by recognizing the environmental need and facilitating appropriate changes. Such leaders are called transformational leaders. These leaders can strengthen the members' understanding of justice, and improve the quality of work life in the church (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016). In the very fast changing world, church leadership has become important more than ever and is considered a critical success factor in church management. Transformational leadership is a complex and dynamic process in which leaders influence their followers, values, beliefs and goals. These leaders move churches toward the future, recognize environmental needs, and facilitate appropriate changes.

An example of someone that had transformational leadership in Kenya, was the late Bishop Alexander Muge. According to Koech and Onyancha (2015), Bishop Muge spent the better part of his priestly life fighting for social justice, and the empowerment of society socially, economically, spiritually and even politically. Right from the early times when Muge served as a priest in Nairobi, he proved himself a crusader for social justice. It is at this level of Muge's life that his contribution to the struggle for social justice in Kenya came out clearly. He stamped out his authority as a fighter against all forms of injustices in society, whether in the Church, the government or the secular world. Muge devoted his life entirely to advocacy and the proclamation of social truth. The bishop strongly believed in the power of the pulpit to transform and reform the society. He defended the poor and the oppressed from the greed of corrupt government officials whose desire was just to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor. So much was his commitment that Muge declared his personal security as secondary compared to the mission of spreading the gospel.

Another Bishop who embraced a transformative leadership style and fought for social justice was the late Bishop Henry Okullu. He stood for what he knew in terms of social justice. He challenged the Moi government about the injustices that the government was conducting on its citizens. At one point he publicly shouted at former president Moi about the injustices that were being carried out by the government. Omollo (2014), states that Bishop Okullu aimed to preach justice for all, especially the oppressed. He moved to Kenya and worked with other Christian English and Swahili publications such as Target and Lengo involved in the struggle against oppressive leadership in the country.

The late Archbishop Gitari was a crusader of social justice and he demonstrated bold leadership and fought for social justice. His leadership style was that of transformative. He challenged the government of the late President Moi. Archbishop Gitari used his sermons as a way of addressing the injustices that were being carried out by the Moi government at some point, he survived an assassination attempt on his life as a result of his persistent criticism towards the government. This clearly shows how transformative he was in bringing out change to Kenya.

In South Africa, another leader who demonstrated the leadership styles that impacted and challenged society was the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu. According to Rensburg (2002), she does affirm that the Archbishop is a leader in the truest sense of the word. Firm and steadfast in his views and way of life, his ideas now are as unchangeable as his ideas during the apartheid regime. He remains one of the few world leaders who retained their views regardless of the

changing surrounding circumstances. He was a maverick spirit who became the voice of black South Africa under apartheid, a man of immense moral authority. Under his vigorous leadership, the church in South Africa became immersed in the political struggle. He constantly told the government of the time that its racist approach defied the will of God and for that reason could not succeed.

Management research over the last two decades has identified transformational leadership as one of the most influential leadership approaches (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), particularly when attempting to change an organization (Middleton *et al.*, 2015). A transformational leadership style consists of these four components (Bass, 1997): 1. Idealized influence, which enhances ethical engagement and levels of confidence between leaders and their followers. 2. Inspirational motivation, which encourages followers and increases their self-confidence. 3. Intellectual stimulation, which helps followers to raise queries, as well as to provide solutions. 4. Individual consideration, which requires leaders to assume the role of teacher or coach and to offer personal care, support, and encouragement to their followers. Transformational leadership has been described as a universal way to manage organizational change (Sharma & Krishnan, 2012), one that focuses on nurturing the potential of followers and changing their mindset to facilitate their involvement in the change process (Rubin *et al.*, 2009).

Germano *et al.* (2010) as cited by Al Khajeh (2018) mentions that bureaucratic leaders influence the people under them to follow the policies and procedures they designed. The leaders are strongly committed to their processes and procedures but not to their people. This is the reason why they appear to be aloof. This method is not very effective as it does not lead to the development and motivation of the employees. These leaders just focus on their tasks being completed systematically, also stated that bureaucratic leadership hurts organizational performance. According to them, bureaucratic leaders do not induce the employees of their organization to work in the expected manner which can lead to improved organizational performance. Something of importance is that the bureaucratic leadership style does not impact the employee as well as organizational performance significantly. This method is beneficial only when the tasks are to be done over a long time following the mentioned procedure.

Bureaucratic leadership can be said to provide a map for the ultimate destination, while strategic decision-making provides direction (Nguyen *et al.*, 2017). This is because through delegation bureaucratic leadership can provide a well-oiled running management structure whilst strategic decision-making can be at a whim and at times force leaders to decisions instantly. Leaders may be powerful in deciding on the eventual goal, but attempting to reach it without implementing a strategy is like walking through a dark forest without a compass (Zu, 2019). A leader's success in strategic decision-making could depend on their ability to bring people together and accomplish the tasks allocated to them without causing glaring dissension in an organization.

Obiwuru *et al.* (2011, as cited in Alkhajeh, 2018) state that autocratic leaders are classic and bossy in nurture. Autocratic leaders want their subordinates to work according to them. Typically, autocratic leaders retain their decision-making rights with them (Obiwuru *et al.*, 2011). According to Srivastava (2016), authoritarian leaders are traditional Do-As-I-say types who may not have had any prior leadership experience; instead, they may have been thrust into leadership roles by the creation of new positions or tasks involving people management. Because their followers may not have the same vision for success, autocratic leaders can cause harm to a company by imposing initiatives or services on them that they may not find successful.

Autocratic leaders force their followers to execute the services and strategies according to a narrow way. Iqbal *et al.* (2015) conducted a study to determine the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance. The study stated that autocratic leadership also known as authoritarian, makes leaders to be less creative and only promote one-sided conversation. This severely affects the motivation and satisfaction level of the employees. The autocratic leadership style is, however, known to be effective in the short term. Autocratic leadership restricts workplace socialization and communication which is cordial for effective organizational performance.

According to Srivastava (2016), this leadership style fosters a culture of trust and commitment among the followers. A leader considers all of his or her followers, makes use of their expertise, and solicits their opinions before deciding. A positive relationship constantly exists between the leader and the followers in a democratic leadership style (Srivastava, 2016). This style of authority depends on the group being counselled and their feelings being esteemed. The pioneer might ask for information from colleagues as he/she regards their specialized ability, and obliges it to settle on the most ideal choice. Fair administration can be a test when there are solid identities in the gathering. Here the pioneer needs to make it clear they will take a definitive choice. All things considered, this authority style is comprehensive in its inclination and in that capacity, destined to bring the group through testing times, as the greater part will have concurred with the game plan. Participative alternately democratic leaders decentralize power.

It is characterized by consulting with the subordinates and their investment in the plan from claiming arrangements and policies. The leader urges cooperation in choice-making. He heads those subordinates mostly through influence and example rather than opposed to fear and force. At times those leaders serve as a mediator of the plans and suggestions group. In this, the way the employees feel that management is interested in them, additionally in their thoughts and suggestions. They will, therefore, put their suggestions for change. Favourable circumstances for

democracy are a higher inspiration and will enhance morale. Expand cooperation with the management. Enhanced employment execution. – Diminished grievances. – Decrease absenteeism and worker turnover (Kaleem *et al.*, 2018). The democratic leadership style consists of the leader sharing the decision-making abilities with group members by promoting the interests of the group members and by practicing social equality (Foster, 2002). This style of leadership encompasses discussion, debate, and sharing of ideas and encouragement of people to feel good about their involvement. The boundaries of democratic participation tend to be circumscribed by the organization or the group's needs and the instrumental value of people's attributes such as skills, attitudes and knowledge.

The phrase "Servant Leadership" was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*, an essay that he first published in 1970. As defined by Greenleaf, "The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is a leader first; perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them, there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature (Kantharia, 2011).

Servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that enrich the lives of individuals, build better organizations, and ultimately create a more just and caring world. The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is a leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them, some shadings and blends are part of the infinite variety of human nature. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the "top of the pyramid," servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as well as possible (Adebomi & Omotosho, 2022).

The Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi, like many religious institutions, encompasses a variety of leadership styles among its clergy and administrators. It's important to note that leadership styles within the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi, can vary widely depending on individual leaders' personalities, backgrounds, and theological perspectives. Additionally, leaders may employ different styles in different contexts or situations, adapting their approach to best meet the needs of their congregation and fulfil their ministry responsibilities.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Area

This research was conducted in the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi, in Nairobi County and in the eleven Archdeaconries of the Diocese namely: Cathedral Archdeaconry, Dandora Archdeaconry, Embakasi Archdeaconry, Githurai Archdeaconry, Kasarani Archdeaconry, Kayole Archdeaconry, Lang'ata Archdeaconry, Pumwani Archdeaconry, Ruai Archdeaconry, Westlands Archdeaconry and Zimmerman Archdeaconry (Church Diary & Lectionary, 2022).

3.2 Research Design

This research adopted descriptive and evaluative research designs. Kothari (2004) states that descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding inquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is the description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. The descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2003). It can be used when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any variety of education or social issues (Orodho & Kombo, 2002). The descriptive design entailed collecting data from a large sample of its population to answer questions on the leadership styles influencing conflicts. This design was appropriate because it involved the use of questionnaires and interview guides.

3.3 Target Population

The Target population comprised the Bishop, Archdeacons, Clergy, congregants, and the church board members in the selected Archdeaconries who are key informants because they are the policymakers in the Anglican Church goes by the initials Parish Church Council (PCC). The Bishop, Archdeacons, and clergy played a big role because leadership started with them as they were the policymakers.

3.4 Sampling techniques and sample size

A sample size of 256 was sampled (only 238 responded) using multistage sampling from the larger Anglican Diocese of Nairobi. Census sampling was used to select key informants which included the Bishop, Vicars and Curates and simple random sampling respondents were picked from the selected parishes.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Primary data was collected through the use of questionnaires, and interviews while secondary data was collected from academic journals, written articles, books, both the print media and online media.

3.6 Methods of Data Analysis

Quantitative data that was analyzed using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 25 for descriptive statistics and themes for the qualitative data. Results were presented in figures, tables and narrations.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Concerning the ethical issues of research, the researcher, maintained confidentiality at all times. Only certain authorized people conducting the survey knew the identity of the participants. The researcher accepted individual responsibility for the conduct of the research and, as far as foreseeable the consequences of the research. The researcher obtained informed consent from the subjects used in the study and ensured that all respondents participated voluntarily. The researcher prepared a sample informed consent form, to be filled and signed by those respondents who would have voluntarily agreed to participate in the research. The researcher was open and honest in that he did not manipulate the respondents or offer bribes in a monetary form. The researcher fully explained to the respondents what the research was all about so that the respondents could make an informed decision on whether to participate in the research or not. The researcher sought a clearance letter from the Directorate of post graduate studies of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST), Directorate of postgraduate studies, to facilitate a clearance letter from the Ethical and Review Board (ERB) and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI). A research permit and a letter from the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi Bishop, from the Ministry of Education, in Nairobi, were sought to authorize data collection from the clergy and the nonclergy members in the selected Parishes. The researcher then started the recruitment process for the Research Assistants. They were university graduates, who had done some courses on Research Methods. They had undergone training in data collection and research ethics before going into the field.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Leadership styles used in the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi

This section discusses the various leadership styles used by the Anglican Church of Kenya within Diocese of Nairobi. The section was divided into three sub-sections; the leadership styles employed, the questions on the perceptions of the respondents from the Likert scale and the ranking of the leadership styles. The leadership styles include transformational, bureaucratic, autocratic, democratic, and servant leadership styles.

4.1.1 Transformational Leadership style employed in managing the Anglican Parishes of Diocese of Nairobi, Kenya

The study sought to establish whether the transformational leadership style has contributed to peaceful co-existence among the communion of Anglican Parishes, Diocese of Nairobi. Figure 1 shows the summary of the findings.

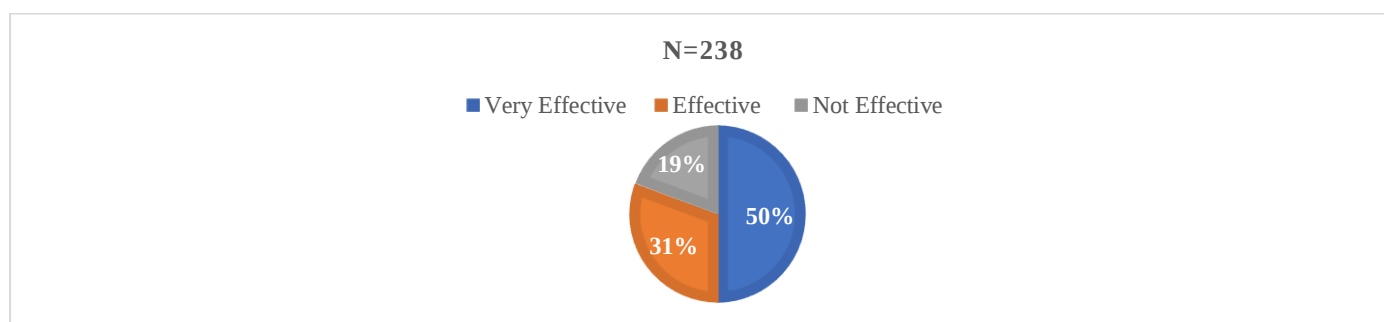


Figure 1

Transformational Leadership style employed in managing the Anglican Parishes of Nairobi Diocese, Kenya

Figure 1 has revealed that (119)50% stated that the transformational leadership style has been very effective, (73)31% stated that it has been effective while (46)19% of the respondents revealed that transformational leadership has not been effective. The qualitative finding further supports the quantitative findings, in an in-depth interview with a long-serving Archdeacon who said that; Many people have been involved in protracted dispute over church property. Instead of imposing a solution, the Bishop-Elect, Canon Jonathan Kabiru, led a series of prayer meetings and open dialogues. He did not just solve the problem; he used it as example to teach about reconciliation and spiritual growth. It shows that faith is initially slow, but strengthened the congregants' understanding of their shared mission and identity.

The current finding concurs with the previous literature of Keita and Lao (2020) on how various leadership styles and how transformational leadership has been impactful on the growth of church in Virginia, USA. The current finding is further in tandem to those previous findings of Mwenje (2016), on the leadership styles exercised by Pentecostal church leaders in Zimbabwe. Transformational leadership style has been impactful on Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe, as most of the church leaders employ it to govern and manage the affairs of respective churches.

4.1.2 Bureaucratic Leadership style employed in managing the Anglican Parishes of Nairobi Diocese, Kenya

The study sought to establish whether bureaucratic leadership style employed in managing Anglican Parishes within Nairobi Diocese contributes to peaceful co-existence among the faithful. Figure 2 shows the summary of the findings.

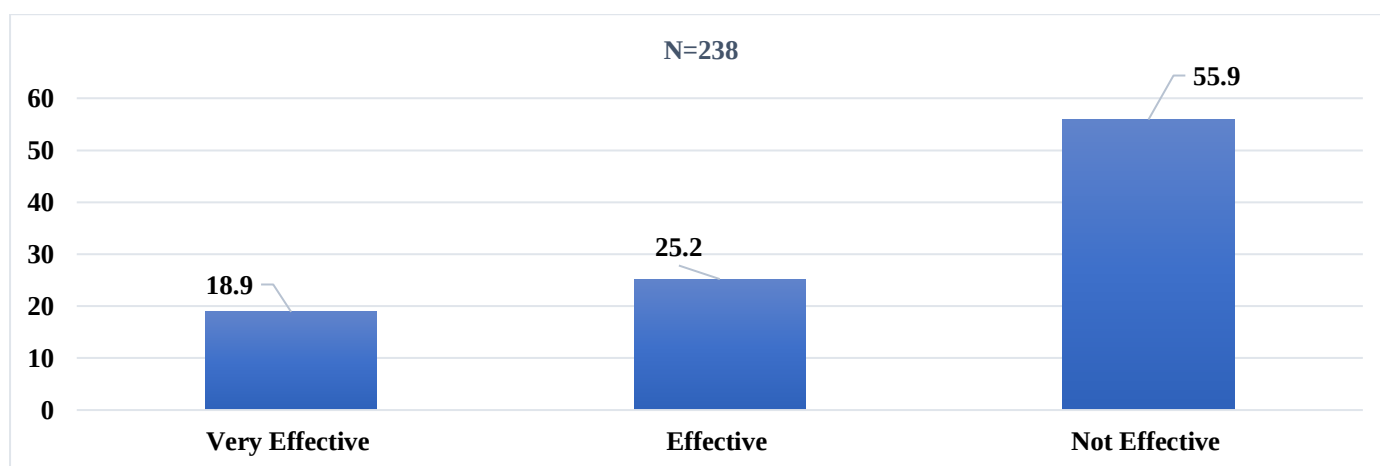


Figure 2

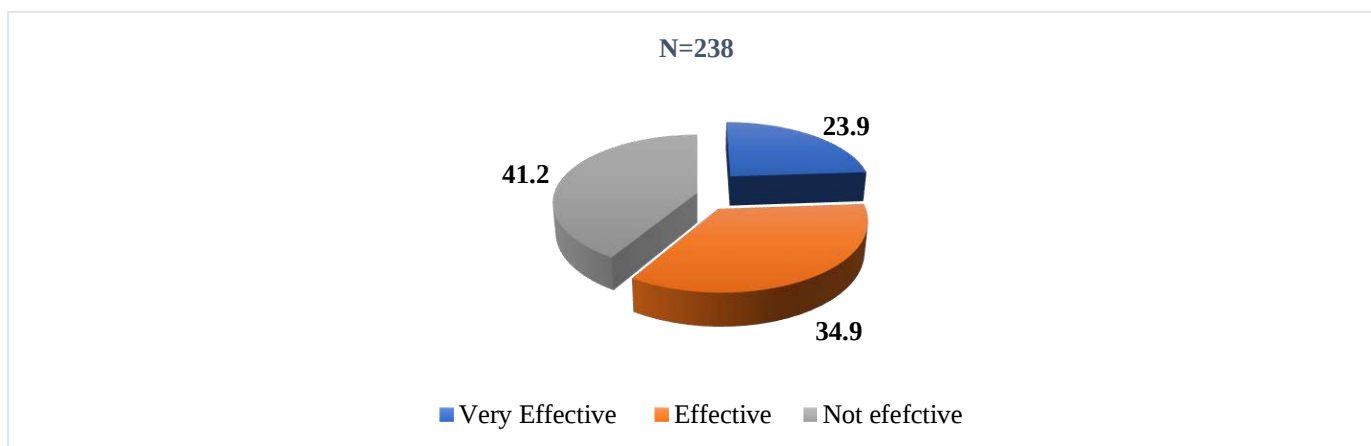
Bureaucratic Leadership style employed in managing the Anglican Parishes of Nairobi Diocese, Kenya (N=238).

Figure 2 shows that that (133)55.9 % of the respondents stated that the bureaucratic leadership style has not been effective, (60)25.2% stated that this style has been effective and (45)18.9% stated that the style has been very effective in maintaining the cohesion among the faithful. The bureaucratic leadership style was the second most used, with a mean score of 3.90 where by a total of 55.9% respondents stated that it has been effective. A mean score of 3.90 suggest that most respondents supported the statement by agreeing with a few divergent views. The standard deviation of 1.07 shows moderate variability though cluster points towards agreement. The above finding was supported by the in-depth interview response. A vicar recounted that; In one parish, a dispute arose over the budget for a community feeding program. A PCC member, known for his bureaucratic approach, strict adherence to protocol, delaying the program for months. His focus was on the process, not the people. The delay caused frustration and led to a wider conflict over his inflexibility. (St. Philip's Jericho, 2025).

The current finding is also in tandem with Northouse (2022), in contexts where disputes or differences arise, a structured leadership framework might help resolve issues efficiently without favouritism, thus contributing to the maintenance of harmony. Thus, Anglican parishes, require leadership approaches that are not only structured but also responsive to the emotional and spiritual needs of congregants. However, this effectiveness might be limited to administrative success rather than relational satisfaction. Therefore, the Anglican Church may need to reassess its reliance on bureaucratic leadership structures in favour of more relational and inclusive styles that better support peaceful coexistence.

4.1.3 Autocratic Leadership Style Employed in Managing the Anglican Parishes of Nairobi Diocese, Kenya

The study sought to establish whether Autocratic leadership style employed in Anglican Parishes within Nairobi Diocese has contributed to peaceful co-existence among the faithful. Figure 3 shows the summary of the findings.

**Figure 3**

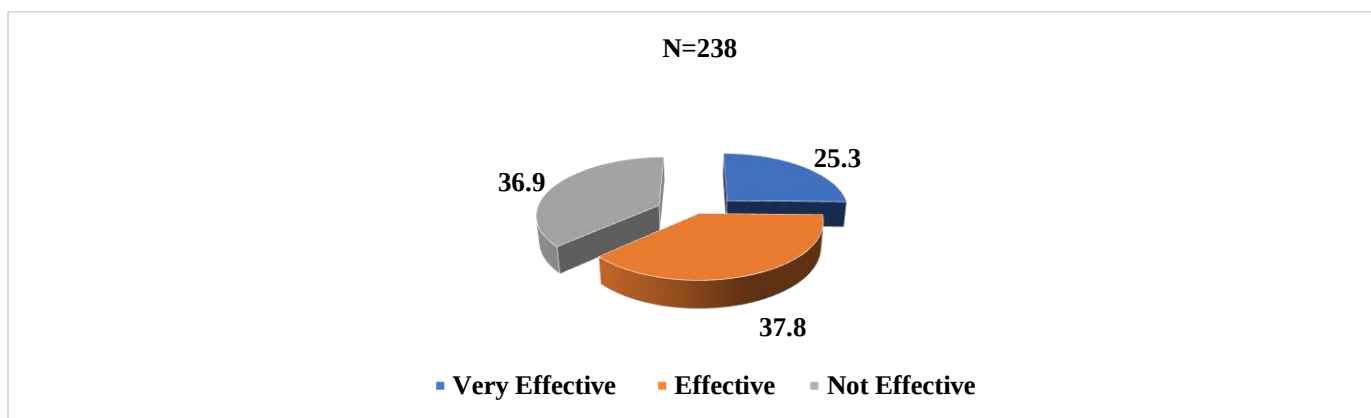
Autocratic Leadership style employed in managing the Anglican Parishes of Nairobi Diocese, Kenya (N=238).

Figure 3 revealed that (57)23.9% of the respondents stated that the autocratic leadership styles was very effective, (83) 34.9% stated that the style has been effective while (98) 41.2% stated that the style has not been effective. Leaders that display autocratic leadership style, had a mean score of 3.64. This suggests that the majority of participants (58.8%) stated that agree leaders that display an autocratic leadership style where they provide clear direction and guidance to their followers. The qualitative responses support the quantitative results. In an interview with one Archdeacon who recounted that; The style of a former priest who made all decisions unilaterally. When disagreements occurred, the priest would simply impose his will. People knew it was his way or the highway, so they kept quiet. But the resentment built up, and the moment he was transferred, a major split erupted in the parish. (Embakasi, 2024).

The current finding is supported by the previous literature of Nyakundi and Ayako (2020), who stated that autocratic leaders make decisions on their own without consulting subordinates or any other dependents. The leader makes decisions, communicate them to subordinates and expect prompt implementation. The study further in agreement with Benincasa (2015) and Mehrotra and Sinha (2017) that autocratic leadership is centered on the boss, who views themselves as the experts and holds all authority and responsibility.

4.1.4 Democratic Leadership style employed in managing the Anglican Parishes of Nairobi Diocese, Kenya.

The study sought to establish whether democratic leadership style is able to manage Anglican Parishes within Nairobi Diocese for peaceful co-existence among the faithful.

**Figure 4**

Democratic Leadership style employed in managing the Anglican Parishes of Nairobi Diocese, Kenya (N=238).

Figure 4 revealed that (90)37.8% of the respondents stated that democratic leaders have been effective, (88)36.9% stated that they were not effective and (60)25.2% stated that democratic styles has been very effective. Democratic leadership style was the least used leadership style with a mean score of 3.49. The quantitative results are further confirmed by the qualitative findings from the key informant interviews where a curate recounted that;

Leaders using this type of leadership usually involve their congregation members in decision-making processes. They value input from their followers and seek consensus on important matters affecting the church community. They encourage participation, collaboration, and transparency (Buruburu, 2025).

The current finding concurs with previous findings of Foster (2002), democratic leadership style consists of the leader sharing the decision-making abilities with group members by promoting the interests of the group members and by practicing social equality. This style of leadership encompasses discussion, debate, and sharing of ideas and encouragement of people to feel good about their involvement. The boundaries of democratic participation tend to be circumscribed by the organization or the group's needs and the instrumental value of people's attributes such as skills and attitudes.

4.1.5 Servant Leadership style employed in managing the Anglican Parishes within Diocese of Nairobi, Kenya

The study sought to establish the effectiveness of servant leadership style in managing Anglican Parishes within Nairobi Diocese for peaceful co-existence among the faithful. Figure 5 shows the summary of the findings.

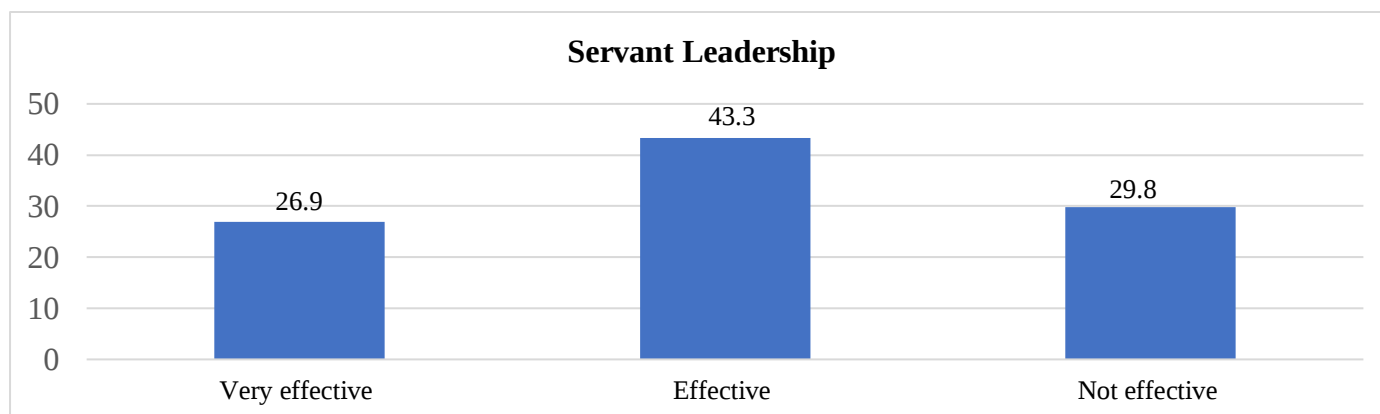


Figure 5

Servant Leadership style employed in managing the Anglican Parishes of Nairobi Diocese, Kenya (N=238).

Figure 5 revealed that (103)43.3% of the respondents stated that servant leadership has been effective whereas (71)29.8% stated that those have not been effective and (64)26.9% stated servant leadership has been very effective with a mean score of 3.53. Leaders prioritize serving the needs of others. They demonstrate humility, integrity, and a commitment to selflessness in their interactions with congregation members and the broader community. One curate argued that; One day a conflict that emerged from miscommunication. The parish priest who was his Vicar, embodying servant leadership, took responsibility for the misunderstanding, even though he was not entirely at fault. His humility disarmed everyone, the leader recalled. By putting our healing before his own ego, he not only resolved the issue but taught us how to forgive. (South C, 2025). This demonstrates how servant leadership, with its emphasis on humility and service, can resolve conflicts by disarming defensiveness and modelling Christ-like behaviour. By prioritizing the well-being of the community, the leader fosters an environment of mutual respect and spiritual reconciliation.

These findings correspond with Funga and Sambu (2023) who noted that churches around the globe face different challenges that hinder church leadership. As a result, these challenges weaken the servant leadership of current churches all over the world. Clergymen have, over time, played important roles and contributed to socio-economic, political and spiritual development of humanity. Because of their expertise in values and integrity, and owing to their extensive presence and reach, faith institutions and their networks offer potential forces in raising government standards in the work of development. Throughout history, faith leaders have raised some of the most courageous and effective voices in effort to combat corruption and promote good governance.

4.1.6 Ranking of various leadership styles used in managing the Anglican Parishes in Nairobi Diocese based on their effectiveness.

The researcher sought to know how effective the various leadership styles that have been employed have been to the managing the various Anglican Parishes in Nairobi Diocese. The ranking was done in order to determine the most effective style. Table 1 shows the ranks of these strategies.

Table 1*Ranking of the leadership styles used by the Anglican Church Leaders (N=238).*

Leadership style employed by the various heads of Anglican Parishes in Nairobi Diocese	Effectiveness Mean	Rank
Transformational	4.10	1
Autocratic	3.64	3
Laissez fair	3.29	7
Servant Leadership	3.53	5
Episcopal leadership	3.02	6
Democratic	3.49	4
Bureaucratic	3.90	2

According to Table ,1 transformational leadership style is the most effective approach employed by parish heads in Nairobi Diocese with mean score (x)= 4.10. This shows the respondents heads perceived this as the most effective. There are instances where by leadership styles alternates between democratic and authoritative, and others where it leans towards a semi-democratic model. The leadership landscape includes autocratic styles, visionary leadership, transactional and transformational leadership, as well as charismatic and authoritarian leadership. This was supported by the qualitative response from interview. A vicar recounted during an interview that; There was a disagreement over the design of a new multipurpose hall. The committee's chair, a democratic leader, facilitated several meetings where everyone, from architects to congregants, could voice their opinions. The chair ensured all views were heard and incorporated. The final design was not what any one person wanted, but it was what everyone agreed on. The consultations prevented a single point of conflict and fostered ownership among all of us. (Ruaraka, 2025).

The current finding corroborate with the previous literature of Kaleem et al. (2018), that transformational leadership dimensions significantly predicted effective ministry outcomes in Adventist churches in East Indonesia. The current study also corroborates with Muthuku et al. (2023), transformational leadership has positive effects on numerical, economic, and spiritual health of churches in Nairobi City County. The second approach in the list bureaucratic with mean =3.90 shows that church members value structure, clear rules, formal procedures, accountability mechanisms The styles in settings is less rich than that on transformational. Some literatures support its usefulness in contexts where organizational complexity, financial accountability, and consistency matter. For example, in Mombasa County, Kenya, strategic and structured leadership styles were significant predictors of church growth alongside transformational and servant styles. The high respondents of bureaucratic leadership shows that Anglican Parishes in Nairobi are more complex, structure where formal systems are vital for sustaining operations and ensuring accountability among many parishes.

The autocratic leader with mean (3.64), ranked third, though participative styles are valued, there is still a considerable acceptance of more authoritative leadership in certain situations. The approach is sometimes get tolerated or seen as effective in churches, especially when decisiveness, discipline, or clear guidance are needed. The finding is confirmed by the previous literature in African Pentecostal contexts have found that while servant and ethical leadership are strongly positive for growth, some leaders still employ more directive styles to maintain control or order. However, servant leadership is deeply rooted in Christian paradigms and is effective for service and moral formation. In this study the servant leadership is lower than autocratic shows that Anglican parish heads need more directive power to cope with high demands, several faithful, or administrative burdens.

The Table 1 shows that bottom three approaches laissez-faire (3.29), Episcopal (3.02). These strategies moreover indicated either minimal engagement laissez-faire, too much hierarchical distance or rigid centralized control Episcopal, is viewed as less effective. The laissez-faire is usually associated with low productivity, lack of guidance, and disengagement. It tends to correlate negatively with motivation and performance. The low ranking of dictatorial is consistent with critiques of authoritarian styles in church organizations; they might give compliance although undermine long-term engagement, trust, or health of the faithful.

Leadership problems are commonly found throughout the African Church. Church growth is placing unmet demands on leaders in some areas of Africa. Over functioning leaders who try to do everything and decide everything is frustrating the church in some areas. These non-functioning leaders are allowing churches to die (Kohls,1998). To overcome this misnomer, leaders of the church must engage in the process of transformation (Willis, 2020). To move toward, transformational leadership requires that Pastors and congregations be willing to create dynamic, active, and developing ministries within the church that are responsive to the complex needs of its members and the community served by the church (Willis, 2020). The current study is in tandem with the previous literature revealed that transformational, servant, ethical, and strategic leadership approaches to have strong positive relationships with church performance. According to Muthuku *et al.* (2023) in Nairobi transformational leadership had strong effects on multiple dimensions of church growth and unity.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Transformational leadership emerges as the explicit ideal with a mean score of 4.10 (81% positive). Members respond strongly to visionary leaders who inspire, motivate, and foster personal growth. Alongside vision, Bureaucratic leadership ranks second with a mean score of (3.90). Church members deeply value order, defined rules, clear procedures, and institutional accountability—proving that inspiration needs structural clarity to maintain harmony.

Autocratic leadership occupies a subtle third place with a mean score of (3.64). While 41.2% find it ineffective, a majority (58.8%) acknowledge its place when firm direction or discipline is required. Servant leadership with a mean score of (3.53) is warmly regarded in principle (70.2% positive rating), yet its practice feels moderate and inconsistent in parish life. Democratic leadership recorded the lowest mean score among major active styles (3.49). While members crave collaboration and shared ownership, true participatory decision-making remains rare in practice. At the bottom, Laissez-faire (3.29), Episcopal (3.02), and Dictatorial (2.97) models prove counterproductive. Passive detachment creates drift, while rigid, top-down control undermines trust and long-term congregational health.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that Clergy are given the orientation of the parishes that they are serving by being given the historical background that includes the culture of the parish, strengths and weaknesses of the parish, financial status of the parish and the demographics of the parish. The study feels that this is an important segment, as it will help the Clergy in knowing the kind of leadership style to use. It has been observed that failure to know your environment is an open invitation to a roller coaster of conflicts.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that they do not have any known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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