

**Exploring Determinants of Men's Absenteeism from Church at Pcea Nyeri Presbytery,
Nyeri County, Kenya**

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Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Conferment of Master of Arts Degree in
Mission Studies at Kenya Methodist University**

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

I declare that this is my original work and has not been presented for any award in any other institution of higher learning.

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Recommendation

We confirm that the student carried out this work under our Supervision.

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ABSTRACT

Men's participation in church has raised concerns about the sustainability of congregational engagement, spiritual leadership and community development efforts. In recent times, churches, researchers and religious analysts have recorded absenteeism and a declining trend in the attendance of men in the church both on Sundays and/or weekly church activities. Despite the central role men play in church leadership and family spiritual life, their diminishing presence in church activities remains poorly understood, especially in local Kenyan contexts such as Nyeri County. This study thus sought to examine the factors contributing to men's absenteeism at the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Nyeri County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to evaluate the contribution of church structure, evangelistic strategies, social-cultural practices and economic factors, to men's absenteeism at the Nyeri Presbytery. Further, the study sought to explore the intervening influence of family commitments and personal beliefs on men's absenteeism in church today. Understanding these determinants would enable church leaders formulate effective strategies that promote inclusive and sustainable church participation. The study was guided by classical secularization and the economic theory of religious belief. The study employed a descriptive research design, using stratified sampling to select 131 respondents. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews, then analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data. Quantitative data analysis entailed descriptive (percentages and means) and inferential (regression) statistical methods with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences. The qualitative data was analyzed through themes and patterns. Presentation of analyzed data was through charts, tables and graphs alongside discussion to enable inference, conclusion and recommendations. The study findings indicate that among the key determinants, economic hardship and religious commitment had the most significant influence on absenteeism, with economic struggles discouraging men from active church involvement. Additionally, ineffective lay preaching and evangelistic approaches further contributed to disengagement. Thus, the study concluded that personal religious commitment, though an intervening factor, had the strongest and positive relationship with absenteeism of men in church. To address absenteeism, the church must restructure its evangelistic approach, incorporating more interactive and inclusive fellowship programs. Additionally, social-economic empowerment initiatives should be integrated into church activities to support men facing financial hardships.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABC	Africa Brotherhood Church
AIC	African Inland Church
NCKK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
PCEA	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
PCMF	Presbyterian Church Men Fellowship
RC	Roman Catholic church
SA	Salvation Army
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist Church
SPSS	Statistical Packages for Social Sciences
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Christian religion is a moral compass for many nations all over the world. It lays the foundation of many laws that guide daily practice and societal interactions. It gives guide to leadership and governance in politics, economy, social structure, and in ensuring peace and a cohesive citizenry. Christianity is heralded to enhance family bond, healthy living and a safe and secure community (Lusey et al., 2017). For the individual Christian, attending church is one of the practices that strengthen their faith, enhancing discipleship and the growth of the church.

The position of the man in the Christian religion is central, with the whole idea of religion and church being men's brainchild (Taylor, 2014). People give God male pronouns. According to Syombua et al. (2020), the fact that Jesus was male is not in contention. All His disciples were men. Jesus founded Christianity. Men have been at the forefront in as far as propagating Christianity is concerned. All the New Testament books were authored by men. Notably, men make a majority of pastors, priests and church leaders today.

It is expected that men should be greatly involved in worship, more so church attendance. Conversely, there is a declining rate of attendance in church by men and this has become a serious concern for many churches today (Pew Research, 2018). In the last few decades, many denominations have experienced declining church attendance by men despite the increase in population in the period. Lucey et al. (2017) noted that women attend church more than men globally. Inadvertently, women tend to be more committed to the church.

Research organizations in religious studies including the Barna Group and Pew Research have conducted surveys in the United States of America. The studies provide statistics ascertaining

the causes for diminishing men participation in the church as well as the reasons for people exiting churches. Notably, men are found to comprise a significant percentage of the declining group of Christians (Awuku-Gyampoh & Formijang, 2021). Further, even among the children, boys opt out when they become young men, increasing the challenge to the development of the church in future.

According to reports from several churches, the attendance of men in church is also worrying. In every 30 countries in Africa, women are more likely to attend weekly services as compared to men in a large Christian population (Ferreira & Chipenyu, 2021). Regionally, a Ugandan 2014 study indicated that 37% of all Ugandan males attended church on a weekly basis, but the trend declined by 0.3% compared with 2012 (Pew Research, 2016). In Kenya, similar sentiments were made by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), acknowledging the skewed gender parity with women having a higher church attendance than men. The report gave a 2014 example where records showed a ratio of 3:7 in favour of women attending church in Kenya (NCCCK, 2014).

Awuku-Gyampoh and Formijang (2021) noted that the gender gap in church attendance is imminent and in recent times exacerbated by the Covid 19 pandemic disruptions on social congregation. This has left the churches with low membership, a sign of decline and a great concern for church leaders. Earlier, Omenya (2014) lamented that the declining rate of men attending the church has social and religious effects in that it has waned the moral scope of men which is well guarded through Christian values. Further, it has had a societal effect on men's roles as ethical leaders in the family, church and community.

The importance of men in the church cannot be overemphasized. Men have led the growth of churches by establishing support systems like institutions of learning and healthcare, progress that may diminish in many churches with men's absenteeism. They have been the custodians

of Christian traditions and culture since the medieval churches (Pew Research, 2016). Historically men are recorded to be regular church attendants, practicing discipleship and leading to the growth of the church in terms of spirituality, and geographical scope. Actually, the spread of Christianity over continents was heralded by men.

Men are called by God to worship, with congregation being a critical pillar in Christian faith. According to the Bible, the Christian way is to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ as pronounced to the early Christians and recorded by various authors in the New Testament (Kuert, 2018). Devotion to the word of God, grace, humility, service to God and mankind are Christian beliefs that shape healthy Christian life (Sumpter, 2019). Generally, most Christian men consider an affiliation to the church but many find it impractical (Pew Research, 2016). Attendance in church activities like baptism, fellowship, prayer vigils and choir show a decline in men's regular attendance.

Notably, in today's church, belief and practice for Christian's worldviews has been inconsistent, motivated by the influence of other worldviews and new thoughts of new Christians joining the church. Studies have been conducted in the past assessing the declining attendance of men in churches. Empirical evidence by Sumpter (2019) and Syombua (2020) shows a deploring situation of men attendance to church, though there is little focus on actual drivers to men's abstinence from church attendance.

According to Taylor (2014), some factors relating to men's church absenteeism may be individualistic/intrinsic, based on religious commitment, perceptions and beliefs for each man. They vary with demographic aspects of age, family, education and economic endowment. Generally, men agree with Christian beliefs but lowly regard church attendance. Other extrinsic drivers to men's absenteeism in church are relative to people, environment, social, political, cultural and economic, as well as institutional (Ferreira & Chipenyu, 2021). Irrespective of

this, the factors have negatively impacted on men's affiliation to the church, family and societal stability.

There are several theories put forward for why, comparatively, there are so few men attending church in the African context. One is that most African men were reared by fathers who did not attend church services and so have no role model for masculine involvement in a church (Awakuru et al., 2020). Other studies contextualize the influence of modern society, with the advent of technology that has revolutionized communication, availing church service at any place on mobile phones, changing the perceptions of men of modern times (like Generation X) on the significance of worship and church attendance (Ferreira & Chipenyu, 2021). This study framed determinants to men's absenteeism in church on: church structure, evangelical strategies, socioeconomic and personal commitment factors.

Scholarly articles have also linked church-related factors to men's failure to attend the church. According to Rainer (2001), the organizational structure of the church indicates its organizational strategy and programmes in its Christian mission. The organizational, cultural and missionary structure of the church are critical in ensuring discipleship and committed Christian community. Further, governance structures and leadership need to embrace the gender diversity and enshrine inclusive strategies for Christ Mission. Studies like Awuku-Gyampoh et al. (2021) argue that the church structure has an effect on men's inclusivity in attendance and governance, and to some extent distracting their commitment and regular church attendance. Further, Rainer (2001) notes that the name of the church/denomination has an effect on reaching the unchurched, affecting the latter's decision-making process. Other related factors include: splinter factions and doctrines, poor leadership, structural separation from the state and emerging churches with confusing doctrinal structures.

The church however was meant to be one, where all men and women may commune with God. According to St. Paul (in Ephesians, 4:13), all men are called to the unity of faith and knowledge of Jesus and to live according to His ways. Thus, disunity should not be a situation in the church as there is only one God, faith and baptism. Unity of the church is founded on the knowledge of Christ, thus forming a formidable foundation of church programmes and strategies (Bawa & Bastimi, 2022).

Syombua (2020) decried that today the discipleship has been disengaged by the many forms of church leadership, poor exegeses as well as false and disorienting messages that lead to confusion, demotivation of congregants and church splinter to many and varied sects. Splinters create a negative appeal and mistrust among men, especially those with devout virtues on the original structure and traditional church. Furthermore, worship styles have been influenced by modern societal perspectives, and the traditional styles may not appeal to men today. Further, frequency of the worship programmes may not suit the social-economic pressures of today's men, exacerbating absenteeism from church.

Evangelical strategies have been theorized to impact on attendance and absenteeism of men in church. Evangelism is the mission for the development of the Christian faith and churches. Churches formulate denominational strategies in this mission and vary accordingly. However, the sole mission is living the life of Jesus Christ (Kuert, 2018). Evangelistic strategies must have strategic vision to achieve the mission of the church- bringing man to the way of God. However, Akinyi (2018) notes that the expectation of evangelical revival in Africa has lost pivot, with focus being on the growth of the congregation, rather than the faith, diminishing spiritual growth.

Another evangelistic determinant to men's absenteeism in church contended by Lusey et al. (2017) is that evangelical messages have become watered-down, with the messages being

emphatic on humility, holiness, and introspection. Men find them degrading to male masculinity and a demotivating factor to church attendance. Further, finding the right activities to attract men in the churches has been a challenge in many denominations. However, some churches have tried to reverse the trend and have innovated fellowship sessions to include more social activities motivating male bonding like fishing and sports (Immel, 2020). Failure to identify the significant programmes with a religious and personal impact on men can deride interest in church missions and attendance. Notably, male interests differ and churches must interrogate the social-culture dynamics in their local areas, more so in Kenya.

Social factors have influence on perceptions and behaviour of Christians and community members in general. Kenya is a transforming society. Today, the society is more enlightened, educated and averse on the different worldviews around them. Technology has greatly ensured this change (Kang'entu & Heiene, 2017) and is not exclusive to religion and the church. Social media has impacted on access to church sermons, allowing Christians to either stream live, or follow the service later (Taylor, 2014). This reduces commitment to attend church, especially for the young, mostly elite working men today. The social influence of peers is also found to affect church attendance by men (Pew Research, 2018). Realizable is the impact of social-demographic factors on men absenteeism especially considering age mindsets for the youth, adults and the elderly.

Recognizing the varied worldviews today, education, materialism and naturalism have secular and diversionary influence on Christian worldview, faith and worship. Thus, many young Christian men find it more attractive to associate with elite, wealthy, merry, partying friends, rather than Christians living in humility. The social effect of age and ill health of elderly men is also an influencing factor to low attendance of men in church. Secularization of the church is another critical aspect that has been affecting attendance rates with weakening spirituality

among the faithful. Kang'entu and Heiene (2017) argue that secularization limits the role of religion in modern society, diminishing religious institutions social power.

Culture and human beings are synonymous. Irrespective of continent, culture and traditions guide the daily lives and activities of people, and ingrained right from childhood and passed on through generations (Hegy, 2021). Remarkably, men have always been the custodians of African culture and religion. In most African communities, men presided over religious functions (Awakuru, 2020). Worship however is practiced in all cultures, including Christianity. Acts of sacrifice and offerings constitute the common worship practice, led by men.

Introduction of Christianity brought in a new religion with men at the helm of new found churches globally, and more so in African countries like Kenya. However, Lusey et al. (2017) contends that men in Africa have not fully delineated from traditional cultures and customs, though they are Christians. Omenya (2014) to such people, notes that church membership is just but the order of the day, but their true fellowship is on traditional culture and customs, therefore not finding church attendance as a priority in daily life.

Economic factors have been theorized to influence men's religious commitment. Economic needs for the family are the prerogative of men in many societies globally (Taylor, 2014). In Africa, men are breadwinners in the family. In the modern age especially after colonization in Africa, young men migrate to towns and urban centres in search for jobs after school completion. They work outside the home and have their social lives in clubs or hotels either watching football matches or chatting with friends (Bawa et al., 2022). On the underscore, women and children are often left at home and attend local church. This leads to a low number of men in the local churches than it is for women who are left to take care of the homes. Further,

work at times required Sunday duties and men are therefore unable to attend church service even in the urban areas.

The waning Christian worldview for men has also been influenced by other worldviews propounded in western economic culture entailing capitalism (Kuert, 2018). According to Clift (2019), capitalism has been driven by political power in European societies, adopted in American and taking root in developing economies in Africa and Asia. The search for material wealth has taken over the mindsets of many men, diminishing the values and virtues of humanity espoused in Christianity (Kuert, 2018). In effect, the men find themselves less motivated to attend church where their new worldview is un-matched.

Personal beliefs and attitudes influence the level of commitment to church and regular attendance. According to Lusey (2017), religious commitment is a critical factor that influences church attendance and also absenteeism. Generally, religious commitment is the degree a person adheres to religious beliefs, values and practices for daily living. In Christianity, affiliation, importance of religion, frequency of prayer and church service attendance are critical indicators of religious commitment. However, gender studies (Pew Research, 2018; Lusey, 2017) show women to be more committed Christians than men. Notably, commitment to the church is an individualistic factor and is driven by many personal factors including affiliation, age, preferences, perceptions (like lack of interest and personal significance of religious belief), cognitive capacity and faith.

Globally, the level of religious commitment varies. In Europe (especially central and eastern parts of the continent) there is report of modest religious commitment and not a majority pray and attend church worship service weekly. In South America, there is higher level of commitment. Religious commitment in Africa (including Kenya) was high in the last three decades, though there is a declining trend especially for men. It is in the interest of this study

to establish the intervening relationship between men's religious commitment and absenteeism in the church in the Kenyan context.

Maintaining a strong Christian community is important in Christian nations, including Kenya. The significance of the presence of men in the church cannot be overemphasized. It is important to address the declining church attendance because this challenge may lead to complete church failures and more people not affiliated to any church, thus a weakness for the church and community. Factors affecting men's church absenteeism are however varied, and diversely regional-centric. However, it is imperative for local churches to strategize on how to engage with Christians who do not frequent church. Further, seeking those who have deserted church and bringing them back should be a significant mission for churches. In the Bible, church leaders are mandated to bring people closer to God and seek those who have wandered off. The New Testament implores that Jesus offers his followers advice on recovering the lost: Jesus told this parable:

Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Therefore, establishing the reasons why men are not attending church and working out effective motivational strategies by the church is critical, more so in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Nyeri County.

PCEA is a prominent Christian denomination with great significance in history and culture in the central region of Kenya, including Nyeri County. It has and continues to play a significant role in education, healthcare and social development among communities where it serves since the colonial era (Mwindi & Kithinji, 2024). Over the years, attendance in PCEA church in Nyeri County has shown varying patterns, with some congregations growing while others decline. Attendance peaks during festive seasons like Easter and Christmas, special occasions

and school holidays. Notably, women, children and elderly men outnumber men during church service (Kariithi, 2023). The participation of the youth and men remains lower than that of women, hence necessitating targeted interventions and the onus of this current study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Men have been affiliated to religion irrespective of ethnic diversities all over the world. In the Islamic world, men are publicly and unashamedly religious. In Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism the same case applies where men lead the worship in their places of gathering. However, men's church attendance by men is declining (Pew Research, 2016). Ideally, attendance to church is expected of every committed Christian irrespective of gender (Lusey, 2017).

Men's absence from church has become a global concern in religious discourse due to the effect on church development and growth and the need to change the status quo (Syombua, 2020). The low representation of men in the church congregation has left a weak church without gender balance in administration. Diminishing masculinity leadership that attracted men in today's church has contributed to men keeping away. Further, social-economic pursuits have driven men away from the church, weakening membership and growth prospects (Ferreira & Chipenyu, 2021). Critically, spiritual development of men is weakened transcending to weak moral fabrics in society and rise of evil. If the church is to grow; it must equip and train all its members to reach other people. The church grows best when every member participates.

Despite being active participants in church activities, men's church absenteeism trends have been noted in Nyeri Presbytery as revealed by the recent baseline survey. Other studies seeking to unravel the reasons for men's absence in church having noted the gender disparity (Lusey et al., 2017; Kinuthia, 2003). The inter-denominational US congregation in their website-www.uscongregations.org. (2020) reports church attendance in America of 61% women

compared to 39% men, showing a significant gender gap. The decline in men's attendance has been noted among many churches, and studies confirm this situation (Syombua et al., 2020). As accorded by Ferreira and Chipenyu (2021), the churches' concern should not only be on the declining numbers, but the reasons for the decline. Notably, there is paucity of information on Kenya's church attendance dynamics today.

Considering the various environmental dynamics like culture, religions, economic and geographic disparities, a need for more regional-centric studies is critical. Further, there could be varied factors driving absenteeism of men in church that are regional, personal and contextual, and it is critical to evaluate the Kenyan context especially in Nyeri County churches, while establishing implications on spiritual engagement and community involvement of men. The study would add critical knowledge for the growth strategies of the church, while providing data on determining factors to men's absence from church through the case of PCEA Nyeri Presbytery, Nyeri County.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The main objective of this research is to examine the determining factors to men's absenteeism among churches in Kenya today. This would help to identify gaps in the current efforts for church growth through men's participation as well as come up with better mitigation strategies.

1.3.2 Specific Objective

i. To evaluate the church organizational structure determining men's absenteeism at the PCEA Nyeri Presbytery.

ii. To assess the evangelistic strategies determining men's absenteeism at the PCEA Nyeri Presbytery.

iii. To examine the social-cultural practices determining men's absenteeism at the PCEA Nyeri Presbytery.

iv. To explore the economic factors determining men's absenteeism at the PCEA Nyeri Presbytery.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between the church organizational structure and men's absenteeism at the PCEA Nyeri Presbytery.

Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between evangelical strategies and men's absenteeism at the PCEA in Nyeri Presbytery.

Ho₃ There is no significant relationship between social-cultural practices and men's absenteeism at the PCEA Nyeri Presbytery.

Ho₄ There is no significant relationship between economic factors and men's absenteeism at the PCEA Nyeri Presbytery.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The challenge of men's absence in many churches has been a recent global outcry among churches. Though statistics are available, the reasons for men avoiding church are not conclusive, notably since they live in different regions of the world with varied social-economic and environmental aspects and types of religions. The reasons for men's church absenteeism in Kenya, and more so Nyeri County, are therefore unique. Results of the study would be an illumination to churches on the reasons for dwindling men attendance and can therefore effectively enhance strategies for positive initiatives motivating men to attend church. By addressing this issue, churches can create more inclusive/ and engaging environments, strengthen community bond, and promote spiritual growth among their male congregants.

This study would also help the church to have a balance in gender representation. Further it would enhance the church growth as a purpose driven institution, and in reaching the unchurched men, a critical function of the church. In religious discourse, the study would add knowledge for Christian mission revival and church development and growth. Further, it would be a point of reference for future researchers.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was confined to PCEA Nyeri Presbytery in Nyeri County. Target respondents comprised the Presbytery Moderator, church ministers, leaders in Women Guild, Presbyterian Church Men Fellowship (PCMF), church youth and formally unchurched men of the 12 parishes of Nyeri Presbytery, Nyeri County. Key focus of the study was the factors influencing men absenteeism from church, guided by thematic factors including church structure, evangelistic message, social-culture affiliations and economics. The Study was conducted in twenty-six months, (August 2022-October 2024).

1.7 Limitations to the Study

In carrying out the study, several limitations were expected. First accessing the participants was challenging since they were mostly available on Sunday and at church, affecting timely completion of data collection exercise. Full disclosure of the reasons why men abstain from church was also limited due to sensitivity and personal nature of the subject.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The study took precautions to mitigate the limitations. First, the researcher recruited, trained and engaged research assistants to aid in data collection. Further, the study assured participants of the confidentiality of all information provided.

1.9 Assumption of the Study

In this study, it was assumed that respondents would be available and accessible during data collection. Further assumed is that these respondents would provide frank and reliable data. Also assumed was the generalization of findings to other church institutions.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

Absenteeism - Habitual failure to attend, appear or participate in church duty or obligations with or without reason.

Attendance - The gathering of people at a location with a common agenda, such as a church.

Church - The body of Christ entailing the gathering or assembly of believers.

- Church growth** - Expansion of the church in terms of population and regional coverage
- Evangelism** - The mission for the development of the Christian faith and churches
- Evangelism strategies** - Different methodologies to reach people in Christian mission
- Generation X** - Young person's born between the years 1965 and 1980
- Millennials** - Persons born in the period between 1980-1990
- Polygamy** - A marriage institutions with many wives and one husband
- Unchurched** - People who are not connected to any church once in their lifetime.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the review of past literature in relation to men's abstinence from attending church. It entails the review of church concepts, empirical review and study gaps, theoretical review as well as the conceptual framework.

2.2. Christianity and the Church

Christianity dates back to the times of Jesus Christ when the early church was formed by the disciples of Jesus. Rooted in the Middle East among the Israelites, Christianity spread all over Europe and Asia in the medieval times. Today Christianity is the largest religion around the world. Conversion to Christianity through persuasion and war was common in those times (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007). The converts mainly congregated regularly through church service attendance on the Sabbath day. Christianity also spread to the Americas and Africa through explorers from Europe (Already a Christian Continent). A recent Pew research study reported that Christians in Asia and Africa tend to be more committed, praying frequently, attending religious services more regularly and consider religion important (Pew Research, 2018).

In Africa, Christianity was introduced by colonial Europeans replacing traditional religious cultures and the so-called heathen lifestyles alongside modernization and development. Today, there are many churches in Africa South of Sahara (Kang'entu & Heiene, 2017). In a recent 2021 updated data, Africa had about 685 million Christians, with 760 million expected by 2025. The report also indicated that in 2020, African Christians formed 49% of the continent's population, with Muslims forming 42% (Awuku et al., 2021).

Notably, in a relatively short time, Africans have converted to Christianity. Syombua (2020) postulates that in the East African Region, Christianity is the main religion, followed by Islam. In Kenya, majority of its population are Christians. According to Omenya (2014), the church

congregation in Kenya is predominantly made of women and children, a trend that has created a challenge for churches and their leaders.

Contrary to the early church that wasn't burdened with the need to build churches, but assembled in house churches of believers in AD 160, today's churches are more of design and planning for modern living styles and attitudes. According to Chaves (2017), a new church member will today find a well-furnished church with adequate parking, comfortable pew/chairs, logical sermons with practical teachings on how to make them be better fathers, husbands and businessmen.

In addition, Adelaja (2008) avers that the churches will also be a well-equipped church school class for their children; clearly marked and a functional welcome centre, with a Sunday service programme that indicates 45 min worship service. The additions to the church structure are however in tune with modern times. Men will take time to choose which church to attend especially if it doesn't fit the above criteria. The review above shows that there are myriads of social-cultural factors influencing people including men to attend church.

Among the churches in Kenya, PCEA is one of the oldest denominations in the world. It is a church led by elders- Presbytery and governed by the sessions of elders within East Africa. The church was established in Kenya by missionaries in 1890 as a Christian mission at Kibwezi under the name 'The East Africa Scottish Mission'. After expansion, the church was based in Kikuyu in 1891, and handed to local leadership a year later by the mother church in Scotland. The church has established churches all over East Africa, structured through presbyteries, parishes and congregations.

PCEA Nyeri Presbytery in Nyeri County comprises 12 parishes governed by a moderator and operated by parish ministers. In relation to men attendance, the presbytery has an approximate population of 150 men who have stopped attending church and 30 men who have rejoined-

being formerly unchurched, (PCEA, Nyeri Presbytery Ledger, 2021). These statistics provide critical grounding for this study's assessment of the factors driving absenteeism of men in church.

2.3 Men and Church Attendance

Christians regularly attend church as a practice. Regular church attendance can be viewed as synonymous with Sunday service visitation, while a broad definition, names as a regular attendee a person who comes to church during three out of eight weekends. Commonly, attending to church on Sunday is deemed as regular attendance in most Christian denominations (Omenya, 2014). Regular attendance to church builds faith in that reading the bible regularly, attending sermons and interacting with the priests keeps the faithful in the right Christian path.

Since the old days in the Bible, attendance for worship was the common practice. This practice has been adopted among churches to the present day all over the world. Majority of churches insist on regular attendance in obedience to the fourth commandment about Sabbath day. Notably, church attendance is a personal choice, though it may be influenced by other external factors. Recent research by Lusey et al. (2017) shows a low rate of church attendance among men in almost all Christian congregations globally.

Pew Research (2018) indicates that in Christian history, men have been synonymous with religiosity since the Bible days of early man. Man was created by God to look over other creatures and regularly communicated with the Creator through worship. In the Old Testament, men were in charge of religious activities and organized and ensured regular communion with God through prayer and sacrifice. In those days, men were attending synagogues as a practice. Similarly, under the New Testament, the early church comprised of men as key followers of Jesus Christ. This is evidenced in the book of Mathew 4:18;

Jesus called four men as his first disciples as He walked along the shore of Galilee (among them Simon Peter and his brother Andrew) and He made them fishers of men. He later called eight more to follow Him and be in His inner circle.

All the twelve apostles were men.

Sumpter (2019) contended that from the first century and across the Roman Empire, the church was very attractive to the oppressed and longed for hope and liberation when they were preached to. The earliest faith was founded by males (Jesus and the twelve disciples) who were respected and loved by the community. At these times, only men ascended to top hierarchy in the church. Until recently, the leadership of the church has been dominated by men. Men preached, taught, baptized and gave sacraments. This shows a strong presence of men in the leadership and place of worship.

Awuku et al. (2021) study on historical analysis of the Church estimates the number of people attending church doubled from 17 percent in 1776 to 34 percent in 1850. This number continued to climb to about 62 percent in 1980 where it became static. In 1980, there were 226.5 million people in the United States, and 140 million, or 62 percent, were affiliated with a church. However, since the 1980s and 90s, a phenomenon occurred in the American culture as church attendance started to decline (Barna, 2000). In 2014, four-in-ten, or 40 percent, of the American population indicated that they regularly attended worship service (Taylor, 2014). According to Taylor, this decline in attendance is the sharpest drop since 1980, where 62 percent attended weekly worship service. A worsening trend has persisted towards the 21st Century and today.

Global studies show that men have taken charge of worship though membership in the church is not commensurate. Barna Group study on gender disparity in the church indicates that in America 95% of senior pastors are men and only 2 out of 6 are men members (Barna group, 2003). The study further showed that when a church leader is a man, two thirds of the ministry leaders will be women. Almost every area of church leadership has been dominated by women.

Further, when the church gathers for revivals, crusades, conferences, retreats, concerts, committee meeting, majority are women. A fifth of married women regularly worship without their husbands. Only the wife and children may attend the church. This indicates a low trend in men's presence in churches, and a major concern globally.

2.4 Men's Absenteeism from Church

Men's affiliation with the Scriptures is profound. The scriptures relate that God has gifted every person special gift for church growth and expected men and women to use it in nurturing the body of Christ (Taylor, 2014). Therefore, when men are neglected, the body of Christ becomes weak, hence the church (Pew Research, 2018). Men failure to attend church has been related to varied and divergent factors all over the world. However, men have been found to be very religious, but prefer not to attend church due to many personal reasons.

Many men will enjoy themselves being in a business set up, work hard to maintain their firms, while the subject on tithing and thanksgiving is rarely found in their books (Chaves, 2017). Thus, for example in PCEA churches, the many structures and projects demanding men's money have threatened their presence in every Sunday worship. They are viewed as the source of income by the big churches while the small churches will view men as a source of wisdom to grow church (Njoroge, 2015). As such, men lose opportunities for the message of Christ.

Pew research (2018) finds one of the causes for a dissipating interest in church to be leadership and how it conducts business (a matter of structure and evangelism). However, exclusion of other environmental dynamics may not provide concrete and credible answers to this problem. Ewakuru et al. (2018) observes that men who are busy doing their businesses, mechanics, teachers, motorbike riders enjoy their time more than those who attend weekly fellowship or in small church gatherings. Sometimes men who attend the church gatherings feel alienated and bored. Their voice is not often felt in the outside economic and social world. With the

current described situations in the church, this current study will try to examine the factors that lead men's absenteeism, or demotivating men to attend church.

Church attendance by men does not just lead to church growth but also strengthens their family bond, leadership and role models for coming generations on the Christian worldview. To the contrary, men's church absenteeism has led to poor family mentorship among teenagers, leading the boy child away from the church and straying them to engagement in social evils like crime, drugs and irresponsible sexual behaviour (Jones, 2015). Pew research (2018) in the United States of America (USA) and Europe found that church attendance practices of parents, especially fathers, can be highly influential in forming the future church attendance practices of their children.

According to Syombua et al. (2020), reasons for men's absenteeism from church should be a concern for church leaders and managers. Establishing the possible reasons can be achieved through dialogue and interaction with young men, husbands, and fathers. To enable such interventions, the church must be encouraged to emulate the heroes in the Bible of the faith-robust men such as Moses, Elijah, and Peter. The Christian life should be presented as the adventure it truly is. The church should pray that God would increase the number of men who recognize their God-given responsibilities and who are unafraid to commit their talents and service to a local church.

2.5 Church Organizational Structure and Men's Absenteeism in Church

The church structure comprises the leadership/governance, operative structures, mission structures and gender issues. Immel (2020) contends that in recent decades, structural separation of church and state has resulted in the secularization of the church. For example, the issue of abortion has caused a deep divide in the nation and has stimulated division in the church, especially the Protestant church (Hubbard, 2016). Today religious environment shows

a rise in splinter churches, giving rise to evangelical, apostolic, and many more sects, all preaching the same message but with differing versions/strategies.

The divergent approach to Christian mission embedded in the denominational structures is at times confusing, deluding the men from the actual truthful church, hence the reason for absenteeism in the church (Jones, 2015). Further, the rise in false prophets in especially new churches has made the church repugnant to many men of good faith. Notably, the state takes a critical step in registration of these churches, while allowing for freedom of worship.

Theological studies have tried to relate church structure and abstinence /attendance of men in church. Chaves (2017) study found that the flexibility of the church governance allowing women leadership to some extent has led to a relatively negative influence on men attendance. This is especially in regards to those men from traditional Christian foundations where men were meant to lead the congregation. How this is manifested in the PCEA church is of contextual significance in this current study.

Taylor (2014) in his books relates structural leadership weakness to spiritual weakness evident in the building of churches for personal purposes rather than for the glory of God. There has been a lot of attention to building churches rather than souls as required in churches. Church leaders tend to raise funds by any means to build big churches, many churches or most beautiful churches. According to Adelaja (2008), they forget the power they receive from Jesus Christ and focus on building churches. To them building churches seems more manageable than transforming the nation. They thus forget to reach out to men who are not attending church who are supposed to comprise the church itself. However, whether this is the case in PCEA is a contextual gap evaluated under this current study.

Murrow (2005) book on why men hate going to church noted that many churches, knowingly or unknowingly, create a feminine atmosphere with their décor, distracting men. Floral

arrangements, pastel colors, frilly curtains, and pictures of passive, pastoral scenes make for a peaceful ambiance, but they tend to make men feel a disconnect. Some churches attempt to appeal to masculine sensibilities by changing their décor to something edgier, darker, more robust, and less nurturing. However, if the church critically evaluates the ambience and effect on members effectively, it can reintegrate the men in the church congregation as regular attendees. Whether this is strategically undertaken in Kenya is the concern of this current study.

Several empirical studies evaluate the church structures and possible effect on attendance by the congregation. Immel (2020) study evaluated the declining situation of the Assembly of God churches within the PennDel Ministry Network. Church's pastor and board participated in the interview focusing on: the church leadership's perception regarding their church's present state of plateau or decline, contributing factors of plateau or decline, needs for change, and future partnerships between the PennDel Ministry Network and the sample churches. Findings show that a combination of a compelling vision and a spiritually-toned strategic plan seemed to be absent in all the churches which participated in the research.

Murrow Media Inc. (2016) USA study found that most employees in the church were female apart from the ordained priests. Sadly, over 70 percent of the boys raised in church abandon it during their teenage years. Also noted was that more than 90 percent of American men believe in religion and five out of six view themselves as Christian. However, only one out of six attend church on a given Sunday. This showed low inclusion of men in church processes, a factor requiring a contextual examination of the Kenyan church environment.

Lawton (2021) notes that churches are failing to reshape their leadership for ministry and mission in response to the changing landscape and needs of their congregations. For instance, most churches have accepted the need for a full-time and full-salaried clergy, without questioning whether such a financial arrangement is actually an asset or a liability from the

congregation's perspective. Such churches cause the congregation to conform to the needs and practices of the ministry rather than to the needs of the congregation. This structure is not conducive to change-oriented organizations.

According to Immel (2020), the church structural setting does not allow men to participate in its activities. Mostly Sunday worship services are led by women and this may display a lot of emotions that may make men uncomfortable. Men will have a hard time or no time in submitting to a feminine leader in a church setting. Their ego is often provoked. Men are not recognized in church leadership, as well as their gifts. Only when it comes to funding the projects initiated by the local church is when men participation is recognized and encouraged. Men will therefore occasionally attend church, limiting their spiritual growth.

Hegy (2021) related religion and culture in the catholic churches of the United States of America. The study established that rotation of priests was a common practice. The rotation of the priests was too frequent (5 years) and building a strong bond and trust with the men in the church through initiated programmes may be short-lived. This to some extent distracts men's continuous attendance of the church.

In Kenya, Syombua et al. (2020) examined factors influencing church membership and attendance. Specifically, the study assessed the theological foundation behind church membership, leadership roles for congregation growth and church attendance among men in Mbooni West Sub County, Kenya. Adopting quantitative survey, five churches were purposively selected and one branch randomly sampled including: African Inland Church (A.I.C), the Roman Catholic church (R.C), the Africa Brotherhood Church (A.B.C), the seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA) and the Salvation Army (S.A). Established was that fewer men attended church than women in the study area, with contributing reasons being cultural, economic, religious and natural attributes. However, a methodological gap exists in

selection of the study churches, with the current study focusing specifically on PCEA Nyeri County. Also, church related influencers were overlooked, and a critical contextual gap focused by this current study.

Njoroge (2015) examined the factors affecting youth participation in PCEA Kajiado Presbytery, Kajiado County. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research design, targeting the youth and church elders and research instruments administered to 258 randomly sampled respondents. The study established that leadership composition influenced youth engagement in church programmes as the elderly were not mentoring the youth to take up church responsibilities. Though good leadership is vital in the church, it is of interest in this study to evaluate the contextual link to men's attendance in church.

Omenya (2014) evaluated men's participation at CITAM Church in Nairobi City County. Using questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, data was collected among male adults of eighteen years and above drawn from the church attendance register. It was established that ministering to men's spiritual, emotional, and socioeconomic needs by the church mainly through relevant Christian Education programs could result in spiritual growth. The study also revealed that men need mentors that they can look to in the church setting. Notably, the study elicits a contextual gap in that it focuses on attendance assessment, with the current study delving deeper into the reasons for men's absenteeism in church.

2.6 Evangelistic Strategies and Men's Absenteeism in Church

According to Taylor (2014), evangelism is the mission of every church as it seeks to bring more men to God and in the way of Jesus Christ. The mission is however undertaken in grounds that are tough, with evil lurking in every phase of the mission. This tough aspect may be more attractive to men in the church. Men are looking to be challenged with a bold message of adventure, danger, and aggressiveness. Any church that turns the gospel into a soft, congenial

message minimizes the cost of discipleship, or imputes weakness to Christ, thus doing its people a disservice. Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) decried such a watered-down message in his day:

There has got abroad a notion, somehow, that if you become a Christian, you must sink your manliness and turn milksop.

Such messages distract men and increase aspects of church abstinence.

Immel (2020) cites another evangelistic related challenge as the common assumption that the more a church grew, the more activity it would offer. The challenge is that church can easily end up burning people out and exhausting their social life. Social life is extinguished where some churches offer so many programs for families that families don't even have a chance to be families. The church strategy should therefore be more flexible, always equipping people to live out their faith in the world. This is because the Christians have to live in the world to influence the world. Churches that focus their energies on the few things the church can uniquely do best will emerge as the most effective churches moving forward. Simplified churches will complement people's witness, not compete with people's witness.

Jones (2015) contends that evangelical factors of some churches have a watered-down message, allowing the world to dictate the sermons, hence negatively impacting on men's regular church attendance. This is because the secular message preached eliminates the need for the church. Perhaps this may be why so many young men have already left the church. The point is that this liberal message is impotent and offers no compelling reason to join the church. Kinnaman and Lyons (2007) also contend that churches put negative labels on potential members which can be characterized as passing judgment on them. The study reinforces the fact that churches must alter how they treat the new generation or tolerate the fact that Millennials will abandon the church altogether.

Kuert (2018) related the Bible to evangelical strategies that are wooing Christians away from the way of Christ, confusing them and driving them out of churches, especially men. In the New Testament book of 2 Timothy 3:1-9, St. Paul raised a warning that the last days of the Christian Church will be difficult:

People will be lovers of themselves and money, boastful, arrogant... loving pleasure more than God. They will maintain outward appearance of religion but have repudiated its power. So, avoid these people.

In recent church, false prophets are now establishing churches and preaching on worldly benefits, watering down the initiation message in the Bible. They try to sanitize the traditional Christian virtues of humility, while enticing secular thoughts towards the Christian congregation who in developing economies are poor and find these messages more fulfilling.

In Bawa et al. (2022) a Ghanaian study evaluated church believers through a quantitative method. Results showed that the least likely church activity was prayer service. Unfaithfulness of pastors significantly affected affinity to church service attendance. Further revealed was materialistic nature of church sermons rather than spiritual evangelism. They have an overly monetized and materialistic leaning in their sermons. However, since church perceptions vary, this study provides a contextual divergence based on the Kenyan churches and teachings.

Conrad (2015) study among Maranatha Seventh Day Adventist churches in Florida USA established that though the churches had sorted the problem of member attrition, challenges were still experienced. The lack of competency driven and user-friendly curriculum impeded on church growth. Actually, there was a combined development of less than 30% in membership between 2002 and 2012. The study recommended a comprehensive discipleship curriculum for the church mission. Notably, the study was conducted in the USA, necessitating a Kenyan context study.

Kang'entu and Heiene (2017) evaluated the secularization of the church in Nairobi, Kenya. The findings show that varied tendencies and factors have influenced the rate and impact of secularization among churches, while basing the findings on the various environments people live in Nairobi. The study noted dichotomizing sacred and secular Christianity being major challenges among churches. For the Christians, tendency to be swayed towards secular trends is imminent, with the sanitized messages affiliated towards naturalistic, materialistic and worldly gains that are in fact against the Scripture teachings. Contextually, it will be interesting to establish the perceptions of Christians on secularization, whether they can identify and avoid it and whether the churches have strategies to mitigate secular influences on men's church absenteeism.

2.7 Social-Cultural Practices and Men's Absenteeism in Church

Social cultural factors have been found to affect religiosity among Christian men. Socially, the marital status of a man may affect societal affiliation and membership in a church congregation. Family set up based on singlehood, divorce/separation do not feature in church programmes in many denominations, especially in traditional churches (Pew Research, 2018). According to Herzer and Strulik (2013), one of the contemporary and salient social-economic features in world religion is gradual secularization. In the 20th and 21st centuries, developed countries in Europe with Christian traditions have been experiencing a decline in religious following. Notably in the industrial era, Europe was deeply religious but now highly secular (Bruce, 2011). There is a falling trend of religious activity over the 20th century for every country (Strulik, 2016). These factors keep men off from the church gatherings especially if they were the cause of the divorce.

According to Bawa et al. (2022), men who live in a polygamous marriage are not recognized by some churches. The Bible and the church structure do not offer religious or social support to men in this category but only to married men and women (they will not even take Holy

Communion), until they solemnize their wedding in the church. Elsewhere in some ethnic groups, men are plunged into a lot of cultural practices such as smoking and alcoholism that become a hindrance in their change to salvation. Work-life balance has been a major factor influencing church attendance for both genders. According to Hegy (2021), having to work the whole week, the weekend is left for family and leisure, with Sunday set for attending church. However, many social events have been shifted to Sundays including sports and festivities, disorganizing church programmes.

Strulik, Holger (2016) study adduces that while enjoying modern day naturalistic attractions, the many church going persons, especially men prefer to socialize, do business to better their lives on Sunday, relegating church attendance to women and children. However, this has taken a divergent shift after the covid-19 pandemic. In lockdown, men were able to reflect of realities of life, what they have missed in connection to their faith and are now more present in church. Actually, some churches have recently reported an increase in male membership. The imminent quest in modern theological discourse is to evaluate how worship styles affect modern young men in church attendance.

A study by Chaves (2017) indicates that the millennials have stronger preferences towards church attendance, and technology is continually disconnecting them from the church. They care about televisions, movies, videos, and websites. This is their culture. Since youth do not care about religion they need to be guided and instructed on how to use technology for missions. The survey shows they spend 12 hours a day on the social media. Further Daniel (2010) noted a positive influence of church culture on the interest of young men in church.

Taylor (2014) contends that the new generation is more attracted to Generation X rock music, finding it more entertaining than drumming of old church. They may thus not be attracted to attending church service of worship through music. They prefer modern music that can be

available in social media. This distraction is a precursor to low attendance of young men in church. Pew Research (2018) recommends that the use of music and technology in Christian worship should be well displayed to keep Generation X, especially adult men. It is in the interest of this study to evaluate the influence of generational and cultural change on church attendance/absenteeism trends amongst Kenyan men.

Bullivant (2019) study findings indicate that generational change was also a factor affecting church attendance especially amongst young men in the USA. The study found that Sunday attendance of cradle Catholics stood at 15% in the U.S. and 13% in Britain in 2016. The study further noted that decline in church affiliation is not abrupt but a progressive process with each new generation. Among Catholics and Protestants, it was a general trend in USA and Britain. Each generation begins at a lower level of practice and continues at the same level during its lifespan. The findings are based outside the African continent with different aspects of generational change, necessitating the evaluation of the Kenyan men context under this current study.

In Kenya, Akinyi (2018) studied the evangelical revival mission of the Anglican Church. The study's aim was to examine the challenges and effect of the spread of the East African Revival Mission (EARM) at the Anglican Churches in Kisumu Central Archdeaconry. Employing a mixed research methodology with a descriptive cross sectional survey research design, qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions. It was established that the evangelistic mission was found rigid with the theology and practices of public confession of sin where sin is called by its name, disapproval of African traditions and culture among others having resulted into misunderstanding, disapproval and outright opposition from colleagues and some church leaders. Notably, a contextual gap in relation to revival mission focus, with the current study examining men's abstinence from attending church. A divergent approach in

data collection in this current study will be the application of quantitative methods (questionnaire) alongside interviews.

2.8 Economic Factors and Men's Absenteeism in Church

Economic factors are attached to men in most societies. Fending for families, creation of investments and assets are bestowed on the man who has to work hard. Notably, the man remains the family head in African cultures like Kenya, with sole responsibility of family upkeep and wellbeing (Syombua et al., 2020). In recent times and more so after the corona virus disruptions, economic hardships are a family challenge, demanding more worktime. In the rural set-up, men move to towns to seek employment, reducing the number of attendees at the local churches.

According to Kuert (2018), churches in urban centres experience low male turn-out, similar to the village areas they come from in search of jobs. Further, poverty has also had an effect on men's affiliation to the church, with men who are economically challenged tending to keep off the church, finding no inspiration through religion for their economic woes. The quest to fulfil family economic needs at times forces the men to work on Sundays, therefore reducing attendance rates.

Strulik (2016) study evaluated time allocation for church attendance (and other religious activities) and secular leisure activities. The study established that those with wealth and elite are more likely to abandon the intuitive-believing cognitive style. They may continue to attend church but do so less frequently than intuitive believers. In general equilibrium, there exists a locally stable steady state where believing and frequent church attendance is widespread across the social strata. A sufficiently large negative shock (repeal of Sunday shopping laws), however, initiates the gradual secularization of society. The study links the economic status of

church congregation, but based on developed countries, necessitating the Kenyan context in developing economies.

Taylor (2014) avers that the search for economic emancipation has made parents less close to their children, reducing parental guidance and this has led to moral decay of the children. The male child lacks role models as they grow up and they turn to rebellious teenagers who are not willing to attend church or follow the Christian way of life. At this age, they are exposed to any view and can be swayed to cultures of drugs, and immorality, contrary to the will of the parents. Notably, at teenage, they are vulnerable due to lack of strong parental guidance.

Taylor (2001) opined that modern world storytelling connotes individualism, though they cannot be healthy in their relativistic and deterministic nature. The pursuit for wealth and power and diffusion of this culture among communities has shaped the thoughts of existing and new Christian, leading to new approaches to the Christian world view. Notably, the conflict and splitting of churches has culminated from the contemporary worldview, with emerging churches based on specific Biblical interpretations. These in effect dilute the actual Christian message, to a more fitting and secular befitting current worldviews that allow men's absence in church.

2.9 Religious Commitment

Religious commitment is highly influential to discipleship and dedication for Sunday church worship service attendance among men (Stolz, 2020). According to Kang'entu and Heiene (2017), commitment to membership, Biblical teachings and practices motivate men to attend church regularly, while the contrary leads men away from the church, inhibiting growth, both for the individual and the church. Establishing the level of personal religious commitment is however an odious task due to its individualistic nature. Notably, measuring religious commitment is inhibited by demographic dynamics all over the world. Empirical studies have

sought to establish the concept of religious commitment and linking it to church attendance all over the world.

Pattachini and Zenou (2016) are of the opinion that religiosity is inherited from generation to generation in Christian and other religions. As such, parental religious commitment has a significant influence on the siblings and future generations. Further accenting to this notion, Petts (2019) posits that parenting styles therefore play a critical role in religious commitment and church attendance. However, parental commitment to the church is varied across demographics, and as such, this current study seeks to contextualize the Kenyan and PCEA perspectives.

The demographic factor of age is an influencing factor to church attendance among the youth. Francis (2020) study reveals that the young adolescents avoid church services because they perceived the sermons as boring. Francis et al. (2018) assert that some Christians are dissuaded out of church because of stigmatization on personal attributes like premarital sex, drugs and alcohol consumption and past crimes. They find no peace in the church community and thus tend to avoid worship services.

In relation to perceptions of the church and its significance to men, the study by Kuert (2018) shows that negative opinions have been formed on the church. Christian men find the laity and leaders as pretentious, covering up evil to please the congregation, and portending moral and ethical problems. In other instances, cases of false prophets, miracles and teachings have demotivated the committed Christians from attending church sermons. They are there just to make money from the community. Seemingly, the opinion that the church is not there to help and save people impacts negatively on church attendance. The quest of this study is to evaluate men's trust perceptions on church leadership in the context of PCEA church in Nyeri Presbytery.

Locally, Kithure (2022) evaluated the factors leading to low church attendance and absenteeism in Methodist Church, Meru County, Kenya. Employing the quantitative techniques, the study collected data from men, women and youth in Nyambene Synod. The study found out that home-based factors influenced absenteeism and low church attendance. These factors included family religious background, financial stability, parent/siblings' conflict and parenting styles. Notably, the study generally considered both genders, a conceptual divergence to the current study focusing on men. Further, home based factors are contextual, hence the reason for this study's focus on men in PCEA Nyeri Presbytery.

Kang'entu and Heiene (2017) study explored the impact of secularizing on Christians in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Among the various factors attracting people to secularism was individualistic with church members loyalty being at crossroads. Some people claimed to be Christians but highly indulged in worldly pursuits at the same time. These person's perceptions were at high risk of worldly influences that pull them away from the church. Noted was that such Christians found the church boring as it did not fit with secular pursuits of wealth and high achievement, and therefore find no use for Sunday worship service. This is a big challenge for the church today since commitment is hard to instill especially in adults. There is however need for this current study to fill in the contextual gap of Christians in PCEA Nyeri presbytery.

2.10 Viable Strategies for Attracting Men to Church Attendance

Kuert (2018) argues that the mission of the church is to lead people to the Christian way of life and in ensuring God's purpose for humanity. The strategies for motivating men to attend church must therefore reflect and be guided by the Scriptures. Some significant guide may be found in Luke 15:11-32 about the parable of the lost son. Jesus tells the story of a certain man and his two sons. The son was separated from his father but eventually returned home. Upon his return, his father welcomed him back with open arms and without condemnation. Similarly,

the church must embrace and welcome men without condemnation. Another is in Luke 15:8-10 about the parable Jesus talked about the Lost Silver Coin:

The woman had ten silver coins, loses one coin, lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches carefully until she finds it. She searched fervently because to her all of the coins were valuable. Just as the coin was lost, many people are lost or separated from God.

An intense effort must be made to find those who are lost, while ensuring those who attend the church do not go astray and wander off.

Lawton (2021) contends that there is no question that today online church has become a back door for Christians who are done with attending church. While online church is an amazing supplement for people who can't get to a service, it's still an off ramp for Christian whose commitment to faith is perhaps less than it might have been at an earlier point. Within a few years, the dust will settle and a new role for online church and online ministry will emerge. Online church has the potential to become a massive front door for the curious, the unconvinced and for those who want to know what Christianity is all about.

Awuku-Gyampoh et al. (2021) postulate that in giving evangelism priority in matters of reaching men outside the church, personal evangelism is very important. Laymen should develop relationships with men so as to bring conviction of the authority of God's word in their personal life. Men will not feel good when they are slapped on the face. They normally will not allow giving the other cheek. Their masculinity does not allow that. Personal evangelism will also cultivate a user-friendly ministry in men.

The Bible commands the church to seek all men and bring them towards God's flock. The church ministries and leaders therefore need not act like the Pharisees that sought perfection and righteousness but should assist the Lord in seeking out the lost by demonstrating a caring demeanor. Preaching should focus on all people rather than just church congregants. Rather than being critical on people, compassion, love and forbearance should be the churches core

mandate in seeking out men that are unchurched. Further, the church needs to improve the evangelistic strategies in order to win back men, more so enhance outreach initiatives. They need also to address social cultural practices that put away men out of religious gatherings.

Social inclusion in church activities is an important strategy to win the interest of men in church. Men want to belong. The church should structure ministries in such a way that they feel they belong to the group where their personal needs are met. The most important need for men as revealed by the study is desire for spiritual growth. Churches that value personal relationships will always attract people who value personal connection.

Churches need to stay focused on the mission (leading people into a growing relationship with Jesus) and be exceptionally innovative in their model. Congregational cohesiveness in the church (both men and women) may help members share their values and beliefs with a similar outlook in life of the church. Therefore, there must be a regular social contact among fellow members and by this more information is disclosed. Somehow facilitating a personal relationship is easier and more effective in person.

2.11 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides the theories that are adopted in aiding the conceptualization of the study. The theories are based on the study variables as stipulated below.

2.11.1 Classical Secularization Theory

The classical secularization theory was developed by Chaves (1994) and Stark (1999). The theory propounds that modernization trends result in a decline in community religious commitment at the personal and group level. The trend is reduction in personal piety and worship as a group in churches (Louis, 2013). Thus, in modern society, aspects of diminishing religious experience are a reality.

According to Stark (1999), modernization leads to differentiation in the social realm creating subsystems and a wider rationalization of the human life. Religion ceases to drive social existence in that the social structures -political, legal, economic and education) do not require religion. Thus, religion becomes one of the subsystems, becoming dispensable in regards to social welfare and insurance of life. Secularization therefore emerges as the social significance for Christianity.

In perspective, Stolz (2020) contends that upward mobility like family incomes, education pose a negative association to religious commitment. The elite find little inner strength in the church/religion as they pursue economic and social gains. As a result, commitment to the church and Christian values and principles wanes, and is evident in failure to attend Sunday worship services and other church programmes. Further, as churches seek to compete in the religious field, the Christians are confused by the secular appeal especially in emerging churches, swaying belief from tradition to more modern teachings that are more appealing. On the other hand, technological development has enabled Christians to avoid worship service in the church but attend through televangelism and other modern technological means (Pickel, 2009). All these factors are post-modernization aspects diminishing commitment to the church.

The development of this theory has not been without criticism. Pickel (2017) noted an assumption of the necessary link between decreasing social significance and subjective religiosity. The theory does not convincingly associate religiosity decline to church attendance. It assumes a linear decline of religion due to modernization but does not directly explain individual decision-making, gender differences, or specific church-related factors influencing absenteeism.

The theory is however critical in the deconstruction of the independent and intervening variables. It can aid in the conceptualization of the intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as men's

religious commitment, social-economic influences and church organizational structures. It is therefore adopted in this study to help link men's personal factors, institutional as well as social-economic factors with absenteeism from PCEA church.

2.11.2 Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory postulates that people are relational and when making decisions choose the option offering the highest benefit (Blau,1964). Individuals tend to seek outcomes with best value in relationships (Molm et al., 2000). Notably, people make decisions without perfect knowledge, basing decisions on the assumptions of what they perceive, and with uncertainty. Thus, rational actors choose options showing highest return (Hechter, 1997). Since all social exchanges entail some level of uncertainty/risk, decisions are made to minimize potential risks (Molm et al., 2000).

According to the social exchange theory, the religious economic theory conceives religion to comprise perceived exchanges between persons and God. The persons exchange religious commitment in the hope of receiving religious goods that are unverified (eternal life, Heaven). According to Stark and Finke (2000), uncertainty is one problem in religion and individuals may not be sure to commit as the returns are not verifiable. Thus, commitment to church by Christians may be influenced by perceptions of cost/benefit interplay. People may prefer to commit to social activities are have tangible and verifiable results, rather than commit to religion.

This theory provides a framework for understanding individuals' behaviour within social relations, emphasizing the exchange of benefits and costs. In the context of men's absenteeism from church, social exchange theory can help explain how men weigh the perceived benefits (such as social support and spiritual growth) and costs (time constraints, competing priorities) of attending church, influencing their attendance patterns. Hence, if the church involvement

does not provide enough tangible benefits (e.g., social networking, leadership roles, or financial incentives), men may prioritize other activities. However, the theory is limited in the aspect that it does not fully capture social and cultural pressures or historical influences on men's absence from church.

2.11.3 Economic Theory of Religious Belief (Strulik & Holger, 2016)

This economic theory of religious belief was proposed by Srulik (2016) and based on choice of cognitive style and leisure time allocation. The theory proposes the possible channel for secularization, economic behaviour and religiosity. It propounds a micro nexus between income, cognitive ability and religious belief that may base evolutionary psychology. Srulik (2016) accords that through rational reflection, individuals can actively reduce the opportunity cost of secular activities. Rational reflection raises doubt about the existence of salvation, forgiveness of sins, hell, purgatory, and other elements of Christian dogma and devalues the religious experience of church attendance and other time-consuming religious activities. It allows individuals to experience the maximum pleasure from secular leisure and consumption.

Srulik (2016) recognizes that attendance to church should be equal and frequent for all social strata in communities. In this respect, the theory is cognizant that when income is close to subsistence and few devices for secular leisure have been invented, the temptation to stop intuitive-believing is relatively low and this cognitive style is widespread in society. On the other hand, when income is high and the possibilities to enjoy secular leisure are abundant, many individuals apply the reflective-analytical style (in particular, when reasoning about supernatural forces), church attendance is less frequent, and some individuals stop attending church altogether. *Ceteris paribus*, these are individuals with high cognitive ability and high-income levels.

Limitation to the theory is that it highlights only one of many potential channels of secularization and acknowledges that secularization is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon, driven by other forces as well, such as increasing individualism, rationalism, religious pluralism, liberalism, scientific developments, and structural change (Warner, 2010). According to Voas et al. (2013) the theory could be used to address the gender gap in religiosity. Such an approach would draw on the observation that women perform worse than men on cognitive reflection tests (Frederick, 2005) in order to explain why they appear to be more religious than men.

Important to this study, this theory could be embedded in the context of long-run economic development and economic growth with a causal impact of secularization and cognitive style on economic aggregates. It could also be desirable to endogenize the onset of secularization and the scientific revolution. Today, the quest for economic gains and life achievement influences the habits, perceptions and religious inclination of men. Establishing the link between church attendance/absence with economic pursuits, cognitive abilities, and cultural inclinations and revolution of men is critical in religious discourse today. Thus, the theory is adopted in this study to deconstruct the social-economic factors contributing to men's absence from church attendance at PCEA Nyeri Presbytery.

2.11.3 Dirk van Dierendonck's Servant Leadership Model

This theory postulated by van Dierendonck (2011) focuses on church leadership and the growth of the church. Accordingly, it relates to emulation of Jesus' servant leadership model that can be applied in the church. According to Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), the servant-leader model emphasizes the primacy of service to one's organization or team. Such leadership begins with a spontaneous impulse towards being of service to other people. Subsequently, the person may

make a conscious choice to fulfill this desire and take the actions necessary to become a servant-leader.

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) contend that servant-leadership must be measured by a different standard than other models of leadership. For example, questions one might ask to assess servant leadership include: Do the people being served by the servant-leader grow as persons? While being served, do they become healthier, wiser, more accessible, more autonomous, and more likely to become servant-leaders themselves? Furthermore, the effectiveness of any servant-leader must be evaluated in terms of the impact of their activities upon the least privileged members of their community and society.

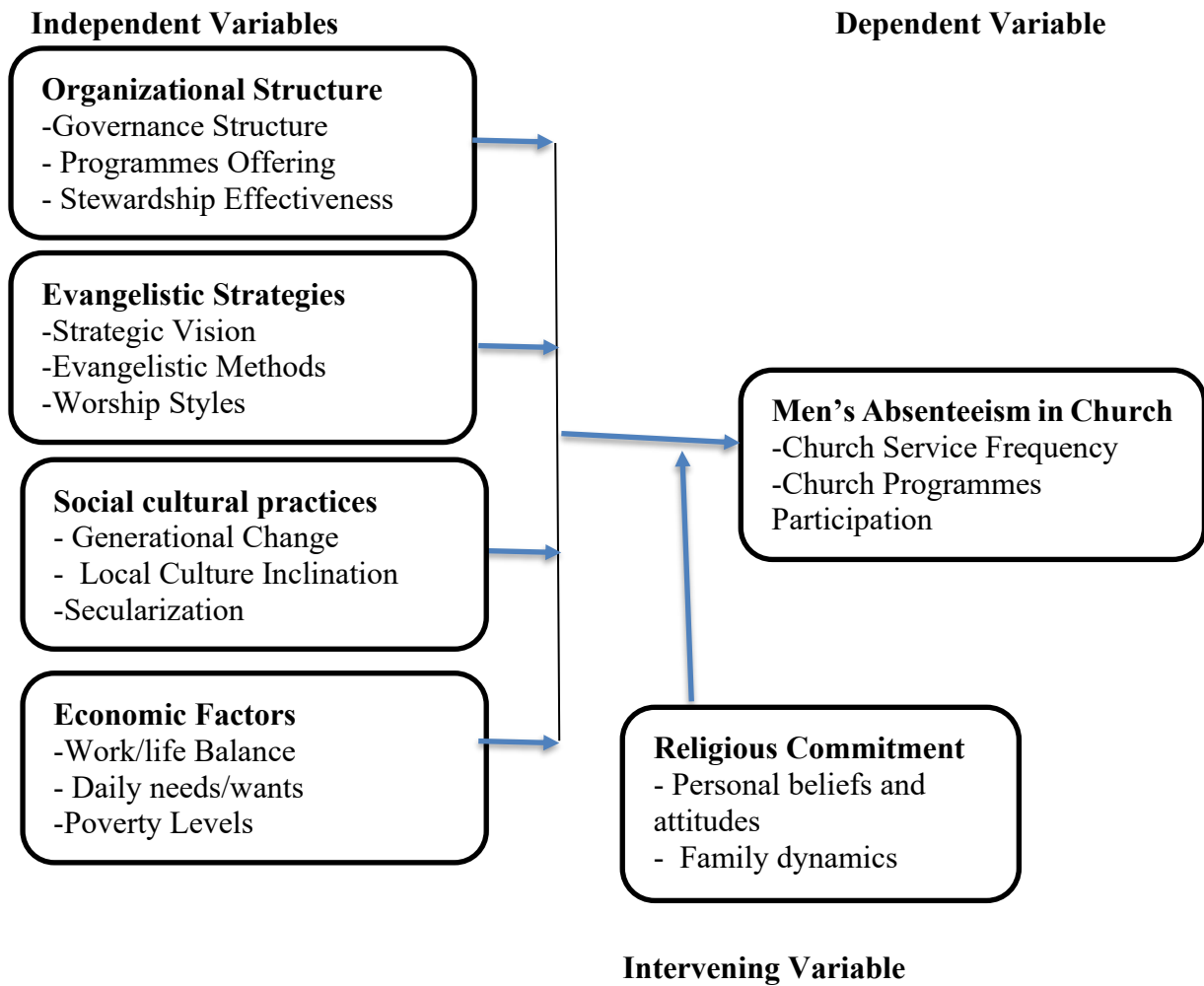
Crocker and Canevello (2008) postulate that a servant-leader would be considered a failure if the people they serve and influence do not benefit from their leadership, even if the leader technically accomplishes their chosen goals. Importantly, whether the church organizational and governance structures as well as evangelical strategies encourage church attendance or lead men away from churches is a noble quest in this current study. This theory is thus adopted in this current to enable conceptualize the church governance and leadership, and evangelistic strategies for steward leaders that enhance the inclusion and promotion of men's attendance in church. It can be adopted to aid in conceptualization of church intrinsic factors determining men's absence from church membership and attendance based on structures and pastoral initiatives within the church.

2.12 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework links the relationship between the study variables. In this current study, the dependent variable is absenteeism of men in church, and the independent variables being church structure, evangelistic strategies, social-cultural practices and economic factors.

Figure 2.1

Conceptual Framework



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the methods utilized in conducting the study. It entails the research design, target and sample populations, data collection instruments, piloting and collection procedure. The chapter further entails the data analysis method and procedures as well as the ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

Research design has been described by Kothari (2014) as the meaningful arrangement of data collection and analysis in research. To inform the research design, pragmatism research philosophy was adopted with the mixed approach encompassing qualitative and quantitative methods in gathering primary information from the various categories of respondents, and for quality data that informs inference, conclusion and recommendations. The descriptive design was adopted.

Kumar (2005) argues that the goal of descriptive research is to describe the characteristics of a selected phenomenon and involves the collection of data without manipulation of variables. The sole purpose of descriptive research is to provide an accurate and valid representation of the factors or variables that are relevant to the research question (Neuman, 2000). The descriptive design involved planning, organizing and collection of data as well as analyzing to provide answers to questions of how to gather data and tools to be used. The significance of descriptive design in this study was that it assisted in indicating trends in attitudes and behaviors of men in relation to church attendance based on respondents' views, enriching quality of data and results.

3.3 Target Population

Kombo and Tromp (2006) define a population as a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement. The target population for this study was 326 and included: 98 Women Guild and PCMF leaders respectively, 84 Youth leaders, 15 parish ministers, 30 formerly unchurched men and the PCEA moderator of the 10 parishes of Nyeri Presbytery, Nyeri County. The respondents were selected because of their participation in church activities, including regular church attendance. Inclusion criterion was on active church members and newly joined members (formerly unchurched).

Table 3.1

Target Population

Category	Target Population
Moderator	1
Church Parish Ministers	15
Women's Guild Leaders	98
PCMF Leaders	98
Youth Leaders	84
Formerly Unchurched Men	30
Total	326

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The sampling technique to be used is a probability sampling which entails the selection of people as a sample representative of a cross-section of the population of study. Stratified sampling was appropriate in the current study to ensure that the sample is representative of all categories in providing a manageable study population within the stipulated timeframe. Stratified random sampling was applied at 40 percent of each stratum to represent a sample size for each category as stipulated in table below. The sampling rate was adopted based on Kothari (2014) commendation that a 10% and above sampling rate was sufficient for social studies. The sample size consisted: 39 PCMF and women guild respectively; 34 youth; 6 church ministers; 12 formerly unchurched men and 1 Presbytery moderator, totaling 131 respondents.

Table 3.2

Sample Size

Category	Target Population	Sample Size (40%)
Moderator	1	1
Church Parish Ministers	15	6
Women’s Guild Leaders	98	39
PCMF Leaders	98	39
Youth Leaders	84	34
Formerly Unchurched Men	30	12
Total	326	131

3.5 Research Tools and Instruments

In this study, data was collected by means of questionnaires and interviews. Structured questionnaires entailing closed ended questions were utilized in collecting quantitative data. Qualitative data was collected by use of interview guides.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire has been described by Franklin (2012) as a research tool used for primary data collection in research and consists of a series of questions that prompt response from participants. In this study, structured questionnaires were utilized in eliciting quantitative data from the congregants including leaders in women guild, PCMF, the youth, as well as the new male members of the church.

The choice of questionnaires was motivated by the fact that they were more appropriate when addressing sensitive issues like reasons for failure to attend church and reduced reluctance or deviation by respondents. Further, they were easier to administer and economical in terms of time and money and easier to analyze during the study.

3.5.2 Interview Schedules

Interview schedule, according to Jackson (2015), comprises a set of questions that are to be presented by the researcher and answered verbally by participants. It is a face-to-face discussion and was preferred in gathering qualitative data. Interviews enabled the researcher

gather deeper details on the factors affecting men's abstinence from attending church. The interviews were organized for church ministers and the moderator. These respondents had a deeper understanding of the church members and could give a deeper insight into the various associated factors (including, social, economic and political among others) affecting church attendance.

3.6 Piloting of Research Instruments

A pilot test of the research instrument was conducted before actual collection of this study's data. Validity and reliability tests were conducted among 15 church members at Muranga Town PCEA church, who did not compose the sample population of the actual study. The reason of pilot testing was to establish the accuracy and appropriateness of the research design and research instrument (Zikmund et al., 2010). Newing (2011) indicates that field piloting is important and that it cannot be overemphasized since it is most likely that there are questions that respondents fail to understand or interpret.

3.6.1 Reliability Test

Reliability according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) is the consistency of a measure. Thus, in research, reliability is the ability of a research instrument to consistently measure characteristics of interest over time and the degree to which the instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. In this study, the researcher measured the reliability of the research tools to determine its consistency in testing what it is intended to measure. The test re-test technique was used to estimate the reliability of the instruments by administering the pilot test to pilot population. Coefficients of reliability were expected to be equal to or greater than 0.7 (≥ 0.7), tested through the use of cronbach alpha statistics. Results showed an aggregate score of 0.787, as indicated in table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3

Reliability Test

Variable	Alpha Score
Church Structure	.747
Evangelical Strategies	.801
Social-Cultural Practices	.788
Economic Factors	.811
Aggregate	.787

Results show that the aggregate alpha score (0.787) was sufficient for the reliability of the questionnaire, being higher than the recommended score 0.7.

3.6.2 Validity Test

Validity has been described by Kothari (2007) as the degree to which an instrument measures the parameters it is intended to examine in a given study. It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the variables of the study. To ensure validity, the researcher made sure that questions used related to and covered all the variables of the study. The research instrument was validated in terms of content and face validity. The content related technique measures the degree to which the questions items reflected the specific areas covered while face validity covered the extent to which a test is viewed as covering what it purports to measure. This was done by consulting research professionals like research supervisors.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was twofold. First, questionnaires were administered to the leaders of men, women and youth fellowships as well as the formerly unchurched members to collect primary data. The collection procedure was drop and pick-later method where the respondents were hand-delivered the questionnaires, allowed ample time to respond and thereafter collected for

analysis. Qualitative data was collected using interviews with the PCEA moderator and church ministers to get a deeper insight into the study subject.

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data obtained from interviews was analyzed through themes and patterns. The thematic patterns were established upon coding and analysis from Excel software data. The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed using open coding, a process of breaking down, examining and comparing data (Paul, 1993). Descriptive statistics- percentages, means and standard deviation, were used in analysis of quantitative data. Inferential statistics were further applied and with the aid of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) analyzed through correlation and regression methods. The multiple regression coefficients were applied to measure the relationship between the study variables. The regression model to be applied was:

$$Y = a + b_1 x_1 + b_2 x_2 + b_3 x_3 + b_4 I_1 + e$$

Where:

Y = Men's Absenteeism in Church

a = Constant

x₁ = Church Structure

x₂ = Evangelistic Strategies

x₃ = Social-cultural Practices

I₁ = Economic Factors

b₁ – b₄ = regression coefficients associated with the independent variables **x₁ – x₃**

The model informed whether the selected characteristics – church structure, evangelistic strategies, social-cultural practices and economic factors contributed to men's abstinence from church attendance. The relative strengths were also established at the significance test of 95% confidence level. Results were presented using tables, percentages, pie charts and bar graphs.

3.9 Ethical Issues

Ethics is a pillar in conducting acceptable research for ethical conduct of researchers is always under scrutiny (Kothari, 2010). To ensure research ethical standards, the following was

considered. The researcher obtained authorization for data collection by first seeking for an introductory letter from Kenya Methodist University and then applying for a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Consequently, consent was sought from all the respondents to ensure voluntary participation. The research further ensured a full disclosure of the intended study and its focus as one that is mainly academic in nature. All materials and documents used for secondary data in the study were recognized, referenced and cited. Further, all the respondents were assured of confidentiality of their identity and information provided. The participants' opinions were respected and information accurately recorded. Data was stored for the research period and privacy ensured as required under the data protection Act in Kenya.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected in the field by the researcher and research assistants. The analyzed data entails descriptive, inferential and thematic techniques and presented with discussions of findings.

4.2 Response Rate

In this study, 131 participants were sampled and during data collection, all (100%) respondents were accessed and participated.

Table 4.1

Response Rate

Category	Questionnaire	Interview	Percentage
Moderator		1	100%
Church Parish Ministers		6	100%
Women's Guild Leaders	35		89.7%
PCMF Leaders	31		79.5%
Youth Leaders	33		97.1%
Formerly Unchurched Men	10		83.3%
Total /Aggregate	109	7	91.6%

Results in table 4.1 show that out of the 124 questionnaires administered, responses were received from 109 (87.4%). Notably, all interview participants were available and the response rate was 100%. In all, the aggregate rate of response was 91.6%, showing that results were reliable as commended by Kothari (2010) that a response rate above 70% was suitable for social studies.

4.3 Respondents' Demographic Profile

The study examined the demographic profile of the respondents. Examined were the respondents' ages, academic achievement, occupation and church attendance trends.

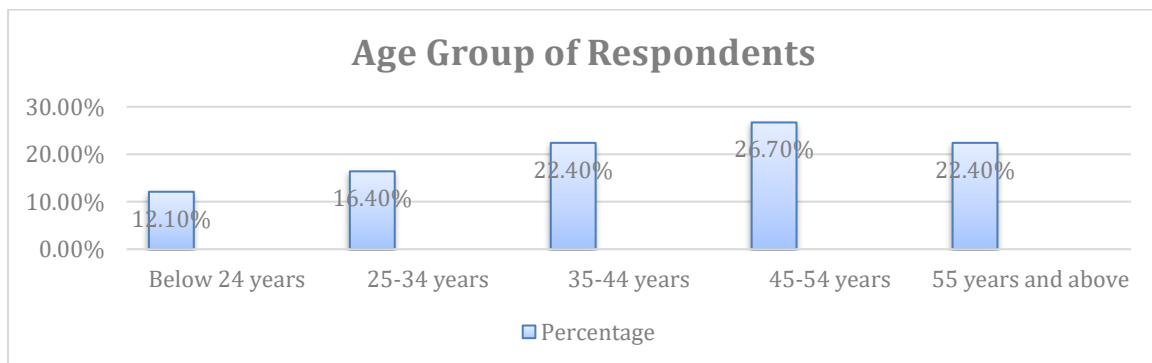
4.3.1 Age Distribution

The study examined the ages of the respondents among interview and questionnaire participants.

The age of respondents was sought and results in figure 4.1 indicate that majority of the respondents were adults of general ages above 35 years (71.5%), with 28.5% being youthful. Thus, most respondents could present objective responses regarding church attendance trends. Notably, the composition of the respondents was church elders and lay community who could describe church attendance trends and gender issues.

Figure 4.1

Age Group of Respondents

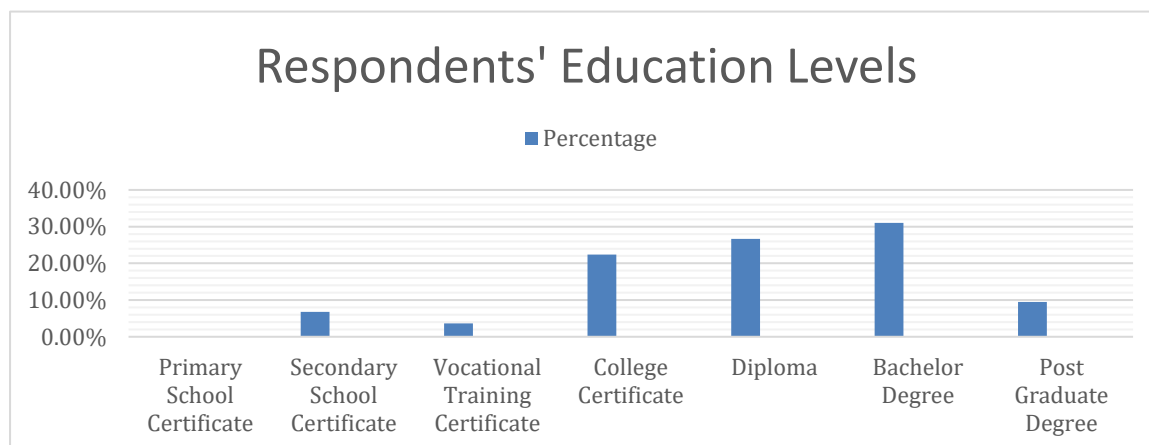


4.3.2 Highest Level of Education

The study evaluated the academic achievements of the respondents and elicited cognitive levels and understanding of study subject. Results in figure 4.2 show that majority of the respondents (89.6%) had tertiary level of education. Further, 2.6% had vocational training certificate, 6.8% secondary education and one had primary school certificate. Generally, most respondents had education levels that enabled them understand the study subject and provide credible and reliable data for the study.

Figure 4.2

Respondents' Highest Level of Education

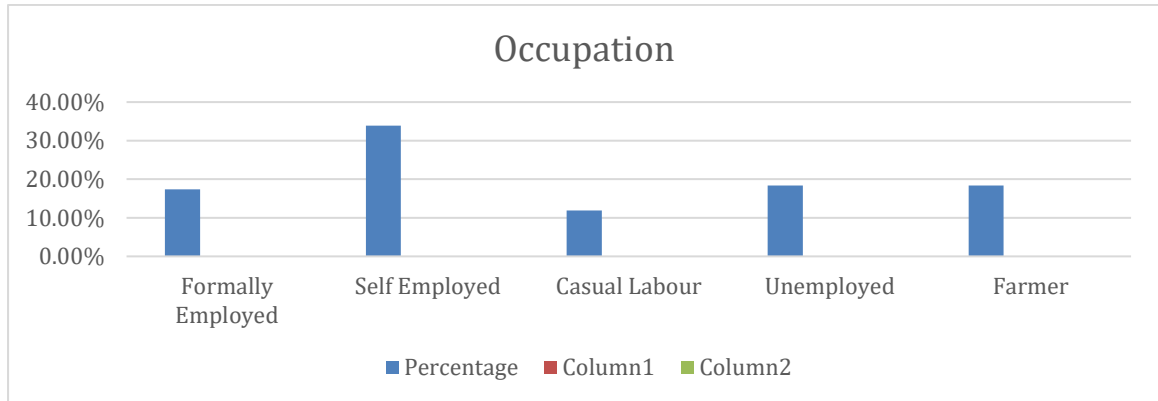


4.3.3 Respondents' Occupation

The study explored the occupations of participants who attended church in the study area to understand their social-economic dynamics. Results in figure 4.3 show that majority of the respondents were either self-employed (33.9%), or farmers (18.4%), and 18.4% unemployed. The formally employed were 17.4% and casual labourers 11.9%. Results indicate that majority of the church attendants did not earn steady and regular income-normal with formal employment, and their incomes varied with time. This variation could have an influence on their social lives and financial commitment to church. Further, their nature of occupation leads them to prevalent daily hassle that may go up to Sunday and affect regular church attendance.

Figure 4.3

Respondents' Occupation



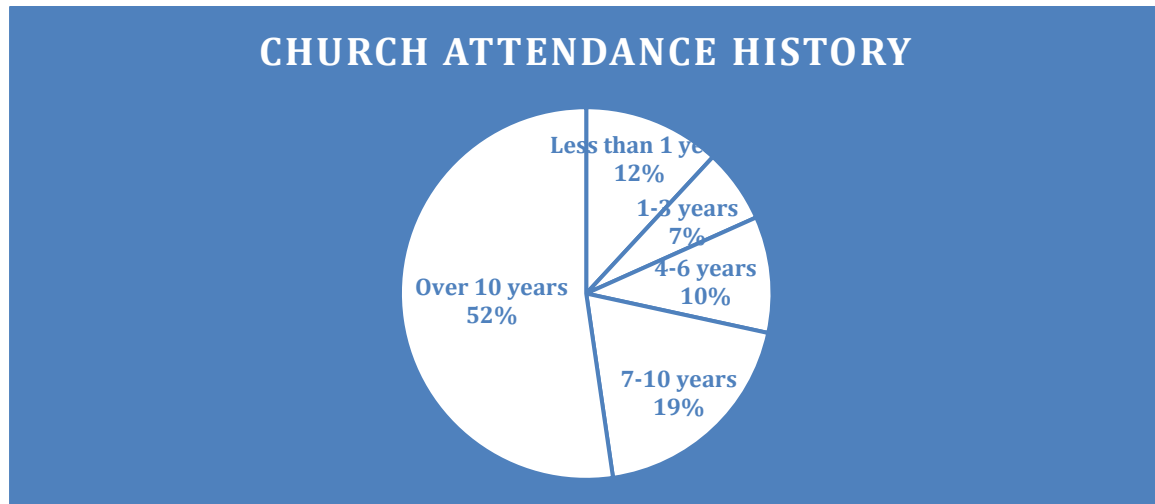
4.3.4 Church Attendance History.

The study explored the period respondents had been attending PCEA church among PCMF, women guild, youth and the formerly unchurched participants.

Results in figure 4.4 show that over 52% of the respondents had attended church for over 10 years, 19% for at least 7 years, 12% less than 1 year and 10% for at least 4 years. This showed that most of the respondents have been in the PCEA church for a long time and have observed the attendance trends over the years and could provide reliable information regarding the study subject; absenteeism of men in church.

Figure 4.4

Church Attendance History



4.3.5 Observation of decline in the attendance of men in church in the recent past.

The respondents were asked whether they had observed a decline in men's attendance in PCEA church in the recent past. All the youth, PCMF, women guild and new male members concurred on the affirmative. This showed that absenteeism of men in church is a reality today. The reasons for absenteeism were cited respectively as: Low religious perceptions (30%); Social commitments on Sunday (22%); demotivation due to conditions for church programmes engagement (18); Hassle to support family economic needs (16%); Indulgence in alcohol and substance abuse (10%); and church leadership challenges (4%).

Notably, personal commitment majorly influenced the low attendance of men in church. Social and economic engagements further constrained the attendance of men in church. The structuring of church programmes and leadership further influenced the interest of men in attending church. The results affirm empirical studies (Ferreira & Chipenyu, 2021; Syombua, et.al., 2020; Lusey, 2017; Pew Research, 2016) that have showed declining attendance of men

in church and gender gap in congregations on Sunday service. It is thus a real concern for the Christian church today.

4.3.6 Socio-demographic factors greatly influence men’s absenteeism in church

The study evaluated the social demographic factors significantly influencing the absenteeism of men in church.

Table 4.2

Socio-demographic factors greatly influence men’s absenteeism in church

Social Demographic factors	Frequency	Percentage
Age	33	28.5%
Marital status	7	6.0%
Education	18	15.5%
Occupation	58	50.0%
Total	116	100.0%

Results in table 4.2 show that the major factor contributing to men’s absenteeism in church was occupation (50.0%), followed by age (28.5%), with the least factor being marital status (6.0%). Education also has some influence on absenteeism of men in church, though not highly significant (15.5%). Thus, the nature of work and daily economic activities greatly influence the activities and interest in church attendance among men in the study area. As indicated earlier, majority of the men in the area did not have formal employment, hassling each day for their families and meeting other men to strategize on social gatherings on Sunday. Findings concur with Bawa *et al.* (2022) who linked men’s absenteeism from church to social-economic occupations, realizing that men work outside their homes (in towns), and do not regularly attend home/local churches. They also asserted that Sunday work duties hinder men from attending church service even in the urban areas.

4.4 Church Organizational Structure and Men's Absenteeism in Church

a) Descriptive statistics evaluated the relationship between church organizational structure and the absenteeism of men in church through the Likert scale: 5-Strongly Disagree, 4-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 2-Agree, 1- Strongly Agree.

Table 4.3

Church Organizational Structure and Men's Absenteeism in Church

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std Dev.
Church organizational structure encourages men's church attendance through inclusive strategies like leadership, roles, attractive activities and programs.	32 (29.3%)	60 (55.0%)	0 (0%)	25 (22.9%)	2 (1.8%)	2.74	1.062
The church is overly feminine with clergy, elders, programmes and ambience, discouraging men's attendance in church.	1 (1.0%)	20 (18.3%)	0 (0%)	76 (69.7%)	12 (11.0%)	2.67	1.204
Church flexibility has allowed the rise in many factions that confuse and discourage men from attendance.	20 (18.3%)	31 (28.4%)	0 (0%)	60 (55.0%)	8 (7.3%)	2.65	1.211
Church leadership does not provide church commitment mentorship for the boy child.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	109 (100%)	0 (0%)	2.98	0.900
Governance wrangles have led to splinter of churches and loss of men followers in the church.	3 (2.8%)	45 (41.3%)	0 (0%)	59 (54.1%)	2 (1.8%)	2.59	1.243
Aggregate						2.73	1.059
N=109							

Results in table 4.3 show that the church organizational structure did not encourage men's attendance in church, according to 84.3% of the respondents. Thus, there were poorly structured programmes with inclusive strategies like leadership, roles, attractive activities and programs. Adelaja (2008) also decried that church leadership lacked focus on inclusivity and

Christlikeness teachings. They focused on building churches rather than the souls of men). Further, Immel (2020) decried that a combination of a compelling vision and a spiritually-toned strategic plan seemed to be absent in many churches.

The study further established that the church is overly feminine with clergy, elders, programmes and ambience, discouraging men's attendance in church as concurred by 80.7% of the respondents. In concurrence, Chaves (2017) study found that the flexibility of the church governance that allows women leadership discourage men from attending church. The patriarchal and leadership character in men makes these factors a demotivation to church attendance, hence absenteeism. Immel (2020) also contends that the church structural setting does not allow men to participate in its activities, with Sunday worship services led by women and this may display a lot of emotions that may make men uncomfortable, and their ego provoked.

In regards to whether church flexibility allowed the rise in many factions that confuse and discourage men from attendance, 62% agreed. These splinter factions lead to diminishing trust and belief in the church by men. All the respondents (100%) agreed that the church leadership did not provide church commitment mentorship for the boy child. Thus, boys are not moulded to be committed Christians and hence opt out of church as they grow up. The effect of governance wrangles leading to splitter of churches and loss of men followers in the church was averagely rated, with just over fifty percent (55.9%) concurring. Thus, leadership wrangles did not form priority on church perceptions and attendance among men in the study area.

b) Qualitative analysis was conducted on interviews conducted to establish the relationship between the church organizational structure and absenteeism of men in church. Participants were requested to describe whether the name of the church/denomination affects the willingness of men to attend church. Results were 60% on the affirmative and 40% against,

meaning that the name of the church had influence on attracting men in attending church and vice versa. The study also evaluated whether the men mentorship programs in the church affected attendance levels. Results were 100% on the affirmative, meaning the organization and execution of church programmes could be a determinant to the low attendance of men in church service and programmes.

The interviews also sought to establish whether there were programmes that enhanced men's inclusivity in church activities. The results showed that membership to PCMF was the main programme with inclusivity for men, though the programme consists of only one gender. Notably, leadership duties were the highly cited (72%) as the activity with high inclusivity in church. The leadership role and PCMF membership did not generally increase the attendance of men in church, and did not attract the unchurched men to church. Interviewee (6, 24) cited; *"the requirements to become a PCMF member were stringent, requiring men to be officially married in church, and this locks out those not married in church, and hence their disinterest."*

It was agreed that the many factions in churches affected men's church attendance, and that the age of men influenced frequency of church attendance. Interviewee (3, 24) cited; *"most of the church going men were elderly, with younger men tending to exit as they grow from teenage to adulthood."*

Summarily, church organizational aspects of leadership challenges, poor mentorship and inclusive programmes determined men's church absenteeism. Results show a strong effect of poor mentorship for boys on church attendance, followed by programme offerings and high feminine leadership, programmes, physical structures and facilities. The aggregate mean (M, 2.73; SD, 1.059) shows that church organizational structure has a significant determination to absenteeism of men in church.

4.5 Evangelistic Strategies and Men's Absenteeism in Church

a) Descriptive statistics were utilized to assess the effect of evangelical strategies on absenteeism of men in church using the Likert scale: 5-Strongly Disagree, 4-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 2-Agree, 1- Strongly Agree.

Table 4.4

Evangelistic Strategies and Men's Absenteeism in Church

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std Dev.
Lack of strategic vision in evangelism constrains gospel outreach programmes	28 (25.7%)	33 (30.3%)	0 (0%)	44 (40.4%)	4 (3.6%)	2.26	1.342
Evangelistic doctrine and theology do not attract men's interest to church.	15 (13.8%)	14 (12.8%)	0 (0%)	63 (57.8%)	17 (15.6%)	2.67	1.088
Evangelistic strategies focus on physical church growth, affecting religious men's interest into the church.	3 (2.8%)	20 (18.3%)	0 (0%)	58 (53.2%)	28 (25.7%)	2.73	1.060
Rise in false prophets and messages have confused men and discouraged their church attendance.	10 (9.2%)	23 (21.1%)	0 (0%)	66 (60.5%)	10 (9.2%)	2.61	1.106
Evangelistic focus on the unchurched has waned over time	5 (4.6%)	15 (13.8%)	0 (0%)	87 (79.8%)	2 (1.8%)	2.69	1.211
Aggregate						2.59	1.114
N=109							

Results in table 4.5 show that slightly over half (56%) of the respondents did not agree that lack of strategic vision in evangelism constrains gospel outreach programmes. Thus, the programmes were fairly well focused in Christian mission and evangelism. Results to some extent concurred with findings of Conrad (2015) that lack of competency-driven and user-friendly curriculum impeded on church growth and there were still challenges experienced. Evangelistic doctrine and theology do not attract men's interest to church as agreed by 73.4% of the respondents.

Evangelistic strategies focused on physical church growth, affecting religious men's interest into the church according to 78.9% of the respondents. Thus, the fact that the churches had become materialistic, relegating spirituality has distracted men from attending church service and programmes. Rise in false prophets and messages have confused men was found by 69.7% to discouraged their church attendance. In concurrence, Kang'entu and Heiene (2017) study in Kenya showed that dichotomizing sacred and secular Christianity is a major challenge among churches. It sways away Christians with sanitized messages affiliated to naturalistic, materialistic and worldly gains that are in fact against the biblical teachings, leading men away from the truth and the church.

Evangelistic focus on the unchurched had waned over time, thus not effective in bringing men to church, according to 80.6% of the respondents. Notably, the prerogative of the church is to preach the word of God and bring men closer Him. Earlier, Jones (2015) concurred that evangelism in some churches has watered-down messages, allowing the worldviews like materialism to dictate the sermons and negatively impacting on men's regular church attendance.

b) Interviews held among the clergy and the church moderator also evaluated the determination of men's absenteeism in church by evangelical strategies. Participants were asked whether the church had a strategic vision for evangelism, and there was a 100% affirmation. However, a mixed reaction was presented with the question whether the vision contributed to alignment of evangelistic strategies to attract and retain men in church (affirmative 57% and negation 43%). One of the clergies (4, 24) cited; *"the strategic vision was not clear to many and not well communicated to the Christian community, thus cannot achieve men membership retention, recruitment and affiliation to the church"*.

The church evangelistic strategies were not cited to focus on reaching the unchurched men, with a 48% rating. Whether pastoral services were contributing to diminishing attendance of

church by men was affirmed by all. Seemingly, mission programmes and implementers were not effectively retaining and attracting men into the church.

The study evaluated the challenge with evangelistic mission by church pastors and ministers. Results showed rating respectively as; Poor connection with the congregation needs (37%); Poor delivery of church sermon (25%); Qualification for pastoral service (15%); Poor role models (12%); Poor skills in preaching (11%). The study further evaluated whether worship programmes and styles influenced men's commitment attendance in church, and results were 100% affirmative.

As to whether the evangelistic message contributed to low interest and attendance of men in church, results were also on the affirmative (100%). The challenges associated were rated: Watered-down message- focus on material wealth rather than spirituality (52%); inclusion of immoral issues for Christians like abortion, gay and lesbianism (22%); false prophesy and misleading doctrines (14%); poor sermon delivery (12%). In concurrence, Syombua (2020) study decried that today the discipleship has been disengaged by poor exegeses as well as false and disorienting messages that lead to confusion and demotivation of congregants.

In summary, descriptive and interview results show a significant influence of evangelical strategies on absenteeism of men in church. The aggregate mean (M,2.59; SD,1.114) indicates an influence of evangelical strategies on absenteeism of men in church today. Notably, ineffective delivery of sermons, the evangelical messages and focus as well as materialism in messages enhance men's disinterest in attending church service.

4.6 Social-Cultural Factors and Men’s Absenteeism in Church

a) Descriptive statistics were utilized to assess the effect of social-cultural factors on absenteeism of men in church using the Likert scale:5-Strongly Disagree, 4-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 2-Agree, 1- Strongly Agree

Table 4.5

Social-Cultural Factors and Men’s Absenteeism in Church

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std Dev.
The increase of social events on Sunday have reduced men’s availability in church service at the church	2 (1.8%)	25 (22.9%)	0 (0%)	60 (55.0%)	32 (29.3%)	2.68	1.091
Secularization in society has waned commitment to church amongst men	1 (1.0%)	20 (18.3%)	0 (0%)	76 (69.7%)	12 (11.0%)	2.70	1.044
Kenyan men are more inclined to local cultural traditions than church, diminishing the importance of church attendance.	20 (18.3%)	31 (28.4%)	0 (0%)	60 (55.0%)	8 (7.3%)	2.57	1.246
Generational change has affected perceptions of church attendance by men.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	109 (100%)	0 (0%)	2.98	0.900
Lack of parental mentorship is affecting church attendance by young men in church	3 (2.8%)	45 (41.3%)	0 (0%)	59 (54.1%)	2 (1.8%)	2.55	1.326
Aggregate						2.70	1.044
N-109							

Results in table 4.6 show that majority (84.3%) of the respondents agreed that the increase of social events on Sunday have reduced men’s availability in church service at the church. The importance of the church to the daily lives of men is relegated to social aspersions that are more attractive to men. Results affirm the assertion of Strulik (2016) and Hegy (2021) studies that the many church going persons, especially men prefer to socialize, do business to better their lives on Sunday, relegating church attendance to women and children. Results also show that 80.3% agreeing that secularization in society has waned commitment to church amongst men.

The findings affirm previous studies like Chaves (2017) and Taylor (2014) that noted that the new generations have stronger preferences towards church attendance, but technology is continually disconnecting them from the church service proceedings, preferring social media, T.V. and radio following.

Results also indicate that a total 62.3% of the respondents accented that Kenyan men are more inclined to local cultural traditions than church, diminishing the importance of church attendance. Bawa et al. (2022) and Akinyi (2018) also asserted in affirmation that cultural traditions like polygamy, rites of passage, and cultural celebrations are more embedded in their daily lives of African men and where not approved by Christian faith create a disconnect and reduce church affiliation and attendance by men. The fact that lack of parental mentorship is affecting church attendance by young men in church was agreed upon by 55.9% of the respondents. This indicated that parental mentorship has not been a significant failure leading to absenteeism of men in church. All respondents (100%) agreed that generational change has affected perceptions of church attendance by men. In concurrence is the Bullivant (2019) study which found that generational change was a factor affecting church attendance especially amongst young men in the USA. It was also noted that decline in church affiliation is not abrupt but a progressive process with each new generation.

b) Interview on social – cultural factors determination of absenteeism of men in church was conducted. Results showed total affirmation of the fact that the transformation of society affected church perceptions and attendance by men. The moderator cited the influence of modernism, new cultures made available by internet and higher migration of people to other countries and new cultures adopted by new generations, especially X, Millennials and Alpha. The societal changes affecting men’s church attendance in respective significance were: technology innovations; education; other worldviews competing with Christianity; increasing social activities after week’s work; and generational change. Seemingly, availability of mobile

phones, smart TVs, internet has availed church programmes at any place, therefore reducing interest in attending church by men, a fact also established by Chaves (2017) study.

Worldviews and socialization trends of Christians were also found to determine absenteeism of men in church. The contribution of Sunday social culture (like visting friends and family/tours/festivities) on men's abstinence from attending church was highly rated, indicating that they were a significant influence on absenteeism of men from church. Strulik (2016) study adduced that while enjoying modern day naturalistic attractions, the many church going persons, especially men prefer to socialize, do business to better their lives on Sunday, relegating church attendance to women and children. Bullivant (2019) assertions are affirmed by current results that generational change has influenced perceptions, attitudes and frequency of church attendance by men.

The study interviews also evaluated the effect of social disruptions on church attendance in recent times, and affirmation was 100%. The rating of the contribution of local culture inclination on men's abstinence from attendance to church was average. The church moderator posited that, *"with education, men of today are not bogged by traditions and are able to remain steady Christians today"*. Thus, though some cultural practices are undertaken, they do not significantly influence men's affiliation to the church, as well as attendance. However, clergy (4, 24) critically noted that, *"some cultural practices are not accepted by the church band men who believe in them will stay away from the church"*. Though previous studies by Bawa et al. (2020) and Strulik (2016) outline some cultural practices not acceptable by the church, results show that they do not determine greatly men's absenteeism from church.

Overall, the results indicate that social-cultural factors had a significant influence on absenteeism of men in church, and this is certified by the strong aggregate men (M,2.7; SD, 1.044). Critical determinants were social activities, secularization of church, changing

technologies and generations. Parental mentorship and traditional culture inclinations did not significantly determine men's absenteeism from church.

4.7 Economic Factors and Men's Absenteeism in Church

a) Descriptive statics were utilized to evaluate economic factors effect on absenteeism of men in church using the Likert scale: 5-Strongly Disagree, 4-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 2-Agree, 1-Strongly Agree

Table 4.6

Economic Factors and Men's Absenteeism in Church

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std Dev.
Work commitment for economic gains affects men's availability in church service at the church.	2 (1.8%)	25 (22.9%)	0 (0%)	60 (55.0%)	32 (29.3%)	2.79	1.011
Economic status of men determines commitment to church attendance	1 (1.0%)	20 (18.3%)	0 (0%)	76 (69.7%)	12 (11.0%)	2.68	1.210
Churches focus on economic gains drains men economically, driving them out of church and attendance of church	20 (18.3%)	31 (28.4%)	0 (0%)	60 (55.0%)	8 (7.3%)	2.58	1.301
Finance challenges have hindered church evangelistic logistics for enhancing men's church attendance	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	109 (100%)	0 (0%)	2.98	0.900
Men's preference for riches irrespective of means deludes their life mission and reduces their interest in the church	3 (2.8%)	45 (41.3%)	0 (0%)	59 (54.1%)	2 (1.8%)	2.55	1.311
Aggregate						2.72	1.031
N=109							

Results in table 4.7 show that majority (84.3%) of the respondents agreed that work commitment for economic gains affects men's availability in church. Further, 80.7% agreed that economic status of men determines commitment to church attendance. Agreed also was

that churches' focus on economic gains drains men economically, driving them out of church and attendance of church, by 62.3% of the respondents. All the respondents agreed that financial challenges have hindered church evangelistic logistics for enhancing men's church attendance. A mixed reaction (55.4% agreed and 44.6% disagreed) was obtained in regards to the notion that men's preference for riches irrespective of means deludes their life mission and reduces their interest in the church. These results indicate that economic factors significantly determined absenteeism of men in church.

b) Interviews were conducted to evaluate economic factors determination of men's absence in the church. The results show great cognition of the fact that the economic status of local communities affect men's commitment to church attendance. Poverty levels were cited as the greatest economic determinants followed by occasional endowment of finance, wealthiness and quests to earn sufficient money for family needs respectively. It was totally affirmed by interviewees that the churches economic strategies drain men and lead them away from church. Interviewee (4,24) cited; *"there are too many fundraising events in the church and we are poor and cannot afford. It is therefore best for men to avoid attending the church service."* The rating of the contribution of church economic status on men's outreach programmes was fair at 51% affirmation. However, total affirmation was that economic empowerment of men would enhance church attendance.

In summary, results indicate a significant effect of economic factors on absenteeism of men in church (M2.72; SD,1.031). The quest to seek sufficient incomes to sustain daily life, invest and support family overrides commitment to church attendance, with some men working on Sunday. Notably, church economic status hardly facilitated programmes that encourage men's commitment and attendance of church. Results concur with Kuert (2018) who notes that poverty has also had an effect on men's affiliation to the church, with men who are economically challenged tend to keep off the church, finding no inspiration through religion

for their economic woes. The quest to fulfil family economic needs at times forces the men to work on Sundays, therefore reducing attendance rates.

4.8 Religious Commitment and Church Attendance

a) Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the relationship between religious commitment and absenteeism of men in church using the Likert scale: 5-Strongly Disagree, 4-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 2-Agree, 1- Strongly Agree

Table 4.7

Religious Commitment and Church Attendance

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std Dev.
Personal belief and attitude towards church influence men’s church attendance.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	109 (100%)	0 (0%)	2.98	0.900
Committed member to fellowship programmes’ requirement influences men’s absenteeism in church.	7 (6.4%)	30 (27.5%)	0 (0%)	71 (69.7%)	21 (11.0%)	2.82	0.947
Family commitments limit frequency of church attendance.	10 (9.2%)	10 (9.2%)	0 (0%)	61 (55.9%)	28 (25.7%)	2.77	1.033
Perceived benefits of the church influence men’s commitment to church.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	109 (100%)	0 (0%)	2.98	0.900
Aggregate						2.89	0.932

N=109

Results in table 4.8 show all respondents (100%) agreeing that personal belief and attitude towards church influenced men’s church attendance. Majority (80.7% also agreed that committed member to fellowship programmes’ requirement influenced men’s absenteeism in church. In regards to whether family commitments limit frequency of church attendance, 81.6% of the respondents consented, affirming Kithure’s (2022) similar assertion. All the respondents (100%) further agreed that perceived benefits of the church influence men’s commitment to church. Seemingly, religious commitment was a critical determinant to absenteeism of men in church, as indicated by the high mean (M,2.89; SD,0.93).

b) Qualitative data results from interviews showed that the church ministers and the moderators found some men committed while a large number were not committed Christians. The interviewees adduced that majority of the men did not regularly attend church service and occasionally participated in the church fellowship activities. Further accented was that family commitments affected men’s attendance in church, more so the quest to earn sustainable income for family support. Acclaimed by all was that men’s perception of the church’s significance in life influenced church attendance. In concurrence, Francis (2020) study revealed that the young adolescents avoided church services because they perceived the sermons as boring. Francis, et.al. (2018) cites men’s stigmatization on personal attributes like premarital sex, which makes them find no peace in the church community and thus tend to avoid worship services.

Generally, descriptive data shows a strong mean with interview thematic analysis results concurring that religious commitment is a significant determinant to men’s absenteeism in church. Critical factors were; commitment on Sundays, low perceptions of church benefit to men’s lives and stringent regulations for men’s participation in church. Results support Stolz’s (2020) assertion that religious commitment is highly influential to discipleship and dedication for Sunday church worship service attendance among men.

4.9 Church Attendance at PCEA Nyeri Presbytery, Nyeri County

a) The study sought to establish the church attendance trend of men.

Table 4.8

Rating of Men’s Church Attendance

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	3	2.8%
High	17	15.6%
Average	48	44.0%
Low	25	22.9%
Very Low	16	14.7%
Total	109	100.0%

Results in table 4.9 show that the attendance of men in church rated average by 44% of the respondents and low by a total 37.6%. This showed a low attendance of men, with results supporting previous findings by Pew Research (2016) and Syombua et.al. (2020). The study also assessed the gender composition of church attendees on normal Sunday services. All respondents (100%) cited church attendees were mostly women, affirming studies by (Lusey, 2017; Ferreira & Chipenyu, 2021).

Further evaluated was the composition of men attending church to show the influence of age on absenteeism in church.

Table 4.9

Composition of Men Attending Church

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Mostly Young	0	0.0%
Mostly Mature Adults	11	10.1%
Mostly Elderly	40	36.7%
Most youth and mature adults	5	4.6%
Mostly youth and elderly	6	5.5%
Mostly Mature and Elderly	47	43.1%
Total	109	100.0%

Results in table 4.10 indicated that the major composition of men attending church were mostly elderly and mature adults according to 43.1%, and mainly elderly by 36.7%. This was indicative that elderly men were more committed to church services was true, and the contrary for the youth. Mature adults and the youth were in their prime, energetic and committed to social-economic goals attainment, generational change, factors that impede on commitment to church attendance. The factors greatly impeding on men's church attendance were cited as: social-economic commitments; message and procedure of preaching; characteristics of pastors and lay staff; church service scheduling; church leadership; financial demands by church; feminine ambience and programmes.

b) Interviews were conducted assessing church attendance trends. The moderator and church ministers rated church service attendance of men in the last three years at the local church as declining with each year passing. Notably, there were new men attending the church, but the number was low in last three years. Description of the gender attendance was skewed in favour of women. The interviewees opined that the church services were well organized to encourage the attendance of men. However, there was a general acceptance that the level of inclusion of women in church activities reduced men's attendance in church. The patriarchal nature of African men demotivates engagement of women especially in leadership and sermon delivery.

4.10 Strategies to Encourage Men to Attend Church.

All the respondents were requested to suggest the strategies that may encourage men to attend church. Descriptive data results showed that church related factors of organizational structure and evangelical programmes should be re-evaluated to determine the shortcomings that are demotivating men from attending church. Suggested by majority (79.8%) was concerted church leadership effort to employ research and development as a strategy for identifying, planning and winning the men back to church. Social economic factors and personal commitment to church were more individualistic factors needing attention by all stakeholders.

Suggested was the churches' role in empowering the communities (all gender) on the importance of trusting in God for the achievement of personal quests, as well as spiritual growth. This was through gospel outreach as well as social-welfare programmes like schools, hospitals, food banks, and social centres to cater for rehabilitation of men previously indulging in substance abuse, crime and other social evils. The church was also supposed to aid economic development projects that reduce poverty among the men, inspire hope and interest in the church. The interviewees (church ministers and moderator) suggested that the church requires to survey the social-economic needs of the community and come up with programmes that ease

daily pressures. Investment in the church should be both for the personal and spiritual benefit of members.

4.11 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics evaluated the relationship between the study variables. Multiple regression technique was applied, with relative strengths of the relationship were established at the significance test of 95% confidence level.

4.11.1 Multiple Regression Analysis

To establish the relationship between variables, multiple regression coefficients were applied.

This was conducted to examine the influence among predictor and intervening variable.

Table 4.10

Model Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Df	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig
	B	St. Error				
1				Beta		
Constant	1.511					
Church Organizational Structure	0.347	0.107		0.223	2.733	0.033
Evangelical Strategies	0.415	0.135		0.315	3.616	0.016
Social Cultural Practices	0.483	0.231		0.201	2.220	0.021
Economic Factors	0.491	0.225		0.211	2.189	0.014
Religious Commitment	0.499	0.277		0.174	2.210	0.011

a. Dependent Variable: Absenteeism of men in church

According to the results in table 4.11 above, there was a significant relationship between all study variables at 95% confidence level. The strength of the determination of independent variables on dependent variables shows the intervening factor-religious commitment to be the highest (p. 0.499) followed by economic factors (p. 0.491), social-cultural practices (p. 0.483), evangelical strategies (p. 0.415) and church organizational structure (p. 0.347). Thus 49.9% change in absenteeism of men in church would be experienced upon a unit change of personal religious commitment, 49.1% by unit change in economic factors and 48.3% upon unit change

in social cultural practices. Further, 41.5% change in absenteeism of men in church would occur after unit change in evangelical strategies, and 34.7% upon a unit change in church organizational structure. The resultant regression model was therefore:

$$Y = 1.511 + .499 I_1 + .491 X_4 + .483 X_3 + .415 X_2 + .347 X_1 + 0.035$$

Overall, there was a strong positive relationship between the four independent variables. However, personal religious commitment had a higher determining effect, supporting descriptive and qualitative data findings. Thus, it was critical for the churches to initiative programmes and strategies that build the commitment of men to change through economic and social support. Further, providing quality evangelism, effective lay community and the right Biblical message was significant in bringing men back to church. Though important, church organizational structure had the lowest relative effect, and the church must re-evaluate how church programmes in fellowship, Sunday service, membership and community support programmes can be modified to suit the modern-day men's spiritual requirements, and inspiration to more frequently attend and commit to the church.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study findings, conclusion and recommendations for policy, practice and further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This study examined the determinants to men's absenteeism from church. The study evaluated the effect of church organizational structure, evangelical strategies, social-cultural practices, economic factors and the intervening factors of personal religious commitment on absenteeism of men in church. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected from PCEA members of the congregation, clergy and the moderator, with a commendable response rate of over ninety percent.

Majority of the respondents had been in the PCEA church for a long time and have observed the attendance trends over the years and could provide reliable information regarding the study subject; absenteeism of men in church. The major composition of men attending church were mostly elderly and mature adults., indicating that elderly men were more committed to church services, which is contrary for the youth. Notably, the attendance of men was average according to 44% of the respondents. A decline in men's attendance in PCEA church in the recent past was observed by all the youth, PCMF, women guild and new male members. This showed that absenteeism of men in church is a reality today. Generally, results showed that personal religious commitment majorly influences the low attendance of men in church.

5.2.1 Church Organizational Structure and Men's Absenteeism in Church

The effect of church organizational structure on absenteeism of men in church was evaluated. Descriptive and inferential data results indicated that church organization structure has a positive and significant determination to absenteeism of men in church (M, 2.73; SD, 1.059);

(p.347; sig..033). Interview results supported the findings with all clergy and the moderator accenting that personal religious commitment influenced affiliation and frequency of church attendance.

In perspective, the church organizational factors leading to men's absenteeism in church were: leadership challenges, poor mentorship and inclusive programmes, financial demands for structural developments, poor mentorship for boys on church attendance. Also significant were the programme offerings which did not inspire men and the high feminine features in leadership, programmes and physical structures and facilities (ambience) that disturbing the male ego of the African man, leading them away from church.

5.2.2 Evangelistic Strategies and Absenteeism of Men in Church.

The study examined how evangelical strategies determined the absenteeism of men in church. Descriptive results showed that majority of church members participating in the study citing those evangelistic strategies focused on physical church growth, affecting religious men's interest into the church. Also significantly agreed upon by the majority was that evangelistic doctrine and theology did not attract men's interest to church. The factors that rated to fairly determine men's absenteeism in church was the rise of false prophets and lack of strategic vision by evangelistic strategies. The aggregate mean $M, 2.59$; $SD, 1.114$ indicates a strong positive relationship between evangelistic strategies and absenteeism of men in church, and is supported by inferential results (p.415; sig..014).

The interview results affirmed descriptive data and inferential results with respondents affirming that pastoral services were contributing to diminishing attendance of church by men. Worship programmes and styles, poor connection with the congregation needs, poor delivery of church sermon, qualification for pastoral service, and poor role modeling, and poor skills in preaching were evangelistic shortfalls. Seemingly, mission programmes and implementors

were not effectively retaining and attracting men into the church. Generally, evangelistic strategies of the church were found to have a significant effect on absenteeism of men in church.

5.2.3 Social-Cultural Practices and Absenteeism of Men in Church.

The study assessed whether social-cultural practices determined absenteeism of men in church. Descriptive results showed that there was a strong relationship between the variables ($M, 2.7$; $SD, 1.044$), affirmed by inferential statistics ($p, .483$, $sig, .021$). The social cultural aspect greatly constraining men's church attendance as cited by church members were: increase of social events on Sunday, generational change, and to some extent traditional practices which are not recognized by the church like polygamy.

An important social determinant was social change propelled by technology advancement, and thus the availability of mobile phones, smart TVs, internet has availed church programmes at any place has reduced interest in attending church by men. The other critical determinants were secularization of church, changing technologies and generations. Parental mentorship and traditional culture inclinations did not significantly determine men's absenteeism from church. The church moderator and the clergy responses agreed with the descriptive data, finding socialization and generational change to be moving men away from the church, hence increasing absenteeism.

5.2.4 Economic Factors and Absenteeism of Men in Church

The study related economic factors to absenteeism of men in church. Descriptive results indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that work commitment for economic gains and the economic status of men determined commitment to church attendance. Financial challenges for the church were found by all to hinder church evangelistic logistics for enhancing men's church attendance. Men's preference for riches irrespective of means was not found to significantly influence their life mission and reduces their interest in the church.

Interviews conducted revealed that poverty levels were cited as the greatest economic determinants followed by occasional endowment of finance, wealthiness and quats to earn sufficient money for family needs respectively. It was totally affirmed by interviewees that the churches economic strategies raising funds for development drained men leading them away from church. Generally, inferential results support these findings showing a strong positive relationship between the variables (p.491, sig.014). The key determinants were economic status of the men, poverty and the economic demands by the church from men which dissuade their attendance.

5.2.5 Religious Commitment and Absenteeism of Men in Church

The study explored the determination of intervening factor -personal religious commitment on absenteeism of men in church. Religious commitment could be a factor for relegating church attendance and perceptions of church structure, evangelism, social cultural practice and economic endeavours. Descriptive results show all respondents agreeing that personal belief and attitude towards church influenced men's church attendance. Majority also agreed that committed member to fellowship programmes' requirement and family commitments affected frequency of church attendance.

Overall, a strong mean (M, 2.89; SD, 0.93) shows a strong effect of economic factors on absenteeism of men in church, with the inferential statistical results showing the highest positive relation (p.499, sig.011). Interview results confirm this data results, with respondents agreeing that family commitments affected men's attendance in church, more so the quest to earn sustainable income for family support. Acclaimed by all was that men's perception of the church's significance in life influenced church attendance. Generally, the critical religious commitment factors were: commitment on Sundays, low perceptions of church benefit to men's lives and stringent regulations for men's participation in church.

5.3 Conclusion

The study evaluated the determinants to men's absenteeism from church through the PCEA church. The study found that religious commitment, economic factors, social-cultural practices, evangelical strategies and church organizational structure determined absenteeism of men in church. This was indicated by both descriptive and inferential results. Interviews with the clergy and church moderator affirmed this positive relationship, denoting the great influence of poverty, belief in the church and its programmes as well as ineffectiveness of lay community in preaching and indulgence with the congregation. Thus, it is concluded that personal religious commitment, though an intervening factor, has the strongest and positive relationship with absenteeism of men in church. It is therefore critical that the church realigns its strategies, programmes and mission to motivate or inspire men to the church, therefore reducing absenteeism.

5.5 Recommendations

The study recommends the following based on the study findings.

Church Structure

The church should re-evaluate its organizational structure to ensure programmes offered encourage men to attend church. This entails re-evaluating leadership styles, church service programmes, training of lay community and easing engagement of men in member groups like PCMF and women guild.

Evangelistic Strategies

The church should also re-strategize on evangelical missions to ensure the messages are aligned to the Bible (not distorted to favour worldly aspirations), effectively delivered and valuable to the souls of men. The church should ensure all church services have quality sermons, avoiding worldly influences of fundraising and politics.

Social-Cultural Factors

The church should further re-align church programmes to social changes, ensuring that the church is beneficial to new generations. Adoption of technology and the remodeling of church service would encourage the youth to attend. However, it is critical to ensure that any reforms do not override the church vision of spiritual healing for all people.

Economic Factors

Economic hardships have made men less religious. Therefore, the church may look into the economic needs of the community, initiate viable projects that would increase incomes, better livelihoods and affinity to the church.

Religious Commitment

In personal religious commitment, the church should take great steps in seeking the individual men, engaging them to understand, empathizing and reasoning with them and making effective amends where the church has failed to address spiritual growth of men.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research.

- i. The study recommends further research on the hinderances to church evangelical missions in Kenya.
- ii. Further study is critical to establish why women are not able to lead their men back to church.
- iii. Another important study is to investigate the effect of rising number of churches on religious commitment of men today.
- iv. A study should be conducted to establish whether emergence of new churches has reduced membership of mainstream churches in Kenya.

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APPENDICIES
APPENDIX I
RESEARCH LETTER

Priscilla Ndumia

PCEA NYERI Presbytery
P.O. Box 2111-10100 Nyeri.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH

I am Priscillah Ndumia a student at Kenya Methodist University undertaking a Master degree in Mission Studies. I wish to conduct a data collection exercise on factors contributing to men's absenteeism in church among the 12 parishes of PCEA Nyeri Presbytery. The data collected will be for academic purposes only. All information obtained will be confidential. Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,

Priscillah Ndumia

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WOMEN GUILD, PCMF, THE YOUTH, & THE NEW MALE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

This questionnaire is aimed at establishing the factors contributing to men's absenteeism in the PCEA Church, Nyeri Presbytery, Nyeri County. Information provided will only be used for the purpose of the study.

Please Answer the questions as frankly as possibly

Please tick where (✓) appropriate

SECTION A: Demographic information

1. How old are you?

- Below 24 years
- 25 – 34 years
- 35 – 44 years
- 45 – 54 years
- 55 Years and above

2. What is your highest level of education?

- Primary
- Secondary
- Vocational certificate
- College certificate
- Diploma
- Bachelor's degree
- Postgraduate degree

3. Describe your occupation?

- Formally employed
- Self-employed
- Casual labour
- Unemployed
- Farmer
- Others (please specify)

4. How long have you been attending church?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 – 3 years
- 4 – 6 years
- 6 – 10 years
- Over 10 years

5. Have you noticed a decline in the attendance of men in your church in the recent past?

Yes () No ()

If Yes, what could be the reason?

.....
 (Please explain)

6. Which of these socio-demographic factors greatly influence men’s absenteeism in church?

- Age ()
- Marital Status ()
- Education ()
- Occupation ()

Section B: Church Organizational Structure and Men’s Absenteeism in Church

In a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

5-Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neutral, 2-Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree

SNO	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1	Church structure encourages men’s church attendance through inclusive strategies like leadership, roles, attractive activities and programs					
2	The church is overly feminine with clergy, elders, programmes and ambience, discouraging men’s attendance in church					
3	Church flexibility has allowed the rise in many factions that confuse and discourage men from attendance					
4	Church leadership does not provide church commitment mentorship for the boy child					
5	Governance wrangles have led to splinter of churches and loss of men followers in the church					

SECTION C: Evangelistic Strategies and Men’s Absenteeism in Church

In a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is strongly disagree and 1 is strongly agree, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

5-Strongly Disagree, 4-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 2-Agree, 1- Strongly Agree

SNO	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1	Lack of strategic vision in evangelism constrains gospel outreach programmes					
2	Evangelistic doctrine and theology do not attract men’s interest to church					
3	Evangelistic strategies focus on physical church growth, affecting religious men’s interest into the church					
4	Rise in false prophets and messages have confused men and discouraged their church attendance					
5	Evangelistic focus on the unchurched has waned over time					

SECTION D: Social-Cultural Factors and Men’s Absenteeism in Church

In a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is strongly disagree and 1 is strongly agree, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

5-Strongly Disagree, 4-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 2-Agree, 1- Strongly Agree

SNO	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1	The increase of social events on Sunday have reduced men’s availability in church service at the church					
2	Secularization in society has waned commitment to church amongst men					
3	Kenyan men are more inclined to local cultural traditions than church, diminishing the importance of church attendance					
4	Generational change has affected perceptions of church attendance by men					
5	Lack of parental mentorship is affecting church attendance by young men in church					

SECTION E: Economic Factors and Men’s Absenteeism in Church

In a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Likert Scale: 5-Strongly Disagree, 4-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 2-Agree, 1- Strongly Agree

SNO	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1	Work commitment for economic gains affects men's availability in church service at the church					
2	Economic status of men determines commitment to church attendance					
3	Church focus on economic gains drain men economically, driving them out of church and attendance of church					
4	Finance challenges have hindered church evangelistic logistics for enhancing men's church attendance					
5	Men's preference for riches irrespective of means deludes their life mission and reduces their interest in the church					

Section F: Religious Commitment and Church Attendance

Please indicate your response (√) to the following questions regarding personal religious commitment. Likert Scale: 5-Strongly Disagree, 4-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 2-Agree, 1- Strongly Agree

SNO	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1	Personal belief and attitude towards church influence men's church attendance					
2	Committed member to fellowship programmes influence men's absenteeism in church					
3	Family commitments limit frequency of church attendance					
4	Perceived benefits of the church influence men's commitment to church.					

Section G: Church Attendance at PCEA Nyeri Presbytery, Nyeri County

G.1 How would you rate church attendance by men in your local church?

Very High ()

High ()

Average ()

Low ()

Very Low ()

G. 2. How would you describe the gender composition of church attendees on a normal Sunday Services

Mostly men ()

Mostly Women

Mostly with gender equity

G.3 How would you describe the composition of men attending church in terms of age?

Mostly Young men

Mostly Mature Adults

Mostly Elderly

Mostly youth and mature adults

Mostly youth and elderly

Mostly mature adults and elderly

G.4 Which of these factors greatly contributes to men's failure to attend church?

Church service scheduling

Church leadership

Messages and procedures of preaching

Characteristics of pastors and lay staff

Social-economic commitments

Others, please specify.

.....

H. Strategies to Reduce Men's Absenteeism from Church

What strategies should be undertaken to reduce the absenteeism of men in church?

..... ***THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATION***.....

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHURCH MINISTERS AND THE MODERATOR

Dear respondent. The purpose of this interview is to establish the factors contributing to men's absenteeism in the PCEA Church, Nyeri Presbytery, Nyeri County. Information provided will only be used for the purpose of the study.

Please Answer the questions as frankly as possible.

SECTION A: Church Structure and Men's Absenteeism in Church

1. Does the name of the church/denomination affect the willingness of men to attend church? Yes/No. ...
2. Do the men mentorship programs in the church affect attendance levels? Yes/No
3. Are there programmes that enhance men's inclusivity in church activities?
 - a. Explain (whether in leadership, duties, Sunday Fellowship, sports, other activities-specify)
 - b. Do these programmes enhance the rate of church attendance by men? Yes No
 - c. Do they attract the unchurched men to church? Yes /No
 - d. Do you think the many factions in churches affect men's church attendance? Yes /No
 - e. Does the age of men influence frequency of church attendance? Yes /No

SECTION B: Evangelistic Strategies and Men's Absenteeism in Church

1. Does the church have a strategic vision for evangelism? Yes/No.
2. Does the vision contribute to alignment of evangelistic strategies to attract and retain men in church? Yes/No
3. Do church evangelistic strategies focus on reaching the unchurched men? Yes/No...
4. a. Do you think the pastoral services are contributing to diminishing attendance of church by men? Yes/No
 - b. What could be the challenge with evangelistic mission by church pastors and ministers? i. Qualification for pastoral service; ii. Poor delivery of church sermon iii. Poor connection with the congregation; iv. Poor skills in preaching; v. Others
 - c. Dio worship programmes and styles influence men's commitment attendance in church? Yes/No

5. Does the evangelistic message contribute to low interest and attendance of men in church?

Yes/No

6. If yes, what could be the challenge?

- i. Watered-down message- focus on material wealth rather than spirituality
- ii. Inclusion of immoral issues for Christians like abortion, gay and lesbianism
- iii. False prophesy and misleading doctrines
- iv. Others (specify)

SECTION C: Social-Cultural Factors and Men’s Absenteeism in Church

1. Has the transformation of society affected church perceptions and attendance by men?

Yes/No

2. Which of these societal changes have created a most significant effect?

- i. Generational change
- ii. Technology including social media, internet, smartphones and computers
- iii. Education levels of communities
- iv. Competition between Christian and other worldviews like atheism and naturalism
- v. Others (specify).....

3. Have social disruptions affected church attendance of late (e.g., due to Covid 19 pandemic)? Yes/No.

4. How would you rate the contribution of local culture inclination on men’s abstinence from attendance to church

5. How would you rate the contribution of Sunday social culture (like visting friends and family/tours/festivities) on men’s abstinence from attending church.

6. Which of these socio-demographic factors greatly influence men’s absenteeism in church?

Age ()

Marital Status ()

Education ()

Occupation ()

SECTION D: Economic Factors and Men’s Absenteeism in Church

1. Does the economic status of local communities affect men’s commitment to church attendance?

2. If yes, which among these factors is of great influence?

- i. Poverty levels
 - ii. Wealthiness
 - iii. Occasional endowment of finances
 - iv. Others, please specify
3. Do you think the churches economic strategies drain men and lead them away from church?
 4. How would you rate the contribution of church economic status on men's outreach programmes?
 5. In your honest opinion, do you think economic empowerment of men would enhance church attendance in your church?

Section E: Religious Commitment and Church Absenteeism

1. Can you describe men in your church as committed Christian?
2. How often do they attend Sunday worship service?
3. How often do they participate in church fellowship activities?
4. Do you think men's perception of the church's significance in life influences church attendance?
5. Do you think family commitments affect men's attendance in church?

Part F: Church Attendance at PCEA Nyeri Presbytery, Nyeri County

1. How would you rate church service attendance of men in the last three years at the local church
2. Have there been new male members of the church in the last three years? Yes No
3. How would you describe the gender attendance rate for men and women comparatively?
4. Do you think the church services are well organized to encourage the attendance of men?
5. Do you think the level of inclusion of women in church activities reduce men's attendance in church?
6. What strategies should be put in place by the church to encourage more men to attend church?

Church Structure:.....

Evangelistic Strategies:.....

Social-Cultural Practices:.....

Economic Factor.....

Others (Please Specify)

Part G. Demographic information

1. How old are you?

18 – 24 years

25 – 30 years

31 – 40 years

41 – 50 years

Over 50 years

2. What is your highest level of education?

College certificate

Diploma

Bachelor's degree

Postgraduate degree