

The Impact of Pastoral Nurture on Member Retention in Selected Fields within the Haitian Union of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive-correlational study sought to investigate the relationship between pastoral nurture initiatives and member retention to confirm, refute or extend pastoral nurture initiatives as effective constructs for retaining members in the church within the Northwest and South Haitian Mission of Seventh-day Adventists. Three self-reported questionnaires were used to collect data from one hundred and thirty-two (132) participants comprising the sampled population from 45 congregations in the Northwest and the South Haitian Missions. The data were coded and analysed using SPSS version 25.0 to compute mean, standard, Cronbach's Alphas, factor analysis, Pearson Correlation, t-test and One-Way. It was found that there was no significant statistical association between membership retention and the nurturing initiative employed by the church (χ^2 (df=1) = 0.015, P = 0.904). The reality is that the nurturing programmes are not enhancing membership retention, which points to a disconnect between church offerings and people's expectations. The findings revealed that 82.4% of the Pastors indicated that the execution initiatives are resulting in low membership retention compared to 78.3% who opined otherwise. Furthermore, with the result showing that there is no statistical association between the execution initiatives and membership retention (χ^2 (df=1) = 0.102, P = 0.749), this suggests that the aforementioned initiatives are not catering to people's deeper emotions of belonging and as such accounts for the ineffectiveness of the execution initiatives to retain members in the church. It was found that there was a revealed significant statistical relationship between the two variables (χ^2 (df =4) = 28.103, P< 0.0001). It was recommended that Union and local fields should design and implement a Pastors' training programme to address discipleship, friendly human relations, stewardship, leader and member motivation, conflict resolution, programme design and development and strategic planning to strengthen the structure of the church's offerings and the faith of members for improved retention.

Keywords-- Member Retention, Pastoral Nurture, Active Membership, Accession, Apostasy, Baptized Member, Membership Loss, Pastor

I. INTRODUCTION

Moses nurtured God's people by personal association with them. Association is the act of identifying with others. Cambridge Dictionary says, "It is a feeling or thought that relates to someone or something". Moses associated with the Israelites in various ways that nurtured them to remain committed to God and their spiritual and national identities. He received Egyptian education and cultural socialization. "So, Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his words and deeds" (Acts 7:22, NRSV). He was in lineage to become a successor or one of the Pharaohs. Blank (2017) said; "Moses spent approximately the first third of his life in the palace of the Egyptian king, observing first-hand how to govern a nation". To become a pharaoh meant that he would have to permanently renounce his identity as an Israelite. Instead, Moses chose to maintain his association with his people, the Israelites and to suffer with them (Exodus 2:11-15; Hebrews 11:24-26). As he associated with the people, he had numerous occasions to castigate them, however during numerous times he forgave and sought forgiveness for them.

Jesus nurtured His people by personal acts, social mingling and verbal instructions. According to Pfeiffer (1996), the Greek word *paideia*, means "child training", "instruction" and "nurture". He suggested that in the New Testament it refers to the cultivation of the mind and morals of human beings through the employment of advices, admonitions, commands and reproofs to attain the goal of balanced maturity and adjustment (Hebrews 12:55, 7, 11; cf. Proverbs 3:11-12; 15: 5).

Heitzig (2012) suggested that as the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ nourishes His sheep by the very truths of the Word of God that speak of His infinite care. Jesus nurtured by providing the ultimate sacrifice, giving His life for His sheep (John 10:11). Rummage (2005) said: "He appointed caregivers to attend to the needs of His chosen people and commanded them to "feed my lambs" John 21:15-17".

Between 2005 and 2009 for example, the accession of members in the Northwest Mission was 13,585 and the number dropped from the membership was

1,599. Furthermore, during the seven-year period, from 2008 to 2015, while serving as Executive Secretary of the Haitian Union, the reality of the loss of members in all the fields within the Union, particularly in the Northwest and the South missions captured the attention of the writer.

According to observation made in the Northwest and the South Missions of the Haitian Union mission of Seventh-day Adventists, after they engage in various evangelistic series, spending large sums of money to win people to Christ, a considerable number of new members and existing church members for many years leave the Church through apostasy. It appears that pastors do not nurture the new and existing members effectively.

The researcher has observed that over the last decade, between three and four times annually, the church in the Northwest and the South Missions of the Haitian Union engaged in various evangelistic series. They spend large sums of money to win people to Christ and get them committed to His Church. However, not long after the evangelistic series and large numbers of baptisms are gained, a considerable number of new members leave the church. Even some of those who were already in the church for many years apostatize. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Does pastoral nurturing initiatives influence member retention in selected fields within the Haitian Union Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?
2. What initiatives were used by pastors to nurture church members?
3. Who implemented the pastors' nurturing initiatives in the church?
4. What were the results of Pastors' initiatives implemented in the church to nurture the members?
5. What percentage of members remained in the church because of these initiatives?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the concepts of the relevant of nurture on member retention, nurture on retention in the Seventh-day Adventist, Baptist, Methodist and Pentecostal denomination is accentuated.

The Concepts of Nurture and Retention in the Baptist Denomination

The Baptist Missionary Association of America affiliated churches conducted research that included 21 new converts and a leading staff member from seven churches as participants. Over 1,200 churches located mostly throughout the southern United States participated. Attebery (2017) shared the findings and called church leaders and educators' attention to the following recommendations: (a) They should consider how to equip

members to share the gospel independent of church staff, (b) maintain a presence during times of crisis or other major life event that affect members, (c) continue existing assimilation strategies that emphasize biblical preaching and teaching accompanied by application, (d) create opportunities for helping new converts develop and share their personal testimonies, (e) make themselves available to new converts, especially by electronic means such as texting and, (f) provide immediate opportunities for new converts to serve the church.

To solve the attrition problem of the Berean Baptist Church of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, Dock (2008) proposed, "The church leaders must be spiritually mature and be willing to help others assimilate into the congregation. There must be teaching strategies developed to 'assimilate' new members into the church". He emphasized, "the ministry of teaching is an essential element of new member retention because it fosters learning and prepares disciples for living by Biblical principles within the faith community and in the world". He also underscored the importance of creating an inviting climate of the retention of new members in the church. Warren (2005) said: "Assimilation is the task of moving people from an awareness of your church to attendance at your church to active membership in your church".

The Concepts of Nurture and Retention in the Methodist Denomination

A group of 16 United Methodist Churches conducted a survey. A total of 109 new members responded. According to Dean et. al. (2007-2008), some survey responders indicated they were looking to join churches that: (a) offer opportunities for spiritual growth, (b) allowed for them to join in warm fellowship, and (c) provided them opportunity to participate in missions with specifically planned support to see visitors become active members of the congregation. Among the resolutions presented to the Church based on the survey, the 77th, entitled "Inclusiveness in All Dimensions" encouraged every Conference, District and Local Church to develop comprehensive programs that place emphasis on inclusiveness throughout the life and ministry of the Church. "If we were providing an atmosphere of inclusion, where visitors feel that the statement also includes them, we should be growing. To overcome that issue, we must immediately put a program of new member retention and assimilation into action". "Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple making occurs".

The Concepts of Nurture and Retention in the Pentecostal Denomination

Various strategies are used to facilitate growth of Pentecostal churches in African culture. Ehianu (2014) mentioned the following as essential: "Testimonies that reinforce faith ... Pentecostal sermon, reception and

follow-up of new members ... Social benefits". Ezejideaku (2006) explained: "The effectiveness of the Pentecostal sermon has become so outstanding that the mainstream denominations have had to adopt the same strategies to minimize their loss of members to these groups". He suggested that in the African liturgy of Pentecostal churches, premium is placed on hospitality. He observed: Time is set aside to welcome new comers. With on-going visits by the committee and at times the church pastor, and the display of love exemplified in the commitment to ameliorate the new comers' problems, what may have begun as a trial visit could translate into a genuine desire for membership

The Pentecostal churches motivate their members by rewards for membership enrolment. The members of these churches practice fellowship showing great love one to another. According to Atanasov (2014), "the converts praise the Pentecostals because they overcome the hurdle that literacy poses to discipleship by means of music, simple preaching involving illustrations and storytelling, and close personal relationships among believers". Pentecostal churches offer a strong sense of solidarity. They observe personal integrity, security, and welfare among the venerable people. Carter (2009) postulated: "The efforts of Pentecostal pastors, evangelists, missionaries and laypersons are major reasons for the growth of the Pentecostal movement around the world". A Pentecostal leader's calling is validated by evidence of a deep spiritual experience with God. People long to see evidence of the touch of God and the qualities of prayer, devotion to the Word, the exercise of spiritual gifts and spiritual sensitivity in the lives of their leaders. These are a source of immense personal power to a Pentecostal leader.

"The undeniable growth of Pentecostal churches within the urban and rural areas of Malawi is largely connected to the success ascribed to their healing ministries". Social welfare of members in the form of pastoral care is another factor that generate growth of Pentecostal churches. Pentecostal pastors are indeed exceptionally good in social and pastoral care. Some Churches have pastoral care as one of their main pillars. Among pastoral care initiatives in Pentecostal churches is the readiness of the pastors, also called Prophets, to spend a lot of time in prayer with the sick members of the community.

The Relevance of Nurture on Retention

According to Kale and McCullough (2003), "Churches that nurture their members provide an atmosphere that is highly conducive to spiritual growth, addressing practical issues such as relationships, conflict resolution, and temptation, and making the Bible relevant to the daily lives of their congregants". A significant effect of deliberate nurturing effort is members engaged in

spiritually meaningful relationships with other Christians. The more relationships members develop within the church, the stronger their commitment to the faith and loss is prevented.

Nurturing the Church Members, a Pastoral Responsibility

The ultimate responsibility to care for, nurture and protect the members is the pastor (Acts 20:28). According to Foullah (2008), "Pastoral nurture is the central focus of the pastor's ministry". God expects pastors to be concerned with the well-being of the people they lead. They should know the conditions and challenges facing their flock. They are required to know the emotional, physical, and spiritual challenges facing those they lead. Discord and infighting in the church should be addressed. Teaching and giving well-balanced instruction on various aspects of life, both spiritual and physical to the members are important in solving their problems. Pastoral nurture is not only for members to stay in the church but to get ready to be with Jesus at the Second Advent and help others do similarly.

Nurturing the Church Members, a Shared Responsibility

In larger congregations or multi church pastorate, the pastor gives direction and enables other leaders to implement. One of his challenges is to train leaders and members to care for each other through strong lay ministry. In this case, qualified elders and ministry leaders can provide hands-on, intimate, person-to-person ministry. The pastor cannot do all the pastoral activities of nurturing alone. He has to equip his leaders and the laity in general to facilitate the nurturing process and to share this responsibility. Paul emphasized; the pastor is responsible for preparing assistants to help accomplish the task of caring for the entire church (Ephesians 4:12). Galloway (1986) affirms: "No church over 100 members can be effective in pastoral care without enlisting and enabling the lay people in the day-to-day pastoral care".

As a servant of Christ, the pastor must preach, teach, train, equip, guide and direct, that members are edified and are able to edify one another, and bear witness to the surrounding world. He must work to unite the members in their Christian life and endeavor to "connect people to people in ways that enable them to minister to one another that no one may live in isolation or fall away". While the general membership must be nurtured, special attention is needed for the newly baptized members.

Nurturing Newly Baptized Members

According to Rummage (2005), when new members are cared for, they tend to leave goodness and love behind them to benefit others. Church leaders must ensure that new members grow in spirituality. A lack of pastoral nurture can be disastrous for them. Kiage (2014) stated that some church leaders do not perform their duties as expected such as caring for the weak in faith, visiting

the newly baptized members, or attending to the needy. Because of this, some new members are exposed to temptations, which drive them from church. Some church leaders are involved in leadership struggles, for examples seeking church positions instead of caring for members. This kind of behavior causes others to leave the church.

Nurture and Retention in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

According to Harelimana (2014), “A major task of missions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is nurturing and retaining newly baptized church members”. Since its inception, church leaders have kept this focus in view. Each ministry of the church is established to nurture members.

In its history

The Action Unit Plan was introduced to the Sabbath School Department in 1990. The total involvement of Sabbath school members in outreach programs of the church as well as increased fellowship and spiritual nurture is the goal of the plan. It combines a personal ministry emphasis with a regular Sabbath school Bible study class. The publication of the Children’s Mission Quarterly by Neufeld begun in 1992 for kindergarten and primary divisions to spiritually nurture the children. Neufeld (1995) further stated that as the youth population of the church grew, church leaders established commissions to study needs and devise ways and means to provide adequately for the nurture and education of youth.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a programme development, descriptive-correlational design in which Pearsons r and multiple regressions were used to confirm, refute, or extend pastoral nurture initiatives as effective constructs for retaining members in the church within the Haitian Union mission of Seventh-day Adventists. It is correlated because it aimed to measure the degree of relationship that exists between pastoral nurture initiatives that influence member retention in selected fields within the Haitian Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventist Churches.

IV. POPULATION AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The study was conducted in the Haitian Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists. The study respondents were one hundred and thirty-two (132) participants

comprised the sampled population from 45 congregations in the Northwest and the South Haitian Missions who participated in assessing the impact of pastoral nurture on member retention in selected fields within the Haitian Union of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A random sampling technique was applied, that is to say that the choice of the elements depended on the probability. It is determined this way due to the difficulty to find former members who were willing to participate in the study. The sample was comprised of 66 actual members of whom 34 derive from the Northwest and 32 from the South, and 26 former members of whom 15 are from the South and 11 from the Northwest. Included will be 40 pastors, 21 of whom will be from the Northwest and 19 from the South. In total, 132 individuals.

Three questionnaires were used to collect data for this study. the degree of nurture that influences the church members in their desires to stay or to leave the church was measured by adopting items from Dudley Ewart Mullings. The researcher has prepared a set of three questionnaires modeled after the Mullings’ to be administered to the sample for this project. In May 2018, the first drafts of these instruments were presented to the advisor for approval. After recommendations, adjustments and approval, they were ready for data collection use. The questionnaire was pretested with five pastors, 15 active members, and ten former members. The test was administered face-to-face with three pastors, 12 active members and seven former members. The others were administered electronically. The face-to-face test was conducted between ten and 20 minutes.

V. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This section presents the results of the study and gives the discussion of findings following the research questions that guided the study.

Based on Table 1, a 5-point Likert scale system was used to assess intended items. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) for each item that is intended to measure Nurturing Initiatives Results. The mean values for each factor range from 3.34 to 3.7, with none lying outside of two or three. This speaks to the appropriateness of using more members remain in the church, fellowship among the members increased, more members are involved in mission activities, the apostasy rate of members decreased, and I remain in the church because of these initiatives to assess the construct Nurturing Initiatives Results.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics-Nurturing Initiatives Results

	Item Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
MMbersRem	3.6641	1.22544	131
FellowsI	3.6412	1.18366	131
MMSGGA	3.2977	1.13473	131
MMMA	3.5038	1.11199	131
Apostasy dcr	3.4275	1.15712	131
M. RETENTION	3.6183	1.42752	131

Membership Retention Percentage

This study used a sample of Pastors for the two Missions in Haiti to examine the issue of the retention of members in their churches. The question asked was “What percentage of members are retained in the church following the employing of the various initiatives?” The sample of respondents was 40 Pastors and their responses are depicted in Figure 1. In response to the previously mentioned questions, most of the respondents indicated

below 70% (42.5%, n=17) followed by 27.5% (n=11) who indicated 100% compared to 15.0% (n=6) who stated 80-89% and 7.5% (n=3) who remarked 90-94% and 95-99%.

From the findings, this seems to be suggesting that initiatives they implement are lowly aiding the retention of members in the churches. Such a seemingly insinuation will be examined statistically by way of cross tabulations (see Tables 3-6).

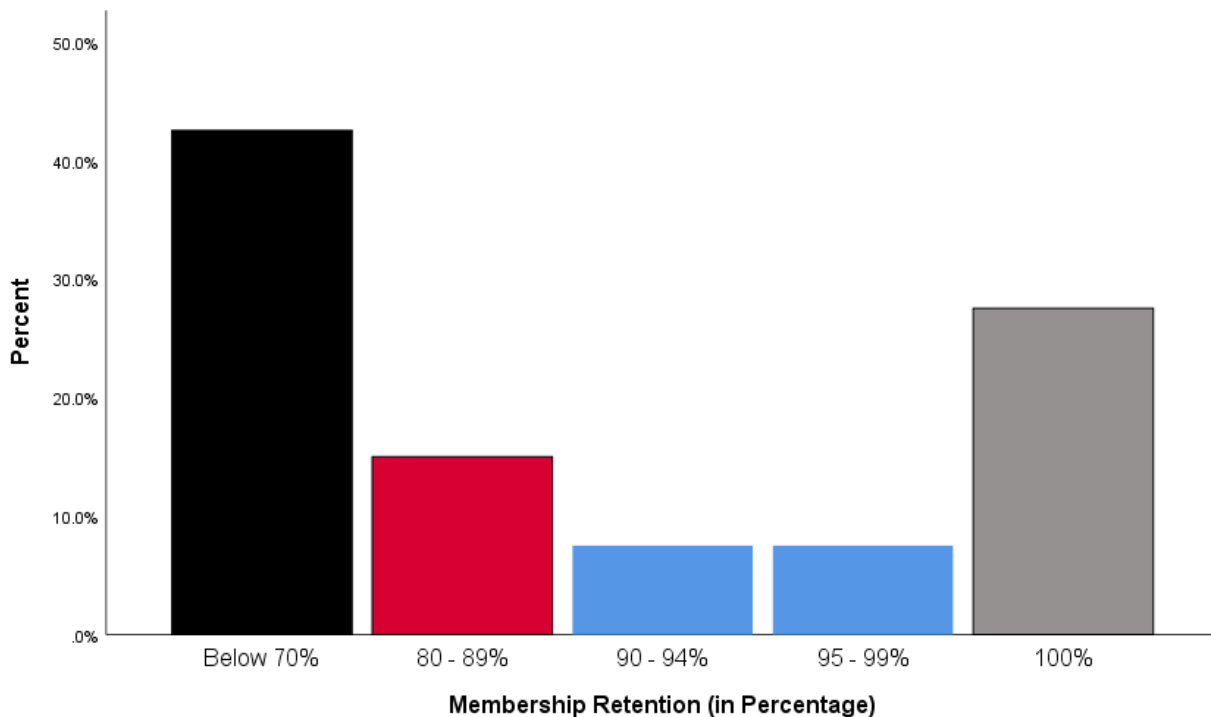


Figure 1: Pastors’ views on the retention rates in their churches

Bivariate Analyses: Pastors’ Views on Initiatives and Membership Retention Percentage

The bivariate correlations are solely based on the sampled Pastors’ responses to percentage of member retained in the church following the various implemented programme employed. Table 3 presents a cross tabulation between the pastors’ indication of membership retention and nurturing initiative programmes by the institution. Of

the sampled Pastors (n=40), most of them (57.5%, n=23) indicated that the nurturing initiative programme are resulting in high membership retention compared to 17 (42.5%) who had the opposite perspective. The findings revealed that there is no significant statistical association between membership retention and the nurturing initiative employed by the church (χ^2 (df=1) = 0.015, P = 0.904). The reality is, the nurturing programmes are not enhancing

membership retention and this points to a disconnect between offerings of the church and people’s expectations.

Table 2: Cross Tabulation between Membership Retention and Nurturing Initiative Programme

Details	Membership Retention		Total
	Low (< 70%) n (%)	High (80+%) n (%)	n (%)
Nurturing Initiative Programmes			
Uncertain	2(11.8)	3 (13.0)	3 (12.5)
At least Agree	15(88.2)	20(87.0)	35(87.5)
	17	23	40

Execution Initiative Programmes

Four out of every 5 Pastors at least agreed that they employed execution initiatives at their churches (see Table 3). These programmes include weekly visitation, small group ministry, missionary pairs home visitation, week of prayer, departmental ministries, personal contact, delegation of leadership and authority, and letters and phone calls. The findings revealed that 82.4% of the Pastors indicated that the execution initiatives are resulting

in low membership retention compared to 78.3% who opined otherwise. Furthermore, with the result showing that there is no statistical association between the execution initiatives and membership retention ($\chi^2(df=1) = 0.102, P = 0.749$), this suggests that the aforementioned initiatives are not catering to people’s deeper emotions of belonging and as such accounts for the ineffectiveness of the execution initiatives to retain members in the church.

Table 3: Cross tabulation between Membership Retention and Execution Initiative Programme

Details	Membership Retention		Total
	Low (< 70%) n (%)	High (80+%) n (%)	n (%)
Execution Initiative Programmes			
Uncertain	3(17.6)	5(21.7)	8(20.0)
At least Agree	14(82.4)	18(78.3)	32(80.0)
	17	23	40

Cross-Tabulation: Implementing Agents and Membership Retention

On the matter of ‘Implementing Agents’, this study uses 7 items to assess this construct. Based on the Principal Component Analysis (PCA), the items are appropriate and adequate to evaluate the variable. These items range from the Church Pastor, Elders, and deacons to leaders in various church ministries. Hence, Pastors were asked to indicate their degree of agreeability with the 7 items, which are expressed in Table 4 (i.e., Implementing Agent). Of the sampled Pastors (n=40), 85% (n=34) were

used for the cross tabulation between implementing agents and membership retention. Seventy-five per cent of the respondents who indicated a high membership retention, at least agree with the implementing agents employed by the church compared to 78.6% who reported a low membership retention rate $\chi^2 (df=2) = 0.722, P = 0.697$. With the probability being more than 5%, this follows that the various implementing agents are not resulting in high retention rates among members of the SDA churches in the sample.

Table 4: Cross tabulation between Membership Retention and Implementing Agent Programme

Details	Membership Retention		Total
	Low (< 70%) n (%)	High (80+%) n (%)	n (%)
Implementing Agents			
Disagree to strongly disagree	0(0.0)	1(5.0)	1(2.9)
Uncertain	3(21.4)	4(20.0)	7(20.6)
At least Agree	11(78.6)	15(75.0)	26(76.5)
	14	20	34

Nurturing Initiative Result Programmes

Table 5 presents a cross tabulation between nurturing initiative results and membership retention rates. The results of this table are solely based on the views of Pastors from the sampled population of churches in Northern and South Haiti Mission. The findings revealed that seven out of every ten sampled Pastors at least agree to the usage of the results of various nurturing initiative.

Seventy-five percent of those who believed that the initiatives are having a high influence of membership retention at least agreed to nurturing initiative results compared to 68.8% who believed otherwise. With there being no statistical relationship existing between the two aforementioned variables, this means that results of the initiatives are not resulting in high membership retention (χ^2 (df =1) = 1.290, $P = 0.523$).

Table 5: Cross tabulation between Membership Retention and Implementing Agent Programme

Details	Membership Retention		Total
	Low (< 70%) n (%)	High (80+%) n (%)	n (%)
Nurturing Initiative Result Programmes			
Disagree to strongly disagree	0(0.0)	1(5.0)	1(2.8)
Uncertain	5(31.3)	4(20.0)	9(25.0)
At least Agree	11(68.8)	15(75.0)	26(72.2)
	16	20	36

Bivariate Analyses: Sampled Respondents' Views on Initiatives

This section presents findings of a cross-tabulation between nurturing initiatives and the respondent's status. Table 6 shows details of the findings.

Cross-Tabulation: Nurturing Initiatives

A cross tabulation was conducted between nurturing initiative and the respondents' status (see Table 6). The findings revealed a significant statistical relationship (χ^2 (df=4) = 27.221, $P < 0.0001$) between the two aforementioned variables. Of the sampled respondents (n=132), the response rate for the cross tabulation was 99.2% (n=131). The findings showed that none of the

Pastors at least disagreed that nurturing initiatives of the Pastors influenced membership retention in the church compared to 9.2% (n=6) of the Active Members and 30.8%(n=8) of the Former Members. Furthermore, almost 88% (n=35) of the Pastors at least agreed that the Pastors' nurturing initiatives influenced membership retention in the church compared to 60% (n=39) of the current members and 30.8% (n=8) of the Former Members. Much can be gleaned from the findings as clearly the Pastors have a different perspective of the effectiveness of programmes they designed and/or sanction to address membership retention.

Table 6: Cross Tabulation between Nurturing Initiatives and Respondents' Status

Details	Pastor	Status		Total
		Active member	Former Member	n (%)
Nurturing Initiative				
Disagree to strongly disagree	0(0.0)	6(9.2)	8(30.8)	14(10.7)
Uncertain	5(12.5)	20(30.8)	10(38.4)	35 (26.7)
At least Agree	35(87.5)	39(60.0)	8(30.8)	82(62.6)
	40	65	26	131

Execution Initiatives

A cross tabulation between execution initiatives and respondents' status is presented in Table 8. The findings revealed a significant statistical relationship between the two variables (χ^2 (df =4) = 28.103, $P < 0.0001$). Forty-two per cent of Former Members indicated

that they did not participate in the execution initiatives through any of the particular media compared to 20.0% of current Members. A deduction that can be made from the finding is that members who are less actively involved in church activities are more likely to leave the organization.

Table 7: Cross Tabulation between Execution Initiative Programmes and Respondents' Status

Details	Pastor	Status		Total
		Active member	Former Member	
	n (%)	n (%)		n (%)
Execution Initiatives				
Disagree to strongly disagree	0(0.0)	13(20.0)	11(42.3)	24(18.3)
Uncertain	8(20.0)	22(33.8)	9(34.6)	39 (29.8)
At least Agree	32(80.0)	30(46.2)	6(23.1)	68(51.9)
	40	65	26	131

Implementing Agents

Table 8 presents a cross tabulation between the implementing agents and respondents' status, with a statistical association existing for the analysis (χ^2 (df=4) = 9.850, $P= 0.043$). Seventy-seven percent (n=26) of the

Pastor indicated that they are at least satisfied with the executed agents compared to 37.5% (n=9) and 63.6% (n=35) of the Former Members. Clearly, the Former Members have encountered some degree of difficulty with the agents who are conveying the message to them.

Table 8: Cross Tabulation between Implementing Agents and Respondents' Status

Details	Pastor	Status		Total
		Active member	Former Member	
	n (%)	n (%)		n (%)
Implementing Agents				
Disagree to strongly disagree	1(2.9)	6(10.9)	4(16.7)	11(9.7)
Uncertain	7(20.6)	14(25.5)	11(45.8)	32 (28.4)
At least Agree	26(76.5)	35(63.6)	9(37.5)	70(61.9)
	34	55	24	113

The researcher believes that the insights obtained from the data can yield significantly more information if the implementing agents are listed by the status of the respondents. The purpose of this analysis was primarily wanting to establish whether or not the Pastors over-inflated their contribution to the membership retention discourse. So, the findings in Table 9 represent only degree of agreement with the various implementing agents.

In many of the cases, similar perceptions had been expressed among the Pastors, Active Members, and the Former Members (i.e., Elders, Deacon, Small group leaders, experienced member of visitation, and leaders of church ministries, $P > 0.05$). However, the Pastors are over-inflating their contribution as implementing agents in members' retention.

Table 9: Cross Tabulation between Implementing Agents and Respondents' Status (only Agreed responses)

Details	Pastor	Status		χ^2 , Pvalue
		Active member	Former Member	
	(%)	(%)	(%)	
Implementing Agents				
Pastor	92.0	76.9	38.4	28.939, < 0.0001
Elder	80.0	81.6	80.8	9.162, 0.329
Deacon/Deaconess	75.0	72.3	80.8	9.525, 0.300
Small group leaders	56.5	47.7	46.1	11.652, 0.167
Members teachers of SS	65.0	53.9	46.2	19.503, 0.012
Experienced member visitation	70.0	64.7	42.3	13.072, 0.109
Leaders of church ministry	71.8	78.2	46.1	13.951, 0.083

Nurturing Initiatives Results

The views of the respondents on the matter of the nurturing initiative results are presented in Table 10. The cross tabulation between nurturing initiatives results and respondents' status revealed a statistical association (χ^2 (df = 4) = 21.196, $P < 0.0001$). Half of the Former Members believe that the nurturing initiatives are not resulting in more membership retention compared to 2.8% (n=1) of the

Pastors and 20.02% (n=12) of the Active Members. The evidence points to the gulf among the different stakeholders on the effectiveness of the measures employed by Pastors to increase membership retention. The disparity is huge and this speaks to some underlying misunderstanding of the reality and the perception of initiatives. Seemingly, the Pastors distorted perception or there is a denial of the effectiveness of their initiatives.

Table 10: Cross Tabulation between Nurturing Initiatives Results and Respondents' Status

Details	Status			Total
	Pastor	Active member	Former Member	
	n (%)	n (%)		n (%)
Nurturing Initiatives Results				
Disagree to strongly disagree	1(2.8)	12(20.0)	11(50.0)	24(20.3)
Uncertain	9(25.0)	33(25.0)	6(27.3)	30 (25.4)
At least Agree	26(72.2)	60(55.0)	5(22.7)	64(54.3)
	36	60	22	118

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part gives the conclusions and the recommendations of the study, based on the findings.

Conclusions

The study confirms pastors' nurturing initiatives in the church as valuable to retain members and that the implementation of the nurturing initiatives is strong. While the initiatives are valuable for member retention, the study found there is no statistically significant association of existing pastors' nurturing initiatives to members' retention. Therefore, the present execution methods are not producing strong retention rate within the churches. Likewise, the implementing agents are not influencing strong retention rates. It follows that pastors have a wrong sense of the effectiveness of the programmes they designed and/or sanction to address membership retention in the churches.

Recommendations

The Union and local fields should design and implement a Pastors' training programme to address discipleship, affable human relations, stewardship, leader and member motivation, conflict resolution, programme design and development and strategic planning to strengthen the structure of the church's offerings and the faith of members for improved retention and also an incentive or recognition plan should be established by the local field and the local church to affirm pastors and ministry leaders in the local churches who have actually obtained retention of a greater percentage of their members.

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