THE ROLE OF THE SEVENT DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN PROMOTING YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN MOSANDO DISTRICT, KISII COUNTY

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Abstract: Youth bulges have become a global phenomenon and Kenya is no exception to this trend. Kenyans in the age bracket of 30 years and below constitute about 75% of the country's population, forming the largest source of human resource. However, they have remained on the periphery of the country's affairs and their status has not been accorded due recognition. They have been excluded from designing, planning and implementing programms and policies that affect them. The youth form 60% of the total labour force but many of them have not been absorbed in the job market owing to the country's high unemployment level. According to the Kenyan constitution, the youth need to be empowered with the relevant education, skills, and training that can enable them participate in all aspects of life and this is the duty of all state institutions. This will enable the youth to increase their spiritual, political, social, educational, moral, and economic participation in the community for service delivery and development. The youth provide the baseboard to the economic, political and social transformation of the country hence through their empowerment the prosperity of the nation is secured. The study established that majority of the youth had some roles to play in their churches, which included acting as spiritual leaders, and church elders. Further the results showed that they participated in singing, co-ordinating church programmes advising, preaching, working as secretaries, providing community service, ushering and teaching others. However, the youth did not participate in key positions such as working as church treasurers. The study established that misunderstandings, lack of support and rejection were the most serious challenges that the youth face in the course of discharging their church duties while opposition from other church members was the least.

Keywords: global phenomenon, church treasurers, church members, spiritual leaders.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study:

Youth bulges have become a global phenomenon and Kenya is no exception to this trend. Kenyans in the age bracket of 30 years and below constitute about 75% of the country's population, forming the largest source of human resource. However, they have remained on the periphery of the country's affairs and their status has not been accorded due recognition. They have been excluded from designing, planning and implementing programs and policies that affect them (KNYP, 2003:22).Many of the youth who are productive and energetic remain unemployed, continue to suffer from poor health, and lack sufficient support. Some of them have special needs that require attention. These include those living on the streets, those living with HIV/AIDS, the girls and those with disabilities.

The responsibility of ensuring that the aspirations and hopes of the youth are met cannot be left in the hands of a single stakeholder without including the Seventh Day Adventist Church herein referred to as SDA, because the youth bulge presents a number of challenges for both the youth and the country. Youth represent the most abundant asset Kenya has or

will have over the near future (Viney, 2007; Sazama, 2009; Domingo, 2012; and Rober, 2013). Nonetheless, there have been a considerable number of surveys conducted and reports and studies published that invariably conclude that there are persistent risks and challenges faced by Kenyan youth. The youth are, and will remain, a significant share of Kenya's population for the foreseeable future. Bill of Rights in the Constitution of Kenya insists of important duty of the state to promote and protect human rights. It states as follows: "It is a fundamental duty of the State and every State organ to observe, respect, protect, promote and fulfill the rights and fundamental freedoms in the Bill of Rights"This includes enacting, implementing and fulfilling its international obligations in respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which include the rights of the youth. The constitution thus provides all rights of the youth to be adhered to by all stakeholders, who include the state and the church. They do this by tapping their talents, empowering them and creating opportunities for them, which in the end will enhance good leadership (Domingo, 2012:56). Mutuku (2009:67) claims that:

Youth marginalization in Kenya has persisted since independence in spite of various policies formulated and even implemented to assist them. However, this seems exaggerated given the country's demographic history. What is evident, however, is that in the last several years the government has taken steps to engage the youth. Prior to that, the government's most notable youth intervention was the establishment of the National Youth Service in 1964.Among the recent efforts was the creation of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs in December 2005 to address youth concerns in the country. This had been grounded in the realization that the government may not achieve the Millennium Development Goals without adequately dealing with the many socio-economic challenges facing the Kenyan youth. (Mutuku, 2009:56)

Evidently, these programs are meant to create awareness on several issues related to the youth in society such as drug abuse, immorality, crime and poverty. Although such projects greatly assisted the youth economically, they specifically deal with the problems at hand without coming up with strategies to uproot them from the source. Consequently, they are dealing with the symptoms rather than the malady. In many occasions people sit in meetings discussing vision 2030 as if it is something to be attained instantly. It is important to understand that the attainment of this vision is a process rather than an event. Therefore, the KenyanChurch herein specifically referring to the SDA-MD need to prioritize its mission and raise strategies to attain them in due course.

This means that there is need to use SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis strategy in planning and management of human resource within organizations in order to succeed. Stakeholders of leadership and develo0pment which include the churches,NGOs,and the civil society too need to employ this strategy by using the present threats of the youth as opportunities and their weaknesses as the motivation to empower them. This will help them to develop, spiritually, economically, socially,morally, andalso to develop a sense of responsibility (Albert, 2009:67). The need to empower the youth should not be restricted to one ethnic group, religion, social or economic group but generally to all the youth and everywhere in the country(Albert, 2009:89).

Such an approach is found in the church of which the SDA is, where efforts to empower the youth include encouraging them to perform activities such as youth leadership, acting as choir masters, teachers and coordinators. Other activities include acting as treasurers, advisors, directors, church choristers, secretaries and pastors among other duties. This notwithstanding in the course of discharging their duties the youth face many challenge such as courage, opposition, discrimination, rejection, and economic constraints. Other challenges include language barrier, health problems, age differences, inexperience, lack of knowledge and skills and lack of support. To address these problems, the state and church can join hands to empower the youth through participation and training strategy.

With the support of all stake holders the youth can be helped to cultivate service delivery and sustainable leadership skills among them. According toReber (2013:45) empowering the youth gives even the most seasoned youth advocacy worker asolid dose of inspiration. It also reminds leaders of the value of youth participation in creating positive social change. However, Samir (2008:28) found out that the Kenyan youth were used by politicians to achieve their political goals, as opposed to societal or national goals. Out of ignorance, they obey the politicians who lure them into hooliganism and destroyed a lot of property without respect to other people's property. His conclusion is that majority of the youth are lured into these acts because they are idle and poor, hence easily swayed to any direction by anyone who offers them a little cash. For them abstract values like the virtue of responsibility, love and respect to their neighbor are secondary to their immediate need for survival. Hence the need for youth empowerment programs by the church to instill the virtues of responsibility, love and respect for other people and their own property.

Majority of the Kenyan youth are either school leavers or school dropouts and they are too lazy to start a self-employment project or they lack the skills necessary. This renders them idle because most of the job market in Kenya require skills and experience which they do not possess (United Nations Development Program, 2013). This means that the Kenyan government urgently needs to empower the youth and make them self-reliant, reliable, dependable and responsible.Youth empowerment is a world problem, and all nations are struggling to ensure that their youngsters are empowered, since no nation can succeedwithout youth empowerment. According to African International Ministries, as quoted by Louise (2013), it is imperative to develop and empower the youth for a successful future.(Statement of the problem comes at the right place but not here).Youth empowerment refers to increasing their spiritual, moral, social, educational and economic strength to enable them to contribute to sustainable development and good leadership. Each teen has a unique potential and every stakeholder needs to assist them in their self-actualization.The youth in Kenya have the potential to provide good and sustainable leadership if well mentored, educated and empowered.

In this regard, Kenya vision 2030, aims to achieve social and economic empowerment for Kenyan youth. This mandate was given to the ministry of youth and sports affairs, to implement the youth projects countrywide. In the year 2008/2009, 47 youth empowerment centers (YECs) were initiated and constructed (Fletcher, 2008). 157 YECs have been completed and 54 of the completed YECs have been equipped with some tables, chairs and computers. The question that lingers in our minds is, are the youth involved in such projects? And if so, what is their role? Are those projects in every county and district? It has been said over and again that the youths are the leaders of tomorrow. And yet they still lack the skills, training, proper education and empowerment for future leadership. The priorities of the government should be geared towards coordinating all the stakeholders, who include the parents, the church community and the schools to empower the youths. This study there delved in to the SDA and it role in promoting youth leadership in Musando District of Kisii County

The Statement of Problem:

Youth bulges have become a global phenomenon and Kenya is no exception to this trend. The youth in Kenya, who number about 9.1 million, account for about 32% of the population. Of these, 51.7 % are female. The youth form 60% of the total labour force but many of them have not been absorbed in the job market owing to the country's high unemployment level. Consequently, the youth bulge presents a number of challenges for both the youth and the country. Scholars (Viney, 2007; Sazama, 2009; Domingo, 2012; and Rober, 2013) in religion have asserted that the youth represent the most abundant asset Kenya has or will have over the near future. Nonetheless, there have been a considerable number of surveys conducted and reports and studies published that invariably conclude that there are persistent risks and challenges faced by Kenyan youth. Despite the significance of molding the youths for future leadership, the specific roles played by the youth in the church to empower them for leadership skills, and the challenges faced by the youth in the course of discharging their duties remains unexplored. In addition, the skills and values that can be inculcated in the youth in the process of empowering them for leadership as well as the church strategies that ensure youth participation in empowerment programs remain unclear. These are the issues that this research study sought to address.

Justification of the Study:

The study is justified based on the facts that the youth are, and will remain, a significant share of Kenya's population for the foreseeable future. Developing and implementing appropriate strategies, policies and programmes to mitigate the risks and challenges they (the youth) face must be much more of a priority for the government than it currently is. Any failure to provide appropriate opportunities for this large segment of the population could have enormous economic, political, cultural, and social consequences. Engaging the youth population fully is therefore no longer a choice but an imperative in the development process. This work advocates for, and analytically discusses, strategies for engaging the youth through empowerment, education, and employment.

More so, the youth in Kenya have the potential to provide good and sustainable leadership if well mentored, educated and empowered, as reflected in the many activities that they undertake in the church. In this regard, young people have held various positions of influence in the churches that have given them a real stake in the running of church affairs. However, as they discharge their duties they complain of facing hurdles which creates a common feeling among young people that the church can do more to promote their wellbeing and realization of their dreams in the church and in the wider society. The youth needto be empowered with the relevant skills in order to perform those activities effectively and contribute to effective future leadership of the church and the country at large.Although many people have argued that leaders are born,

not made, leaders with integrity are made by promoting a culture of justice, honesty, responsibility, hard workandrespect for all the people at all times.Therefore, it is necessary for the church to join hands with the government and empower the youth both spiritually and economically in order to cultivate a culture of service and good leadership. The future of every country depends on its youth. Failure to pay attention to issues that touch on the Kenyan youth would spell doom to their future and that of the country. The youth bulk in the Kenya, as in most other developing countries, is a factor that could make or break the country. Therefore, Kenyans need to embrace holistic development of the youth which entails empowering them in both spiritual and material terms. This would allow them to gain a healthy self-esteem, develop effective decision-making skills and creativethinking. It is against this background that this research considers it justifiable to address the issue of youth leadership empowerment in the church.

Study Area:

The study was carried out in the Seventh Day Adventist Churches in Kisii County.The County is boarded by six counties, namely, Homabay to the Northeast, Nyamira to the East, Narok to the south, Kisumu to the North, Migori to the West and Bomet to the SouthEast. The Headquarters of Kisii county is Kisii town which is located at latitude 0^0 41'S and longitude 34^0 46'E. The town is a driving distance of 309 km from Kenya's capital city Nairobi. The Kisii County covers an area of 1317 Km^2 with a total population of 1,152,282 and a population density of 874.7 people per Km^2. By the year 2009, the county had an annual growth rate of 2.75% (GoK census, 2009). The county is covered with natural resources which include arable land, wetlands, forestand soapstone. The arable land is overwhelmed with economic activities which include subsistence agriculture, vegetable farming, dairy farming, coffee and tea farming. Over 77% of the land is fertile and wet throughout the year.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey design. Orodho (2003) argues that descriptive survey design is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Cooper and Schindler (2003) contend that a descriptive design is concerned with why and how a variable produces a change in another variable and a cross section if it is done at only a point in time or over a shorter period. The process of collecting data pertaining to the variable in a population or sample is done at a time of the study. Descriptive research usually intends to cast light on the current issue or challenge by collecting data that allows the research to describe the situation at hand in a comprehensive manner (Best & Kahn, 2016). Descriptive studies are commonly utilized to examine different aspects. For instance, the approach can be used in exploring the features. While descriptive studies are closely linked to observational researches, they can use surveys or case studies.

Target Population:

The target population of the study was two thousand three hundred and seventy-nine (2379) youth of seventeen (17) established SDA churches, six (6) Sabbath schools, twenty-three (23) catholic churches and seventeen (17) ELCK churches in Mosando District. Table 31 below indicates the target population

Table 1: Target Population:

Category of sample	No. of Units	Target population
SDA(established)	17	663
Sabbath schools(SDA)	6	233
Catholic	23	879
ELCK	15	585
Total	61	2379

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The churches were stratified as follows: Churches: The churches were stratified according to their Statistical representation in Mosando District. There are seventeen (17) SDA established churches and six (6) Sabbath schools, twenty-three (23) catholic churches and fifteen (15) ELCK churches in Mosando District. According to Mugenda (2006:45), at least 10% of the target population is representative of the target population. The researcher used 10% of the target population which were stratified into three categories, of the SDA churches, catholic churches and the ELCK. This enabled the researcher to select samples that were proportional to the number of churches in each category.

Through the use of simple random sampling technique, the researcher then picked 1/3 of the churches from every category which included six (6) main churches and two (2) Sabbath schools of the SDA category, eight (8) catholic churches and five (5) ELCK churches. This represented the sampled churches selected for the study. The sample size of the study was finally 238 respondents comprising 91 from the SDA church, 91 from the Catholic Church and 56 from the ELCK as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample Size

Category of sample	Target population	No. of units in Sample	Sample size
SDA(established)	17	6	68
Sabbath schools(SDA)	6	2	23
Catholic	23	8	91
ELCK	15	5	56
Total	61	21	238

Source: Field Data (2017)

The study was guided by participation theory propounded Shier's (2006). This theory originated from the participation model, which is regarded as a breakthrough towards empowerment, participatory learning and participatory decision making to be a toolforyouth empowerment for leadership. According to Shier (2006:34) youth participation must be a matter of national interest, the end result of which should see the youth and adults sharing power and responsibility for decisions, without the former being dismissed as immature or as half adults. In the education system, various activities such as student peer counseling, role plays/imitations, student-centered learning guides and counseling programs as well as youth leadership programs are geared to youth empowerment. Hence Youth empowerment requires participation as its key pillar over and above everything else. As if to support this position, Heads of States and Governments of the African Union gave special attention to youth by focusing on its July 2011 summit on the theme, "Accelerating youth empowerment for sustainable development (Herbert, 2009:56)."

This research study adopted this theory because it inclusively seeks to bring out the best in everyone, including those who are socially and economically disadvantaged. "Leaders are great persons who could lead no matter what historical conditions are. Leaders happen to appear in the right place at the right time. The transactional view point argues that both personal traits and situational factors are important (Morris 1990)."

Thus, it is important for adults to create a situation that makes leaders among their children, to teach them in word and deed, to be grateful even in small things, guide them to see the silver lining in every situation, a stepping stone in every struggle, and hidden treasures camouflaged in what appears to be inconveniences. The Bible is clear on how parents should bring up their children in love and fear of the Lord and as they grow they will remember. "Let us teach a child in the ways he should go and he will never depart from it (Proverbs 22:6)." The shortcoming of this theory is that it mostly advocates for participative approach towards empowerment.

This theory originated in health and social policies. According to Margaret Cargo (2007:78), empowerment is a guiding principle for health promotion. The need for theory to guide practice and research in working with youth in a health promotion context led to this grounded theory study to develop a theory of youth empowerment. The study was based on 32 months of participant observation where the researcher was a co-facilitator of a community organizing effort aimed at engaging youth in identifying their quality-of-life issues, and developing and implementing their solutions. Of the 123youth entering the process 66 attended at least three meetings of which 18 demonstrated ongoing commitment to the community action process.

Partnering between adults and youth as the process of empowering youth emerged as the core category in the analysis, composed of two sub-processes, creating an empowering environment for youth and becoming empowered. An empowering environment allowed the youth to take responsibility in a welcoming social climate with enabling support from adults. The adults demonstrated their belief in the capacity of youth to act in the community, expected youth to take responsibility, cared for youth and offered encouragement through acting- with interactions with young people. Youth felt welcome and participated in the process, taking responsibility for voicing, decision making and action on their quality – life- issues.

The adults transferred the power to youth by giving up their responsibility for voicing, decision making and taking action. By taking responsibility and acting in the community with enabling support, the youth became empowered by controlling the process and incrementally developing their competence, self-esteem, confidence and understanding, which cultivated their belonging to the community. Participating in an empowering process enhanced their development and set in motion a social change process that raised the consciousness of adults and influenced organizational practice. The theory identifies youth empowerment as ecological construct and a capacity – building process. The weakness of this theory is that there is generally little theoretical understanding of youth empowerment. To address this shortcoming, the Kenyan churches can provide an ecological ground for adults to capacity-build the youth and empower them for leadership. Leadership is built through coaching, communication, setting goals, motivation and accountability of leaders among other factors. This can be embraced by the church community.

These two theories were relevant in this research study especially on engaging the youth in identifying their quality of life issues, talents and developing them. The process is creating an empowering environment for youth in order to be empowered. The theories are suitable because the adults in the church community can partner with the youth in giving them responsibility, allowing them to voice their views, decision making and taking action with enabling support, they will be empowered with competence, self-esteem, confidence and understanding which are the key skills of leadership. Adults should delegate roles with full confidence to youths and offer encouragement through interaction. Finally, they will take responsibility for all actions as adults transfer power to them.

Kenyan Policies on youth empowerment would further bolster young people's confidence as they stand alongside older folk in seeking elective posts, and so would the confidence of the electorate in voting for them meritoriously as their leaders.Referring to the youth as "the most untapped resource on planet earth -2 billion youth", the founder of Impact a Nation Vicki (2002) said that Impact a Nation is committed to finding innovation strategies to engage the world's largest untapped resource , youth , in solutions to the key challenges people are facing today. Impact a nation, whose core mission is to "develop young people's belief in themselves", works in partnership with key stakeholders, including the youth; to increase their collective ability, to realize their potential and make the world a better place.

All Impact a nation projects are co-created because in the words, "Any project that seeks to engage participants needs to be co-created involving the key stakeholders it will impact. Mulwa (2008:56) argues that experience has showed that unless people are central actors in activities and programs that affect their lives, the impact of such interventions would either be negative, irrelevant or insignificant as far as transforming people's lives is concerned. It is time that everybody participated in order to transform society. The leaders must embrace the policy of The Youth Participation Strategy (Y.P.S). This strategy is all about participation and without equality, they cannot genuinely participate, and without participation they cannot impact. According to the Lutheran World Federation view," the advice is simple; give young people a place and a voice in all aspects of life including decision-making. "It is rewarding and inspiring to be part of the decision-making process. Those involved experience joy in serving and living together.

This research holds the view that issues of empowerment should be addressed right from the earliest schooling age by all stakeholders and remains part of the learning process through participation. One can correctly bet that majority of the youth do not know their legal safeguards as guaranteed by the laws of the land among other supportive conventions, particularly the UNCRC and UNCHR. Such acknowledge would boost their sense of status and bolster their credibility as they seek to be listened to and as they engage with adults in decision making. Churches and schools should be primary channels for transmitting such awareness. The data for this study was collected in a period of three months, using structured questionnaires, which were administered to 238 respondents. 168 questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 70.1% which was considered adequate(Mugenda and Mugenda, 2013). However, only 130 questionnaires were fully completed giving a percentage of 77.4% questionnaires used for the final analysis.

Demographic Information:

Among the data collected from the field included the respondents' gender, level of education, age of respondents, church attended and years the respondents have been attending church. The data obtained on these demographics are discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

Gender of the Respondents:

The data obtained from the field indicated that 82 respondents representing 63.1% of the sample were male while 48 representing 36.9% were female. Table 3 gives a summary of the data obtained.
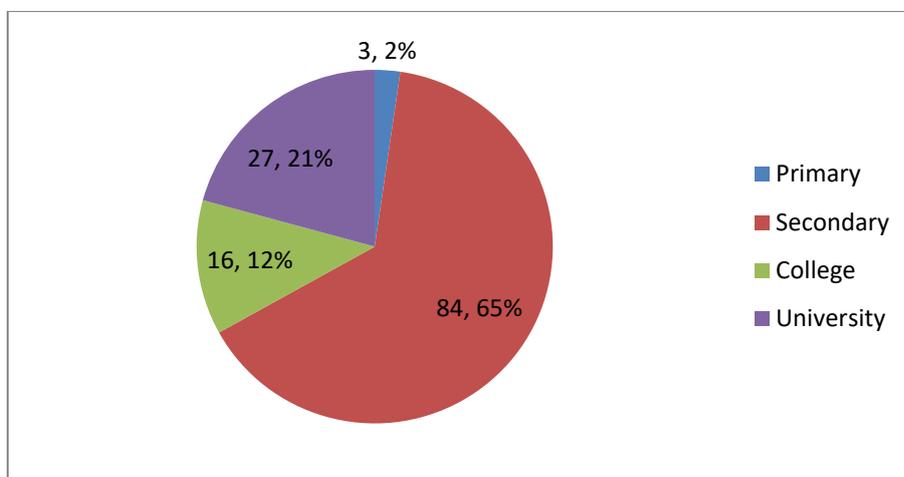
Table 3: Gender of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	82	63.1	63.1	63.1
Female	48	36.9	36.9	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data 2015

As such, majority of the responses obtained were from male population while the minority views were from female respondents.

Level of Education of the Respondents:

The level of education in this study was measured by the number of years that respondents have spent in formal schooling. The results revealed that 3 of the youth surveyed had attained primary education, 84 of them had secondary level of education, 16 held college education while 27 were degree holders as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Respondents Education Levels (Source: Research data 2015)

As such, majority of the responses obtained were from primary and secondary level population while the minority views were from university degree holders.

Age of Respondents:

The study indicated that 53.08% of the respondents were below 20 years of age, 14.62% were between 21-30 years of age, 22.3% were between 31 – 40 years while 10% were in the age group 41 – 50 years as shown in Table 4.
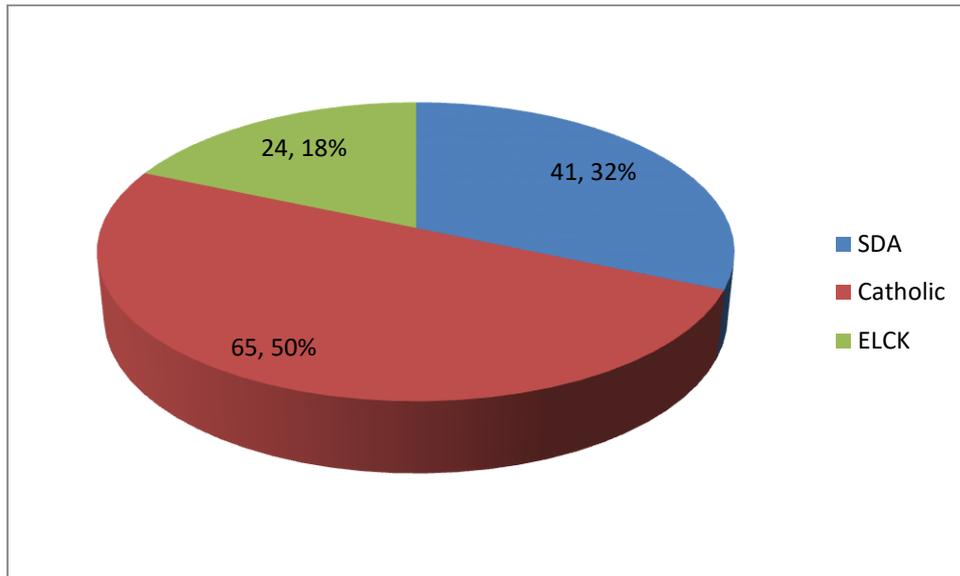
Table 4: Age of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Below 20	69	53.08
21-30	19	14.62
31-40	29	22.3
41-50	13	10
Total	130	100.0

Source: Research data 2015

Consequently, majority of the views expressed in this research study were from respondents below 20 years of age while the marginal responses were from a population aged between 41 to 50 years of age.

Church Respondents Attended:

The study established that 41 (32%) of the youth were SDAs, 65 (50%) were Catholics while 24 (18%) belonged to ELCK as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Church Respondents Attended

Consequently, in this research study, majority of the responses obtained were from Catholics while the minority were from ELCK church members.

Roles Played by the Youth in the Church to Instil Leadership Skills:

The first objective of the study sought to determine the roles played by the youth in the church as a means to instil leadership skills. To achieve this objective, respondents were asked whether they play any role in their churches. The data obtained is shown in Table 4.3. As shown in this table, 112 youths representing 86.2% of the total respondents had some role to play in their churches, whereas 18 representing 13.8% had no roles to play. Of those who had roles to play, 60 youths comprising11 from the SDA church, 31 from the Catholic Church and 18 from the ELCK were spiritual leaders. On the other hand, 39 of them consisting of 7 from the SDA church, 18 from the Catholic Church and 14 from the ELCK were spiritual leaders or catechists. 13 respondents comprising 7 from the SDA church, 4 from the Catholic Church and 2 from the

Table 5: Roles Youth Play In Church

		Role in church				Total
		Spiritual leader	Church leaders/catechist	Church elder	None	
Church	SDA	11	7	7	2	27
	Catholic	31	18	4	8	61
	ELCK	18	14	2	8	42
Total		60	39	13	18	130

Source: Research Data 2015

ELCK were church elders. The results show that majority of the youth have roles to play while only a small percentage of them had no role to play. Figure 4.3 gives a graphical summary of the data obtained from the field study.
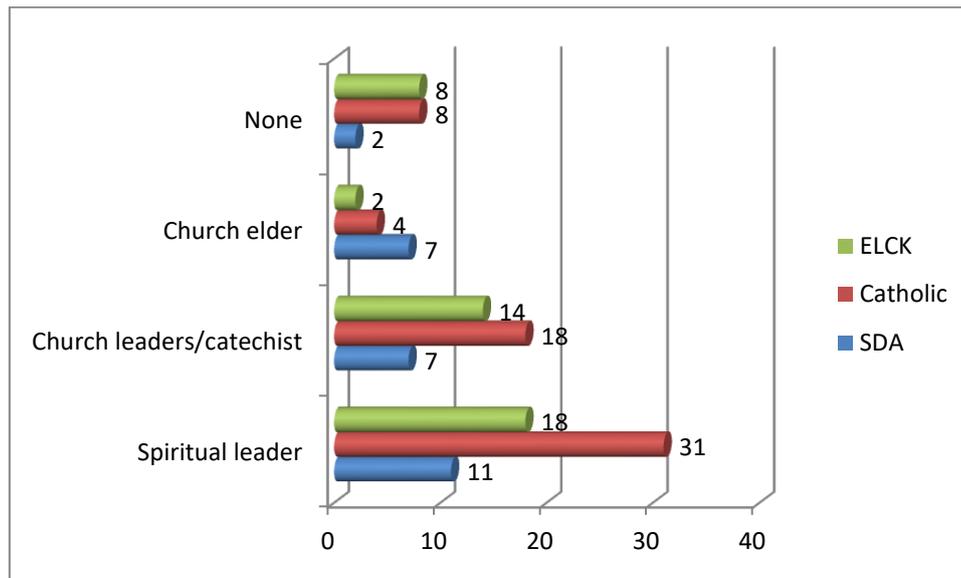
Figure 3: Roles Youth Play In Church

Further, the youth were asked to indicate, in rate of a four-point Likert scale (1=Stronglydisagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Agree (A), 4=Strongly Agree (SA)), their level of agreement with participation in the given church activities. Their responses obtained and the corresponding analyses are given in Table 6.

Table 6: Youths Participation in Their Churches

Roles	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	$\sum f_i$	$\sum f_i w_i$	$\dfrac{\sum f_i w_i}{\sum f_i}$
Coordinator /director	40	55	8	25	130	366	2.82
Church treasurer	19	41	19	51	130	288	2.22
Advisors	47	48	12	23	130	379	2.92
Preaching/Sermons	65	55	5	5	130	440	3.38
Prayer bands	64	58	5	3	130	443	3.41
Chorister/singing	81	40	6	3	130	459	3.53
Secretary	47	37	21	25	130	366	2.82
Community service	68	52	5	5	130	443	3.41
Funding	37	79	3	11	130	402	3.09
Hospitality/Ushering	78	37	8	7	130	446	3.43
Teaching/guiding others	70	42	18	0	130	442	3.40

Source: Research Data 2015

As this table shows, the respondents strongly agreed that they participated in singing (3.53). They also participate in co-ordinating church programmes (2.82), and play other roles such as advising (2.92), preaching (3.38), prayer bands (3.41), secretary (2.82), providing community service (3.41), funding (3.09), ushering (3.43) and teaching or guiding others (3.40). However, the respondents disagreed that they participated in key church functions such as church treasurers (2.22). The results showed that the youth mostly participated in singing and least participated in safeguarding church finances.

Challenges the Youth Face In The Course of Discharging the Church Duties:

The second objective of the study sought to determine the challenges that the youth face in the course of discharging their church roles. A four Likert scale was employed and the data obtained is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Challenges Youths Face In The Course Of Discharging Their Church Roles

	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL
Discouragement	54	52	24	0	130

Opposition	37	27	64	2	130
Misunderstandings	64	61	3	2	130
Rejection	64	41	17	8	130
Lack of knowledge skills/training	62	26	29	13	130
Lack of support/corporation	77	30	9	14	130

Source: Research Data 2015

These results showed that that 96 or 73.8% of the respondents, said that discouragement is a challenge (score 3 and 4 on the scale) as compared to 24 (representing 26.2%) who disagreed (score 1 and 2 on the scale). With regard to facing opposition from other church members, 64 youth who represent 49.2% agreed that it was a challenge (score 3 and 4 on the scale) as compared to 66 representing 50.8% who disagreed (score 1 and 2 on the scale). On their part, misunderstandings, rejection, lack of knowledge skills/training and lack of support/corporation, 125, 105, 88 and 107 youth, representing 96.2%, 80.8%, 67.7% and 82.3% respectively, agreed that these were challenges (score 3 and 4 on the scale) as compared to 5, 25, 42 and 13, representing 3.8%, 19.2%, 32.3% and 17.3%, who disagreed (score 1 and 2 on the scale). Figure 4 summarises the findings from the field study.
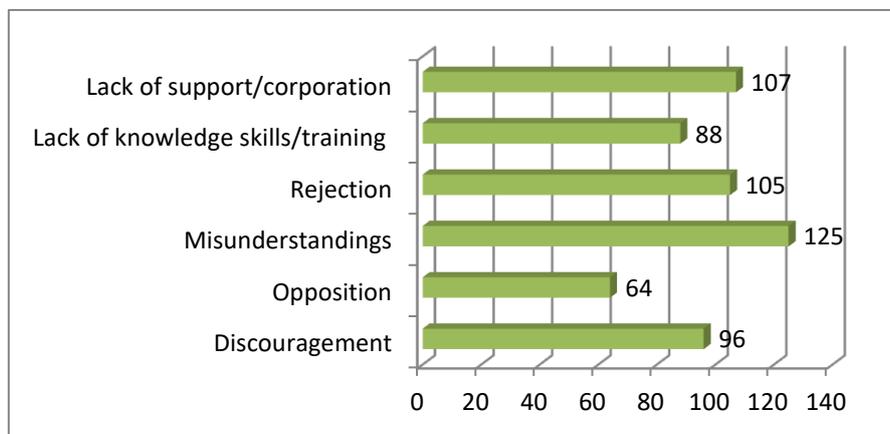

Figure 4: Youths Challenges in Duty Discharge

As shown in this figure,misunderstandings, lack of support/corporation and rejection were rated as the top three challenges that the youth face in the course of discharging their church duties, while opposition from other church members was rated least. The misunderstanding from other church members may be as a result of lifestyle change which makes older members of the church to see the approaches youths employ in discharging their roles as a deviation from the norm. This may result into older members not supporting the youths hence making them feel a rejected group in the church.

Leadership Skills and Values Developed amongst the SDA Youth:

The third objective sought to determine the leadership skills and values imparted to the youth in the process of empowering them for leadership roles in the church. To achieve the objective respondents were asked to rate on a four-pointLikert scale their level of agreement to the provided list of skills and values. The results are shown in table 8.

Table 8: Leadership Values and skills developed amongst the SDA Youth

Values and Skills	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Self – awareness	67	55	0	8	130
Encouraging them to be authentic	65	65	0	0	130
Teaching them to be open minded	55	75	0	0	130
Encouraging them to be confident	58	64	0	8	130
Instilling the value of humility	65	56	9	0	130
Being good role models to be emulated	65	51	9	0	125
Being courageous	73	49	0	8	130
Having the virtue of wisdom	68	54	0	8	130
Instill the culture of service	51	79	0	0	130
Encourage them to be of high integrity	48	74	3	5	130
Making a difference in their lives and that of others	47	61	8	14	130

Respect for the self and others	66	47	8	9	130

Source: Research Data 2015

The results indicated that the youth agreed that being open minded, encouraging them to be confident, instilling the culture of service, integrity and working towards making a difference in their lives and that of others were values and skills instilled by the churches in the leadership empowerment programmes as indicated by weighted averages of 3.42, 3.45, 3.39, 3.37 and 3.36 respectively. Figure 5 summarises these field findings.
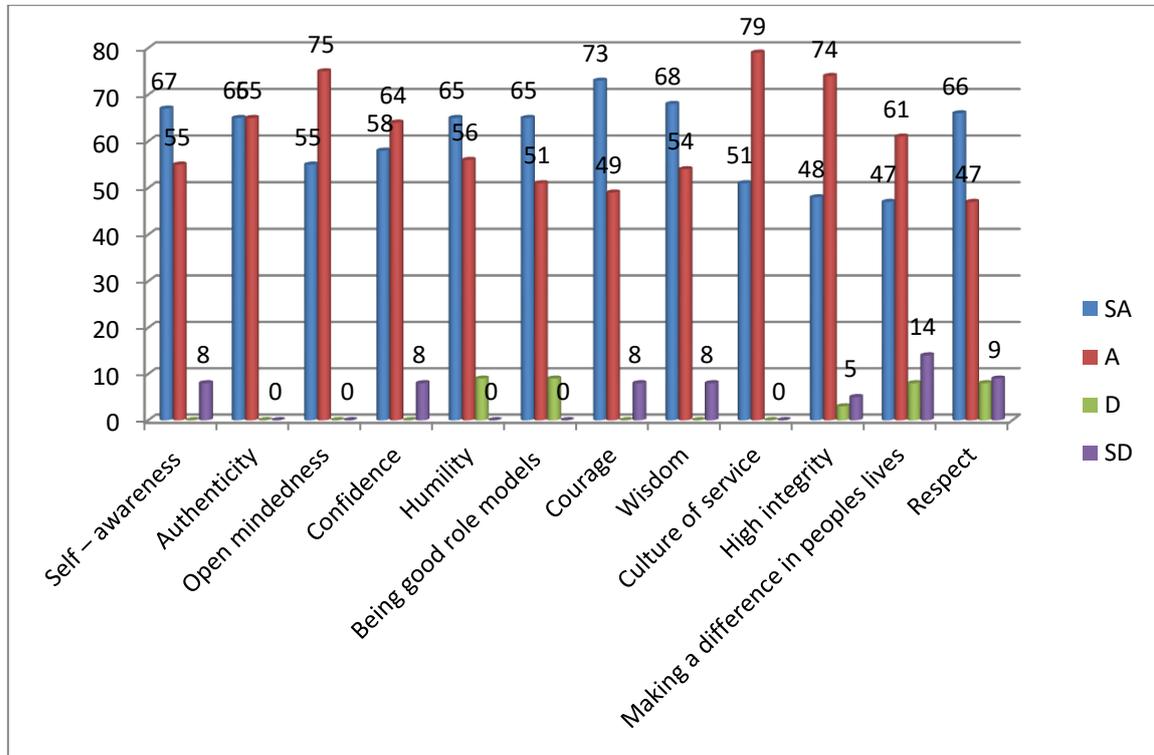

Figure 5: Leadership Values and skills developed amongst the Youth by the Churches

The implication is that open mindedness, confidence, culture of service, integrity and working towards making a difference in their lives and that of others were identified as the most important leadership values and skills among the youth.

Strategies to Ensure Youth Participation in Empowerment Programs:

The study further sought to determine how the church ensures that the youths actually participate in their various programs. The responses obtained are as shown in Table 9, shows that the youth strongly agreed that understanding their strengths and weaknesses (3.51), training them in the relevant skills(3.71), providing them new opportunities (3.62), setting specific days for the

Table 9: Strategies to Ensure Youth Participation in Empowerment Programs

	SA	A	D	SD	$\sum f_i$	$\sum f_i w_i$	$\dfrac{\sum f_i w_i}{\sum f_i}$
Understanding their strengths and weaknesses	66	64	0	0	130	456	3.51
Identifying their potentials/ Encouraging them	41	27	62	0	130	431	3.32
Training them in the relevant skills	92	19	11	8	130	482	3.71
Providing them new opportunities	80	40	2	8	130	470	3.62
Welcoming their new ideas	50	65	7	8	130	440	3.38
Include them in decision making process	7	53	70	0	130	397	3.05
Setting specific days for the youth programs	65	55	0	10	130	455	3.50
Fostering strong youth organization	72	53	0	5	130	462	3.55

Initiate youth projects	67	63	0	0	130	457	3.52
Lay proper structures to provide them with freedom to speak and act	81	44	5	0	130	471	3.62
Have mentor's/role good models for them to emulate	76	50	4	0	130	469	3.58
Create attitudes that promote good youth participation	76	50	0	4	130	472	3.58
Avoid open criticism of youth ideas	88	26	3	13	130	478	3.68
Teaching/coaching the youths	105	25	0	0	130	495	3.81

Source: Research Data 2015

Youth programs (3.50), fostering strong youth organizations (3.55), initiating youth projects (3.52), laying proper structures to provide them with freedom to speak and act (3.62), having mentors or good models for them to emulate (3.58), creating attitudes that promote youth participation (3.58), avoiding open criticism of youth ideas (3.68) and teaching/coaching the youth (3.81) were ways the church used to ensure proper youth participation in programs meant to empower them for leadership roles.

The youth further agreed that identifying their potentials and encouraging them, welcoming their new ideas and including them in decision making processes were used to ensure active youth participation in programs meant to empower them for leadership roles as indicated by weighted averages of 3.32, 3.38 and 3.05 respectively. These results indicate that the youth are least involved in coming up with ways to ensure their participation in church programs meant to empower them for leadership. Thus, this may result to resistance from the youth and/or non-achievement of the intended goal. Figure 6 demonstrates the percentage responses from the field study regarding the church strategies that ensure youth participation in empowerment programs.
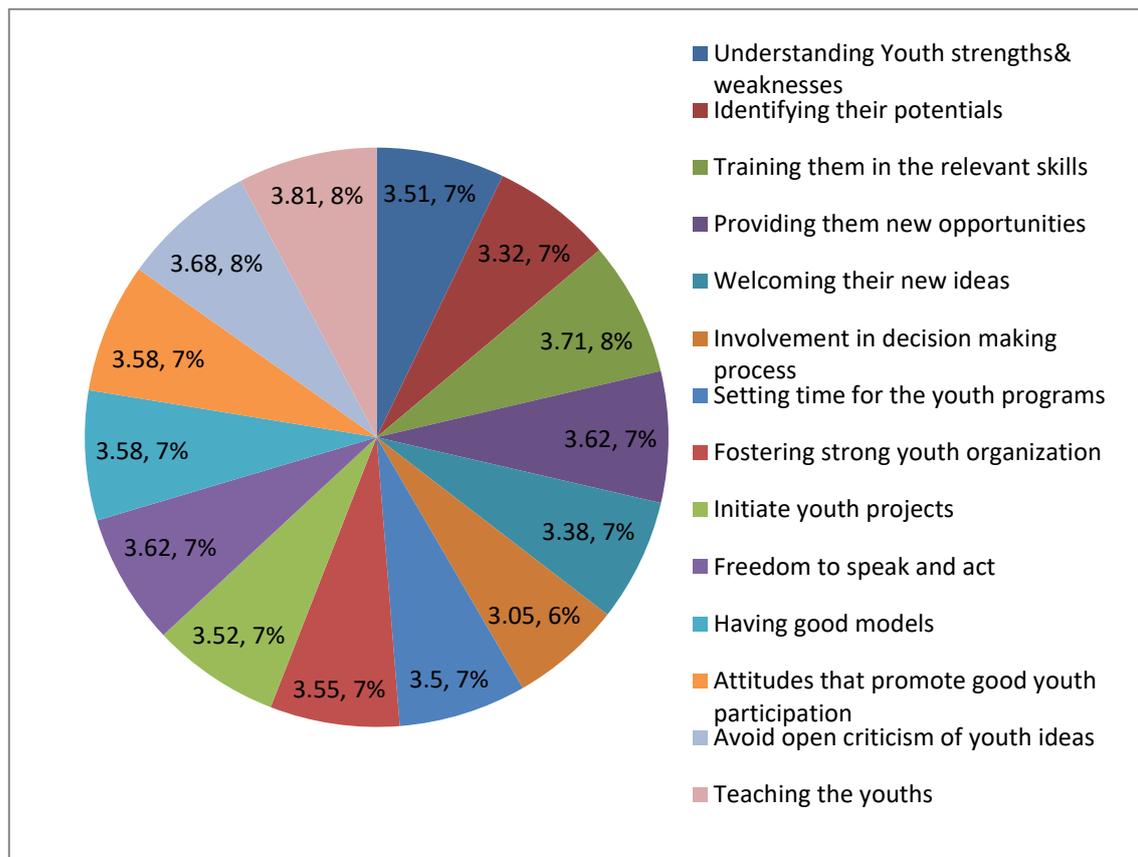

Figure 6: Strategies to Ensure Youth Participation in Empowerment Programs

Based on the results in Figure 4.6, it is clear that teaching or coaching the youth, training them in the relevant skills, and avoiding open criticism of youth ideas each with 8% rating were some of the most preferred strategies that the church can employ to encourage youth participation in empowerment programs. On the other hand, including them in decision

making processes was the least preferred strategy that the church can employ to encourage youth participation in empowerment programs.

3. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concluded that:

The study on the role of the church in promoting youth leadership in Mosando district, Kisii County was conducted successfully, achieving its four objectives. Since youth empowerment is an important aspect both to the nation and the youth themselves, the findings of this study are crucial in the understanding of the roles played by the youth in the church to empower them for leadership skills. This is significant since the churches that do not assign any roles to the youths are now made aware that if youths are given some roles to play, these roles can empower them for leadership skills in future. As such, assigning them roles molds the youths and hence for leadership continuity, the youths should be encouraged to take these preparatory roles.

Another important contribution of this study is that it helped unravel the challenges faced by the youth in the course of discharging their duties. In gaining understanding of these challenges, the church will be motivated towards coming with innovative ways of solving the identified setbacks. Consequently, the hurdles that impede youth from discharging their duties will be eliminated hence increasing their efficiency. In the same breath, this study helped reveal the skills and values instilled in the youth in the process of empowering them for leadership. In so doing, the church can know the most pertinent skills and values that the youths feel they require in order to be empowered towards assuming leadership roles.

The research findings were also crucial in the identification of the church strategies that ensure youth participation in empowerment programs. Based on the strength of a given strategy, the church is made aware of the most important strategies that the youths regard as momentous in encouraging them to take part in the various programs put in place by the church to sanction them in terms of leadership. The least preferred strategy can then be safely removed from the church program to prevent time and other resources wastage in unfruitful endeavours.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based o the conclusions, the study recommends that:

The youth play in the church that empower them in future leadership positions, established the challenges faced by the youth in the course of discharging their duties, determined the skills and values instilled in the youth in the process of empowering them for leadership, and identified various church strategies that ensure youth participation in empowerment programs. These findings are very important in the understanding of youth empowerment and leadership in the church. As such, these outcomes are recommended for implementations not only in churches within Mosando district in Kisii County but the entire churches within the country and beyond. This study was limited to the identification of roles, challenges, skills and values, as well as the church strategies that are directly related to youth leadership. Future research in this area lies in the establishment of the nature and strength of the relationships between these roles, challenges, skills, values, strategies and youth leadership.

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