

**INFLUENCE OF SPIRITUAL-ECONOMIC PROJECTS ON GROWTH OF THE
METHODIST CHURCH IN KENYA. A CASE OF KAAGA SYNOD, KENYA**

LAIRANGI JENIFFER KINYA

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of Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies of Kenya Methodist University**

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other University.

Sign..... Date.....

Jenifer Kinya Lairangi

PRS-4-0302-1/2019

We confirm that the candidate carried out the work reported in this thesis under our supervision.

Sign..... Date.....

Dr. Mary Kinoti, Ph.D.

Kenya Methodist University

Sign..... Date.....

Dr. John Njoroge, Ph.D.

Kenya Methodist University

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my husband Rev. Dr. Kenneth Gitiye and our daughter Michaela Gitiye.

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ABSTRACT

A church is not only an assembly of believers where people meet for spiritual nourishment from the Word of God but a place of spiritual empowerment in all aspects of life. It has been observed that majority of the religious faithful in Kenya live below the poverty line to an extent of inability to meet even basic needs. The study's main purpose was to assess the influence of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of the MCK. A case of Kaaga synod, Kenya. The objectives were to examine the influence of communal training in spiritual-economic projects on the growth of MCK; To assess the influence of sustainability of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of MCK; To determine the influence of financial literacy of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of MCK; and to investigate the moderating influence of involvement of communities in projects and the growth of MCK in Kenya. The two theories used were resource-based theory and Stewardship theory. The philosophy of the study was positive paradigm whereas the research design was descriptive which was applied in Kaag synod, Meru, County Kenya. The target population was 25 circuits in Kaaga synod, Meru County. The respondents were 25 superintendent ministers, 53 managers of church projects and 652 community project members that participate and are registered members in the projects. The study used purposive sampling technique to select all the 25 superintendent ministers and 53 project heads. The study selected 196 project members through simple random sampling method across diverse circuits. Interview guides and questionnaires were used to collect data. The study conducted a pre-test study in Methodist church in Nairobi synod. A pre-test study was conducted on 3 superintendent ministers, 5 projects heads and 20 community project members. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as median, frequencies and percentage. SPSS version 24 was used to analyze the data which was presented using tables. The interview responses were analyzed using content analysis method after which the explanations were issued. The findings on communal training were that, there was resistance from some of the leaders whereby they felt that the timing of the implementation of communal training operations was wrong since other things needed priority. Further on, sustainability, the schools and financial institutions which were main sources of income for the church, were negative impacted by Covid-19 hence low income. The findings on financial literacy were that, there was general lack of interest by some members whereby most of them were not ready to attend the training sessions. The study also established that in the involvement of communities in spiritual-economic project variable, members were still struggling to ensure that they followed biblical teachings to the letter. The recommendation on communal training is that the clergy should organize frequent meetings with project leaders so as to develop goals and their timelines to minimize resistance. On sustainability, the church council should develop strategies that would enable the church projects recover more quickly from the adverse effects of Covid-19 pandemic. On financial literacy, the clergy should use their influence on members to uptake the initiative of sensitizing members on the importance of the trainings. On involvement of community members variable, the clergy should advance their Biblical teaching and explanation skills so as to convince their members more on following them.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACK	Anglican church of Kenya
ADA	Afghan Development Association (ADA)
AIC	African Inland Church
AWSDC	Afghan Women Skills Development Centre
BCRPWA	Berkley Center for Religious, Peace and World Affairs
CAWC	Central Afghanistan Welfare Committee
CoAR	Coordination of Afghan Relief
CRCCUSC	Center for Religion and Civic Culture University of Southern California
QIMS	Qualitative Interpretative Meta-Synthesis
ECBCE	Empowerment of Congregation-Based Community Economic
EMC	European Methodist Council
FGMC	Full Gospel Mission Church
GRSP	Ghazni Rural Support Program
GWO	Green Way Organization
KeMU	Kenya Methodist University
MCK	Methodist Church in Kenya
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NIV	New International Version
PCEA	Presbyterian church of East Africa
RGC	Redeemed Gospel Church
RRAA	Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan
RSSAO	Reconstruction and Social Service for Afghanistan Organization

SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperatives
SDO	Sanayee Development Organization
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UMI	United Methodist Insight
UNCN	United Methodist Church in Nigeria
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This chapter gave an in-depth exploration of the background information to the study focusing on the effects of the spiritual-economic projects in church growth in Kaaga synod. The study began with the background information of various problems affecting church growth. This also included looking into how various global, regional and local churches had introduced various spiritual-economic projects and the problems these projects were facing. The statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, objectives, and research hypothesis followed shortly. The study later looked into scope of the study, significance, justification, significance, scope of the study, limitations, assumptions and definition of terms.

The significance of a holistic society that values both the sacred and the divine providence for the posterity of the society is paramount. In Genesis 1:26-31, God was so specific that the people should be fruitful, multiply, replenish and subdue the earth. This would enable them have dominion over every living thing hence lacking nothing to facilitate their unprecedented worship to God. A church is not only a gathering where people meet to worship but a safe haven for the people get nourished both spiritually and also economically (Wyk, 2017). It is a place where solutions should be derived especially basing every thought and talking on the word of God. People go to church for different reasons such as praying, singing, worshipping, listening to the word of God and also interacting with people so as to be sharpened on what to do in their lives (Kioko, 2020).

According to Genesis 12 all the way to chapter 50, Abraham is given a directive to leave his forefathers nation which was so much involved in idol worship (New International Version [NIV], 2011). When Abraham heeded to the calling and left with his family, the Lord gave him promises of how he will make his descendants many and also immense blessings such as riches accorded to him. All this was accorded to Abraham because he had faith in God which was later on rewarded (Castellanos, 2015). This Biblical example proves that having faith in God and obeying his commands such as going to church, not only does it give spiritual nourishments but also gives wealth. That is, when a Christian is connected and obedient to God's word, they are more likely to experience His blessings which could be good health, wisdom and wealth among others. (Deuteronomy 28:1).

Further on, God sees all coming troubles and has good plans to shield people so as to see through the troubles for his glory. God foresaw that Pharaoh would become so resistant such that Moses and the elders would not be able to convince him without experiencing the wrath of God. Therefore, God had planned several plagues to befall the land of Egypt and the Egyptians. That means that as Christians, our concern and prayer should not always be focused on avoiding the troubles that come our way, but let God do his will to save use from the troubles (English, 2019). God's ways are way higher than what we think or imagine as options at his disposition. It is important to note that when God wants to elevate a church member, he necessarily does not need to involve distant people but the one's close to them especially in the church. Therefore, church members have a mandate to always embrace healthy and good relationships with other people around them since they could be used to allow use share opportunities and favor with them. Embracing relationship has all to do with having vigorous missionary work (Melé & Fontrodona, 2017).

A church mission cannot succeed without an empowerment by the Holy Spirit [NIV, 2011]. It He that gives missionaries the power to have zeal in seeing to it that the gospel of Christ is spread in all nations. Additionally, the works of church of Christ which include our personal and public life are intertwined with mission work. Failure on one area could affect the other easily (Acts 1:6-8). On the one hand, when a missionary fails in integrity, it could compromise their faith in Christian life just like it happened to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).

On the other hand, when mission leaders are selected quickly without the guide of the Holy Spirit Just like Paul and Barnabas, they may lead to hinderances and sharp divisions in the missionary work in terms of decision making (Acts 14). It is not expected that the strategies that worked during Paul's time to fully work in today's world such as always being physically present for gospel to spread (Ndegwa et al., 2018). Technology has changed which do not require one to be physically present at all times in a region for the mission work to succeed. This means that for the church to fully conducts its mission activities, members have to contribute monetary and non-monetary resources towards church projects that see to it the gospel is spread to the poor and most hopeless (Purwaningrat et al., 2019).

Over time, a church has proved to be a source of hope to generations. Beginning from the time Jesus Christ was in this earth, people have been healed from their predicaments, fed, guided in their daily tasks, clothed, sheltered and the most important part is that people have been given the free gift of salvation (Melé & Fontrodona, 2017; NIV, 2011b). The mission of Jesus Christ as modeled in Luke 4:18-19 explicitly describes the agenda of Jesus Christ anchored on social and spiritual holiness (NIV, 2011b). This agenda is aimed at the integration of both spiritual and material aspects of redemption. This marries with the

teachings and ideologies advanced by John Wesley, the founder of the Wesleyan movement that was a great reformation movement in the 18th centuries that led to social and spiritual liberation in Britain (Holgerson, 2017).

The New Testament gives attention to details on morality of the church such as emulating virtues of Christ and showing love to one another. According to the New Testament, virtues of Christ such as meekness, integrity, faithfulness, and compliance to authority should be continuously emulated among Christians. Further on, the kingdom of God is taken to be a place where believers are members. Being members of the Kingdom makes believers identify themselves as disciples of Jesus Christ following his steps closely and furthering the gospel. Membership entails responsibility in facilitating and being present when gospel needs us. Christians also have the responsibility of identifying with the poor hence extend a helping hand. The poor should be loved and cared for by Christians as well as being respected.

The Bible clarifies that everyone is equal in the eyes of God despite their wealth status. When one is privileged to have plenty within their borders, they should be mindful of those who do not have by always sharing with them various resources extensively. The Bible also posits that there is a divine command for Christians to always be in God's will in all undertakings closely guided by the Biblical teachings. The Bible is considered as one of the ways through which God speaks to us hence his will is revealed when we make a habit of reading the Bible. The Bible also reveals that indeed Christians have natural integral-ethical-traits in them. Traits guide on the behavior of Christians such as being just, honest, and impartial in their daily activities. It should not be a joy of a Christian if a fellow human being is suffering because of the lie and unjustness that has originated from them.

Therefore, Christians always have a desire to follow natural instincts that bring peace and not division just as Jesus did.

Jesus integrated physical liberation and spiritual liberation, to the point that one could not differentiate physical and spiritual in the ministry of Jesus Christ. That is, faith enhances physical healing and accompanied by spiritual wholeness. Likewise, the rationality present in the incarnation and Christian redemption, economic rationality works not by abstracting from history but in and through its historical embodiment (Spaling & Vander, 2019). The approach of integration of economic and spiritual holiness ought to be promoted in the church's ministry to contemporary society, both rural and urban (Qayyum et al., 2020).

John Wesley, founder of the Wesleyan movement quest was for Christian completeness for sanctity of life and heart and for faith working in love (Holgerson, 2017). Wesley sees the end of the church when there is disengagement between religious practices of Christians from that of the world in which they live. He was enthusiastic on bringing a balance and vitality in Christians' life which was to be reflected in the church he treasured. The main virtue that both John and Charles embraced was love; love was at the center of God's heart (Holgerson, 2017). In a development process of a person, they interact with different other people at different capacities. These capacities could be family, friends, school mates, colleagues and community at large. The family forms the basic structure established by God in a person's life to provide various needs such as basic needs, mentorship and companionships. Family structure sails through from childhood, adulthood till old age of a person and since a family includes diverse number of people who have different characters and temperaments, issues are bound to happen from time to time. John Wesley emphasis to his audience was the need to relate well with the world they were living in. Christians

are able to appreciate and have hope that the doctrine of Christianity is true and will forever prevail since it's the only one that do not require any humanly efforts to inherit the kingdom of God.

Other religions have advocated that one has to do this and that to be able to enjoy in the afterlife (Vickers, 2013). However, in Christianity, believers understand that they need to be saved by grace. This is through having faith which later extends into doing good to others hence, as they do good to others, they appreciate that they are already part of the kingdom while still in this earth and in afterlife. This is what build confidence among believers that they serve a living God (Vickers, 2013).

John Wesley applied spirituality when doing ministry but within it there were aspects of material consideration whereby, he taught his friends, his listeners and the people called the Methodists by all means and at whatever cost (Holgerson, 2017). Not only do Christians in the church seek ways through which they can address the spiritual needs for their members but also seek means and ways through which they can contribute in becoming a solution to their physical and material needs and challenges (Junaedi & Waruwu, 2020).

If the church does not participate actively in the revolt against those social structures and economic organizations which convict men to poverty, humiliation and degradation, then the church becomes irrelevant to man (Akanbi & Bayers, 2017). Thus, development of people involves economic development, social development and political development. The main mandate and obligation of the church, is that of being of present help for the poor and marginalized in the society as stated in Mathew 25:45 (NIV, 2011). In short and precise words, justice and dignity for the poor remains the yardstick for any system and the church

has to act according to God's will and Jesus' example in how to bring about justice and dignity for God's creation and within human society (Mbuagbo & Akoko, 2019). Sharing in God's mission is an outworking of the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves as well as to be good stewards of whole of creation (Lausanne Movement, 2017).

Religion and economy are intertwined with each other in various ways. The church cannot serve God's liberation of the poor and the dying in the world if it is not obliged to economy, political, and cultural liberation. The mission of the church is geared towards contribution of the transformation of the existing dehumanizing economic structures by making its contribution to the humanization of economy. Therefore, for the church to have impact on the economic activities of its society, it gives priority to transformation of its own economy and participative in the empowerment of its people (English, 2019). This contribution is made successful through economic empowerment (Andersen et al., 2017).

Spiritual-economic projects are defined as the programs set to enhance the ability of people to partake in, add to and benefit from development measures in manners that perceive the spiritual-estimation of their commitments (Chowdhury et al., 2019). That is, the freedom people get to participate and chip into various monetary growth projects aspects that concerns them. Churches have a mandate to not only conduct spiritual rites but also empower its members for continued growth both in their personal and communal lives (Berchie et al., 2016). A church empowers its members through various ways such as through sound doctrine, discipleship, biblical leadership, inspiring worship, accountability, stewardship, strong fellowship and quality giving (Amanze, 2019; European Methodist Council [EMC], 2020; Gates, 2017; Karanu et al., 2020; Kariuki, 2018; Kathambi, 2018; Methodist Church in Kenya [MCK], 2020a).

Sound doctrine is a healthy approach to religion that encourages love, faith and peace among its followers (Gates, 2017). There are various studies which have been done on the various challenges empowerment of church members faces globally, regionally and locally. Various studies that have been done globally such as Basedau et al. (2018), Chowdhury et al. (2019), Mbuagbo and Akoko (2019), Spaling and Vander (2019 and Wyk (2017) have collectively investigated how faith can be incorporated in agriculture, reforming society and various sustainable project are mainstreamed in global churches. Nevertheless, in a developed nation such as America, the spiritual-economic project challenges include lack of training in most church projects that are initiated leading to poor management and failure of the projects; low church leadership backing; poor technical know-how on investment education; racism whereby people in church are divided based on which race they come from; lack of market availability analysis would lead to unsustainability of a church empowerment program; unrealistic church policies; wealth status inequality (Berkley Center for Religious, Peace and World Affairs [BCRPWA], 2017; Center for Religion and Civic Culture University of Southern California [CRCCUSC], 2017; EMC, 2020; Norwegian Church Aid [NCA], 2016; Tower, 2016; United Methodist Church in Nigeria [UNMCN], 2018).

In Europe and Asia there has been wealth status inequality; racism of church members; tough government regulations on freedom of worship; poor financial management skills among church members; few empowerment projects; and costly empowerment projects whereby church members get charged to be allowed to attend these projects (Chowdhury et al., 2019; Melé & Fontrodona, 2017; Mele, 2017; Nababan, 2017; Pillay, 2017; Rogers, 2017; Somu & Sujatha, 2016; UNMCN, 2018).

In developing nations such as South Africa, there have been weak church policies that are vague on the repercussions of a church leader in misappropriating church resources; gender inequality; unavailability of resources by churches to come up with more diverse viable empowerment projects; The disabled and vulnerable groups such as the ones living with HIV/AIDS are the most forgotten in empowerment; high cases of poverty rates (Akanbi & Bayers, 2017; Kgatele, 2020; Purwaningrat et al., 2019; Soboyejo, 2016; Wyk, 2017). In North Africa, and West African nations, they have had negative traditions that restrict women from being leaders to spearhead the projects initiatives; corruption, poor governance of the projects, insecurity due to illegal groups and inconsiderate cultures where women are supposed to stay at home to do house duties (Alawode, 2016; Amanze, 2019; Arasio et al., 2018; Mabwe et al., 2018; Mbuagbo & Akoko, 2019; Soboyejo, 2016; (UNMCN, 2018).

In East Africa, youth have been neglected in involvement of church projects or being empowered economically; strict church policies; poor management of church financial resources which lead to frequent embezzlement of funds by church leaders; poor personal funds management, discrimination against the poor whereby the poor people in the church are normally viewed as sinners or have family curses behind them (Karanu et al., 2020; Marava, 2016; Ndegwa et al., 2018; Ngatia, 2016; Omondi, 2020).

In Kenya studies such as Ayiimba et al. (2016), Ndegwa (2018) and Thiong'o (2019) have assessed the influence that the clergy and lay leaders support towards empowerment projects have on bringing people close to Christ; poverty alleviation and eradication by churches in various Kenyan regions. Nevertheless, the empowerment of church members has been heavily engulfed with ethnicity; gender imbalance; politics of the church;

different doctrines; traditional conservative nature of churches; low financial sustainability due to lack of consistent flow of resources to venture into diverse projects; lack of trained personnel to guide the projects from collapsing; and low literacy levels on members of the projects (Anglican Church of Kenya [ACK], 2016; Karanu et al., 2020; Kariuki, 2018; Kioko, 2020; Kwemboi, 2019; Lairangi, 2016; Mawudor, 2016; Modise, 2018; Ndegwa et al., 2018; Ngatia, 2016; Omondi, 2020).

These issues not only do they affect the members but also dictate how long a church would survive in a particular area. For example, Kathambi (2018) have examined the role of the Methodist church on handling challenges of specifically the elderly and orphaned children in Meru respectively which is seen as a way the church is establishing its root to excel for a prolonged period of time in the area. Therefore, the main goal of a church is to grow and win souls for Christ (Akanbi & Bayers, 2017). Growth of a church requires unlimited resources so as to engage in activities such as crusades, revivals, seminars, normal church services, and youth camps for various church groups (Alawode, 2016). These activities cannot be performed without money and other resources. Therefore, to avoid the church always seeking for giving and offerings to fund these activities, there is need to think and come up with ways through which a church should invest and reap profits which can be used for financing its activities. Different churches such as Methodist church, full gospel church, Anglican church, catholic church, redeemed gospel church, deliverance church among other churches have invested in diverse projects (ACK, 2016; CRCCUSC, 2017; MCK, 2020; Kioko, 2020).

Methodist church in Kenya is one of the earliest churches to be established in Kenya in 1862 when the missionaries came to Africa. It is one of the Kenyan churches that pay keen

attention towards preaching the Word of God, and prayer (MCK, 2020a). It is also a church that has a key strategic goal of firming up systems of the church and resources to be able to address both spiritual and social growth aspects of the church. In addition, Methodist church in Kenya is one of the richest churches in Kenya whereby it has a university with 3 satellite campus and a hospital with 4 dispensaries and 10 clinics. It sponsors one hundred and forty schools, 15 youth polytechnics, 2 Guest Houses, an insurance brokers firm, three rural training Center, a children's home and 3 high-end real estates (MCK, 2020b).

In terms of membership, Methodist has increased overtime to 450,000 members with over 1007 Churches in East Africa (MCK, 2020b). The church has an objective of promoting membership growth and sustainability in the church; stimulate and guides distinction in church headship and administration; empower believers into faith and freedom through God's Word; and encourage social holiness in the Methodism spirit. These attributes indicate that the Methodist church has both resources and quality leadership to enable spiritual-economic empowerment of her members hence enhancing church growth. In addition, the Methodist church has already established visible projects that have been sustainable.

Globally, feeding the growing society has been a challenge as everyone is shifting to urban life leaving a very low number of working populations in the rural areas. This has resulted to unbearable food costs. The society has also been rapidly growing and as a result, HIV/AIDS has been prevailing due to unsafe sexual practices. Regionally, crime has increased since there is low employment among the growing population (Alawode, 2016). There has been an increase in poverty rates due to tough economic hard times especially due to covid-19 pandemic (Omondi, 2020). Further on, high illiteracy levels have also been

an issue due to inability to access education among its population. Locally, there have been ethnic clashes due to political and social differences among Kenyan tribes and also increasing family conflicts. For example, cases of parents killing themselves, their partner and their children.

There are initiatives began by Methodist church such as establishing farms whereby the urban community is able to get food supplies at subsidized costs (Holgerson, 2017). There have been programs on community health whereby the community is trained on ways of prevention of HIV/AIDS. There is a children's home center to cater for the children left behind by parents who have already succumbed to HIV/AIDS. There have been donations comprising food, clothes, shelters, and counseling sessions to people involved in ethnic clashes such as the Tana River region. There are frequent church services, periodic crusades and revivals that let people hear the Word of God which is their source of hope and encouragement.

The above reasons show why this study was set out to examine the influence of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of the Methodist Church in Kenya. A case of Kaaga Synod, Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The physical and the spiritual aspects of an individual and the society are equally vital as emphasized by the church. Sustainability runs across diverse areas such as moral, integrity, honesty and corporate social responsibility. Methodist churches have established various sustainable spiritual-economic empowerment projects. Globally, Methodist churches in continents such as America, Europe and Asia have introduced various television ministries;

primary schools, high schools and universities; microfinances establishments i.e. saccoes; hospitals; music schools; green-houses; partnership with banks for church members loan access; humanitarian initiatives such as Norwegian aid; church planting; golf clubs; real estates; and cargo businesses (Nkansah-Obrempong, 2018; Qayyum et al., 2019; Rogers & Konieczny, 2018; United Methodist Insight [UMI], 2020).

In developing nations there have been Methodist church microloans to begin small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); sale of traditional artefacts such as beadworks; micro-credit schemes; sale of household item; livestock trading such as cattle, sheep, goat and camel in northern region churches; table banking projects such as worth banking projects; Saccos, colleges, church farms; universities; secondary schools; primary schools; hotels; bookshops; supermarkets; television and radio stations (Berchie et al., 2016; English, 2019; Gates, 2017; Marava, 2016; Mawudor, 2016; Mbuagbo & Akoko, 2019; United Nations Environment Program [UNEP] (2018).

Despite these initiatives, majority of the Methodist church members in Kenya live below the poverty line unable to meet even basic needs which negatively affects their reception towards spiritual principles (United Nations, 2020). This is because of poor monitoring and evaluations; embezzlements of funds; poor market assessment leading to losses; lack of long-term business plans due to lack of financial literacy; lack of trained personnel to run the business; lack of senior church leadership support hence lacking spiritual guidance; limited resources to expand the projects to ensure sustainability; inequalities based on gender, ethnicity and age (Ndegwa et al., 2018; UNEP, 2018).

Failure to address poverty which has been attributed to many vices among majority of the Methodist church members in Kenya were detrimental. This is because majority of those

living below poverty line may have high rates of church services absenteeism (Kwemboi, 2019). There may be experiences of early pregnancies, school dropout, engagement in excessive drinking of alcohol as a form of escapism from the meaninglessness and other forms of juvenile delinquencies (Kioko, 2020; Omondi, 2020; Owino et al., 2017). Rick (2019) asserts that Satan uses poverty as a powerful tool to keep the world in bondage; calls upon all believers to participate in eradicating poverty as a way of living according to the purposes in which they were called. Rick (2019) adds that if believers can overcome poverty, then they are in a position to address most of their pressing needs.

Past literature failed to explore further on how empowered leadership structures, allowing gifts of members to sprout, spirituality, active structures, worship inspiration, loving relations, holistic small groups and evangelism are aimed at meeting both spiritual and physical needs of the people. Additionally, there have been less studies done on underpinning the relationship that exists between resource management and conflicts in churches which has resulted to decline in growth. Further, very little has been indicated on the influence that spiritual-economic projects have in ensuring growth in church. Therefore, the low impact that spiritual-economic projects had towards the growth of the church was identified as a shortcoming. This therefore led to the research gap as the study strives to explore the influence of spiritual-economic projects from the perspective of communal training, sustainability, financial literacy and community participations on the growth of the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK), Kaaga Synod.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study's main purpose was to assess the influence of spiritual-economic projects on growth of the Methodist Church in Kenya, Kaaga Synod.

1.4 Specific Objectives

- i. Examining the influence of communal training in spiritual-economic projects on growth of MCK, Kaaga synod, Kenya.
- ii. Assessing the influence of sustainability of spiritual-economic projects on growth of MCK, Kaaga synod, Kenya.
- iii. Determining the influence of financial literacy of spiritual-economic projects on growth of MCK, Kaaga synod, Kenya.
- iv. Investigating the moderating influence of involvement of communities in spiritual-economic projects and growth of MCK, Kaaga synod, Kenya.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What is the influence of communal training in spiritual-economic programs on church growth in MCK, Kaaga synod, Kenya?
- ii. What is the influence sustainability of spiritual-economic programs on church growth in MCK, Kaaga synod, Kenya?
- iii. What is the influence of financial literacy of spiritual-economic programs on church growth in MCK, Kaaga synod, Kenya?
- iv. What is the moderating influence of involvement of communities in spiritual-economic projects and the growth in MCK, Kaaga synod, Kenya?

1.6 Justification of the Study

This study held that if spiritual-economic projects are not delivered, the church would have unmotivated, not self-confident and energetically motivated people. Additionally, when church members are empowered through sustainable spiritual-economic projects, this narrows the gap of the people who are living below poverty leading to a more economically empowered member. Spiritual-economic projects lead to energetically motivated and self-confident people, whereby they are liberated to develop the power within themselves hence unleashing the potential in them to increase their skills, self-affirmation and self-assurance. According to Castellanos (2015), this kind of empowerment can be achieved in three dimensions such that people must be given chance to have their needs addressed; they must be given a chance to contribute towards addressing their needs; and when a sustained path of having needs addressed and being able to contribute for those needs established, helping others have their need addressed is vital (Castellanos, 2015). The study therefore sought to explore ways in which people got spiritual-economically empowered to live a happier, healthier and long life. That is life in abundance and they were able to participate in societal development and church mission work.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The church members would greatly benefit from this study. More information would be provided on the various types of spiritual-economic projects that the Methodist church in Kenya specifically Kaaga synod has. Knowing this information would boost their morale to engage more deeply in church activities such as volunteering and personal finances commitment. In addition, it would bring more insights how church members can be on the

look-out for new positions which they should apply to be considered in various spiritual-economic projects within the church.

The Methodist church in Kenya would find this study useful in the sense that through this study, the Methodist church management would be equipped on various challenges various established projects have been facing. This would help them align various financial and spiritual resources with a goal to cover the challenges established.

The general public around Methodist church in Kenya, Meru region would know various projects established by the Methodist church to play part in corporate social responsibility. When this awareness is known, the community members would be more receptive in communal activities offered by the church and also take part through volunteering in various activities. In addition, this would promote peaceful co-existence between the church and the community hence less cases of church property theft and destruction. Further on, the general public such as suppliers would get an opportunity to look into various areas, they can maximize to ensure that they present their bids for their supplies to be considered in future.

The study would share the outcome with various stakeholders such as the government of Kenya who would have a platform to acknowledge the various spiritual-economic projects affiliated to the Methodist church and policies implementation programs related to the projects. Once they acknowledge a program such as Maua Methodist hospital which offers healthcare to the community, the government's key agenda of access to health care to Kenyan citizens may be achieved through partial partnership. This partnership may involve the government restructuring its policies to include supplying medical supplies whereby

they are given to the community around through subsidized prices, offer expertise help through free training on maternal healthcare; and optical healthcare camps whereby the government partially caters for the costs associated among others. In addition, the government would benefit through taxes paid through these spiritual-economic projects such as university, hospital, Sacco and the hotel affiliated by the Methodist church in Kenya.

This study would also add new knowledge in the pool of theological knowledge when the influence of spiritual-economic projects in church growth in MCK Kaaga synod, would be known. Future researchers would also get reference material for their studies as they investigate the topic further.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in 25 circuits of Kaaga synod Methodist church located in Meru County. Data was given by 25superintendent ministers, 53 chairpersons and 196 church program members. The scope only concentrated on the effects of spiritual-economic projects, extent of spiritual-economic projects, nexus of spiritual-economic projects and financial literacy has in church growth. This study did not address areas concerning cash flows of spiritual-economic projects.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The study only looked into Kaaga synod in the entire MCK hence limited by geographical attributes. To mitigate this limitation, the study also conducted pre-test in other synods such as the Nairobi synod and additionally considered Kaaga synod as part of MCK due to

the fact that even other synods followed the same standing order. Therefore, the findings derived from the synod would be used to point out issues affecting other synods as well. Additionally, the study aimed to focus only on spiritual-economic projects and not any other aspects of the church such as politics. This was due to the fact that the holistic mission of the church was largely determined by spiritual- economic projects of church members as divined by Jesus Christ through the concept of abundance life in John 10:10.

Therefore, this study was focused on church growth from whom the findings of the study would inform the effects of spiritual-economic projects of MCK Kaaga synod. Another limitation faced by the study was due to the fact that superintendent ministers were busy in their work schedule. The researcher always made efforts to attend Sunday services where superintendent ministers were preaching so as to get time to meet up with them particularly after the service where they were less busy.

1.10 Assumptions of the Study

This study was guided by the following assumptions;

1. There were spiritual- economic projects in Kaaga synod.
2. People were involved in spiritual-economic projects.
3. There was a general church growth in Kaaga synod.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

Church

This is a group of Christian believers who believe in death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They believe in the Holy trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) (Chowdhury et al., 2019).

Church Members

These are people who attend church services regularly, take part in church activities and are acknowledged through church register as members (Somu & Sujatha, 2016).

Community Project Members

A community project member is any person that participates and is a registered member in the M.C.K church projects (Chowdhury et al., 2019).

Financial Empowerment

This is the ability of people to partake in, add to and advantage from development measures in manners that perceive the estimation of their commitments, regard their pride and make it conceivable to arrange a more reasonable distribution of the advantages of economic development (Chowdhury et al., 2019).

Head of Church Project

head of church project will be any person at a church level who is responsible for running and managing church projects. This will be the chairpersons and their assistants (Nababan, 2017).

Income Generating Projects

An income generating program is any activity that is undertaken in whose outcome derives revenue on behalf of the owner of the activity (Seland, 2014).

Spiritual-economic Projects

Spiritual-economic projects are defined as the programs set to enhance the ability of people to partake in, add to and benefit from development measures in manners that perceive the spiritual-estimation of their commitments (Chowdhury et al., 2019).

Superintendent Minister

A superintendent minister will be considered any clergy in charge of a single circuit or a Methodist church branch (Nababan, 2017).

1.12 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter provided various information that provided the problem faced by churches in relation to growth as a result of establishment and survival of their projects in global, regional and local scope. The chapter also introduced the various spiritual-economic projects that the Methodist church had implemented and the issues surrounding the projects. Additionally, both the ideal and current issues in the problem statement were also described in details. Under the current situation high poverty level being the main issue, was tackled and linked to communal training, sustainability, financial literacy and involvement of communities in church projects' variables of the study. Thereafter the study indicated the justification and relevance on the need of the study, particularly to various parties such as the Methodist church clergy, leaders, members, and the general public. There was also a brief mention of the limitations and assumptions that the study operated within.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed previous studies done closely guided the key objectives of the study. Thereafter a brief summary of gaps derived from the critiqued studies was given. Theoretical framework followed based on various guiding principles of the study. Conceptual and operational frameworks which categorically showed the relationship between the variables of the study concluded the chapter.

2.2 Relationship between Spiritual Economic Projects and Church Growth

Spirituality-economic projects calls for relevance on what one is doing and should always have a right standing with God (Nababan, 2017). This means every project should strive to ensure righteousness is promoted by the church members to facilitate church growth hence the glory of God should be evident in all undertakings in the economic cycle. In other words, as the church is growing and developing various economic initiatives, these initiatives should bring church members closer to God. In performing various economics functions such as supplying of materials, selling and buying of items, it should always be anchored on doing things the right way and not any short-cuts. Therefore, the church ought to consider various ethical principles that church members should always abide by when interacting with the church projects to ensure growth (Pillay, 2017). Apart from being ethical, these principals are closely guided by the Biblical teachings (Modise, 2018). The various examples of spiritual-economics growth aspects are sound doctrine, discipleship,

biblical leadership, inspiring worship, accountability and stewardship, strong fellowship and quality giving, regular prayers, evangelism, guidance and counseling, spiritual discipline, training in adhering to government policies and regular preaching and encouragement (Melé & Fontrodona, 2017). An ideal spiritual-economic project should be ethical and be acceptable to various diversion religious beliefs (Kariuki, 2018).

In Netherlands, Vermeer and Scheepers (2021) examined the attributes affecting growth of the church particularly in the era of secularization. The study's nature was quantitative based on 6 evangelical churches in Netherlands. The main focus was based on the reasons behind people flooding the evangelical churches whereas the other conventional religious denominations such as Catholic Church had average congregations. According to Vermeer and Scheepers (2021), most evangelic churches measure of success was measured by dealing directly with frequent religious believers rather than reaching out to the potential believers, whereas the conventional denominations were more focused in impacting the lives of the community (members and non-members) through preaching and also meeting their needs. For example, instead of a conventional church continuously investing in latest sound systems, they would rather buy bags of maize to feed the community and preach the good news of Christ to them. This was why in as much evangelical churches seem to have huge following, it was just a matter of time before the numbers decline whereas the conventional churches numbers either remaining constant or steadily increasing.

Further literature done shows how various nations are ensuring that not only do the church projects benefit members materially but also sharpening their spiritual life. A study by Chowdhury et al. (2019) documented on the purpose of faith-based NGOs in social and economic development. The study used secondary data to explain the process involved by

NGO's which are religious in nature in providing spiritual help complimented through physical help. Notably, Chowdhury et al. (2019) revealed that most of the organizations were normally located in Western and African nations. Through the use of Qualitative Interpretative Meta-Synthesis (QIMS) of secondary data, Chowdhury et al. (2019) confessed that there were few literatures in relation to this area. However, the study noted that most studies reviewed paints a picture of communal participation on resource mobilization in various projects such as farming, education and health. The purpose of these faith-based NGOs was not only to provide physical needs, but also showed the communities on how to pray, read the Bible and also lead them into salvation. These NGOs trained the locals on how to be self-sufficient through engaging in diverse economic activities. Further on, Chowdhury et al. (2019) explained that faith-based NGOs directed locals on personal and communal projects. For example, when farming, NGOs advised strongly on communal farming for a larger scale production. When farming communally, they tended to learn more on various Biblical teachings as they cultivated their crops. Division of labor was emphasized on ensuring everyone had a task to do where diligence was administered. Once they harvested and proceeded to the market to sell, faith-based NGOs encouraged them to always evangelize to the buyers on what they had learnt. By continuous practice, they not only engaged in farming but also in soul winning which brought about church growth.

According to Nababan (2017), who conducted a study on how empowerment was actualized through improving economic standard of church members, advocated for equality when the church was growing. Notably, Nababan (2017) emphasized that through a business partnership model called Empowerment of Congregation-Based Community

Economic (ECBCE), church members were able to equal own business ventures without prejudice despite their financial backgrounds which improved their personal income hence more interest to come regularly to church. Therefore, Nababan (2017) revealed that spirituality began when everyone got treated equally and their input was welcome. This led to a congregation who truly believed that indeed everyone was equal in the eyes of God as practiced by the church. The study expounded more on some of the benefits of having communal economic venture whereby there was sense of ownership, unity and increased evangelism. Further, Nababan (2017) explained that having a church business venture created an environment whereby church members used it as an example to preach the gospel to the unbelievers. For example, having a church project such as a hospital, created an environment where church members would go preaching and giving hope to the sick and leading them into the prayer of sanctification in case, they were not born-again. This revelation gave this study to explore the various programs and systems that the Methodist church used to reach out to non-believers through their projects hence causing the growth of the church.

Further on, Pillay (2017) examined how the church was a transformation and change agent. The study considered the history of the church and what was the original purpose of the church. Pillay (2017) began by documenting that the church that Jesus Christ started was at the forefront of attacking the Pharisees and Sadducees who were well known of exploiting and oppressing the poor people (Matthew 22:25-33) (NIV, 2011). The poor people found relief through Jesus Christ teachings. They were fed, clothed and taught the Word of God. It was also evidenced that the 12 disciples of Jesus were from humble backgrounds. Pillay (2017) explained further that Jesus Christ submitted that he came for these oppressed people. In their poverty, they were able

to raise to standards whereby they would later become the apostles, pastors, prophets and teachers of the Word of God.

Therefore, Pillay (2017) added that a church was a place whereby both physical needs were met as people were being taught the word of God. According to Pillay (2017), the poor are still being oppressed even in today's era hence a church was a place where they get comfort. The church was always at the forefront towards fighting injustice towards the society. Social injustices such as political violence, murder, corruption among others were not tolerated. As the church was economically empowering its members, there was a closer watch to any form of injustice to church members when they were doing their businesses. Has the church defended their members when they were falsely accused in the court of law? How did the church educate its members to speak out in a respectful manner to the government when oppressed? What was the stand of the church on training their members on timely and full payment of business taxes so as to avoid being on the wrong side of the law?

Additionally, Pillay (2017) further noted that in Matthew 22:2, Jesus advised his followers to always ensure they gave what belonged to the government without delay (NIV, 2011) In the line of being empowered it was evident that church members got some income from doing business. When these church members grew, there was growth in faithfulness towards their business. Therefore, the current study sought to know what were the current empowerment programs offered by the Methodist church of Kenya on tax payment faithfulness and how they handled any oppression while conducting business among others.

Additionally, Melé and Fontrodona (2017) explored the various Christian ethics and spirituality applicable in major businesses. The study started by agreeing that the art of

combining Christian ethics and spirituality while conducting business activities was an operation that had been going on from the 13th century. According to Melé and Fontrodona (2017), Christian spirituality gave a guideline and group of virtues to be followed when performing the function of an economic activity. However, since the modern age was highly technologized, a lot of economic activity were being conducted online. These included advertising, purchasing and making payments. There was therefore need for prudence in undertaking any economic activities as a church member.

Further, a lot of people were involved in undersupplying the agreed amounts of products or not making legit payments when they were supplied with the products. This resulted to strained relationships between various people. Therefore, Melé and Fontrodona (2017) advised that Christian ethics always guided various religious members so as not to fall into any temptation of engaging in various cyber theft. Therefore, the church was very keen on letting these issues known on their members and hence enabled church members perform due diligence whenever they were always purchasing or making payments. Therefore, the present study had a goal to discover some of the spiritual and economical due diligence processes the Methodist church in Kenya undertook to ensure that it guided its church members from being a victim of cyber-crime.

In addition, a book written by Mele (2017) described the various virtues that Catholic believers were supposed to uphold when doing business and management. Notably, Mele (2017) revealed that these virtues began by taking care of God's creation, respecting life including the unborn babies, helping the poor, being actively involved in family and having dignity for workers. The book which acted as a guide, narrowed down further to show what each and every virtue meant. Specifically concentrating on respecting life virtue, Mele

(2017) proclaimed that respecting life did not only include giving birth but also included ensuring that a human being was not made a slave or mistreated. The book advocated for always protecting the young and the old by ensuring they were well taken care of by feeding them, clothing them and giving them a chance to enjoy life in abundance. This virtue was closely guided by Jesus Christ who instructed his disciples to let little children to come to him when they were stopping them. Later on, Jesus was seen teaching these children the Word of God. In light of this Mele (2017) pointed out that apart from proving physical needs, there was need for Catholic believers to go an extra mile of teaching them the Word of God and also praying for them. Contextualizing this in the present study, the Methodist children's home was a perfect example of an empowerment center for children who did not have parents or come from poor backgrounds. The study therefore examined what were some of the spiritual programs that were present in the children's home that helped the children grow in Godly way.

In India, Somu and Sujatha (2016) developed a study on spirituality and its influence of economic empowerment of self-help group members. According to Somu and Sujatha (2016), self-discipline was not only be intrigued on economic matters but also on spiritual matters. The study revealed that spiritual discipline was the guideline and a distinguishing mark between how believers of Jesus Christ did their business and the non-believers. This spiritual discipline did not depend on age, gender or income level. According to Galbraith and Galbraith (2007), (as cited by Somu & Sujatha, 2016) there was a positive relationship between spiritual discipline and growth in economic activity. It was evident that business people who prayed before opening their business and attended various weekly religious meetings experienced a more fruitful day as compared to those who did not.

According to Somu and Sujatha (2016), fruitfulness was not only measured by business performance but also through desire to live, self-confident, less stress, improved personal and business hygiene, physical and mental growth and less abuse of drugs and substances. Since this study was conducted on Hindu religion, there is a concern to conduct in under Christianity specifically Methodism to check whether the results would be similar or differ. In addition, there was need to check which church programs had been developed to be used in church projects to enable the stakeholders maintain spiritual discipline while in the environment of the income generating projects such as in the Methodist University.

Additionally, Ferreira and Chipenyu (2021) investigated the main causes of decline in churches beyond the number of people in attendance in Protestant churches of South Africa. The reports from the Reformed Churches in South Africa [RCSA] were used to examine the main causes beyond congregation numbers that have been leading to churches failing. According to Ferreira and Chipenyu (2021), when the churches failed to adhere and honor the following eight principles led to a definite decline. These were: empowered leadership structures, allowing gifts of members to sprout, spirituality, active structures, worship inspiration, loving relations, holistic small groups and evangelism aimed at meeting both spiritual and physical needs of the people. These principles were considered main acumens as far as the length of stay of members at a particular church are concerned. Notably, the major challenge affecting the study of Ferreira and Chipenyu (2021) was that it relied on reports and no primary input from the church members. For example, in making a conclusion such as loving relations among members, could only be derived through interacting with the members to assess the level of love in place.

Further in South Africa, Modise (2018) gave a synopsis of the part that the church had played towards changing the socio-economic status of its members in South Africa. Notably, Modise (2018) narrowed down on the main purpose of a church which included healing and reconciliation, family restoration, reducing poverty and inequality, economic transformation and supporting democracy. Therefore, Modise (2018) investigated how the churches located in South Africa were ensuring these pillars of the church stood the test of time and consistently grew. The study explained that as long as people were involved, they tended to once in a while not agree on various areas which brought in conflict among church members. The church played a great deal to ensure peace prevailed at all times among the congregation. According to 1st Timothy 6:10, money was the root cause of all evil in the society (NIV, 2011).

Engaging in any church activity that generated money either at a personal or communal level, conflict was bound to happen. Further, Modise (2018) therefore recommended that the churches had advanced into taking their clergy through a guidance and counseling programs such that when complimented by prayers and reading the Word of God, enabled them handle any conflicts arising in South African churches. The current study would investigate how the Methodist church in Kenya handled monetary related conflicts in the process of economically empowering its members and growth.

In Kenya, Karanu et al. (2020) elaborated the effect the church policies had on youth church member's (20 years-35 years) economic empowerment. While looking into a case study of Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), Nyahururu Parish, the study complained that the youth had been neglected in involvement of church projects or being empowered economically. This resulted them joining crimes and engaged in illicit behaviors. While

using positive youth development model, Karanu et al. (2020) used cluster sampling method to come up with 94 respondents who are youths, clergy, evangelist, youth leaders and youth coordinator. Notably, Karanu et al. (2020) discovered that church policies such as single parenthood and divorce negatively influenced youth economic empowerment. That is to say that any youth who had a child out of wedlock or had divorced their partner could not be involved in church projects leadership or had to pass through a complicated process to get economic empowerments such as church loans or even being employed in the church institution.

This was because the church policy dictated that sexual intercourse before marriage was a sin and whoever did it, suffered consequences such as neglect. The church policy also strictly prohibited any married couple from divorcing quoting that God hated divorce. This was rather not only interesting but also a reality finding. In today's world, increase in technological advancement, exposes youth into sexual environment and also programs brought in our television shows that divorcing your partner is normal and okay. Since believing is seeing, many youths end up falling into this trap. Does that mean simply because they made a sin out of ignorance, they will spend all their life in this world paying for their sins such as not being involved in church projects and being considered in economic empowerment? This created a need to establish how Methodist church in Kenya handled involvement of church members who had not fully adhered to the church spiritual policies to various economic empowerment or projects.

A study by Thiga et al. (2021) explored the intricacies of how conflicts negatively affect growth in Kenyan Pentecostal churches, particularly in Nairobi. The study was qualitative in nature selected using purposive sampling method on leaders that had served for two

years in Full Gospel Churches of Kenya, Kenya Assemblies of God, Pentecostal Evangelism Fellowship of Africa, and Worldwide Gospel Church of Kenya. They were interviewed and their responses sampled using thematic sampling method. According to Thiga et al. (2021), the churches in question had experienced conflicts as a result of control of resources. The more the resources, the tougher the wrangles affecting the church. The nature of conflict mainly affected church leaders such as pastors and church members, church leaders and other leaders in other church branches. As a result, the church growth was negatively affected since the income generated through the church projects was unevenly distributed to various futile activities depending on who had immersed more power over other leaders. According to Thiga et al. (2021), when there were conflicts, the church sought arbitration, prayer and court proceedings. That notwithstanding, Thiga et al. (2021) did not explore on how church growth was affected by conflict between church members exclusive of church leaders.

Further in Kenya, Nzeng'e et al. (2021) analyzed how the growth of the church was affected by empowered members in Pentecostal churches. The study was guided by shared leadership theory and Mead's theory of church growth to gather data from 1235 and 1210 pastors and elders respectively. The population was sampled using simple random, purposive and stratified methods to have 245 participants. The Pentecostal churches included were from Evangelical Alliance of Kenya [EAK] in Machakos, Murang'a, Kajiado, Nakuru and Nairobi Counties. The study issued questionnaire to pastors whereas the elders were interviewed using focus groups. Notably, Nzeng'e et al. (2021) discovered that when church members were empowered, they tended to invite their friends, family and community at large to attend services. This resulted to increased number of members, as

well as increased income from the offering and tithes. However, Nzung'u et al. (2021) did not include respondents such as few members to participate in the study for exhaustivity.

A case study by Ndegwa et al. (2018) considered the importance of the Holy Christian Israel church in socio-economic empowerment of the communities. Using a sample size of 72 members of the Holy Christian Israel church, Ndegwa et al. (2018) noted that the Holy Christian Israel church mostly used its finances to pay church leaders and less emphasis towards improving the livelihood of the church members and the community since there were handful projects initiated by the church. However, Ndegwa et al. (2018) had an objective of examining the local community's perception on the church but only collected data from church members hence not supporting their evidence, which led to their results being biased. In addition, Ndegwa et al. (2018) did not look into some of the indirect effects of the church sermons towards improving socio-economic aspects of its members.

According to Kariuki (2018), a church did not only provide spiritual and physical support to its members, but also collaborated with different organizations to improve the welfare of its members. In the light of this, Kariuki (2018) disagreed with Ndegwa et al. (2018) results that since because a church was not directly providing various socio-economic support, it did not really care about its members. Therefore, Kariuki (2018) argued that the size of the church determined a lot its stamina to offer economic support to its members, however that did not mean it cannot consider external organizations and donors to improve the livelihood of its members. The results derived by Kariuki (2018) indicated that the church directly or indirectly supported health, education, livelihood, spiritual well-being among other areas. Nevertheless, Kariuki (2018) did not examine more deeper on church economic activities and how they were sustained.

Additionally, Lairangi (2016) documented a study on how the Methodist church was empowered both spiritually and materially. The study used a case study of Ruaraka Methodist church. Notably, Lairangi (2016) used unstructured interview method to collect data from 12 respondents who were selected using purposive sampling method. These 12 respondents were all members of Ameka Sacco which was an affiliate Sacco of Methodist church in Kenya. Therefore, Lairangi (2016) revealed that the act of church members pooling their resources together created a pool of resources that were for the good of all members.

There was mutual accountability of members whereby they encouraged saving attitude in the Ameka Sacco which in turn lent loans to members who were in need of financial support. When they got finances, they invested in businesses which in-turn improved their financial independence. Methodist church members were each other's keeper to ensure that they regularly saved and were faithful enough to repay loans given by the Sacco. When faithfulness was a continuous practice, the church attained both spiritual and economic growth milestone. That notwithstanding, Lairangi (2016) used only 12 respondents in gathering data. This number was below the 30 threshold that was required for validity in data collection since the research was a scientific in nature (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

2.3 Communal Training in Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

The benefits that the church members get access to when there is a training program vary greatly depending on the management of the church and as well as the projects initiated by the church. These benefits range from material to non-material benefits. There are various studies done on the church training projects on spiritual-economic empowerment of local

community. According to UMI (2020), Covid-19 pandemic have had majorly negative influences on Methodist churches. While conducting an online survey, UMI (2020) confessed that 59 percent of the 958 respondents indicated that there was shortage of finances whereby 76 percent agreed that giving in the church was low. Thirty-four (34) percent of the respondents estimated that the giving had declined by 40 percent. According to UMI (2020), in as much as the finances had declined, majority of the respondents had adjusted their lifestyle to fit in the low budgets. Interestingly almost 52 percent of the respondents revealed that in as much as nothing was working, covid-19 pandemic had made them improve prayer time, reading the Word of God and reflecting on the blessing they had previously received from God.

Certainly, most respondents in the study by UMI (2020) had resulted to thankfulness on what they already had and most importantly the gift of life. UMI (2020) noted that through various religious leaders, the United Methodist church had begun various telephone calling initiatives, text messages and online projects through television, radios and social media to guide various members on how to go about their private intercessory. Apart from that, a lot of Biblical encouragement had been given to members through this program. This proved that in as much as everyone was complaining on how covid-19 had damaged and disrupted their lives, there was a positive benefit from this whole experience. Therefore, the current studies looked into some of the material benefits that the church members in Methodist church in Kenya, Meru region, had gotten from the church.

Further, Qayyum et al. (2019) evaluated the relationships that existed between religion and economic growth globally. This study's objective looked into various ways into which religion came in handy to improve the economy such as improvement of mental health,

reduction of poverty and ethics in daily undertakings. Nevertheless, Qayyum et al. (2019) used 110 countries spread over developed nations to reveal that religion had a significant relationship with the economic growth. This meant that by participation of the people in religious undertakings they had greatly benefitted through stress reduction, accumulation of wealth hence low poverty levels and had learnt of how to avoid negative issues with the law when they lived their lives closely guided by Biblical teachings.

Further on in America, Nkansah-Obrempong (2018) explored what the assignment of the church was, as far as all-rounded redemption is concerned. That is, how did the church ensure that both spiritual, social, economic and political aspects of the church members were harmonized such that one did not miss going to heaven because of falling short of Grace in any of them. Adding to that, Nkansah-Obrempong (2018) admitted that the church was normally at a very hard-task of seeing to it that believers benefitted fully from all earthly endeavors but also were very much prepared to have eternal life. Therefore, Nkansah-Obrempong (2018) considered both the catholic and protestant churches in America to eventually come to terms that the church taught practical Biblical examples that which directly related to the members lives. For example, a church pastor would preach about how David was a King but yet very humble in the presence of God to relate with the political lives of the members.

Further on, Nkansah-Obrempong (2018) added further that after teaching Biblically, the church supported its members in the best way it could such as offering platforms for members to express themselves such as during meetings, retreats, seminars and conferences. When members expressed themselves, the church was able to know which area it could help such as funding educations, opening hospitals and at times giving seed

capital for members businesses. In this way Nkansah-Obrempong (2018) confirmed that church members who had been empowered were more cooperative in church functions, come to church all Sundays, there was reduction of stress among members, and self-confidence to even do evangelism work of souls winning was improved.

Another study by Berchie et al. (2016) reviewed a book on the inter-relationship between the Bible, cultural identity and mission. The book explained that for the Word of God to gain great impact to the people, the church needed to device creative ways through which they could practice the Bible teachings. According to Berchie et al. (2016), the first step was acknowledging the culture of the region the church was located. For people to really listen to the Word of God, the church ought to first acknowledge and appreciate the healthy cultural norms of the people. For example, the church could not bring projects that were contrary to what people believed in and in return expect their trust. Therefore, Berchie et al. (2016) related this argument with what Christian missionaries did when they approached a new area. They first respected the community leadership and later learnt their language. This enabled them to get security and communicate effectively with the locals. Once accepted, that was when they began doing mission work in the area. As they did mission works such as building hospitals and schools, they did so while teaching the Word of God to the people.

This protocol of events had been proved effective according to Berchie et al. (2016). This book did not cover on how the church handled situations whereby the community remained adamant and refused to accept the church. In our context there was need to investigate how the church of Methodist in Kenya coped with the communities around them to ensure that they benefitted fully from the projects initiated and attended the church services and

activities regularly. That is, what creative ways had they come up with to entice the community such as educational scholarships, free medical check-ups, food donations among other ways.

In a developing nation such as Indonesia, Junaedi and Waruwu (2020) investigated the change in economic as a result of new spiritual leadership in church. Therefore, Junaedi and Waruwu (2020) used qualitative methodology to collect data inform of observations interviews, secondary data and case studies. The study found out that any time a new regime of spiritual leadership was put into place, there ought to be disruptions especially on previous projects that the previous leadership had initiated. Therefore, Junaedi and Waruwu (2020) added that in as much as there were new leaders, much consultation was needed to be able to know how far in terms of economic development empowerment, the previous church leaders had gone. This ensured smooth transition of leadership with less disruptions hence continued benefits such as long-term employments by various staffs who were directly working in church projects; freedom to add constructive inputs by junior leaders and increased peaceful church environment. Since the Methodist church in Kenya allowed free and fair election of various spiritual leaders such as Bishops after every 4 years, it was of great concern to explore what were some of the spiritual-economic benefits and challenges that church members experienced as a result of leadership transition.

In Africa, an appraisal had been done by Amanze (2019) on how the church benefitted disabled people in central and southern Africa. Disabled people were often treated inhumanly as though they were second-class type of people. According to Amanze (2019), in African context, disability was mostly linked to witchcraft or sin hence discrimination by the society. The church therefore acted as a link and voice between the disabled people

and the society. Additionally, Amanze (2019) pointed out various initiatives brought about the church in central and southern Africa such as disability equipment like wheel chair donations, health coverage, interpreting services for the hearing impaired and scoliosis. The disabled and vulnerable groups such as the ones living with HIV/AIDS were the most forgotten groups in very many places. This validated the current study to examine how Methodist church of Kenya's projects were benefiting the vulnerable groups especially the disabled and the people living with HIV/AIDs in the society.

Further, Alawode (2016) examined the growth of people based on the perspectives of Christian mission in Africa. The study started by noting that one billion people on earth lived in extreme poverty whereby they lacked good health, accesses to dirty water, poor hygiene, deteriorated houses, did not have food and were not educated. Indeed Alawode (2016) further documented that when Christians decided to extend a helping hand in terms of organizing missions, they not only showed concern but brought immense happiness to these poor people. However, Alawode (2016) directed further that mission activities undertaken missionaries included opening free schools, hospitals, building water reservoirs, building low-cost houses for the community and coming up with green-houses initiatives. Therefore, Alawode (2016) traced missionary activities since 1900 whereby civilization in Africa was brought about by missionaries.

Further, Alawode (2016) proclaimed that once these projects were initiated, the locals came up with various projects of ensuring these projects remained sustained. This created employment which brought about increased revenue growth, improved self-confidence, improved health and low levels of stress. The present study sought to know some of the

benefits of spiritual-economics benefits of various projects initiated by the Methodist church in Kenya, Meru region.

In Kenya, a study was done by Kioko (2020) on the importance of the Redeemed Gospel Church (RGC) in social-economic growth of the society in Makueni. Therefore, Kioko (2020) sampled 30 RGC pastors in the area for the study to establish that the RGC had been mainly involved in education, health and agriculture. In terms of education RGC churches in Nunguni, Makindu and Mtito-Andei had established primary schools. This benefited the community through acquisition of jobs in the school as teachers and non-teaching workers. In addition, community members were able to supply various products from stationeries to food stuffs to the school. In terms of healthcare, RGC was involved in praying for the sick, paying medical bills and raising funds from various donors for the sick. In addition, the sick people were visited by church members occasionally which made them get healed quickly. In terms of agriculture, RGC provided seedlings, and an RGC church in Kathonzweni gave food to the poor during drought periods. That notwithstanding, Kioko (2020) noted that the RGC churches were governed through one main strategic plan from the headquarters hence lack of customized strategic plans in satellite churches.

Additionally, Tenai (2016) while considering the African Inland Church (AIC) examined some of the theological literatures done for calls on poverty reduction in the communities by the church. According to Tenai (2016), Christian religion was mainly focused on how the society well-being could be advanced. In Kenya, the level of poverty was still very high even as of date. AIC mainly focused on various projects that helped the vulnerable and the poor in various communities in Kenya. These projects which mainly involved establishing

community-based projects that helped the community rather than individuals had been successful. Simply out of this good gesture from AIC, the community was able to have nutritious food in their tables hence improving their health; there had been less premature deaths due to sicknesses; there had been increased attendance in AIC churches as well as the number of born-again Christians had improved; and there had been increased active voluntary participation of previously helped people on AIC projects in other areas. Due to high cases of poverty, AIC relied on various studies done by theological scholars that showed areas of concern as far as poverty levels were concerned. In as much as this was needed, the motives behind the theological literature could be biased hence mislead the church towards helping the poor people who were in real need. This created a gap of examining how the Methodist church in Kenya gathered due diligence on areas to establish its projects to benefit the members of the community. For example, the reasons behind opening a hospital in Maua and not in Meru town.

2.4 Sustainability of Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

When the missionaries came to Africa, they came with the intention of spreading Christianity to Africans (Owino et al., 2017). However, for the missionary work to be effective, they had to undertake some other supporting activities such as teaching people to read and write, building schools and hospitals (Owino et al., 2017). They were able to accomplish this because they had great financial support from their mother nations. When churches were widely established, the missionaries went back to their countries of origin leaving the administration to Africans (Scholten, 1950). As a way to ensure that the various initiatives started by missionaries did not fail, there was need to think of diverse ways of

raising resources that would be directly utilized in church (Owino et al., 2017). Also, so as to make sure that the believers who relied on church were self-efficient, the churches had to think of ways to support them (Scholten, 1950). These reasons were the causes of starting up even more income generating projects for sustenance. These projects had turned out to be a great pillar towards ensuring that the church survives during different economic cycles.

A spiritual-economic program is any church activity that is undertaken in whose outcome derives revenue on behalf of the church (Seland, 2014). In a church set-up, these spiritual-economic projects included schools, universities, hospitals, farms, book-stores, financial institutions, shops, supermarkets, real estate, companies, work-shops among others (Seland, 2014). This study considered schools, universities, hospitals, farms, book-stores, financial institutions such as Kemu Sacco because they were directly associated with MCK (2020a). An ideal spiritual-economic program was characterized by increased revenues, increased expenditure, increased church assets, increased staff number, increased suppliers and increased debtors (EMC, 2020).

A church is mandated to ensure that its church members are always nourished with spiritual, social and economic empowerment. Being empowered economically entails having a justified and legal means of attaining livelihood through which you can sustain your various needs as a person (UNMCN, 2018). Once a church member is empowered economically, they are able to live comfortable lives and as well support various church activities through offerings and tithes. Churches have embarked on a mission to ensure that its members benefit as a whole and not specific individual. That is, why they invest in communal projects in which members directly benefit through employment, sell their

products to the church and also get financial support to begin their respective businesses. In addition, church members also benefit indirectly when some of the revenues are used to purchase various properties of the church such as advanced musical instruments, building various structures without necessarily being informed to chip in, church sponsored tours, free seminars, monthly camps among other benefits.

Authors have documented various literature on spiritual-economic projects. A closer examination on various studies on developed nations shows that these projects are the key backbone towards complementing the various sources of revenue of the church. In Europe, EMC (2020) documented a report on the program list that will be used for funding missions around Europe continent. These projects were grouped based on the various regions. They included projects such as television ministry in Poland, kindergarten in Pivnice, weekend soup kitchen in Virbas, music ministry in Dolny Kubin, church planting in Rome among other projects. Therefore, EMC (2020) was closely guided by ensuring that there was full sustainability of the projects, training on leadership of the projects and always providing a platform of learning and contribution of new ideas. This gave the current study the need to look into some of the spiritual-economic projects that were currently present in Methodist church in Kenya, Kaaga synod.

A report by CRCCUSC (2017) elaborated on various initiatives brought about by Catholic sisters in Uganda. The report indicated that Catholic sisters in Uganda had been relying a lot on the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for grants meant for various projects. These projects were mainly anchored on agriculture, health, humanity, microfinance and sanitation. In specificity of income generating projects, CRCCUSC (2017) pinpointed that self-help groups had been able to access funds to run various projects. The report cited

issues such as low financial sustainability due to lack of consistent flow of resources to venture into diverse projects; lack of trained personnel to guide the projects from collapsing; traditions that restrict women from being leaders to spearhead the projects initiatives; and low literacy levels on members of the projects. This report however missed to document on how Uganda government intervention had been influencing various projects of the Catholic sisters.

Further on, BCRPWA(2017) developed a report on how the world could develop faith through bringing in ideas that transformed the social and economic aspects of the members. The report answered the question on how religious organizations could affect the social and economic challenges. Therefore, BCRPWA (2017) agreed that religious affiliations were well known to come in handy in funding education or when there is a pandemic such as HIV/AIDs, flooding, starvation, fire outbreaks among others. However, when it came to investments and gender relations it was hard to exactly show how these religious organizations have participated. Additionally, BCRPWA (2017) gave various resolutions such as present interfaith bodies to work hand in hand to ensure women were given equal opportunities in managing projects; involvement of youth in various projects so that they could learn and get experience applicable in future; and presence of policies that were developed to ensure that church income generating projects were not harassed by the local authorities since they were for greater good of the community. This raised concerns to the current study to investigate on the gender equity in a program such as the Kenya Methodist University which was a direct spiritual-economic program of the Methodist church in Kenya, Kaaga synod.

Further on, Tower (2016) gave a guide for mission workers on how to initiate income generating projects in churches. The study put emphasis on how various missionaries who were outsiders in a church could work hand in hand with local church communities to have projects that reduced poverty rates in the said communities. This helped the community to have a healthy interaction in a program guided by independent personnel (missionaries) by organized by the local churches in an area. Therefore, Tower (2016) confirmed that this brought fresher ideas from the missionaries, local churches and the community hence increasing economic development rather than imposing old and repetitive ideas or unsuitable solutions from the missionaries. There was a gap to ensure that the present study sought to address on knowing and providing fundamental information on the various spiritual-economic projects that the Methodist church in Kenya, Kaaga synod had partnered with diverse missionaries.

Further on, NCA (2016) gave the strategy that would be applicable in Afghanistan communities from 2016 to 2020. The report indicated that even before finances were allocated to various individuals, there was need for training to be offered on business planning, development-based market demand. Further, NCA (2016) revealed that an initiative through partnership with cooperatives would provide various capital to begin businesses at community level. The report cautioned on various issues that would limit the church from beginning program such as corruption, poor governance of the projects, insecurity due to illegal groups and inconsiderate cultures where women are supposed to stay at home to do house duties. Therefore, NCA (2016) identified various associations that it partnered with such as Afghan Development Association (ADA); Afghan Women Skills Development Centre (AWSDC); Central Afghanistan Welfare Committee (CAWC); Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR); Green Way Organization (GWO); Ghazni Rural

Support Program (GRSP); Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan (NPO/RRAA); Reconstruction and Social Service for Afghanistan Organization (RSSAO); and Sanayee Development Organization (SDO). However, NCA (2016) failed to partner with a group such as the Joshua program which had a rich experience in operating within an Islamic region. Therefore, since Methodist church could not work alone without shutting other religions, there was a call for action to establish whether there were any other religions such as Islam that the church of Methodist in Kenya, Kaaga synod was working with especially in pertinent of spiritual-economic projects.

In developed nations, UNMCN (2018) examined how Nigerian women had been empowered through the church microloans to begin small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Additionally, UNCN (2018) shed light that through a program called ‘Empower Her’, women had been able to access funds that are meant for opening business. The program had over 1,500 women registered to have accessed these microloans. In the year 2018, the program registered 800 more women. However, for one to qualify, they needed to have a good business idea that was viable enough. These loans were paid back with a 2.5% interest for a period of 10 months. Women in Nigeria invested in grocery, fish-selling, clothes and farming. However, UNCN (2018) was vague on what other qualifications were considered when lending to avoid loan default. Apart from that, a church was not registered as a financial institution hence UNCN (2018) did not indicate which affiliate of the church lend on its behalf.

Further, Arasio et al. (2018) explained how pastoral community groups had emerged and evolved towards helping societies from community members perspective in northern Kenya. The study began by confirming that in as much as information on various

institutions that had commenced income generating projects in northern region in Kenya were plenty, few information on the churches that had participated on the projects was very low. While under the scope of Marsabit south district, the study used 10 chiefs and 24 sub-chiefs, 6 government staff, 4 private sector members, 5 non-governmental organization and 2 church organizations in the area were consulted to identify various groups that participated in income generating projects. These groups included the registered ones which were 130 out of 153. 86 of them out of 153 were women's groups.

Additionally, Arasio et al. (2018) revealed that the two church organizations which were the Catholic church and African Inland church had supported sale of traditional artefacts (25 beadwork groups) and micro-credit schemes (32 merry-go-round groups), sale of household item (89 groups), and cattle, sheep and goat trade (100 groups). In addition, there had been engagement of various investment such as camel trading by groups such as Salama, Saidia and Salato women's groups supported by the church. However, Arasio et al. (2018) complained that there were few markets spread over vast area in Marsabit south leading to high transportation costs, high capital needed to start, low financial education and increased insecurity to trade. However, Arasio et al. (2018) did not mention a problem such as a church differentiating between charity projects and income generating projects which was prevalent due to harsh conditions in the area. In the current study, there was need to investigate how Methodist church was able to differentiate and support the various types of non-income generating projects such as Methodist children home.

A study by Kwemboi (2019) found out the input of Salvation army's Worth banking program on economic empowerment of women in Bungoma county. Therefore, Kwemboi (2019) conducted the study in Cheptais ward due to low number of formal women financial

institutions. The study used 136 respondents who were leaders of this program. In addition, Kwemboi (2019) found out as a result of the Worth banking program, total dependency of women to men was greatly reduced. However poor technical know-how on investment and low loans issuance had significantly deteriorated the program. Since the program was informal, accessing a boost from various formal financial institutions such as Uwezo funds to members had turned out to be futile. However, Kwemboi (2019) did not explain deeper on the causes of the program remaining informal regardless of ease of registration of a financial group in Kenya. The current study would assess some of the registered projects in Methodist church Kaaga synod and how they influenced the vulnerable groups such as women and children.

A report by the ACK, (2016) showed the strategic plan of the church from 2016-2020. The report had recognized various six pillars of the church as a spiritual, social, economic, governance, infrastructure, and capacity building pillar. In relation to economic pillar, ACK (2016) gave a platform through which its members were empowered through initiatives such as membership in the church savings and credit cooperatives (Saccos), whereby they could save and access low interest loans. These Saccos included ACK Sacco, ACK Imani Talent Sacco and Ukristo Na Ufanisi Wa Anglicana Sacco. There were other projects such as Business college where students were training on basic business courses and also computer packages; academies, bookshops and church farms (ACK, 2016). The report emphasized on the need of prudent management whereby the church hires third party members to run and do the administration of the projects on behalf of the church. This informed the current study to assess how often did the Methodist church rotate job positions

within the various projects it had to ensure that there was prudent management of its resources.

In addition, Ngatia (2016) investigated the elements that contributed towards sustainability of income generating projects of the church. The study specifically focussed into Kihumbui-ini Presbytery in Kandara sub-county, Kenya. Therefore, Ngatia (2016) elaborated that these elements were church leadership backing, resources availability, strategies used to monitor and evaluate projects, and training offered to stakeholders of the projects. The study worked using a sample of 21 youth committee affiliates, 25 women committee affiliates, 17 men committee affiliates, 9 church committee affiliates and 28 pastor's office affiliates. However, Ngatia (2016) discovered that most projects were initiated without offering training to their stakeholders which led to poor management and failure of the projects. This lack of training was caused by low church leadership backing.

In addition, priority of allocating resources on new projects was limited since there lacked personnel who would monitor and evaluate these projects on full-time basis. This was because most of the church members opted to be part-timers especially when they learnt that it was voluntary. However, Ngatia (2016) failed to consider an element such as the market availability into which the program's products would be sold to generate income. This was because in as much as everything might be done right, lack of market availability analysis would lead to unsustainability of a program (United Nations, 2020). This study would investigate the various spiritual-economic projects such as Methodist hospital initiated by the Methodist church and consideration done on the availability of the market.

2.5 Financial Literacy of Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

Financial literacy is the ability of an entity to make reliable and thorough monetary decisions that are able to expand their current income level (Purwaningrat et al., 2019). A church makes choices to invest in diverse projects so as to empower its members spiritually and economically. Financial literacy helps and equips the church to avoid any financial pitfalls that would drain the church resources in unviable projects. Financial backing is needed in establishing creative ways through which the church can raise various financial resources such as through consistent saving. As they are saving, the church ought to appreciate the value of interest that their saving earns over a duration of time. Once the savings have reached a desirable amount that can be used to invest, budgeting knowledge is needed so as to make sure the church and members knows the cost, they are expected to cover for a program to be successful.

Depending on the policies of the church, debt management structure should be realistic to ensure they are able to chew what they bite. For example, if church policies allow the church to get a loan, the management should consider an amount that they would be able to pay the monthly installments when they fall due without much strain. At the end of it all, financial safety is needed especially in determining how, who and when the money should be used. Authorization should always be limited to few trusted church leaders and members. Therefore, for spiritual-economic initiatives to be sustainable for the purposes of empowerment of church members, financial literacy intervened in between.

There are several studies done in relation to how financial literacy contributes towards ensuring spiritual-economic projects have empowered church members. In developed nations such as America, a study was done by English (2019) on how big churches impacted economic development through various financial literacy. These financial

literacy included short courses on financial management to train on budgeting and setting financial objectives; financial literacy courses to equip members with various investment opportunities around them; career development projects to increase their chances of being selected for various jobs; real estate courses on how church members could be owners of either business or home buildings; entrepreneurship courses to develop the basic skills to set-up a business and how to be financially disciplined for the survival of the new business; and debt restructuring courses on equipping the members on the relevance of loans and genuine reasons to taking a loan. Therefore, English (2019) explained that these results are some of the projects offered to improve the economic status of the church members. The churches in America offered at least one of these projects to its members. There was therefore need to investigate and know some of the financial empowerment projects offered by the Methodist church.

Additionally, Suttington (2018) explored on financial knowledge among church leaders in Black Baptist churches in America. The call to investigate this area, was derived when Suttington (2018) noticed that church leaders had a problem when it came to management of church financial resources which led to frequent embezzlement of funds. The study examined the educational and experience knowledge of 12 black baptism church leaders on financial matters. However, Suttington (2018) discovered that the church leaders were all educated and had sufficient experience on financial literacy. However, there were weak church policies that were vague on what really happens when a church leader is misappropriating church resources. Though Suttington (2018) study was informative, it did not look into the views of the church members for an exhaustive finding.

UNEP (2018) explored various ways into which it could work with organizations that were religious in nature. UNEP (2018) expressed that the church organizations had impacted greatly in reducing poverty, promoting health of the community and also maintaining the environment. The churches were seen to get the trust of people more as compared to any other organization hence their relevance could not be undermined. UNEP (2018) indicated that spiritual and moral principles learnt in a church direct the decisions people made towards increasing their wealth, improving their health and their environment. These ideals contributed a lot towards sustainable development. The report by UNEP (2018) further noted that churches had been highly involved in educating the community of climate change, planting trees, conservation of power and using natural energy power in their activities. However, UNEP (2018) admitted that it highly depended on the church to mobilize the communities through green church financing training projects. These projects ensured financial literacy passed onto the members not only improve their economic welfare but also conserved the environment. For example, training members on where to buy trees when they got profits; properly disposing their businesses' wastes; and engaging natural energy power such as solar and wind power in their businesses. Therefore, UNEP (2018) stated some of potential risks in the program such as UNEP falling short of not engaging with all religions to ensure diversity, gender inequality, and low resources by churches to come up with more diverse viable projects that fits in the agenda of UNEP. The current study therefore sought to know which organizations had the church of Methodist partnered with when training financial empowerment projects to its members.

Additionally, Raduly (2017) examined on Biblical training manual that could be used to develop financial knowledge of Roundup-Lewistown district of the seventh-day Adventist

church members. Therefore, Raduly (2017) proclaimed that the key problem through which was a motivation for the study was because the study had noticed that majority of Roundup-Lewistown Adventist church members had problems when it came to managing their personal finances. The study argued that the members had a wrong misconception especially in relation to basic concepts of wealth building, debts accumulation and administration of wealth resources. However, Raduly (2017) revealed that the Adventist church had a church population of 69 with 26 active members in attending services. 15 of the 26 members were highly involved in church activities such as in leadership position among others.

According to Raduly (2017), 23 members of the 69 church members were poor which was one third of the church population. The study found out the poor people in church had struggled in making ends meet because they came from a poor background; they had little or no financial management skills; and lacked financial literacy to know when, how and where to invest for more profits. This showed that financial empowerment is an area of concern since in as much as the church may give its members fish to feed, training them on how to fish was more important and results to financial freedom. There was need to establish some of the financial literacy training projects present in the Methodist church in Kenya, Kaaga synod.

In another study, Gates (2017) gave some of the approaches used when offering financial knowledge in firms that were religious in nature. According to Gates (2017), after the financial crisis of 2008, many people were left devastated on the fact that they had not really focused on having sound financial knowledge in their lives. People lost their lifetime savings, jobs and also some even died due to stress. The remnants sought refuge in religious

organizations to get spiritual help during these hard financial times. Further, Gates (2017) revealed that in as much as religious organizations offered Biblical comfort, there was a dire need to handle the bull by its horns. Financial empowerment was heavily needed so as to sharpen the minds of these people.

In addition, Gates (2017) explained that various church leaders have offered various projects to its members. The study therefore involved 15 pastors to be interviewed. The findings indicated some of the approaches were based on risk taking area, effective communication on various financial goals, sermons and Bible study. However, Gates (2017) revealed that while the religious organizations were performing these approaches, they were encountered in recognizing and linking the church roles to the members, high illiteracy levels (reading and writing) and also negative mindset of the members of financial empowerment due to previous losses. This called to establish some of the challenges the church faces when training its members on financial empowerment.

In developing nations, there were literatures done on how financial literacy played part in ensuring that spiritual-economics of church members is successful. According to Kgatle (2020), Pentecostalism in South Africa was latent to turn out to be a substitute for economic restructuring. This was because when the country of South Africa gained independence in 1994, churches adopted new-liberalism. Interestingly, Kgatle (2020) noted that as a result, there had been imbalance between various church members. That is, you would find in the same church, there were extremely rich members and also extremely poor members who could not afford a decent meal, clothing or shelter let alone being unemployed. This imbalance had caused the church to be divided in terms of development agenda. The rich on the one hand were advocating for more mega projects while the poor on the other hand

were advocating for humanly projects such as feeding the hungry, clothing and building shelter for the poor. This had left the church stagnant without a specific direction it was headed.

That notwithstanding, Kgatle (2020) proclaimed that Pentecostalism in South Africa had been thriving. This was whereby Pentecostal churches had adopted alternative ways of ensuring that all church members were equipped with financial management skills, financial literacy and communalism. The members of Pentecostal churches seem to have learnt that one could not walk for long alone but as a group you moved a lot. Once trained on financial literacy, the rich had begun noting that various poor members as an opportunity and hence given them jobs. This was because the rich had confidence that these members had various basic skills such as financial management that could come in handy in their organizations. The poor people were hence able to get employment which boosted their lifestyle from being poorers.

Additionally, Purwaningrat et al. (2019) investigated the purpose of attaining both spiritual and financial acquaintance in personal finances administration. The study by Purwaningrat et al. (2019) selected through simple random sampling method 100 students from the University of Indonesia Hindu. The study discovered that when one had spiritual intelligence, their personal financial management was likely to be high. That is, there was a significant influence between spirituality and personal financial management. Therefore, Purwaningrat et al. (2019) considered various financial management aspects such as savings, level of debts, expenditure and investment. The choice of sampling methods used was unreliable hence the study should have used purposive sampling method to get students in business, economics and tourism. Later on, the study should have used stratified sampling method to ensure that gender balance was

used for conclusive findings. Since the study was done in a university set-up, there was need to investigate whether spirituality would have a significant impact on Methodist church members.

Further on, Soboyejo (2016) investigated how churches that greatly advocated for prosperity influenced African nation's economic growth. Therefore, Soboyejo (2016) began by complaining that the 21st African religious leaders were more concerned with their personal empowerment, propositioning that it was God's drive for the society to have wealth, health and triumph in the world. According to Soboyejo (2016), the poor people in the church were normally viewed as sinners or had family curses behind them. This was a total deviation from the original gospel brought about by the missionaries in Africa (Soboyejo, 2016).

The study revealed that in as much as these prosperity churches had financial management and literacy projects, they had high entrance fees in which the poor could not afford. In these meetings the rich members interacted and create more connections while the poor people were shut out. Therefore, Soboyejo (2016) proclaimed there had been total inequality especially between the rich and the poor. For a church member to be listened to, they either have to be educated or be wealthy. However, Soboyejo (2016) found out that these prosperity churches had no notable impact on the society, had led to exploitation and a lot of church members backslidden due to lack of communalism and concern. This proved that there was a gap of knowing the measures that the Methodist church ensured that the rich and the poor got empowered economically without discrimination and inequality.

A book documented by Mawudor (2016) explored how church organizations ensured there was financial sustainability in Kenya. The book by Mawudor (2016) examined church

donors, general secretaries, church leaders, and church staff. The study identified that some of various methods that churches used to maintain sustainability included but not limited to financial management, capitals management, broadening of revenue, relationship management between partners, and church and revenue generation. All these methods were discovered to have a positive and statistically significant relationship with financial sustainability of the church. Nevertheless, Mawudor (2016) did consider how the church ensured that there was relationship management between the government and the church. This created a gap to examine relationship management structures that the Methodist church in Kenya had with the government since financial sustainability of the church was greatly anchored on the various policies and directives issued by the government.

2.6 Moderating Influence of Involvement of Communities in Church Projects and Church Growth

Current years have experienced a growing attention in and a debate on the relevance of religion in the contemporary community. Since 1990's institutions are progressively become more knowledgeable on the relevance of religion in improving growth in the economic arena (Arasio et al., 2018). Churches have advanced ways through which they can promote both spiritual and economic development to empower its members. These ways include participation in tithing and offering, meaningful welfare groups, regular, bible study, revival meetings, crusades, youth camps and church retreats (Basedau et al., 2018). Involvement of church in spiritual-economic projects borrow relevance in that they should be creative, fun, friendly, and informative (Kwemboi, 2019).

Different global churches are involved in spiritual-economics projects differently. There are various studies done in light of this. Studies done in developed nations like a critical review by Rogers and Konieczny (2018) sought to answer the question on whether religious ways of involvement of spiritual-economics projects were set to always include the poor in these projects. This is in consideration of social classes of people in the west and south. This was an area of great interest to various people. This had been a problem to very many people in understanding how the church really worked. The study by Rogers and Konieczny (2018) reviewed the point that the church weighed in various level of social status of people and how that fought poverty among its members. Further, Rogers and Konieczny (2018) elaborated that the church was in normal cases at cross-roads to bring an equilibrium between the lower class and high-class status of members in the church. There was a great difference between how churches in the western side of the globe work as compared to the south ones.

According to Rogers and Konieczny (2018), race, ethnicity, and gender greatly contributed to social inequalities in churches when trying to empower its members. Churches were meant to give purpose of living to its members through communal activities such as group retreats, crusades, revivals and also weekly bible studies. However, the church could sometime bring various divisions in the church whereby various professions were looked down (Rogers & Konieczny, 2018). For example, the way a member of the church who was a professional doctor was treated, was quite different from a farmer church member in the same church. In addition, when a member was poor, their opinion on church economic development program would not be considered effective as the wealthy member. There was therefore need to assess how Methodist church in Kenya, Meru region, ensured that

social inequalities such as ethnicity, gender and age were minimized especially in relation to promotion of spiritual-economic aspects.

Additionally, Basedau et al. (2018) described the multi-scale effects of religion on socioeconomic development. The study noted that in as much as religious concepts could contribute to various types of personal wealth and labor market contribution, being associated with a certain type of religion could a genesis of hinderance to join a new labor market hence negative influence on economic development. Adding to that, Basedau et al. (2018) went on to revealed further that studies had established that there was a low influence of religious beliefs on level of income and gender fairness in addition to modernization of events. There was therefore need to establish whether gender fairness was normally practiced when there was spiritual-economic empowering of members in Methodist church in Kenya, Meru region.

A write up by Lausanne Movement (2017) gave the key highlights on the importance of the church in building wealth for its members. Therefore, Lausanne Movement (2017) highlighted that a church had four mandates as far as wealth building on its people was concerned. The first mandate was enlightening its congregation. This was done through conferences, social media and meetings whereby people were informed on various business opportunities in the market. The second mandate was to educate the congregation. Education of the church members was a process done to enable them move from just being interested in available opportunities and be committed towards attaining these opportunities. They were taught on how and when to grasp an opportunity for maximum benefits. The third mandate was whereby the church equipped its members. This step involved the church stepping in to either connect member in financial institutions and

resourceful people that would partner with the members on the journey of obtaining the opportunities, or simply giving them seed capital to begin the journey. The last mandate was empowering its members. This was whereby the church did a follow-up to its members to ensure that their various business ventures were going on smoothly. Apart from that, the church gave more ideas to its members on how to protect their businesses by occasion tithing and offering since it was the Lord who gave power to make wealth (Deuteronomy 8:17-18); ensuring they remained faithful when paying taxes and suppliers; and reduced a lot of expenditure for more growth of their businesses (NIV, 2011). Therefore, Lausanne Movement (2017) guaranteed that once a church followed these four mandates, long-lasting wealth was built.

Further on, Andersen et al. (2017) brought forth an intriguing investigation on how religion impacted the economy. The study gave evidence from 9 centuries on the fact that virtues such as hard-work could indeed improve the economy. The study by Andersen et al. (2017) gave a synopsis commencing with Max Weber argument that protestants in north of Europe who were motivated to ensure that they practiced the hard-work virtue they had learnt from their various denominations caused an increase in their wealth when they saved more as compared to their Catholic counterparts. This led to uprise of capitalism in Europe. Therefore, Andersen et al. (2017) agreed that the virtual of hard work could improve the economy. These positive virtues were trained to children by parents over a span of the nine centuries. Additionally, Andersen et al. (2017) linked various Christian virtues improved economic and reproductive growth.

In Africa, a case study was documented by Mbuagbo and Akoko (2019) on Christians should harmonize material success and spiritual development for holistic growth. The

study was specifically inclined to women in Full Gospel Mission Church [FGMC] in Cameroon. Therefore, Mbuagbo and Akoko (2019) explained that churches in Cameroon already concerned themselves with not only spiritual growth of its members but also economic empowerment. The study proclaimed as a result current resource mobilization by women in FGMC, there had been need to establish how they were able to not only grow spiritually but also in wealth. In addition, Mbuagbo and Akoko (2019) expressed that the various churches in Cameroon had always been concerned with healing and protection part of the ministry, however, the women in FGMC had gone a step further to form welfare groups whereby they contributed to the groups for meaningful projects.

These groups had been successful since women form majority of the members in Cameroon churches. Some of the meaningful projects included goat rearing, chicken keeping and farming. Additionally, Mbuagbo and Akoko (2019) further revealed that when these women had meetings, they sang, prayed and read the Word of God. This enabled them to clear their minds and have peace as they go back to their homes. This eventually resulted to harmony in most of the women's homesteads. In as much as this study was informative, it only gave account on women's program and failed to give details on youth, men and children projects.

Further, Mabwe et al. (2018) developed a study on consideration given to the church as a social enterprise for economic growth of Zimbabwe. The study investigated how the church could come in handy when the economy was low. That is, how the government and private sector could utilize the church to ensure that they got an upper hand towards boosting the economy in Zimbabwe. Therefore, Mabwe et al. (2018) used secondary data to determine how both Pentecostal and mainline churches had contributed towards improving the

economy. The study established that the church such as Catholic have opened Mbuya Dorcas Health Center in Waterfalls. This hospital had a unit which was non-medical whereby the people with spiritual needs were ministered to through prayers and the Word of God. The hospital was funded through offering and tithing of the Catholic church members.

In addition, Mabwe et al. (2018) confirmed that following the command by Jesus when he was leaving this earth that we should go out and teach all the nations, 196 schools had been opened in Zimbabwe. In this schools, the church was able to create projects such as week challenge, prayer days, Christian union and Youth Catholic Association movements, and also begin with prayers every single day of the week. This helped promote both spiritual as well as education to children. Nevertheless, this information that was provided by Mabwe et al. (2018) was from secondary sources which were prone to high levels of biasness. The present study would collect primary data to ascertain some of the ways through which the Methodist church in Kenya uses to promote spiritual-economics aspects among its church members.

In Nigeria, Akanbi and Bayers (2017) found out ways the church could become a catalyst to improve the society. The study put the church under the scope of socio-economic contribution to the nation of Nigeria. Narrowing down to South Western Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, Akanbi and Bayers (2017) revealed that there had been increase rehabilitation rescue and reconciliation projects that gave spiritual guidance to youths before any economic empowerment was accorded to them; new faith-based universities establishments that undertook a Christian unit as a mandatory subject for example in covenant university; and there had been promotional education such as certificate and

diploma free courses to poor women on how they could invest and manage in diverse businesses.

Further on, Akanbi and Bayers (2017) expressed that the new believers were well taken care of with a team of church members called evangelist, elders or church leaders who followed up the new believer to guide them on how to live well in this new life in Christ. These believers were taught on Christianity principles such as always praying, reading the word of God and ensuring that they always followed the biblical teachings. These teachings ranged from faithfulness in their material offerings and tithes, honesty and just when offering services to people among others. However, Akanbi and Bayers (2017) looked only at Pentecostal churches and not any other churches such as Catholic, Methodist, Anglican church. Therefore, the present study would examine the Methodist church in Kenya, Meru region, to know some of the ways they use to ensure they blend in spirituality as well as economic empowerment to her members.

In another study, Marava (2016) investigated the purpose and extent of the management of the church towards improving sustainable growth in Zimbabwe. Therefore, Marava (2016) proclaimed that the church was highly acknowledged on its role towards nourishing the spiritual aspect of the people while less emphasis was documented on its role on how the church had improved in Godly boosting of economic development in Zimbabwe. In addition, Marava (2016) gave an outline on some of the initiatives that have been developed by leaders of Zimbabwean churches towards Agenda 21 of sustainable development. Some of these initiatives according to Marava (2016) were learning institutions, old-people homes and vocational training centers. However, some of the issues that were inhibiting churches from fully contributing towards development include politics of the church,

gender inequalities, different doctrines, traditions nature of churches. Hence this study also examined the challenges that the Methodist church in Kenya, Meru region, leadership faced when promoting spiritual-economic aspects among its members.

In Kenya, Omondi (2020) explored the conspicuousness of the church during the covid-19 era. The study concentrated on how Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) came into rescue of its members especially on economic support. In the year 2020 corona virus invaded the world and as a result profitability of many businesses have declined as well as some other businesses closing down for good. The economic impact of covid-19 had not only affected non-church believers but also church believers. Notably, Omondi (2020) noted that employment of many people had been terminated, resulting to people not having any source of income. The study evaluated how the church had come into aid to not only encourage people spiritually but also empower them materially and economically.

Therefore, Omondi (2020) described a situation whereby the church was not able to meet physically its members hence need to deliver sermons through social media, radios and televisions. It had become so hard for the church to trace its members since there was limited movement of people from one place to the other. However, Omondi (2020) revealed that ACK had previously organized for food drives whereby church members were given various food stuffs as well as sanitizers and masks. The ACK had organized a day whereby members who did not have enough meals, came and got free food item. ACK further liaised with various international donors for various financial and material support to keep up with the food program. ACK believed that once its members were fed, they would have the energy to hang on during this tough covid-19 period. However, Omondi (2020) did not give tangible evidence on how ACK had been handling various non-church

members who had come to get food stuff but were not members on the ACK. There was therefore need to consult how Methodist church in Kenya, Meru region, had been providing aid to the community around the church.

2.7 Summary of Research Gaps

The examined studies on project communal training centers and how they empowered church members had categorically given various projects that were initiated by various religious organizations. There were various projects such as schools, farming, hospitals, lending of loans and bookstores. However, these projects experienced their share of challenges which was critiqued to form the gaps for the study. The studies discovered that most projects were initiated without offering training to their stakeholders which led to poor management and failure of the projects. This lack of training was caused by low church leadership backing. There had been complains that there were few markets leading to high transportation costs, high capital needed to start, low financial education and increased insecurity to trade. Poor technical know-how on investment and low loans issuance had significantly deteriorated various projects growth and traditions that restricted women from being leaders to spearhead the projects initiatives.

The studies reviewed on sustainability indicated that the churches gave purpose of living to its members through communal activities such as group retreats, crusades, revivals and also weekly bible studies. However, the church could sometime bring various divisions in the church whereby various professions were looked down. These divisions were based on race, ethnicity, and gender greatly which contributed to social inequalities in churches when trying to empower its members. Issues that were inhibiting churches from fully

contributing towards development include politics of the church, gender inequalities, different doctrines, traditional nature of churches.

Financial literacy variable had categorically bridged the gap that seem to be present when the church was offering spiritual-economic initiatives to its members. Various studies investigated, discovered that poor people in church struggled in making ends meet because they came from a poor background; they had little or no financial management skills; and lacked financial literacy to know when, how and where to invest for more profits. When churches stepped in to train its members, there had been various challenges such as recognizing and linking the church roles to the members, high illiteracy levels (reading and writing) and also negative mindset of the members of financial literacy due to previous losses. In other reviewed studies, it was discovered that there were weak church policies that were vague on what really happened when a church leader was misappropriating church resources. gender inequality, and low resources by churches to come up with more diverse viable projects that fitted in the agenda of environment protection.

The diverse studies done on the types of benefits that church members got as a result of spirituality, come out clearly especially on many cases of neglect by the church on people living with disabilities and the vulnerable. The social stigma that the community gave the disabled people frequently linked to witchcraft and sin was fueled by the church when little or no attention was given to these people. They often felt neglected and without a voice of reasoning or hope. As a result, they purged into depression and most of them backslide. In as much as there had been churches especially in South and central Africa that had developed various initiatives, very many disabled people had not yet been reached yet. This high number of disabled people was simply because of lack of medical access when struck

by various treatable diseases such as meningitis. This proved that poor medical treatment and lack of treatment on time were the main causes. Further on, due to high cases of poverty, churches relied on various studies done by theological scholars that showed areas of concern as far as poverty levels were concerned. In as much as this was needed, the motives behind the theological literature could be biased hence mislead the church towards helping the poor people who were in real need.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by two theories which were resource-based theory and stewardship theory. Resource based theory guided communal training and financial literacy variables. Stewardship theory guided the study into sustainability and involvement of communities in church projects.

2.8.1 Resource Based Theory

Resource based theory was developed by Barney (1991). This theory guided communal training and financial literacy variables. Resource based theory states that organizations possess various resources that through them, they gain competitive advantage for long-term performance and survival. That is, various organizations weather public or private have treasured resources that through investment of these resources, there is growth and a grasp of a certain niche into which the organization becomes very competitive which translates into the organization performing well.

Resource based theory was used in this study because a church which is a private religious organization, strives to ensure that it spreads out the gospel of Jesus Christ and also reach

out to many people who are in both physical and spiritual needs. To attain his key objective requires resources such as money, personal commitment of the church members and also material support. Therefore, the church requires to adequately and wisely use the resources it has to gain a competitive advantage. Since the church does not get any monetary support from the government, it maximizes on the offering, tithes and first fruits among other types of giving to ensure that it is able to support its activities. In Malachi 3:10, the Bible encourages believers to bring tithes and offering, so that there should be plenty in the house of the Lord (NIV, 2011).

Having plenty in the house of the Lord means that once tithes and offering are brought, the church should ensure that it is multiplied through investments to ensure that the church activities never fail. Church management have the responsibilities of ensuring that once members give out their resources to the church, prudence should be administered for the church to reach out the World. Prudence comes in various ways. Churches sponsor church members through various levels of education, pays hospital bills, builds houses for poor members, buys food and household stuff for members, shows compassion among the vulnerable such as the old and orphans. These activities give a church a competitive edge hence members easily give out their resources since they can clearly see how their resources are used to help the community.

The church ensures that as members are giving out their resources, they should invest in various income generating projects to ensure that the church offering interest is compounded over time to increase the wealth of the church. In the parable of the talents in the book Matthew 25:14-30, the master gives his servants some talents based on the capabilities (NIV, 2011). Various servants invest in diverse businesses which generates

more talents and when the master comes back, he is much pleased with them. However, one servant does not invest in anything but keeps the given talent which he returns to his master. The master is so much angry with the servant and hence even asks him on whether he thought of putting the talent in the bank so as to gain some interest. This story clearly shows the church that it is very okay to invest various resources into business initiatives to ensure that more resources are generated. This is because, the more the church generates more resources, the more it will be easier to spread the gospel since the church will be able to fund the costs associated and also reach out to the community. In case a church does not invest, the Bible shows that the church leaders will be put to task on the judgement day (NIV, 2011).

Resource based theory was criticized by Rumelt (1991) in that it works in an assumption that as long as an organization utilizes its internal resources it will gain a competitive advantage. However, it does not factor in the unpredictability of the market and other external factors which limits it. This limitation will not affect the current study since it has been proven over time that as long as a church manages its resources transparently and empowers the community around it, it always enjoys competitive advantage as compared to other churches who do not do this.

2.8.2 Stewardship Theory

Stewardship theory was developed by Donaldson and Davis (1991). It guided the study into sustainability and involvement of communities in church projects variables. Stewardship theory argues that manager's stewardship behavior leads to great corporate governance norms when the adopted organizational principles are in line with endorsed

principles. That means that when managers of an organization blend various thoughtful ideals with the current practices, an advanced governance of the institutional resources is enhanced.

Stewardship theory was adopted in this study because the church has been mandated by Christ to be stewards on its resources in expanding the Kingdom of God. Therefore, it is the sole purpose of the church management to train and equip members with financial empowerments and management. This is because, a greatly governed institution entails maximum participation of all members in all key areas such as personal and communal financial matters. A church management or leadership team will be deemed successful if not only provides economic empowerment projects to its members but also train them of how to manage these projects at a personal or communal level. Financial literacy is the most basic strategy that a church ought to use as they commence on the journey of economic empowerment. Financial literacy could be compared to as teaching the congregation on how to differentiate between a 'fish' and a 'rock in the sea'. This will enable members understand how a fish looks like so that when they are economically empowered to 'catch the fish', they will know what they are doing.

Financial empowerment is basically the backbone of economic empowerment. Therefore, good stewardship could be measured on how well the church management has trained its members. For example, when a church member knows the positive and negative effects of debts, it will make them more informed when they are making decision to take a loan either at a personal or communal level. If a member understands how an interest rate is calculated, they will be at a position to weigh and see whether the debt intended to be borrowed will generate more revenue than the interest charged when invested in a program. If the revenue

will be low, then that church member understands why such kind of a loan is risky and unviable.

In second Corinthians, Paul teaches the Corinthians that anyone could be used for the glory of God (Garland, 1999). For example, God could use the weak, low and unworthy people to fulfill his intended purpose in the world. Therefore, the church has a mandate of always seeing to it that servant leadership (stewardship) is continuously practiced, whereby when one gets a chance to lead, they should do so in whole humility and laying down their lives to others just as Christ did. According to Garland, (1999), believers and churches should be cautious in thinking that outward success means growth in gospel. This is because, the measuring scale for growth in gospel in the perspective of people is different from what God uses.

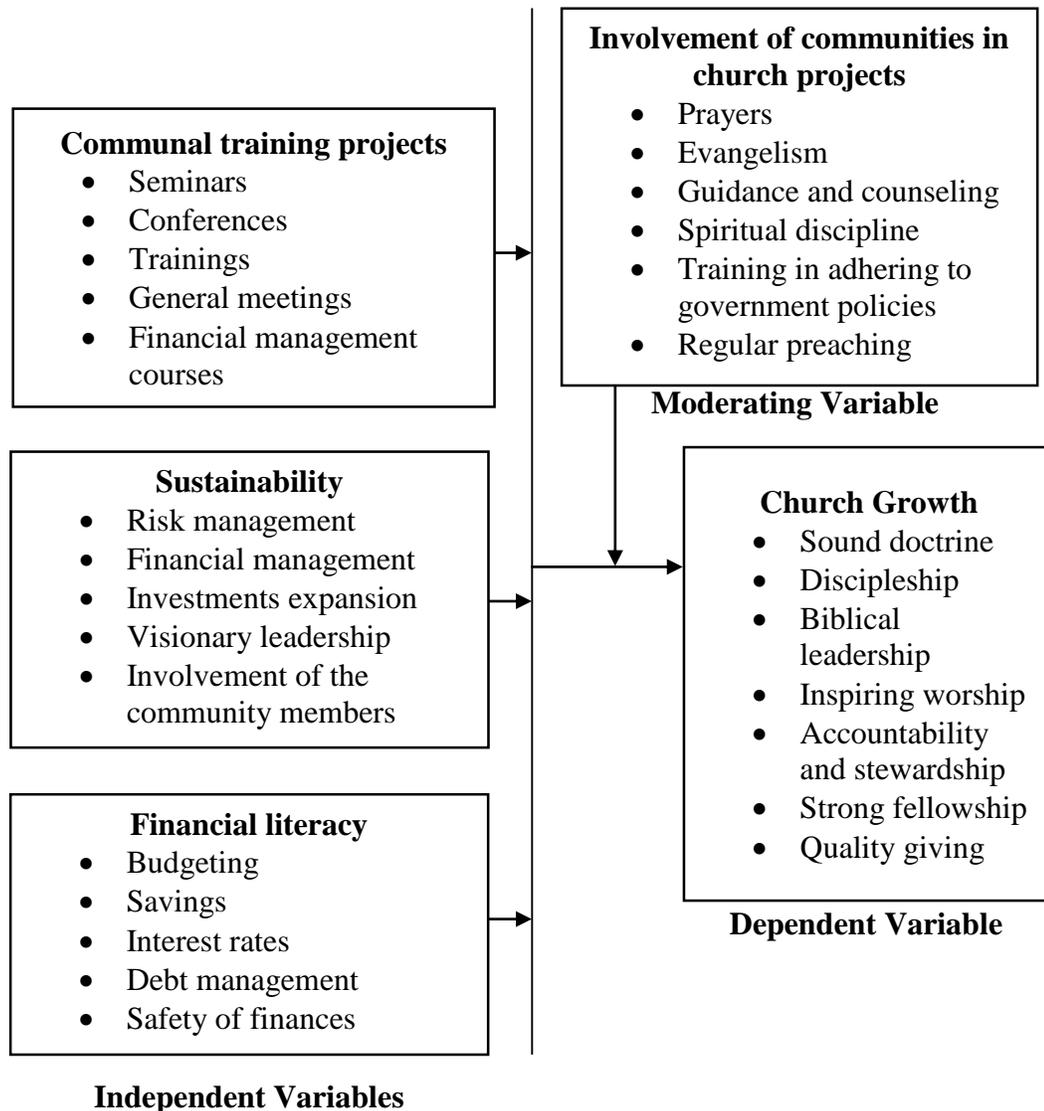
Stewardship theory was criticized by Chrisman (2019) that people act opportunistically when their interests arise. For example, when a church leader has a child working in a financial institution such as a bank, they will insist that a church takes a big loan to boost the portfolio sales target of their child and not considering the detrimental effects of the loan to the church in case it is unable to raise the monthly installments. However, this weakness will not influence the study since there is a chain of command in Methodist church whereby before embarking on a risky venture that may put the church at a problem is critically discussed by various religious leaders and not one person makes the decision.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatic representation of the variables of the study. In this study, the dependent variable is the church growth. It is located on the right side while the independent variables are located on the left side of Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1

Conceptual Framework



According to Figure 2.1, the independent variables are projects, communal training, sustainability, financial literacy, and involvement of communities in church projects.

Church growth had sub variables such as sound doctrine, discipleship, biblical leadership, inspiring worship, accountability and stewardship, strong fellowship and quality giving. Sound doctrine is where Christians are taught about God and the correct way of loving and knowing their God. The principal object of sound doctrine is God and another object is all thing in relation to God. Doctrine imparts us to see God as the one from whom and through whom all things exist in this world. The Holy Bible talks about the right teachings; therefore, we should endeavor the follow the correct word of God in terms of giving our sacrifices and tithes to him. Our relationship with God should be anchored in truth and in spirit.

Discipleship simply means being a follower of Christ. A Christian disciple is a person who follows Jesus Christ willingly and assists in spreading the good news of salvation through him. Christians follow the word of God in order to be more like him. Jesus Christ had his twelve disciples whom he taught and they followed his teachings and they desired to be like him. The Church today is in need of leaders and shepherds who understands the true call of Christian and have the ability to teach and instruct Gods people. True discipleship is characterized by putting Jesus first in all things, following Jesus Christ, bearing fruits and loving other disciples.

Projects where training was offered to the community included seminars, conferences, trainings, general meetings, and financial management courses (EMC, 2020; UNMCN, 2018). These trainings were cognizant of the fact that the community not only required empowerment in financial aspects of the church projects but also Biblical principles anchorage. Therefore, the training grounds required to be in a suitable environment that is

away from distractions of daily activities. Once that was done, the community was able to understand the basic concepts of project management without strain.

The sustainability of projects was done through risk management, financial management, investments expansion, visionary leadership and involvement of the community members (Chowdhury et al., 2019; Nababan, 2017; NCA, 2016; Pillay, 2017). Church projects required sustainability in as much as other projects out there. The projects have a lifeline which requires consistent flow of resources to enable various operations take place. Therefore, in the management of these resources, at times the project faces various shortcomings. From time immemorial, projects have failed for the management not taking seriously various risk associated with the projects. Other times, when a project is implemented just for the sake of it and there is no any visionary leadership to sustain it, it crumbles after a short-duration of time.

Financial literacy was indicated through budgeting, savings, interest rates, debt management and safety of finances (Andersen et al., 2017; Basedau et al., 2018; Lausanne Movement , 2017; Rogers & Konieczny, 2018). The ability of the church to ensure that there is financial literacy among the members is putting in place activities that exposes them to financial matters. For example, through involving them in preparing budgets and safety of finances such as allowing them to suggest options such as opening bank accounts. Additionally, the church also encouraged members to save their personal finances in stable financial institutions where they are able to earn interest and take loans. However, as they take loans the church encourages them to balance their loan appetite vis a vis the interest required hence have the ability to manage debt.

The involvement of communities in church projects and financial empowerment included prayers, evangelism, guidance and counseling, spiritual discipline, training in adhering to government policies, and regular preaching (Mele, 2017; Melé & Fontrodona, 2017; Somu & Sujatha, 2016). The church had a mandate to ensure that the community around it, were involved in its projects. This was to ensure that the community members not only saw project being implemented but also took part in the implementation process. This was due to the fact that the community members who were regular attendees of the church services were actually main financiers of the church operations. The church therefore involved them either directly or indirectly in the project.

2.10 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter paid attention to provision of studies that supported the various variables of the study. The chapter commenced by providing studies that have ever been done in relation to church growth, communal training, sustainability, financial literacy and involvement of the communities to church projects. The main attributes documented under the studies review involved providing the details of the author, timelines, topic, target population, sampled population, respondents, and main findings. Thereafter, the study provided criticism on areas that were either not covered or issues on methodology. The issues pointed provided the gaps that were later summarized before providing information on theories. The study also provided two theories that supported various variables of the study. The theoretical explanation involved details of the author, the original contents of the theory, link with how best the theory related to the variables, and the relevant critics. Later on, the chapter provided the conceptual framework and its subsequent explanations.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter outlined the procedures that were followed when collecting data that that would be useful in achieving the objectives of the study. The methodology involved knowing how the study would collect data. The chapter examined research philosophy, research design, target population and location of the study. Emphasis was also be placed on sampling techniques used, data collection instruments, pre-testing, procedures for data collection and how the data was analyzed. Ethical considerations undertaken concluded the chapter.

3.2 Research Philosophy

A research philosophy is elaborated as a strategy through which a study is thought as standard by extensive numeral studies in the area and in which have been proved and undertaken for lengthy period of time (Abdullah & Siti, 2019). There are two major research philosophy. They include positivism and interpretivism (Abdullah & Siti, 2019). Positivism follows a thorough theory substantiation system which relies heavily on facts and offers in depth explanations that leads to generalization (Park et al., 2020). Interpretivism entails making conclusion based on personal experiences of the respondents (Abdullah & Siti, 2019). That is, how different individuals use their human-centered qualitative approaches to a subject matter. The current study therefore applied positivism research paradigm because the study was scientific and hence relied mostly on factual

information which would be explained for generalization to be concluded (Park et al., 2020).

3.3 Research Design

A research design constitutes of the approach utilized in a study to join in diverse aspects of a research in an articulate and rational way hence efficiently finding solution to the study's problem (Sileyew, 2019). This study used descriptive research design. This type of design explores the situation of the population being studied without necessarily interfering with their activities (Siedlecki, 2020). Descriptive research design was used in this study because the study sought to elaborate the effects of spiritual-economic projects in church growth in Kaaga synod in Meru County, Kenya. In other words, the study had a goal of establishing the effects of spiritual-economic in church growth, the extent of spiritual-economic projects in church growth and financial literacy and spirituality on church growth in Meru County, Kenya.

3.4 Location of the Study

A location of the study is the place where the study collects its data from (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). The location of this study was in Kaaga synod in Meru County, Kenya. Kaaga synod was selected because Methodist church received a warmer reception in Meru particularly in Kaaga area where the first church was built as compared to other regions such as Mombasa. (Methodist Church in Kenya [MCK], 2020c). The total circuits in Kaaga synod are 25 while other regions such as Nairobi synods have 11 circuits; Nkubu have 20 circuits; Nyambene have 22 circuits; Tharaka have 7 circuits; Miathene has 16 circuits; Mombasa

has 9 circuits; Western has 8 circuits; Kilifi has 8 circuits; Kajiado has 5 circuits; while Singwaya has only 3 circuits (MCK, 2020a).

3.5 Target Population

A study's target population is the unit of analysis through which the study intends to collect data from (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). In this study, the target population was Kaaga synod. This synod encompassed a topographical area with a collection of diverse Methodist churches called circuits. The respondents were 25 superintendent ministers, 53 head of church projects and 652 community project members that participated and were registered members in the projects (MCK, 2020c). A superintendent minister was considered any clergy in charge of a single circuit or a Methodist church branch. The head of church project was any person at a church level who is responsible for running and managing church projects. This included the chairpersons and their assistants. A community project member was any person that participates and was a registered member in the M.C.K church projects.

3.6 Sampling Technique

A sample is a unit of the population that acts as a representative of the entire population (Babbie, 2014). Since it would take a lot of time and huge resources used, it is therefore recommended to obtain a sample from the population. The study used purposive sampling technique to select all the 25 superintendent ministers and 53 project heads. This was because the heads of each circuit who included the superintendent minister and project leaders were more knowledgeable in church projects and their finances more than any other member of the church. The study sampled the head of projects through simple random sampling method. When sampling community members, the study used simple random

sampling method. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), it was recommended a sampling size of between 10 to 30 percent for populations samples. Therefore, the study selected 30 percent of the project members' population to result to 196 project members who were sampled through purposive method across diverse circuits. The sampled population is as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Sampled Population

No.	Methodist church circuits in Meru Synod	Superintendent ministers	Head of church projects	Community project members	Total
1	Kaaga	1	2	22	25
2	Ntakira	1	2	4	7
3	Chugu	1	2	3	6
4	Buuri	1	1	11	13
5	Kambereu	1	3	3	7
6	Kibirichia	1	2	12	15
7	Ruiri	1	2	2	5
8	Mt Kenya	1	2	9	12
9	Central K, Mission	1	3	13	17
10	Timau	1	2	4	7
11	Kieni	1	2	14	17
12	Ontulili	1	1	3	5
13	Thuura	1	3	12	16
14	Mulathankari	1	2	8	11
15	Kiamiriru	1	2	7	10
16	Naari	1	3	4	8
17	Ntugi	1	3	3	7
18	St. Pauls	1	2	19	22
19	Nthimbiri	1	2	12	15
20	Runogone	1	2	3	6
21	Mwiteria	1	3	5	9
22	Kiburine	1	1	3	5
23	Rwarera	1	2	9	12
24	Kisima	1	2	4	7
25	Ngushishi	1	2	7	10
	Total	25	53	196	274

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments are tools that a study uses to gather information from the respondents. For accurate and precise data collections, as study should always strive to have it done using reliable instruments that will be able to achieve the objectives of the study. In this study, interview guides and questionnaires were used to collect data. Interview guides were utilized when collecting data from the superintendent ministers (see appendix IV). This was because they were the most informed people in Methodist church in Kenya as far as spiritual-economic empowerment aspects were concerned. Interviewing them would boost this study in such a way that they were able to give as much information as they would want based on the objectives of the study.

The other respondents such as head of church projects and community project members answered the questionnaires provided (see appendix IV). The questionnaires had both open and closed questionnaires. The closed-ended questionnaires were confined to an Ordinal Likert Scale which had five various ticking options like 1-Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3- Neither agree nor disagree, 4- Agree, and 5- Strongly agree. The questionnaires were grouped based on the objectives of the study and had six sections. Section A asked questions that related to demographic information of the respondents. Section B asked questions related to the influence of communal training in spiritual-economic projects on the growth of Methodist church in Kenya. This section had four closed-ended questions and three open-ended questions that required further explanation.

Section C asked questions related to the influence of sustainability of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of Methodist church in Kenya. This section had four closed-ended

questions and three open-ended questions that required further explanation. Section D asked questions related to the influence of financial literacy of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of Methodist church in Kenya. This section had four closed-ended questions and three open-ended questions that required further explanation. Section E asked questions related to the influence of involvement of communities in projects on spiritual-economic projects and the growth of Methodist church in Kenya.

This section had five closed-ended questions and two open-ended questions that required further explanation. Section F asked questions related to growth of Methodist church in Kenya. This section had five closed-ended questions and two open-ended questions that required further explanation. The study had also interview guides which would be used during the interview process. The interview guide had six similar sections just as the questionnaire which included demographic section that asked two questions. The other five sections asked each four questions related to communal training, sustainability, financial literacy, involvement of community members and growth of Methodist church variables.

3.8 Pre-Testing

According to Gani et al. (2019), a pre-test study is very important in a study. This is because it gives a chance to other respondents who will not take part in the main study but are knowledgeable in the area of interest, to go through the research collecting tools. The pre-test respondents answer the questions asked in the data collection tools and hence offering the study to clarify questions that are not comprehensible before the main study. Pre-testing acts a benchmark and a litmus test to establish whether the questions are realistic and related to the key study's objectives. Therefore, as a way to ensure that the questionnaires

and interview guides are fit for the main study, the study conducted a pre-test study in Methodist church in Nairobi synod. Nairobi synod has similar characteristics as Kaag Synod based on high number of circuits and church projects. The study selected 3 circuits in Nairobi synod through purposive sampling method. Nairobi synod, had also several projects such as 1 hotel, 1 satellite campus, 1 insurance company, 1 Sacco, 3 clinics, and 2 dispensaries.

A pre-test interview was conducted on 3 superintendent ministers. According to Perneger et al. (2014), ten percent of the main study's respondent number should be used to determine the number of participants in pre-test study. Therefore, this study used 10 percent of each of the main study to derive to 3 superintendent ministers, 5 projects heads and 20 community project members. The superintendent ministers and head of projects were selected using purposive sampling method while random sampling technique was used to sample community project members. Head of projects and community project members were required to answer the questionnaires and provide answers that would measure and corrections of clarification done before the main study was conducted.

3.8.1 Reliability

Reliability is the ability of the research instruments to maintain consistency of measure (Mohajan, 2017). The types of reliability that exists include test-retest reliability, interrater reliability, parallel form's reliability and internal consistency (Taherdoost, 2016). Test-retest reliability is a test that is conducted the same away in two different period of time (Taherdoost, 2016). Interrater is conducted by different people (Taherdoost, 2016). Parallel form's reliability is done through different versions designed to be the same (Taherdoost,

2016). Internal consistency is a test done on individual items of a test. Internal consistency type of reliability was most suitable in this study since the study would wish to ascertain the reliability of both interview guides and questionnaires separately (Mohajan, 2017).

For that to happen, reliability in this study was measured using Cronbach Alpha. This measured the internal consistency scale reliability of research instruments such as questionnaires and interview guide. The responses to both interview and questionnaires were subjected to the scale which runs from 0 to 1. According to Trizano and Alvarado (2016), when the results of Cronbach Alpha ranged from 0 to 0.6 on scale, they were weak but when they range from 0.7 to 1 on scale, they were reliable to be used for the main study.

3.8.2 Validity

Validity is the accuracy of the study to articulately measure and achieve the objectives of the study (Boralinwa, 2015). That is, the ability of the research instruments to measure what they are intended to measure. Validity is measured in three ways which are face, content and construct validity (Boralinwa, 2015). This study ensured that it measured the three types of validity in its undertaking. Face validity was indicated when the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable was measured (Surusu & Maslakci, 2020). That is, the influence of communal training on growth of Methodist church in Meru County; influence of sustainability on growth of Methodist church in Meru County; influence of financial literacy on growth of Methodist church in Meru County; and influence of involvement of communities in church projects on growth of Methodist church in Meru County. Content validity was indicated when the research queries asked were related to the variables of the study (Surusu & Maslakci, 2020). That is, the questionnaires

and interview guide would have questions relating to communal training, sustainability, financial literacy, involvement of communities in church projects, and growth of Methodist church, which were the objectives of the study. Lastly criterion validity was indicated when the outcome of the study was compared with past studies to ascertain how well it had been able to measure the variables of the study (Surusu & Maslakci, 2020).

3.9 Procedures of Data Collection

The researcher intended to first achieve the proposal presentation requirements after which successful presentation led to approval by the Kenya Methodist University (KeMU). An introductory letter from KeMU was the resultant of the approval. Once issued with the introductory letter, the researcher used this letter to apply for National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) research permit. Application of the NACOSTI was done online through their website portal. The NACOSTI research permit usually took approximately one to two weeks. In this period of time, the researcher was conducting pre-test in Nairobi synod after which Cronbach alpha results were generated. In addition, the researcher intended to use this time to seek services of 2 research assistants. These research assistants aided when supplying questionnaires and conducting interviews. The researcher employed the services of two research assistants who had theological background to relate well with the intended work. Apart from that, they were placed at a better position to ask quality questions when interviewing the respondents. Additionally, they had a moral and intellectual background to clarify any queries pertaining the study. The researcher trained the research assistants for a period of one day on various area such as confidence, clarity of speech and consistency. These skills would boost their data

collection process hence making it more enjoyable and easier. Once the training was over, the researcher gave them a chance to conduct mock interview and also supply mock questionnaires as a way of testing their reliability and eloquence.

Once NACOSTI issues research permit to the study, the researcher and research assistants began the process of data collection. When collecting data through issuance of questionnaires, the researcher and research assistants travelled to various circuits location as stipulated in this study. They worked together for moral support. The researcher and research assistants first sought authorization from the Kaaga main office synod as stipulated in appendix (I). Once authorization was granted, they then began by requesting the Kaaga synod's office staff to direct them on how to identify the superintendent ministers.

Thereafter, the researcher and research assistants met with the superintendent ministers who head a circuit. They introduced themselves and stated why they were conducting the research. They also gave proof of authorization from the Kaaga synod head office to conduct the study. They further requested the ministers whether they could be interviewed through a consent letter as indicated in appendix II. Once the minister consented to their request, they proceeded to interview them. The researcher interviewed while the research assistants documented the responses on a notebook alternately. However, if the superintendent minister did not have time at the moment, the researcher and research assistants then booked an appointment on the most convenient day for the interview. Once the interviews were over, the researcher then stored the notebook which had the responses in a safe place awaiting further analysis.

Further on, since a superintendent minister was in charge of a circuit, the researcher and research assistants requested the minister to direct them on how they could get in touch with the project heads and community project members. The researcher and research assistants requested the minister to give them telephone numbers or if it was not allowed, then they requested the minister to tell them which was the most suitable day to find these most of respondents in the church

The superintendent minister either gave a weekly day when these respondents met or after a Sunday service. Consulting a church minister first before reaching out to the other respondents improved the chances of getting as much responses as possible. The day that the superintendent minister would direct was the day that the researcher and research assistants would come back to issue the other questionnaires. On this said day, the researcher and research assistants came back and issued questionnaires to the sampled project heads and community project members who then answered the questionnaires to the best of their abilities. Once they completed filling the questionnaires, the researcher stored all the cumulative questionnaires answered by all respondents in a safe place for further analysis.

3.10 Measurement of Variables

The study had four independent variables and a dependent variable. The independent variables included communal training, sustainability, financial literacy, and involvement of communities in church projects. The dependent variable was growth of Methodist church. The study measured all the variables using two methods which were use of a questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire had five-point Ordinal Likert scale which had seven sections that contain six questions each. On the interview guide, the study

asked four questions on each of the six sections. Table 3.2 indicates the summary of measurement parameters of the study.

Table 3.2*Measurement of Variables*

Type of Variable	Construct variable	Sub-construct	No of Indicators	Measurement Scale	Tool
Independent	Spiritual-economic projects	Communal training	7	Five-point Ordinal Likert scale, open-ended, content analysis	Questionnaire, Interview
		Sustainability	7	Five-point Ordinal Likert scale, open-ended, content analysis	Questionnaire, Interview
		Financial literacy	7	Five-point Ordinal Likert scale, open-ended, content analysis	Questionnaire, Interview
		Involvement of communities in church projects	7	Five-point Ordinal Likert scale, open-ended, content analysis	Questionnaire, Interview
Dependent	growth of Methodist church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Sound doctrine •Discipleship •Biblical leadership •Inspiring worship •Accountability and stewardship •Strong fellowship •Quality giving 	7	Five-point Ordinal Likert scale, open-ended, content analysis	Questionnaire, Interview

3.11 Analysis of Data

This study measured and analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was information gotten as a result of questionnaires while qualitative was information gotten from the interview responses.

3.11.1 Analysis of the Questionnaires Information (Quantitative)

The questionnaire data was first sorted to eradicate all incomplete questionnaires. Once sorted, it was cleaned and later coded into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 24. Once coded where by different statistics was typed and accorded different grouped words. Descriptive analysis included median and frequencies and percentages. The results were tabulated accordingly with narration given after each table. This provided more information on what the results meant in relation to the main problem and study's objectives. The revelation described provided key precept in making the conclusion and later in recommendation for the study.

3.11.2 Analysis of the Interview Information (Qualitative)

Once the interview responses were derived from data collection, content analysis method was used for analysis purposes. Analysis involved according specific codes to various questions asked during the interview. The codes were able to help towards recitation of the content. Once this was done, the researcher investigated for patterns of responses that were alike on all the superintendent ministers. Thereafter all alike responses were identified in special themes. These themes were further be used in generating a report in from the SPSS.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The researcher first sought approval from KeMU to be allowed to data collection stage by issuance of introduction letter. This introductory letter was used to apply for NACOSTI

research permit. Apart from that the study sought authorization from the headquarters of Methodist church in Kenya (see appendix I). Once authorized, the researcher sought consent from the respondents through a letter of consent as shown in appendix II. Confidentiality and respect were maintained whereby personal details of the respondents were not revealed nor were the respondents requested to write their names anywhere in the questionnaires or during interview responses. The data collection process was voluntary and there was no coercion to answer the questions. The respondents were informed that the research study was academic and not for any other reasons. As part of covid-19 safety measures, the research assistants at all times maintained social distance, wore a mask and avoided touching the respondents. The questionnaires that the respondents filled in were safely placed in an envelope awaiting analysis.

The research assistants remained courteous such as thanking every person that had participated in the process of data collection in one way or another. The researcher used a common language that was understandable to the respondents and in case a respondent did not understand; the research assistants used local language easily known to the respondents. The response documents were stored in a safe place under lock and key once the analysis was complete. All information that was borrowed from various sources was revealed through in text citation and at the reference list at the references section. All citation was done according to APA 7th edition guidelines. Finally, all the outcomes that this study found, were put in public domain for everyone to read them. These public domains were in terms of publications and the university repositories.

3.13 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter provided the basics of methodology used to select population, respondents and methods of data collection. To begin with, the study indicated the paradigm followed as positivism due to its scientific nature. Thereafter, there were deeper explanation on the design, location, and target population. Under the target population, the chapter indicated the reasons justifying the choice of the respondents included in the study. Various scientific sampling methods were applied on each category of respondent to come up with the samples. Once the samples were identified, the study provided more explanation on the data collection used instruments used on each category of the respondents. Further, the measures used to examine reliability and validity were provided and also the exact sequence of events used by the study when collecting data. Further on, the study explained further how data was handled before and after data analysis. The chapter explained how various data collected (quantitative and qualitative) was analyzed. The ethical considerations applied by the researcher to ensure that the study did not cause any psychological or physical harm were discussed at length.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provided various analysis results derived after data collection. The chapter provided the results and discussions from the findings such as providing the reliability test results which indicated how the pre-test study was undertaken and the measures taken to assess the reliability of both the interview and questionnaires. Further, there was the presentation of the response rate which provided the information on how many respondents took part in the study and also their demographic information based on the research instruments. Later on, it provided information on the results gotten on the variables of the study which measured the Methodist church growth, communal training, sustainability, financial literacy and involvement of community members in spiritual-economic projects.

4.2 Reliability Test Results

The study conducted a pre-test study to examine whether the instruments-maintained consistency of measure. The pre-test study was conducted on 3 superintendent ministers, 5 projects heads and 20 community project members in Nairobi synod. The results are indicated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Reliability Results

Instrument	Sampled	Cronbach's Alpha
<u>Interviews</u>		
Superintendent ministers	3	0.87
<u>Questionnaires</u>		
Project heads	5	0.89
community project members	20	0.83

According to Table 4.1, the interview guides answered by superintendent ministers had a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.87. The questionnaires answered by the project heads had a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.89, while the ones answered by community project members had a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.83. Therefore, it was evident that the interview guides, and the two questionnaires had a Cronbach alpha which was above 0.7. According to Trizano and Alvarado (2016), when the results of Cronbach Alpha ranged from 0.7 to 1 on scale, they were reliable to be used for the main study. This meant that the three research instruments tested could be articulately used to assess the influence of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of the Methodist church in Kenya. A case of Kaaga synod, Kenya.

4.3 Response Rate

The study had sampled twenty-five (25) superintendent ministers who were interviewed; fifty-three (53) head of church projects; and one hundred and ninety-six (196) community project members who answered questionnaires. The response rate in indicated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Response Rate

Respondent	Sample Size	Response Rate	Percentage
<u>Interview</u>			
Superintendent Minister	25	18	72%
<u>Questionnaire</u>			
Heads of church project	53	45	84%
Community project members	196	161	82%
Totals for questionnaires	249	206	83%

The results on Table 4.2 reveal that the superintendent ministers that agreed to take part in the interview were 18(72%). Additionally, the heads of church project who answered the questionnaire were 45(84%) and the community project members who answered the questionnaires were 161(82%). In total, the questionnaires were answered by 206(83%) respondents. Therefore, since the interviews and questionnaires had 18(72%) and 206(83%) response rate respectively, it indicated that it was excellent (Mailu et al., 2021; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Therefore, the study was able to include the good number of respondents since the topic was easily relatable to them in their day to day lives both spiritually and economically. For example, in communal training, the superintendent ministers, heads of projects and project members have attended at least one seminar, conference, training, general meeting and financial management courses in the lifetime of the project.

This made it easier to understand the questions asked related to communal training. Additionally, the aspect about always ensuring that the project implemented remain viable for a foreseeable period of time is also something that they have seen happen to some projects and in some cases, they have not. Therefore, the sampled respondents had experiences in both personal or group risk management, financial management, investment expansion, and visionary leadership. Additionally, the ability to successfully implement and sustain a project requires sound financial literacy on aspects such as making budgetary plans, savings, interest rates, debt management and security of funds. Further, just as Akanbi and Bayers (2017) suggested, for a project to be successful it must involve people. Therefore, in the case of the current study, the superintendent ministers, heads of projects and project members had tangible hands-on experience on the benefits and costs incurred in projects when community members are involved. The community members involvement through prayers, evangelism, guidance and counseling, spiritual disciple, training in adhering to government policies, and regular preaching, requires careful consideration so that the members benefit both spiritually and economically from the whole activity. Lastly, the superintendent ministers, heads of projects and project members had served for quite a reasonable number of years in the church to actually see any progress/growth made in the church. This growth could be in terms of sound doctrine, discipleship, biblical leadership, inspiring worship, accountability, stewardship, strong fellowship and quality giving.

4.4 Demographic Information

Demographic information of the respondents was also examined closely guided by the questions asked in the instruments of data collection. Table 4.3 indicates the results from superintendent ministers.

Table 4.3*Demographic Information of Superintendent Ministers*

Academic Qualifications	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
PhD	3	17	17
Masters	4	22	39
Bachelor's Degree	9	50	89
Diploma	2	11	100
Total	18	100	

Serving period	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
More than 10 years	7	39	39
5-9 years	8	44	83
1-3 years	2	11	94
Less than 1 year	1	6	100
Total	18	100	

According to Table 4.3, 9(50%) superintendent ministers who were majority had a bachelor's degree qualification while 4(33%) had masters qualifications. It was also noted that 3(6%) had a PhD qualification while 2(11%) had diploma qualification. This shows that superintendent ministers had high education levels to be in a position of providing leadership in circuits where most of projects happen. Additionally, by having high education enabled the clergy provide sound doctrine that could guide the spirituality aspect of the project members so that they engage in legal operations when undertaking the project. For example, a clergy who is well versed in theological matters (mainly gotten after advancing their academic level) will guide their members on how to study the bible while taking into consideration the context in which a particular area of interest is based

upon (exegesis). This knowledge would guide the members from avoiding the biblical errors as they implement the project.

Additionally, 8(44%) and 7(39%) respondents had served for a period of 5-9 years and more than 10 years respectively. Nevertheless, only 1(6%) had served less than 1 year. This reveals that most of the superintendent ministers had emersed wealth of experience in theological standing of five years and above. With such experience, it was very easy for the superintendent minister to offer advice to new project team when put into place and also provide viable suggestions at the synod meetings. For example, maybe a minister with over the 10 years, could advise the project heads to always work as a team with the project members. This advice could be very easy to follow till when one is tasked with working with temperamental and judgmental members among other traits. A study by English (2019) advocated that church behavior is mainly anchored on how the pastor interprets their expectations while comparing with what the Bible says should be done.

The option of implementing projects alone could be the easier route till members are fed up with such leadership character which stalls projects. Therefore, ministers who had wealth of experience were well off in providing realistic and time-tested solutions. This notion was also adopted by Andersen et al. (2017) who used nine centuries old belief to articulate that the virtues of hard work resulted to reformation stimulating economic growth. This kind of evidence was collected through forming focus groups and interviewing veterans in both theological and business world, as well as secondary sources.

The study also asked demographic information from heads of church project and community project members as indicated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4***Demographic Information of Heads of Church Project and Community Project******Members***

Academic Qualifications	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
PhD	0	0	0
Masters	6	3	3
Degree	55	27	30
Diploma	61	30	60
Certificate	84	40	100
Total	206	100	

Serving period	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
More than 10 years	21	10	10
5-9 years	54	26	36
1-3 years	92	45	81
Less than 1 year	39	19	100
Total	206	100	

According to Table 4.4, 84(40%) heads of church project and community project members who were majority had certificate academic qualifications. Additionally, 61(30%) respondents had a diploma qualification. Nevertheless, 6(3%) respondents had master's qualification. This revealed that even though most of heads of church project and community project members did not have high academic qualifications, they were not illiterate as per say. This therefore meant that the Methodist church had ensured that the learning institution projects established had provided basic education to its members to acquire all levels of education such as certificate, diploma, bachelor's degree and master's degree (Methodist Church in Kenya, 2020a). Having the various educational background, they were in a position to understand various processes involved in project management

such as budgeting, trainings on financial management, book keeping and other aspects. In support, Lausanne Movement (2017) indicated that when creating wealth, the church had a role in ensuring that its members acquire basic education to be responsible for running, managing and participating in church projects.

Additionally, 92(45%) and 54(26%) respondents had served for a period of 1-3years and 5-9 years respectively. Nevertheless, only 21(10%) respondents had served for more than 10 years. Therefore, this insinuated that the project life ensured that there was a rotation of leaders and as well as actively recruiting members to ensure inclusivity of the whole church. The fact that only 10% had served for more than 10 years was a good sign that members and leaders did not overstay in positions so as to ensure that the projects had fresh ideas from other new leadership. This also meant that there was no chance of leaders who had stayed for a long time to think of misappropriating funds with the notion that they cannot be replaced. This strategy enabled leaders and members understand that they have been given an opportunity to serve and do so in uttermost humility. The same sentiments were advocated by Modise (2018) that as the church was gearing up into ensuring that there was social-economic change, it should begin with leadership reformation to facilitate the process of transformation.

4.5 Church Growth

Church growth was the dependent variable of the study and had indicators such as sound doctrine, discipleship, biblical leadership, inspiring worship, accountability, stewardship, strong fellowship and quality giving. Church growth was measured using interviews and questionnaires which had both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed ended-questions were measured using Ordinal Likert scale which indicated that 1-strongly

disagreed, 2-disagreed, 3-neutral, 4-agreed, and 5-strongly agreed. Table 4.5 includes the results on questionnaire.

Table 4.5

Results on Church Growth

Statement N=206	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Assisting the needy through initiating various projects has increased the church membership	1(1%)	3(2%)	0(0%)	22(11%)	180(87%)	4.83
The church is able to comfortably fund evangelism missions	1(1%)	31(15%)	0(0%)	59(29%)	115(56%)	4.24
There is more time allocated in worship and teaching of the word	97(47%)	103(50%)	0(0%)	6(3%)	0(0%)	2.97
The church members are able to do discipleship training within the community since they understand its value more as the church grows	2(1%)	3(2%)	0(0%)	23(36%)	178(86%)	4.81
Members have been able to sustain their livelihoods through engaging in church projects	0(0%)	35(17%)	0(0%)	85(41%)	86(42%)	4.08

According to Table 4.5, 180(87%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.83, that the church has been assisting the needy through initiating various projects which has increased the number of church members. The results indicate that the Methodist church has undertaken the initiative of fighting poverty among its members by establishing projects that give members opportunities to engage in form of employment, sponsorship, training them on how to maximize agricultural activities such as buying fortified seeds to improve farming harvests; artificial insemination of preferred cow breeds to increase milk and meat consumption; organic farming to improve quantity of harvests; and looking for market of farm produce to earn extra income.

Further, projects established by the church have enabled members learn the aspect of saving whereby they get low interest loans to boost businesses from the Methodist Sacco. All these initiatives have encouraged church members who most of them are farmers and business people to benefit greatly from the church projects. The same notion was advocated for by Nababan (2017) who indicated that one way a church could enable its congregation have improved economic welfare was through empowerment programs that revolved around savings, loan issuance and training on various aspects such as finances, business and farming.

Further, 178(86%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.81 that the church members were able to do discipleship training within the community since they understood its value more as the church grew. This indicated that the church was operation under the dispensation of God's Grace, whereby they were actively conducting discipleship trainings so as to preach Christ to all corners of the earth, just as Jesus Christ commanded in Luke 24:47-49 (NIV, 2011). The discipleship trainings mainly offered in a church set-up

included correct interpretation of the word of God, evangelism, prayer and fasting. The findings by Nkansah-Obrempong (2018) revealed that apart from improving the livelihoods of the community members, the church priority is to ensure that all followers of Christ are holistically redeemed and will one day inherit the kingdom of God. Therefore, the main message passed during the mission of the church is that Christ came to this world, became sin, died and rose again on the third day. Anyone who believes in this message and give their life to Christ will not perish in eternal fire since He is the only true way.

Therefore, based on the above findings, it was prudent to indicate that Methodist church had made cognizable efforts to improve the livelihoods of its members through projects and as well as preach the Word of redemption to its members. Additionally, it was factual to indicate that the church had equipped through training its members and community with the correct doctrine of Jesus Christ, as the main reason why the church exists. The church has also provided resources to enable these people to go and preach to others the message of redemption through various evangelical missions. Missionary work has been there since time immemorial.

According to the results derived by Owino et al. (2017), the church missionaries in Kaloleni District made significant contribution in spreading both Christian religion and education in the area within a span of 60 years beginning from 1890. In echoing the same sentiments with Owino et al. (2017), Qayyum et al. (2020) argued that religion and economic development are mainly bond to occur simultaneously. Whenever true religion is preached, it should not only advocate for Christianity living among community members but also guide them to work hard for their livelihood. This meant that spirituality and economic growth must complement each other for holistic living.

Nevertheless, 103(50%) respondents disagreed on a mean of 2.97 that there was more time allocated in worship and teaching of the word. This meant that Methodist church had clear standing orders that required Sunday services conducted in a similar way and time. However, it was noted that the MCK council of Kenya had not reviewed their Sunday services programs for a long period of time. Therefore, the repercussion was that most members felt that their spiritual thirst was not quenched over the few minutes allocated to the services.

In the long-run, according to Wyk (2017), the interest of worship and genuine hunger for the word of God ends leading to faithless congregation. A study by Wyk (2017) also found out that in South Africa, churches had great economic transformation but less reformative in the society. It was shocking to notice that most members especially the youth went to church after the preaching just to interact and attend economic forums. Therefore, as a result, it led to crop-up of prosperity preachers who emphasized more on earthly riches but less emphasis on what the word of God says, prayer and fasting. The recommendations made by Wyk (2017) indicated that the church should establish and keep on reviewing its worship programs to allocate more time to preaching and worship, as comparing to other activities.

Additionally, the questionnaire tasked the respondents to explain the role church leadership had in ensuring that tithe and offering had increased in church. The respondents revealed that the church leadership had ensured that church renovations were done to modernize the churches hence becoming attract to even the young generation. Other indicated that leadership had established different themed Sundays such as thanksgiving and hospitality Sunday services. The leaders had also ensured they make the church members know the

church expenditures via a vis the income gotten. Additionally, the church leaders had also created so many services such as weekend revivals, bible study, and home fellowships for a chance of increasing the knowledge of the word of God and also giving. The leadership had allowed various groups of church to operate whereby there were women groups, men groups, youth groups and children groups.

These groups were tasked with various monthly targets on a set project within the church to enable them raise funds. For example, youth groups tasked with a target of raising 50,000 for purposes of buying uniforms, balls, and other needs for their church soccer team. The respondents also indicated that at times the church leadership raise funds through fund raising to facilitate a particular project such as buying church buses. The findings by Alawode (2016) indicated that most Christian missions which had a lot to do with empowering the lives of people was made a reality through the contribution of offerings. These offerings were gotten in church services, fundraising, group funding, corporate institutions, and government support.

In addition, they were tasked to mention the guiding Biblical principles followed by the church to practice accountability and stewardship. The respondents indicated their responses under the following themes; honesty, hardworking and not lazy, merciful, reliable, respectful, resourceful, trustworthy, and integral. Under the honesty principle, the respondents revealed that they always ensured that all the dealings of the projects were done in legal and correct manner. That is, the church did not engage in sale of illegal drugs, weapons and definitely paying all the taxes required of them by the government. The projects' information was always available on request to anyone interested in knowing the dealings encountered. Additionally, the church project leaders ensured that they involve

the members in every process of the project to ensure they were cognizant with everything. Under the hardworking principle, the church ensured that the projects undertaken are not done to entertain laziness but rather encourage the leaders and members to engage their minds and physical energies in delivering the ultimate desirable goals. This was done through allocating different tasks that were to be delivered on the required time. Any non-achievements were punished using various means such as warning letters, suspension and eventual expulsion from the project affairs. Under the merciful principle, the church ensured that the tasks undertaken in the projects were beneficial to its members to enable the poor get financial, social and spiritual empowerment. This was whereby the project leaders and members surrendered any income from the projects to the church income kitty to enable it undertake various communal aid activities. These include setting up free primary schools, low-cost secondary schools, affordable colleges, and children's home, and empowering the disabled members of the society.

Under the reliability principle, the church ensured that they remained the full custodians of the resources entrusted to them by the members. Therefore, they ensured that they practiced consistency in their utilization, management and reporting on the particular resources. The church employed staff that could be relied to give true account of what has transpired during a particular time without necessarily favoring any side. Additionally, the church through its leadership ensured that they had staff of sound mind, whose account could not only be relied upon but be used in the court of law, if so be. The church leadership also practiced the principle of respect through providing any required information to members on request as required by the law. The leadership respected its members as independent God creation and also as citizens of Kenya. Based on their independence nature, the church

leadership understood that their way of reasoning and resourcing was different from each other. Every opinion was taken into consideration without necessarily looking into who contributed it and how much they provide in terms of resources such as tithes and offering. All that was needed, was to assess whether the opinion in question was viable, lawful and Godly.

The church leadership also ensured that they remained as resourceful as possible in terms of provision of Godly service to humankind. This was whereby the church was deeply involved in the issues of its members such as paying school fees for the poor families, offering food reliefs, job opportunities, savings education, buying cows, goats and pigs for the community members, offering fortified seeds to the members who were farmers, offering shelter to the orphans, preaching the word of hope to the hopeless and simply being a leaning shoulder to its members. The church always ensured that no members slept hungry or in the cold when they knew about their situation. The leadership of the church also practiced trustworthy principle by putting into place policies and procedures of conducting the church project activities. The policies and procedures involved having trustworthy ways of accounting, procuring, recruitment of staff, marketing, banking of money, management of resources, and reporting. There were clear Methodist church standing orders Act followed that would distinguish between how the church runs the processes of running the projects as compared to other Christian denominations.

The church also practiced integrity in its dealings to eradicate any dishonest and corrupt operations. The church leadership also practiced clear standing orders disbanding any members that obtain information or resources from any source through crooked ways. The church maintains a strong standing that it values the principle of maintaining its integrity

as a Christian entity and also as the community custodian of Biblical tool of authority. The church leadership could not be preaching against the sin of corruption while on the same hand allow its staff to become corrupt. There are very serious corruption repercussions for anyone suspected to be engaged in the corrupt deals such as suspension or termination from project activities, depending on the weight of the accusation.

Therefore, it was prudent to indicate that the church was keen in following to the letter various Biblical principles such as maintaining honesty, hard work, mercy, reliability, respect, resourceful, trustworthy, and integral. The findings by Amanze (2019) also reflected the true purpose of the church in southern and Central Africa, through the mercy principle. This was whereby the church had the mission to consider and help people living with disabilities. Help was offered through preaching the word of hope, buying wheel chairs for the crippled, barrel and walking stick to the blind, hearing aids to the partially deaf, and sponsoring their education, livelihoods and families to have sustainable businesses. Additionally, Ayiamba et al. (2016), also supported through indicating that the Anglican church had established various poverty alleviation programs that aimed at training its members on financial and business management, savings education and soft loan applications. This instilled the biblical principle of hard work and enabling the members learn the art of relying on themselves to earn a living, hence alleviating poverty once and for all.

Further, Basedau et al. (2018) also found out that there was a connection between religion and social development. This was whereby, the religious beliefs and principles established helped its members re-shape their thinking and acting which facilitated social development. Through reviewing information from secondary sources, Basedau et al. (2018) did find a

pattern of how religious faithful developed their integrity and honesty attributes to their personal and social lives. According to Basedau et al. (2018), people who took religion seriously were hardly involved in corruption scandals, resource misappropriation, lying and were always protecting the truth with their lives. This therefore meant that when someone paid attention to specific religious principles, it had an effect in their lives eventually with or without their knowledge.

The study interviewed superintendent ministers with eighteen (18) of them agreeing to participate in the study. They were asked questions and hence the study allocated them codes that began from M1-M18. In tackling the aspect about church growth, they were asked to explain how many evangelism programs had the church engaged within a period of the last 3 months. The superintendent ministers indicated that there were evangelism programs such as soul winning, mercy (visiting the sick and elderly), and bible exposition program (youth conferences and seminars). The church had established the soul winning program to enable the young energetic members go out and preach the word of God and lead the community members to Christ. The church facilitated their fares, lunches, bibles, and evangelism brochures to the evangelical teams. A superintendent minister M7 indicated that,

“According to Revelation 22:17, the Spirit of the Lord calls the thirsty and all those who desire to take the water of life.”

The superintendent minister M7 added that,

“This means that there are people who are thirsty of the word of God but do not know how to get it hence out target.”

This meant that the church had established the soul winning program to look for people ready to receive the word of God. The superintendent ministers admitted that though during the first days of soul winning may be a challenge, it would surprise anyone to know how many people are eager to hear a word of hope and give their lives to Christ. Just as the Bible says there is plenty of harvest, the ministers admitted that in their walk with Christ, most potential believers are within the community set-up. A superintendent minister M11 indicated that,

“I have participated in soul winning program and the most rewarding act is meeting a person who is ready to give their lives to Christ.”

The superintendent ministers admitted that most people fear undertaking the role of evangelism since they could be disappointed by people who adamantly refuse to hear what you have to say. However, what counts is that you talked to the about Christ and what they decided to do with the information is up to them.

Further, there were other programs such as visiting the sick and the elderly which involved the mercy groups. The church identified community members who had special needs such as sicknesses or/and had advanced in age. They were then paid a visit to be encouraged and also given household item to enable them live comfortable lives. In line with this, Kathambi (2018) gave a synopsis of various initiatives led by the Methodist church. Among the initiative established, the study concentrated on the church addressing the needs of the elderly and its impact to the society. According to Kathambi (2018), there were two categories of the elderly, the ones affected by sicknesses in their old age and the ones with only old age. Therefore, to be in a position of dispensing the aid, the Methodist church

acknowledged that they had to differentiate the two scenarios to help in the best way they could since some of the elderly people were neglected by their families (Kathambi, 2018). The current study poised that sick people were taken to hospital to get treatment and the ones in hospital, were encouraged through regular visits. Additionally, there was a bible exposition program which included youth conferences and seminars. This was whereby the young people were trained on how to read and interpret the bible objectively while taking into context the exegesis. A superintendent minister M4 indicated that,

“It is sad to notice young people have fallen into victim of misinterpreting the bible and hence misleading the society to prosperity gospel.”

Therefore, the bible exposition program is established to enable young people have a solid foundation on the basic principles of the bible. This could be in terms of encouraging hard work in form of waking up early to go and hustle instead of seating around waiting for miracles that will give you free money to happen. This is the same argument made by a study by BCRPWA (2017) who pointed out that a dialogue needs to be done on the world and faith development. According to the report, preaching on faith were being misinterpreted to entertain laziness in the world. This was whereby, the believers were only taught the first aspect of faith which included believing in the Word of God and praying. The second aspect of faith which was ‘working’, was never emphasized. This therefore led to a generation that ‘clearly knows God’ but are struggling with poverty to the extent that they break the same principles they purport to preach when given a chance.

Further, the superintendent ministers were asked to describe the roles played by the church in maintaining soul winning programs. They indicated that the church provided finances

and non-finance materials such as providing cars and food material for the pastoral team involved in soul winning programs; offered leadership and guidance; nurtured young evangelists; and set up policies especially on how to follow-up new believers such as establishing new believers' classes. The church was in the forefront of always providing both monetary and non-monetary item. This is because, the church believed that it was easier and motivating to preach the Word of God without having to think of what to eat and how to cover more ground, in form of transport.

Therefore, when the church catered for these expenses, the evangelists paid more attention in reaching out to more people objectively as they introduce Christ to them. This is because, soul winning is the only task that Christ left for the church as he was ascending to heaven, hence the need to prioritize it. Adding to that, the church had set up policies to the soul winning programs on how to reach out to the new believers. This is to ensure that the church protects both the new believer and the evangelism team. In the one hand, the new believers were followed up to ensure that they have located a true bible-based church preferably the Methodist church in their jurisdiction, to get natured in the word of God. In the other hand, the church also protected the evangelists from falling into the trap of being lured into sin. A superintendent minister M4 indicated that,

“We have had cases of purportedly ‘new believers’ calling evangelist to meet them into unsocial places to take advantage of them”.

The evangelists who are both men and women are protected by the church and always encouraged to give out the church official telephone numbers so that any follow-ups are made from the church offices and not any other place. According to Castellanos (2015),

when God is at the center of a place, true redemption happens. However, the emerging issues is that the culture of that particular place could also influence the believers. The findings by Castellanos (2015) pointed out that this was the most assumed aspect which has continued to ail the church. Therefore, the study recommended that the church needs to have clear foundations and ground principles of what happens during and after evangelism has taken place.

Additionally, the superintendent ministers were asked to highlight the challenges that the church has undergone in its growth prospects which are related to spiritual-economic projects. The challenges named included lack of adequate finances, policies and service centered leaders. It was factual to indicate that the church at times failed to attain all desired goals due to aspects such as inadequate monetary sources since every project requires money to run and sustain. Further, there were still gaps on the extent of policies in place particularly in the standing orders. A superintendent minister M17 indicated that,

“Some of the policies in place are outdated and require current review to fit within the current timelines like updating into digital payments and systems.”

This is whereby there are few or no E-Systems of tracking payments made through digital means, hence requiring a secretary to manually go through the M-PESA statements to update various members’ tithes and offering information. Therefore, the information is either skipped or updated late which could demotivate the member from making any more contributions or reducing the contribution amount, on the sense that their money is being misappropriated.

Further there has also been the challenge of insufficient service centered leaders. This is whereby the project leaders tasked by the church, do not do so in good faith but rather to enrich themselves. A superintendent minister M02 indicated that,

“Having project leaders that are not accountable of their actions and who cannot be prosecuted due to their influence is a dangerous trend.”

A superintendent minister M15 indicated that,

“Having selfish leaders who think about themselves, is a major problem that not only Methodist church has but also other churches.”

In support with the findings, Chowdhury et al. (2019) established that one of the reasons as to why faith-based NGOs were hardly making any impact in the society, was because of their leadership. The leaders had very good paper work on the project purposed and implemented but when someone took their time to go to the actual region, there was actually invisible empowerment in place. The role of leaders had shifted from service to humanity to empowering themselves and immerse power to avoid being brought to book.

4.6 Communal Training in Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

Communal training in spiritual-economic projects was the first independent variable of the study and had indicators such as seminars, conferences, trainings, general meetings, financial management courses. It was measured using interviews and questionnaires which had both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed ended-questions were measured using Ordinal Likert scale which indicated that 1-strongly disagreed, 2-disagreed, 3-neutral, 4-agreed, and 5-strongly agreed. Table 4.6 includes the results on questionnaire.

Table 4.6***Results on Communal Training in Spiritual-economic Projects***

Statement N=206	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Church members who have been empowered are more cooperative in church functions and attend Sunday services	3(2%)	15(7%)	0(0%)	38(18%)	150(73%)	4.54
Creative ways that the church have come up with ways that have enticed the community to become full members of the church leading to an increase in church attendance.	0(0%)	19(9%)	3(2%)	26(13%)	158(77%)	4.57
The Methodist church has working systems that gather due diligence on areas to establish its projects.	4(2%)	36(18%)	0(0%)	49(24%)	117(57%)	4.16
There is a strategic plan in the church that guides the circuits on which projects to implement	98(48%)	52(25%)	1(1%)	45(22%)	10(5%)	2.67

According to Table 4.6, 158(77%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.57, that the creative ways that the church had come up with such as educational scholarships, free medical check-ups, food donations among other ways, enticed the community to become full members of the church leading to an increase in church attendance. The results revealed

that the efforts of the church were bearing fruits towards attracting the community to the church. When the children of a particular family set up were sponsored through their education, it attracted the attention of the parents and more often, they ended up being members of the church. This finding was also established by Kioko (2020) who found out that as a result of Redeemed Gospel Church Makueni helped the poor through funding their children's' education, they ended up being involved in church activities and becoming faithful in attendance.

Further the current study established that when the church was at forefront in showing concerns on areas such as health of the community members, they attracted their attention. In health concerns, the study established that when there were frequent food stuff donation and medical checks, people paid attention to the church just as NCA (2016) found out. That is, when the Norwegian church aid was directed to victims of war in Afghanistan, it resulted to many of them converting from Muslim to Christianity religion. This is because, they felt at peace and their needs care for hence resulting to shifting their religious alliance to fully benefit even more from salvation of Jesus Christ who is the prince of peace. In further support of the case, Omondi (2020) revealed that the church played a huge part in ensuring that peoples' daily needs such as food and medical attention were handled during the covid-19 pandemic. This saw to an increase on numbers of new believers in Anglican church, since they appreciated the efforts of the church to see them survive through the tough economic period brought about by the pandemic.

The above results are in consistent with resources-based theory whereby as a result of the church utilizing its available resources and combining them with creative initiatives of resources distribution such as educational scholarships, free medical check-ups, food

donations among other ways, it had gained competitive advantage of attracting more members. This in turn translated to increase in church income through offertory, tithes and other types of giving.

Further, 150(73%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.54 that the church members who had been empowered were more cooperative in church functions and attended Sunday services. This meant that people came to church due to various needs and saw it as a place of refuge and comfort. Therefore, when the church acted as a place of refuge in terms of providing spiritual and economic empowerment, it attracted the cooperation from members. A study by Pillay (2017) also justified the cause of the church acting as transformation and change agent through providing hope to undergo both current and future challenges in people's lives. What this meant is that, by the virtue of the church being an agent of change, it had to help people advance from one point to the other both spiritually and economically. This was the only way the church could sustain members to become more responsive to various functions and services.

According to Rogers (2017), both Faith and fortune have to work hand in hand in religion set-up to include everyone in the society. When one is omitted, misbalance of individual needs is evident which leads to resistance in religious functions and services. For example, Rogers and Konieczny (2018) conducted a study to ascertain whether religion was really meant to help the poor or not while comparing nations in the western and southern region of the world. According to Rogers and Konieczny (2018), irrespective of the religion, the western poor people seem to benefit from the religious based programs since the programs balanced both religion and economic empowerment. Nevertheless, the southern regions such as Brazil, Vietnam, India and other nations, the poor hardly got real help since religion

was over emphasized with less economic empowerment. This was whereby they were required to consistently make numerous prayers with less actions in terms of working. As a result, a lot of them eventually got tired and began engaging in crimes and unhealthy social practices such as prostitution to survive.

Nevertheless, 98(48%) respondents strongly disagreed and 52(25%) disagreed on a mean of 2.67 that there was a strategic plan in the church that guided the circuits on which projects to implement and the order they should follow. The results revealed that the church had not restricted the branch churches on which projects they should undertake. It was up to them to make independent decisions on what they wanted to engage as a circuit. The same approach was also used by the ACK Kenya. According to a report by ACK (2016), the Zimmerman church had developed its strategic plan that guided them between 2016 till 2020, separate from the head church. This shows that the churches understood that they operated under different environment and with different people. Therefore, the project plans for the urban church branches could not be similar with the ones for rural areas. To avoid much confusion, conflicts and underperformance, every church was allowed to structure their own path as far as the project suggestion and implementation.

However, there have been exemption with the Catholic churches, whereby every project was initiated through the main church branch. For example, a report by CRCCUSC (2017) pointed out that in Uganda, there had been established the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Catholic Sisters Initiative which had origination roots, all the way from Italy. Therefore, as it was evident, the initiator of projects entirely dependent on the mother branch church constitution. Nevertheless, the respondents in the case of Methodist church disagreed that the control of projects was done from the main circuit.

Additionally, the questionnaire tasked the respondents to highlight various seminars that had been established to equip church members with spiritual-economic projects. The respondents indicated that each group formed various seminars such as men seminar, women seminar and the youth seminar. The leaders of each group organized with the church leadership to be allocated a day and probably a speaker who is quite informed on various issues affecting both spirituality and economic areas of their lives. For example, most recently, the youth group invited Robert Burale who is a renowned preacher and a business man in their annual youth conference to give them motivation speaking on how they could still serve God and become successful in their careers.

The findings by Junaedi and Waruwu (2020) revealed that the Jembran Bali had adopted a model that involved combining both economic and spiritual aspects to empower the church. This model was developed as a result of the church noticing that the village of Blimbingsari was evidently being engulfed with poverty even though they were keen in spirituality activities. Bringing the point closer home, Karanu et al. (2020), found out that the Presbyterian church of East Africa, Nyahururu Parish had established a platform of reviewing church policies to allow economic transformation in the lives of the youths. This definitely attracted the youth in great numbers to attend church services since they understood the value the church brought about in the spiritual and career lives.

The other question required the respondents to explain the challenges faced when implementing various communal training projects such as financial management courses. The challenges named included lack of finances, lack of concentration due to conflicts of interest from members, and resistance from some of the leaders. Under the lack of finances, it was established that at times the church operated under limited budget which had strict

guidelines on how to use the fund, failure to which the project stalled. This was the same case by the findings established by EMC (2020). The mission that was supposed to be done in Europe operated under strict financial guideline through which the program would run. The guidelines involved a list that the mission team operated on to reach out to the masses, hence lack of window of new developments while in missionary activities.

Additionally, members did not concentrate to complete of the financial management courses since they either lacked financial literacy or simple expected payments of attendance at the end of the course. The same lamentations were also made by Gates (2017) who admitted that the faith-based institutions had a high number of members who had low financial literacy hence a need of innovative practices and strategies that would lead to financial training. Some of the strategies suggested included providing financial management courses which would enable them learn the basic of financial management. Further, an issue that affected the proper implementation of financial management course included resistance from some of the leaders. This is because the leaders felt that the timing of the implementation was wrong since other things needed priority. That is, leaders would have preference of feeding the hungry members, buying cows, goats or chickens for the poor families. Therefore, when there were these kinds of ideas, when what was implemented was different, they resisted it.

Further, the respondents were tasked to indicate ways that the church leadership benefitted from trainings and conferences on management of church projects. The benefits named included information/knowledge and connections created after interactions. The church leadership was able to learn and get new ideas and information on the processes of management. For example, when church leaders were taught how to file taxes, they not

only used it during operations of the project but also on personal businesses. Additionally, when they were taught on the laws governing a specific area of the project, they understood the losses that would face the church in case of breakage of such laws. The same sentiments were shared by Kwemboi (2019) when the study found out that before the women in salvation army church were allowed to have village banking, their leaders underwent training on what laws governed public banking.

This was to enable them understand the outcome of failing to surrender a member's savings to the owners on request, misappropriation and corruption of funds. In relation to the question at hand, the church leadership was also able to create connections through interactions with the trainers, organizers, corporate leaders, other affluent members and fellow leaders in the training. The connections created could come in handy after the training whereby they would meet or share more ideas under project point of discussion. For example, the church leaders would meet lawyers whom they could contract to act as the church lawyers in a particular court case.

The study interviewed superintendent ministers with eighteen (18) of them agreeing to participate in the study. They were asked questions and hence the study allocated them codes that began from M1-M18. In tackling the aspect about communal training in spiritual-economic projects, they were asked to name some of the material benefits of integration of spiritual-economics in Methodist church. The superintendent ministers indicated that the benefits included greater productivity of the church to enhance self-sustenance to cater for its expenses. This was done through enhancing the financial ability of the church such that it gets more income as opposed to only waiting for the offertory and tithes. This income would enable the church to improve to better infrastructure such as

its structural development without incurring unnecessary debt. A superintendent minister M01 indicated that,

“When a church is able to become self-reliant, is able to avoid going the debt way which is commendable thing.”

In support of the findings, Mawudor (2016) established that most churches had established various church related institutions whose mandate was to improve the income of the church through running several income generating programs. This was to ensure that the church can sufficiently cater for its expenses without necessarily having to always pressure members to give.

Additionally, integration of spiritual-economics created self-employment for some church members to increase their financial status while at the same time improving the standard of living of the community members such as offering employment for community members to take care of the farm and also in boosting food banks within the family livelihood. A superintendent minister M018 indicated that,

“Families who are able to farm huge track of land, do so to feed the family members and also sell excess to the community.”

Further, it helped in evangelizing and improving the vulnerable members of the family so that spiritual nourishing would have a meaning, hence more church planting through mission work. This was whereby, the church was able to teach correct doctrine to members of the community and also give hope to the hopeless.

The second questions required the superintendent ministers to explain the challenges the church management was faced with when running projects such as the annual circumcision program. They indicated that at the initial stages, churches invested heavily without an equivalent turnover whereby the community members choose to stick to their traditional systems. In relation to that, a superintendent minister M018 indicated that,

“Methodist Church began this project along time ago hence one of the major issues we have faced is resistance from traditional system.”

The community members choose to completely oppose while some members refuse leave traditional ways such that after the boys complete the 2-3 weeks at the church, they are then taken to traditional houses where they are confused more with cultural beliefs and practices which confuse them completely. This leaves the young man at cross roads of which road to follow hence may have a psychological effect on them causing them to make unhealthy decision which they would regret later. There were also challenges of follow-up programs due to lack of trained personnel, particularly after the 2-3 weeks period ends. A superintendent minister M06 indicated that,

“The church tries using members to check on the young men, but it is not yet enough since the information received is very scanty.”

There were also challenges on high cost especially due to constant review on charges employed as a result of inflation. Parents were unable to keep up with the pace due to low financial ability, hence ending up taking their sons to other churches offering the same cheaper services with compromised standards. Parents cannot be entirely be blamed since

churches have now realized it's a cash cow hence providing stiff competition to the Methodist church.

Additionally, there have been challenges related to financial accountability and control from the church. A superintendent minister M04 indicated that,

“We have witnessed doctors liaising with some church leaders to charge the church more and later share the money together.”

The other challenge has been insufficient training for management to offer clear counseling since the curriculum design and implementation of what the young men are to be trained is not precise. Therefore, the young men end up getting half-baked information on various biblical principles particularly on adulthood.

The third interview question required the superintendent ministers to highlight some of the spiritual-economic benefits and challenges that church members experience as a result of leadership transition. The respondents revealed that one of the most important benefits was that the churches got better managers than the ones they had previously. That is, new leadership came with new ideas, progressive development, spiritual growth, physical growth, financial growth, fresh minds and positivity towards driving the department or the project to new horizons. New leaders had no room for thinking or acting as failures hence mostly overturned impossibilities to possibilities. Additionally, when there was smooth transition, the assets and liabilities of the church were well protected to ensure continuity in growth and reduce loss and wastages. This is because there was confidence enhanced in the new group of leaders and as the mantle is placed to them, they understand that their role is to expand the assets and minimize liabilities as much as possible.

Nevertheless, in most cases there was improper handing over during transitions leaving the new leaders to figure out things for themselves. Therefore, this meant that there was a period of total confusion since old leaders had not oriented the new ones on how much they covered as far as areas of concern areas were related. A superintendent minister M14 indicated that,

“When an old leader was fired due to embezzlement issues, the new leaders got a rough time since there was no one to guide them.”

That notwithstanding, the case of removing a leader forcefully could also go the other way whereby the other leaders want someone gone since he or she was not serving their personal or political interests. The respondents complained a lot that there were problems especially related to this kind of transition. A superintendent minister M09 indicated that,

“This has been a problem even beginning from the senior bishop of Methodist church who is being victimized by few individuals who want him gone.”

The results are inconsistent with resource-based theory by Barney (1991) since in as much as the church has used its resources to pay allowances, train and empower church and project leaders, when they were leaving, they left a gap of confusion in their docket. Therefore, this created a chance for ill-motive members to siphon both monetary and non-monetary church resources. In the long-run, the resources invested in the old leaders were wasted and adding to that, the church lost even more resources as a result of them not properly orienting new leaders.

A study by Marava (2016) also established that one of the reasons why the church in Zimbabwe was struggling with ensuring that there was sustainable development, was due

to leadership transitions. This was whereby the leaders wanted to overstay in leadership and when forcefully removed, they left without even caring from which point the new leaders would operate. As a result, the projects stalled since there were not trails of leadership milestones.

On the fourth question, the superintendent ministers were asked to elucidate how the Methodist church in Kenya's projects benefitted the vulnerable groups especially the disabled and the people living with HIV/AIDs in the society. The respondents revealed that the Methodist church played a huge role in ensuring that every human being whether disabled or suffering from HIV/AIDs lives comfortably as much as possible. To live comfortably involved being undertaken through guidance and counseling program which could be offered subsidized or at no fee. The counseling would enable the vulnerable group be more aware of their surrounding and coping mechanism on how to turn discouragements and stigma into success steps. This was done also by providing an opportunity for people to meet and discuss their issues and how to handle them. For example, through social meetings, support groups meetings, games, retreats and other ways.

Other benefits done by the church through its projects, included providing basic needs such as foodstuff, clothing, and shelter. The church helped in school fees payment programs for the children who came from the affected families through awarding scholarship or bursaries depending on the need. In some cases, if the ailing or disabled members were adults, they were facilitated through educational programs such as professional courses to equip them with knowledge through education and also gain skills such as in electrical works, plumbing, health sciences, sewing and others so as to earn a living. Additionally,

the church put up small initiatives such as opening businesses for the disabled or ailing community members, all in bid of supporting them to become sustain their daily needs.

4.7 Research Question one on the Role of Communal Training in Spiritual-economic Programs on Church Growth

The study was guided by the first question which inquired on the role of communal training in spiritual-economic programs on church growth in MCK, Kaaga synod. The study conducted a Pearson Correlational Analysis and also inquired directly from the respondents. Table 4.7 indicates the results of Pearson Correlational Analysis.

Table 4.7

Pearson Correlational Analysis on Communal Training in Spiritual-Economic Programs and Growth

		Communal Training	Church Growth
Communal Training	Pearson Correlation	1	.404**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	224	224
Church Growth	Pearson Correlation	.404**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	224	224

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As per Table 4.7, the Pearson correlation coefficient for the communal training was $r=0.404^{**}$ at $\alpha < 0.000$ and 99% significance level. Therefore, since the Pearson correlation coefficient was less 1 and its significance level less than 0.05, the findings revealed that to begin with communal training had a positive and significant influence on church growth. Therefore, having established that, the study gathered from the respondents that when the community members were trained, they were able to gain Knowledge/information, skills, and exposure which spurred church growth. Under knowledge, once the members were trained on how to manage finances, minimize debt, the art of ploughing back the profit and payment of the required taxes, they were able to become innovative and establish various businesses that would be sustainable.

Additionally, when the community members were trained, they gained various soft skills which enabled them comprehend the procedures used and technical knowhow of running machines, knitting, plumbing and other skills. These skills would raise their chances of getting employed or train others. Further the training also encompassed exposure to different people, cultures, systems and professionals. When properly utilized, the connections made could enable the community members link up and form professional groups which would enable them have collective bargaining to access funds from the government. A past study such as Akanbi and Bayers (2017) found out that through training its members on various income generating activities, the church could act as a transformative agency that propels the society towards new horizons of self-sustenance.

4.8 Sustainability of Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

Sustainability of spiritual-economic projects was the second independent variable of the study and had indicators such as risk management, financial management, investments

expansion, visionary leadership and involvement of the community members. It was measured using interviews and questionnaires which had both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed ended-questions were measured using Ordinal Likert scale which indicated that 1-strongly disagreed, 2-disagreed, 3-neutral, 4-agreed, and 5-strongly agreed. Table 4.8 includes the results on questionnaire.

Table 4.8***Results on Sustainability of Spiritual-economic Projects***

Statement N=206	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
All genders are well represented in various income generating projects.	37(18%)	16(8%)	12(6%)	37(18%)	104(51%)	3.75
Qualified staffs have been assigned task to manage within a specific duration of time	0(0%)	48(23%)	0(0%)	104(51%)	54(26%)	3.80
The Methodist church have greatly partnered with other denominations such as Catholic church in delivering various community-based projects	103(50%)	72(35%)	0(0%)	31(15%)	0(0%)	2.05
There is a great team effort played by Methodist church and the government of Kenya towards improving various income generating projects.	8(4%)	17(8%)	0(0%)	74(36%)	107(52%)	4.25

According to Table 4.8, 107(52%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.25, that there was a great team effort played by Methodist church and the government of Kenya towards improving various income generating projects. This revealed that the church was actually contributing towards the government agenda of provision of employment and as well as eradicating poverty in the nation of Kenya. The good working relations between the Methodist church and the government provided a platform for the church to also air its opinion advising the government on various innovative ways of ensuring there is prosperity within our borders. The findings by Tenai (2016) and Thiongo (2019) also established that African Inland Church in Kenya had also ensured that it heeded to the call to eradicate poverty as a way of supporting the government in place.

Further, 104(51%) agreed on a mean of 3.80 that there was good management in income generating projects whereby qualified staffs were assigned task to manage within a specific duration of time. The presence of qualified staff indicated that the church was keen in delivering the projects in the correct way through the available means. Having qualified personnel ensured that the church was able deliver its mandate with minimal errors while at the same time observing the laws of the land. In the long-run, projects became successful towards improving the lives of the community members. In support, Tower (2016) provided a guideline under which mission departments in church could use to ensure that they run church projects profitably. The main attention of the work was focused on employing the right workers to ensure consistency in delivering the mandate of the church towards poverty eradication.

These results were consistent with stewardship theory by Donaldson and Davis (1991) since when the church management trained and equipped members with financial empowerments and management, they were able to open business initiatives which made

them self-employed contributing to reduction of unemployment and poverty eradication. Additionally, the church also offered working contracts hence monthly payment of salaries to staff that had showed much potential in the management courses. This therefore enabled the church to become great stewards of the resources entrusted to them by God to offer jobs to church members. Therefore, the members were in even a better position to preach and evangelize at a personal basis since they had experienced the benefits of working in church.

Nevertheless, 103(50%) respondents strongly disagreed and 72(35%) disagreed on a mean of 2.05 that the Methodist church had greatly partnered with other denominations such as Catholic church in delivering various community-based projects. This meant the church had taken more time than it was required towards delivering its mandate in conjunction with other churches. According to UMI (2020) the main reason why Methodist churches were struggling to partner with other congregation was because it was due to negative impact COVID-19 had towards the church projects. The projects such as schools and financial institutions which are main sources of income for the church were greatly affected due to low income generated. Therefore, the church is still in its recovering process hence a need to give it more time to set its operations in order before embarking to partnering with other denomination in delivering the projects.

Additionally, the questionnaire tasked the respondents to indicate some of the considerations given by the Methodist church when setting up an income generating projects. The considerations given by the respondents were that the church intention to develop a project was to meet its financial obligations such as paying workers and developments. Any project implemented by the church mainly revolves around this reason

just as UNMCN (2018) stated. According to the report, the church had discovered that there were numerous women who were in dire need of microloans hence the church saw as an opportunity to expand its financial systems so that both parties' benefit from the loaning system.

That is, on the one hand, when the women were issued with soft loans, they boosted their businesses and on the other hand, the church benefitted from the interest charged on the loans. Additionally, the respondents stated that the church also considered how beneficial and the kind of socio-economic impact the project would have to the immediate community. This would be in the sense of sorting out community needs expressed by members and the sustainability of such projects as well as the willingness of members to fund them. Apart from that, the resources at the disposal of the projects were considered since these resources not only involved source of capital for the program but also availability of human resource to implement and manage the project.

Other key attributes paid attention included the overall economic status of the community such as the various economic activities the community engaged in to ascertain the viability of the project. Additionally, this enabled the church fulfill the needs of the community hence having a reliable donation system whereby funds were always plenty to implement even further goals of the project. The church also ensured they assess where the project would be located in a strategic place to reach out to the targeted group and also ensure that the implemented project does not become nuisance to them. Once the community members understood that the church cared about their lives, they gained interest to even chip in towards the capital and security to cater for the cost of the project. This narrative was also established by Somu and Sujatha (2016) who indicated that when self-help group members

were empowered by the church, they became more committed towards ensuring that the project does not fail under their watch.

The respondents also indicated that the church also considered members spiritual growth and commitment to the church. The projects implemented were not be a reason why members could not find time to come to church or fellowship but rather a uniting factor that empowered them spiritually, socially and economically. Other factors considered included education level of the locals, honesty, accountability and truthfulness on the details of the project.

In addition, the respondents were tasked to elaborate how the church had managed various risks associated with income projects which could cause strife within the church. The respondents revealed that the church would mainly capitalize on guidance and counseling to the church members on how to interact with each other in the cause of the operations of the project. When members understood the communication skills such as what, when, how and who to say to an issue bothering them, it would result to less strife. The church also organized various frequent groups meetings so as to communicate the various milestones of the project implemented. When members are kept in light of the operations, they became more accommodative of the project intentions. Additionally, the church also gave a chance to members to contest for leadership rotated after every 4 years. This enabled them lobby for ideas and mobilize other church members to elect them in offices. Handling it this way would ensure that the church remains peaceful without the allegations of leaders being favored into leadership. Ngatia (2016) also found the same results whereby the study poised that when there was frequent communication, counseling, and independence when electing leaders, the projects in question remained sustainable for a very long time.

Further, the respondents were tasked to name various initiatives established by the church to instill visionary leadership among the project members. They responded by indicating that the church had developed systems through which older leaders could offer in job mentorship to their juniors and interested members. This entirely involved the chemistry between the mentor and the mentee since no one would be forced to undergo through a mentorship program but it was allowed. Further, there was also cost-subsidized trainings on leadership to members whereby the church could pay half of the fee for them to attend colleges, or universities as a way of learning about leadership. The members were also exposed to various leadership conferences and seminars to learn a thing or two. This was whereby they were allowed to attend church organized leadership summits to understand the Methodist church standing orders, synod structure, vision and goals. This was also named as one of the achievements of the MCK (2020b) whereby the members were united with their leaders through conferences and seminars.

The study interviewed superintendent ministers with eighteen (18) of them agreeing to participate in the study. They were asked questions and hence the study allocated them codes that began from M1-M18. In tackling the aspect about sustainability of spiritual-economic projects, they were asked to explain how the Methodist church supported and empowered the vulnerable groups such as women and children. The superintendent ministers indicated that the church offered them seminars for self-awareness to understand their vision and purpose in this world. Once they had identified their purpose the women were helped to form and register self-help groups, whereby the church funded them through the group. The groups also acted as a platform whereby they would meet and air out their views mainly on life hustles. These women also benefited in getting basic skills necessary

for a better living, and capacity building through various non-governmental organizations linked by the church. A superintendent minister M13 indicated that,

“The church has always helped women in groups to access training on life skills and financial management through NGOs.”

The same narrative was also withheld by Mbuagbo & Akoko (2019) who revealed that Full Gospel church in Cameroon had organized women into groups who were able to get financial help, training of life soft skills and also interact with other women groups in the nation. Additionally, the respondents also revealed that the women were also provided seeds for their farms and also providing some money for them to keep chicken and livestock. The most vulnerable women’s children were offered education sponsorship, donations of food stuff, building houses for them, and paying for their medical bills.

Further, the superintendent ministers were asked to name some of the partners that Methodist church had partnered with to ensure success of income generating projects. The partners included local and international donors, partner churches abroad, its members through giving, the surrounding communities; non-governmental organizations such as ZOE, Compassion, and Samaritan purse. There were also government parastatals such as Joint Admission Board [JAB] which admitted government sponsored students at KeMU to undertake various courses. The church had also partnered with the KARIBUNI trust in Kibera and Kawangware. There were also partners such as banks, SACCOS and other microfinance institutions, SMEP, Faulu, and other relevant government ministries such as in agriculture and water.

Additionally, they superintendent ministers were asked to enlighten the measures that the Methodist church had implemented to ensure that gender equality was present in its initiatives. The various gender equality measures related to use of the governing legislations such as standing orders and gender mainstreaming which was largely a church idea which allowed women to be part of leadership. Additionally, the church also had made it mandatory to consider equity in its leadership though allowing and advocating for priesthood of all believers. This was whereby there was equal treatment of male and female clerics and also creating employment to women in the Methodist institutions. A superintendent minister M01 indicated that,

“The Methodist church was among the first churches to ordain women as priests and select them as bishops such as the first bishop of Nairobi”

According to Kariuki (2018), if the church had purposed to bring significant development to the community, it required to allow gender inclusivity since the said society included women. Women ought to be allowed in leadership of the church as it executed its mandate in the community around them. Kariuki (2018) pointed out that a church could not purport to show concern for women without entrusting them with the very leadership of the church.

Further on, the superintend ministers were asked to elucidate some of the government interventions that played part in improving various income generating initiatives in Methodist church. The respondents indicated that the president through his office good will, accepted to come through clergy commissioning and official dedication of such projects which was a clear indicator of government intervention. The national government also allowed through the constitution on the freedom of worship whereby churches were

protected from victimization. The national government also allowed government sponsored students study at the Methodist institutions through higher learning parastatals such as JAB and TVET. The national government also through the ministry of interior coordination has continuously offered security to the assets of the church and also on various projects of Methodist church such as Saccos and main synod offices. The national government had further encouraged various self-help groups through awarding them with licenses to operate in Kenya. A superintendent minister M05 indicated that,

“The government help is immense, beginning with the basic aspect such as issuing operating licenses to self-help group of our members.”

Further on, the members funds were also protected in the government banks such as cooperative bank. The county government had also complimented poverty eradication of community members by encouraging Christian projects from the governor’s office such some Okolea initiatives which saw to it that members got cows, bursaries for their children and also other basic commodities donation. The national government had also provided of water for irrigation and improved general infrastructure for investment and doing of business. The national government through the ministry of health, agriculture, and internal security had established vaccination campaigns, provision of extension officers who assist farmers, peace and stability respectively. A report by UNEP (2018) also pointed that while they were engaging with faith-based institutions, it was always prudent to assess the various government interventions the churches had received. This was for the sole purpose of not interrupting the government operations and strategies but at the same time offering different help to the community members.

4.9 Research Question Two the Influence Sustainability of Spiritual-Economic Programs on Church Growth

The study was guided by the second question which inquired on the influence sustainability of spiritual-economic programs on church growth in MCK, Kaaga synod. The study conducted a Pearson Correlational Analysis and also inquired directly from the respondents. Table 4.9 indicates the results of Pearson Correlational Analysis.

Table 4.9

Pearson Correlational Analysis on Sustainability of Spiritual-Economic Programs and Church Growth

		Sustainability	Church Growth
Sustainability	Pearson Correlation	1	.424**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	224	224
Church Growth	Pearson Correlation	.424**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	224	224

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As per Table 4.9, the Pearson correlation coefficient for the sustainability was $r=0.424^{**}$ at $\alpha < 0.000$ and 99% significance level. Therefore, since the Pearson correlation coefficient was less 1 and its significance level less than 0.05, the findings revealed that to begin with sustainability had a positive and significant influence on church growth. These results reveal that the church also sensitized its members to work hard so as to attract wealth using honest ways hence promoting sustainability of the church projects. This was a way of encouraging members to be industrious and shun laziness through being attending group welfares, merry go rounds and being active participants of income generating projects that

involved their time and resources. The findings by Tenai (2016) revealed that the church also helped the poor through getting basic needs, visited the sick and prayed with them, as a measure to ensure no one is left during the spiritual-economic journey.

4.10 Financial Literacy of Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

Financial literacy of spiritual-economic projects was the third independent variable of the study and had indicators such as budgeting, savings, interest rates, debt management and safety of finances. It was measured using interviews and questionnaires which had both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed ended-questions were measured using Ordinal Likert scale which indicated that 1-strongly disagreed, 2-disagreed, 3-neutral, 4-agreed, and 5-strongly agreed. Table 4.10 includes the results on questionnaire.

Table 4.10***Results on Financial Literacy of Spiritual-economic Projects***

Statement N=206	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
There are financial literacy projects run by church to empower members	3(2%)	20(10%)	0(0%)	44(21%)	139(68%)	4.44
The Methodist church ensures that the rich and the poor get empowered economically without discrimination and inequality	20(10%)	84(41%)	2(1%)	90(44%)	10(5%)	2.93
There are visible measures that the Methodist church have put into place to promote good governance anchored on the various policies and directives issued by the government.	10(5%)	49(24%)	1(1%)	99(48%)	47(23%)	3.60
The various financial literacy projects that have been able to attain both spiritual and financial acquaintance in personal finances management.	0(0%)	27(13%)	0(0%)	73(36%)	106(51%)	3.43

According to Table 4.10, 139(68%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.44, that there were financial literacy projects run by church to empower members. This meant that the church had taken keen consideration to ensure that the members are not introduced to projects blindly but with some basic knowledge of what is expected to happen. They were informed on the procedures used when conducting financial planning, control, risk assessment, monitoring and evaluation among others. The information members got enabled them make informed decision when on the ground hence running the operations of the projects became easier and less stressful. In agreement with the findings, Raduly (2017) indicated that the financial literacy abilities of Seventh Day Adventist church members had improved after getting trained using both the biblical model and financial principles. They were able to make independent prudent decisions that enabled both their personal and church projects excel (Purwaningrat et al., 2019).

Further, 47 (23%) respondents strongly agreed and 99(48%) agreed on a mean of 3.60 that there were visible measures that the Methodist church had put into place to promote good governance anchored on the various policies and directives issued by the government. This meant that the church had established certain protocols and standing orders that were to be followed within its operations to be in good standing with the government. Being in good standing revolved around ensuring that all government directives such as noise pollution, payment of taxes on the church projects, being patriotic towards following the established church regulations and keeping peace. Among the findings made by Melé and Fontrodona (2017) any time a business entity that has its roots from the church, should always uphold Christian ethics and spirituality. In Christian ethics, the business is supposed to always pay

promptly taxes and other government charges just as Jesus directed the church by an example.

Nevertheless, 20(10%) respondents strongly disagreed and 84(41%) disagreed on a mean of 2.93 that the Methodist church ensured that the rich and the poor got empowered economically without discrimination and inequality such as including financial literacy and management courses for all. The results mean that the disparity between the rich and the poor was also not amicably handled. There were still some inconsistencies of how the poor members were handled in terms of opportunities available for them. According to Soboyejo (2016), this was definitely expected to happen since some financial literacy and management courses were expensive to pay hence the poor members in church had no financial muscle to cater for the expenses. In the long-run, the church would definitely put the trained members into the positions of project management hence viewed as discrimination. The findings by Soboyejo (2016) revealed that the reason why prosperity gospel was negatively viewed was because it empowered the rich more as compared to the poor. However, there have been cases that the poor members cannot not afford to manage even though they wanted to hence a leeway for the rich.

Additionally, the questionnaire tasked the respondents to explain various strategies implemented in church projects to be in a position of managing debt by the church. The respondents indicated that the church had limited the powers of church leaders into taking debt. This was whereby the issue on debt taking was only allowed by the church council and no any other leaders. Additionally, the church had also limited the amounts of debt that a church council would take at a one instance to minimize of risk associated with debt. The church constitution had also put clauses on protocols to be taken before the decision of

taking debt is arrived at. For example, selling of old assets and reducing expenses as a means of raising the revenue required. The findings by Holgerson (2017) indicated that the Wesleyan enlightenment guides the Methodist church Worldwide of being sufficient to the extent that before a decision is taken to borrow, the church needs to exploit all other options. This would enable bring together heart religion and reasoning for the common good of the church.

In addition, they were tasked to highlight various incentives used by the church to entice church members into expanding their savings plan in church projects such as the KeMU Sacco. The incentives that the church had included free trainings on financial management whereby members are promised church funded trainings whereby they get knowledge of various financial concepts such as accounting, reporting and risk assessment. Additionally, there is an exposure to different mentors such as local and international investors who could walk the journey of financial exploits with members to attain their personal goals. Additionally, the church has also allowed church members to access funds in form of Sacco loans which are repaid with low interests and longer periods. The church also creates welfare programs to Sacco members such that they come in handy when member needs to pay hospital bills, funeral expenses and other emergency needs.

These results were also in consistence with resource-based theory by Barney (1991). whereby the church had put effort to fund trainings in accounting management, paying different mentors to mentor the members and also cheap loans to enable more members register with the church Sacco. As a result, the Sacco's income channels have grown which has enabled the Methodist church fund its operations without going back to the members to request for more financial support.

Further, they were tasked to mention how the church promoted integrity while handling church finances to be in a position of maintaining safety of funds. The respondents indicated that the church funds are mainly handled by a group of selected people mandated to manage funds such that they are responsible in the process of mobilizing for funds, receiving funds, storing funds and using the funds for the intended reasons. The church has also contracted security services such as services from G4s and Wells Fargo to transport the church offertory and tithes to the bank. Additionally, the church has several bank accounts which receive the payments and require a number of members such as circuit reverend, chairperson of the project, and treasurer to act as the custodian of the accounts and make any withdrawals. This is to ensure that the church minimized the number of people in charge of its funds to facilitate accountability in cases of misappropriation. In Cameroon, Mbuagbo and Akoko (2019) indicated that one aspect of ensuring that there was material prosperity and spirituality, is minimizing the temptation of tempering with the women group funds. This was done through selecting few custodians of church fund accounts to perform various financial transactions on the authorization from a meeting with the members.

The study interviewed superintendent ministers with eighteen (18) of them agreeing to participate in the study. They were asked questions and hence the study allocated them codes that began from M1-M18. In tackling the aspect about financial literacy of spiritual-economic projects, they were asked to name financial literacy projects offered by the Methodist church. The superintendent ministers indicated that the financial literacy programs were seminars tailored to equip financial knowledge to treasurers and stewards. There were also trainings offered to farmers on how to tender for dairy animals, poultry

and basic modernized farming methods at bio-intensive institution. In this institution, farmers are trained on how to improve living standards. The finding of Ndegwa et al. (2018) revealed that as part of empowering the communities through socio-economics, Holy Christian Israel church in Githunguri, liaised with various partnering institutions that deal with agriculture to train farmers. The farmers were trained on factors considered when making decision of artificial insemination to improve cow breeds for increased meat and milk provision.

Further, the second question required them to disclose which organizations had the Methodist church partnered with when training financial literacy projects to its members. The superintendent ministers indicated that the church partnered with Kenya Revenue Authority [KRA] to train members on taxation processes in Kenya, filling of returns and penalties involved when taxes are not broken. There were other government affiliated institutions such as Retirement Benefit Authority [RBA] to train on the need on savings as individuals for their retirement. Additionally, a superintendent minister M02 indicated that, *“The church has partnered with accounting bodies such as KASNEB to train and offer professional exams to the members who would want to become accountants.”*

Other institutions such as community-based organizations, Saccos, banks, county government and NGOs previously partnered with the church to deliver various products and services to members.

Additionally, the third question required them to explain the challenges faced by the church when training its members on financial literacy. The challenges named by the superintendent ministers included high incompetency of leaders offering treasurers

training. There were also language barriers whereby some members did not understand English or Kiswahili. Further, there was general lack of interest by some members whereby most of them were not ready to attend the training sessions hence low turnout. There were also financial strains to cater for the facilitation of the training. Additionally, members expected to be paid for attending a financial training seminar. A superintendent minister M04 indicated that,

There is also lack of proper research on the real needs of the people like training them on reconciliation whereas recording keeping is a problem.

4.11 Research Question Three on the Impact of Financial Literacy of Spiritual-Economic Programs on Church Growth

The study was guided by the third question which inquired on the impact of financial literacy of spiritual-economic programs on church growth in MCK, Kaaga synod. The study conducted a Pearson Correlational Analysis and also inquired directly from the respondents. Table 4.11 indicates the results of Pearson Correlational Analysis.

Table 4.11

Pearson Correlational Analysis on Financial Literacy of Spiritual-Economic Programs and Church Growth

		Financial literacy	Church Growth
Financial literacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.239**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	224	224
Church Growth	Pearson Correlation	.239**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	224	224

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As per Table 4.11 the Pearson correlation coefficient for the financial literacy was $r=0.239^{**}$ at $\alpha < 0.000$ and 99% significance level. Therefore, since the Pearson correlation coefficient was less 1 and its significance level less than 0.05, the findings revealed that to begin with financial literacy had a positive and significant influence on church growth. The results indicated that the church was keen on training the members on financial matters which was mainly done by use of financial experts such as internal and external auditors who came and equipped them with knowledge on how financial records are kept and the laws broken in cases of lack of accurate records. According to Wyk (2017), the church often acted as a transformative agency whereby it had colleges, universities and Sacco where interested members went and enrolled for financial literacy course taught by experts on book keeping/records, financial controls and areas of investment of money.

4.12 Involvement of Communities in Church Projects and Church Growth

Involvement of communities in church projects was the fourth independent variable of the study and had indicators such as prayers, evangelism, guidance and counseling, spiritual discipline, training in adhering to government policies, and regular preaching. It was measured using interviews and questionnaires which had both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed ended-questions were measured using Ordinal Likert scale which indicated that 1-strongly disagreed, 2-disagreed, 3-neutral, 4-agreed, and 5-strongly agreed. Table 4.12 includes the results on questionnaire.

Table 4.12***Results on Involvement of Communities in Church Projects***

Statement N=206	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Strong religious leaders in church have enhanced easy blending of spirituality and empowerment.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	89(43%)	117(57%)	4.76
The impact of the church has been felt among community members	0(0%)	31(15%)	3(2%)	38(18%)	134(65%)	4.33
The church has boosted various church members economically through financial initiatives	4(2%)	42(20%)	0(0%)	54(26%)	106(52%)	4.05
There have been an overall ethical advancement practices among church members.	87(42%)	40(19%)	32(16%)	20(10%)	27(13%)	2.32
Godly principles have played a significant role towards improving the well-being of members	0(0%)	29(14%)	2(1%)	104(51%)	71(35%)	4.05

According to Table 4.12, 117(57%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.76, that having strong religious leaders in church had enhanced easy blending of spirituality as well as economic empowerment. Therefore, the results indicate that the church was keen in having strong and reliable leaders who would lead in a way that both spirituality and economics would work hand in hand. According to Basedau et al. (2018), religion had different influences on people's lives. The ability of the church to impact the society in both spiritual and economic aspects is closely relied on the maturity and experience level of the leaders in place. If the leaders were well exposed on different multidimensional factors such as professionals and other religious leaders, they tended to offer more reliable insights on how the church should work and corporate with economic growth.

These results are consistent with the stewardship theory by Donaldson and Davis (1991) since they indicate that the church had taken a very serious consideration to ensure that it put spiritual leaders that were strong as a means of acting as stewards of both material and non-material resources of the church. It required to have reliable leaders that would say no to common malpractices such as corruption, nepotism, and enriching themselves out of the church financial kitty. This would enable the church operations go on without halts due to lack of finances in the church accounts.

Further, 134 (65%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.33 that the impact of the church had been felt among community members due to provision of various types of aids such as financial aids, scholarship and job opportunities. This meant that spiritual-economic efforts played by the Methodist church had enabled the society members make milestones, as far as their lives were concerned. They were able to make sustainable livelihoods through employment, boosted businesses, their children being educated and

receive various funds to being farming projects. According to English (2019), the church members had a higher expectation of getting various types of empowerments from big churches as compared to the smaller ones. This meant that the big churches had a higher responsibility to empower the members which was more of corporate social responsibility hence a way of giving back to the community.

Nevertheless, 87(42%) respondents strongly disagreed and 40(19%) disagreed on a mean of 2.32 that there had been an overall ethical advancement practices among church members. This indicated that the irrespective of the church clergy preaching on morality issues and eventually giving them finances to practice Biblical principles in their business, the members were still struggling to ensure that they followed strictly the teachings. This indicated that the church leadership had still work to do as a means of providing more guidance on biblical principles. As per the findings of Melé (2017) the church should always have a continuous way of instilling virtues, values and principles of how the members should live with each other. The church should not be tired of preaching and teaching on social phenomenon to enable members grow spiritually.

Additionally, the questionnaire tasked the respondents to name ways that the Methodist church promoted spiritual-economics aspects among its members. The respondents indicated that the church had services on Sundays for different spiritual-economic aspects such as agricultural Sunday, health and wellness Sunday. For example, there were times when specific sermons cited development, health and wholeness of family, good Christian citizenship, so as to address social, economic aspects in a spiritual setting. Further the church had been coordinating scholarships for needy children like the CDC center. Further, there were various programs run by the chapel and the various meetings, seminars and

courses held to train members like the women fellowship, youth groups and also men fellowship. According to MCK (2020b), the church through organized workshops had always been in the forefront of fighting against negative issues like alcohol, drug abuse and sexual abuse, which when morally understood helped in socio economic development of church youth members.

The church had also opened boarding schools, medical institutions, compassion projects/programs, donor programs, all which helped to train and teach members and non-members to promote their wellbeing. These projects had benefited a lot of people and many of them were presently associated with at least one of the mentioned projects. The church through the projects encouraged people to be self-dependent by making personal investments and save for the purposes of their future. The church has a Sacco which encouraged saving among church members whereby they were advised to save their resources such as money so as to take care of the lives in case there are any eventualities of tragedies.

The church emphasized that its clergy forms groups where they would speak out their issues in private. The issues of members were also discussed during members fellowships which was a way of establishing social standards, shaping individual personalities and connecting with other Christians. Further, the church encouraged Bible study programs to enhance knowledge empowerment and also Implementing of IGAS. The church partnered with CDC (compassion) to start SMEs for the member. According to Nkansah-Obrempong (2018), this was to train, empower and educate them on health and businesses within the set-up of the church believers.

In addition, they were tasked to highlight various techniques used by the church to training members and employees to adhere to government policies. The respondents indicated that the church employed training methods such as training members in a classroom set-up, general meetings, seminars, conferences, retreats. The findings by Rogers (2017) also established that for faith and fortune to work, there was need of incorporating trainings through various forms. These included preaching and teaching in services, conferences, seminars and other fellowship meetings.

The study interviewed superintendent ministers with eighteen (18) of them agreeing to participate in the study. They were asked questions and hence the study allocated them codes that began from M1-M18. In tackling the aspect about involvement of communities in church projects, they were asked to explain how Methodist church ensured that social inequalities such as ethnicity and age were minimized especially in relation to promotion of spiritual-economic aspects. The superintendent ministers revealed that the Methodist church had developed and required the leadership to always be guided by the integrity of the word of God, use standing orders, apply church and country's constitution, when dealing with social lives of the members. The church also emphasized on use of common language that could be understood by all when teaching such as use of local language. In relation to this, the church also ensured it stationed ministers from different tribes in all parts of the country. This was to ensure that church ministers integrated all groups in leadership and management by encouraging members to accept each other and learn from one another. The findings by Soboyejo(2016) revealed that in terms of learning, the church also set up different training activities to enhance capacity building of the members.

Additionally, the second question required the superintendent ministers to explain some of the Christian virtues emphasized in Methodist to improve economic and reproductive growth. The various virtues indicated were having integrity, accountability, honesty, faithfulness, trustworthy, and living healthy lifestyle such as eating balanced diet.

Further, the third question asked them highlight the challenges faced by bishops when promoting spiritual-economic aspects among church members. The superintendent ministers indicated that most project leaders were not always available when needed in the meetings or others lacked appropriate time management skills. When leaders were tasked with the role of implementing agreed upon policies, they failed to do so in the right way. The respondents also complained that in their line of promoting spiritual-economic aspects, they encountered discouragements from some members, or others did not support them since the bishops did not have close contact with members. Further, the bishops were also surrounded by so many advisers and each of them offered uninformed decision such that if the bishops followed it led to disasters and conflict of interest among members.

The bishops also underwent the set back of most members being extremely poor hence became very hard to raise substantive amount of capital to begin projects. As a result, the bishops relied mostly on the allocated funds from the headquarters which was never enough to sought out the project needs on their areas of jurisdiction. In other extreme cases, bishops found themselves right at the center of internal wrangles in the church such that there was individual alienation of some circuits or churches from the synods and conflicts arising from mismanagement of resources. In relation to management of resources, some bishops also lacked background knowledge and training in financial management.

4.13 Research Question Four the Effect of Involvement of Communities in Projects on Spiritual-economic Projects

The study was guided by the fourth question which inquired on the effect of involvement of communities in projects on spiritual-economic projects and the growth in MCK, Kaaga synod. The study conducted a Pearson Correlational Analysis and also inquired directly from the respondents. Table 4.13 indicates the results of Pearson Correlational Analysis.

Table 4.13

Pearson Correlational Analysis on Involvement of Communities in Projects on Spiritual-economic Projects and Growth

		Involvement of Communities in Church Projects	Church Growth
Involvement of Communities in Church Projects	Pearson Correlation	1	.358**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	224	224
Church Growth	Pearson Correlation	.358**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	224	224

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As per Table 4.13, the Pearson correlation coefficient for the involvement of communities in church projects was $r=0.358^{**}$ at $\alpha < 0.000$ and 99% significance level. Therefore, since the Pearson correlation coefficient was less 1 and its significance level less than 0.05, the findings revealed that to begin with involvement of communities in projects on spiritual-economic projects had a positive and significant influence on church growth. In relation to this, the church was engaged in empowering the society economically through educating the needy, initiating self-help groups among members and engaging in seminars to enlighten on economic empowerment. There were also other operations such as promoting

organic farming in training centers such as the Kaaga bio intensive agricultural center and Marimanti rural training center. The church also took front row in advocating the Wesleyan principle of earn all you can, give all you can and save all you can. Through his method, it taught its faithful the biblical principles of seeking first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, so that all other things could be added. The results by Owino et al. (2017) also indicate that the ability of the church to sensitize its members on the biblical principles, enabled the members avoid putting their trust in material possessions while relying on God to bless the labor of their hands.

4.14 Diagnostic Tests

The study examined various diagnostic tests on the collected data. This was because, it was prudent to ascertain that the data would be relied upon to perform various analysis operations. The various diagnostic tests conducted included normality, autocorrelation, multicollinearity and linearity tests.

4.14.1 Normality

The study also conducted normality test using the one-sample Kolmogrov-Smirnov Test as indicated on Table 4.14.

Table 4.14*Normality Test*

		Communal Training	Sustaina bility	Financial Literacy	Involvem ent of communi ties in church projects	Church Growth
N		224	224	224	224	224
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	16.9320	15.8495	10.4466	16.4223	20.9272
	Std. Deviation	2.15842	3.07970	3.34585	2.24397	2.48695
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.160	.189	.116	.157	.181
	Positive	.097	.136	.116	.107	.108
	Negative	-.160	-.189	-.092	-.157	-.181
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.304	1.718	1.668	1.254	.605
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.102	.212	.065	.282	.254

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

According to Table 4.4, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) values for communal training, sustainability, financial literacy, involvement of communities in church projects and church growth were 0.102, 0.212, 0.065, 0.282, and 0.254 respectively. All these values were above 0.05 which indicated that the data was normal. This meant that the data set was well-modeled and most likely had an underlying variable that qualified to be normally distributed.

4.14.2 Auto-correlation Test

The study also conducted auto-correlation test such Durbin-Watson. This test was relevant in ascertaining whether the study's variables had any relationships within the independent variables. Table 4.15 indicates the results.

Table 4.15*Autocorrelation Test*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.854a	.729	.714	2.205	1.211

According to Table 4.15, the Durbin-Watson Test was 1.211. This was between 0 and 2 which indicated positive autocorrelation. When The Durbin Watson value was 2, it showed there was not auto-correlation and when above 2, it indicated that there was a negative effect of the independent variables.

4.14.3 Multicollinearity Test

The study conducted multicollinearity test to explore whether the coefficients under the scope, were sensitive to small changes in the model. That is, whether the coefficients were robust enough not to be swayed by other elements in the model by maintaining their unique properties. Table 4.16 indicates the multicollinearity test results.

Table 4.16*Multicollinearity Test*

Model	Collinearity Statistics		
	Tolerance	VIF	
	(Constant)		
1	Communal Training	.467	2.972
	Sustainability	.612	1.634
	Financial Literacy	.882	1.134
	Involvement of communities in church projects	.403	2.820

According to Table 4.16, the tolerance and VIF of communal training were 0.467 and 2.972 respectively; tolerance and VIF of sustainability was 0.612 and 1.634 respectively; tolerance and VIF of financial literacy were 0.882 and 1.134 respectively; tolerance and VIF of involvement of communities in church projects were 0.403 and 2.820 respectively. Wanjiku (2019) advised that for a data set to be free from collinearity the tolerance value ought to be above 0.2 and VIF value below 5. Therefore, based on this guideline, the four variables of the study did not have multicollinearity issue.

4.14.4 Linearity

The study conducted linearity test to ascertain whether both the dependent and independent variables had any relationship in existence or had what it takes to be investigated on a linear and multiple regression analysis. According to Schober et al. (2018), for a data set to be ascertained as linear, the significant value on deviation from linearity should be above 0.05. Table 4.17 indicates the results.

Table 4.17***Linearity Results***

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Church Growth * Communal Training		(Combined)	390.957	8	48.870	10.978	.000
	Between	Linearity	207.327	1	207.327	46.574	.001
	Groups	Deviation from Linearity	183.629	7	26.233	5.893	.128
	Within	Groups	876.951	216	4.452		
	Total		1267.908	224			
Sustainability		(Combined)	434.939	11	39.540	9.209	.061
	Between	Linearity	227.951	1	227.951	53.090	.000
	Groups	Deviation from Linearity	206.988	10	20.699	4.821	.374
	Within	Groups	832.969	213	4.294		
	Total		1267.908	224			
Financial Literacy		(Combined)	312.219	10	31.222	6.371	.019
	Between	Linearity	72.429	1	72.429	14.779	.138
	Groups	Deviation from Linearity	239.790	9	26.643	5.436	.201
	Within	Groups	955.689	214	4.901		
	Total		1267.908	224			
Involvement of communities in church projects		(Combined)	404.974	12	33.748	7.548	.033
	Between	Linearity	195.994	1	195.994	43.835	.000
	Groups	Deviation from Linearity	208.980	11	18.998	4.249	.117
	Within	Groups	862.933	212	4.471		
	Total		1267.908	224			

According to Table 4.17, communal training deviation from linearity significance value was 0.128; sustainability was 0.374; financial literacy was 0.201; and involvement of communities in church projects was 0.117. From their significance values, it was clear that

they were all above 0.05 hence the study variables were linear. This signified that they had existing relationships between the dependent and independent variables.

4.15 Results of the Overall Purpose of The Study

The study’s main purpose was to assess the influence of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of the Methodist Church in Kenya, Kaaga Synod. To ascertain this, the study used model summary, ANOVA and regression weights to determine its percentage influence, and validity of the model and regression weights.

4.15.1 Model Summary of the Influence of Spiritual-economic Projects on Church Growth

The study examined the percentage influence of spiritual-economic projects on church growth using model summary as indicated in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18

Model Summary on Influence of Spiritual-economic Projects on the Growth of the MCK, Kaaga Synod

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.854 ^a	.729	.714	2.205	1.211

a. Predictors: (Constant), Involvement of Communities in Church Projects, Financial Literacy, Sustainability, Communal Training

b. Dependent Variable: Church Growth

According to Table 4.18, the R coefficient was 0.854 while the R-square was 0.729 implying that spiritual-economic projects had a 72.9% influence on church growth. The Durbin Watson value of 1.211 indicated that there was a positive correlation between the variables. Therefore, the results revealed that spiritual-economic projects were a very

relevant contributory factor towards enhancing growth of the church. This is because their presence enhances availability of resources as well as correct doctrine as what Jesus Christ taught his disciples, which are necessary towards expansion of the kingdom.

4.15.2 ANOVA of the Influence of Spiritual-economic Projects on Church Growth

The study examined the validity of the model using ANOVA as indicated on Table 4.19.

Table 4.19

ANOVA on Influence of Spiritual-economic Projects on the Growth of the MCK, Kaaga Synod

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	290.247	4	72.562	14.918	.000 ^b
Residual	977.661	220	4.864		
Total	1267.908	224			

a. Dependent Variable: Church Growth

b. Predictors: (Constant), Involvement of communities in church projects, Financial Literacy, Sustainability, Communal Training

According to Table 4.19, $F(4,220) = 14.918$, $P \leq .000$ which meant that the significance level was less than 0.05. This implied that the model was valid and spiritual-economic projects had a positive and significant influence on the growth of the Methodist Church in Kenya, Kaaga Synod. The results indicated that when a church was able to combine both spiritual aspects and also become considerate towards empowering the members economically, the church moved from one dimension to the other towards realization of the vision of reaching out to all corners of the world.

4.15.3 Regression Weights of the Influence of Spiritual-economic Projects on Church Growth

The study had a model which indicated that $Y = C + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4$

Where:

Y = Church Growth

β_i = Coefficients to be estimated

C= Constant

X₁= Communal Training

X₂ = Sustainability

X₃ = Financial Literacy

X₄ = Involvement of communities in church projects

Table 4.20 indicates the results of the regression analysis.

Table 4.20

Regression Weights on Influence of Spiritual-economic Projects on the Growth of the MCK, Kaaga Synod

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	12.567	1.230	1.221	.237
1	Communal Training	.144	.174	.125	.410
	Sustainability	.239	.064	.296	.221
	Financial Literacy	.094	.049	.127	.156

a. Dependent Variable: Church Growth

Table 4.20 reveal that church growth= $12.567C+0.144X1+0.239X2+0.094X3+0.070X4$. That is, Constant was 12.567 at a significance level of 0.237; communal training was 0.144 at a significance level of 0.410; Sustainability was 0.239 at a significance level of 0.221; Financial literacy was 0.094 at a significance level of 0.156.

The results indicated that by adding one-unit X1, X2, X3 and X4, church growth increased by $0.144+0.239+0.094$. Therefore, since all the p-values were greater than 0.05, it was prudent to indicate that separately, they were significant, however when combined only sustainability was insignificant. There the church should ensure that it continue facilitating training of members on important financial matters, donate finances to members so as to boost business, and offer even more employment opportunities to members in many of its project already in operations. In matters of spirituality the pastors should be encouraged to teach correct doctrine doing discipleship and mentorship programs.

Further, the church should see to it that there are frequent pastoral visits, revival meetings, retreats; through preaching in church, weekly fellowships, open-air preaching (crusades)

and seminars which would empower members to always follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. The findings by Basedau et al. (2018) also discovered that for religion to have a multidimensional impact to the society, it needed to have sustainable programs that enable the church to lead as an example of ensuring there is transparency among its members and matters affecting them. The church should also ensure that there is sustainability through equal distribution of resources such as food reliefs and shaping/empowering individual values and attitudes towards remaining in Christ.

4.16 Moderating Influence of Involvement of Communities in Spiritual-economic Projects

The study sought to examine the moderating influence of involvement of communities in spiritual-economic projects and the growth in MCK, Kaaga synod. The study adopted use of Moderated Multiple Regression (MMR) which had three models combined. The first model examined the influence of communal training, sustainability and financial literacy (independent variables). The second model examined the influence of communal training, sustainability and financial literacy (independent variables); and involvement of community to church projects (moderating variable). The third model examined the influence of communal training, sustainability, financial literacy (independent variables); involvement of community (moderating variable); and interaction term (combination of communal training, sustainability, financial literacy and involvement of community). The Moderated Multiple Regression is indicated as shown:

$$Y = C + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3$$

$$Y = C + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_5 D_e$$

$$Y = C + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_5 D_e + \beta_6 F_i D_e$$

Where:

Y = Church Growth

β_i = Coefficients to be estimated

C= Constant

X1= Communal Training

X2 = Sustainability

X3 = Financial Literacy

B5= Coefficient of the moderator as a predictor

De= involvement of community to church projects

β_6 = Coefficient of the interaction term

FiDe = interaction term between variable ($z=X_1, X_2, X_3$) and moderating variable

The outcome of the moderating influence of involvement of community to church projects on spiritual-economic projects and the growth of the MCK, Kaaga Synod are explained further by Tables 4.21 to 4.23.

Table 4.21***Model Validity Test of the Moderating Influence of Involvement of Communities in Church Projects***

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	290.247	4	72.562	14.918	.000b
	Residual	977.661	220	4.864		
	Total	1267.908	224			
2	Regression	372.723	4	58.181	14.811	.001c
	Residual	895.185	220	3.779		
	Total	1267.908	224			
3	Regression	699.612	5	39.922	10.850	.000d
	Residual	568.296	219	1.664		
	Total	1267.908	224			

a. Dependent Variable: Church Growth

b. Predictors: (Constant), Communal Training, Sustainability, Financial Literacy

c. Predictors: (Constant), Communal Training, Sustainability, Financial Literacy, Involvement of communities in church projects

d. Predictors: (Constant), Communal Training, Sustainability, Financial Literacy, Involvement of communities in church projects, Interaction term

According to Table 4.21 the first model had a p-value of 0.000, the second model had a p-value of 0.001, while the third model had a p-value of 0.000. Therefore, in the three models, the p-values were all less than 0.05 indicating that the model was valid and could be used in examining the moderating influence of involvement of community to church projects on spiritual-economic projects and the growth of the MCK, Kaaga Synod, through the model summary. Table 4.22 indicates the findings.

Table 4.22***Model Summary of the Moderating Influence of Involvement of Communities in Church Projects***

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.854a	.729	.714	2.205	.084	6.135	3	202	.001
2	.933b	.871	.690	1.94401	.004	.851	1	201	.357
3	.917c	.841	.837	.81462	.753	944.662	1	200	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Communal Training, Sustainability, Financial Literacy

b. Predictors: (Constant), Communal Training, Sustainability, Financial Literacy, Involvement of communities in church projects

c. Predictors: (Constant), Communal Training, Sustainability, Financial Literacy, Involvement of communities in church projects, Interaction term

The results presented in Table 4.22 show that the first model which did not have any moderating variable had an R value of 0.854 and R-square of 0.729 (72.9%). However, when the moderating variable (involvement of communities in church projects) was added, R value of 0.933 and R-square of 0.871 (87.1%). Therefore, this resulted to 14.2% increase in influence once moderating variable was included in the second model. In the third model when the interaction term was included in the relationship, the P-value value which was 0.000 was significant since it was less than 0.05. This therefore, saw to it that the study concluding that involvement of communities' church projects had a moderating influence on spiritual-economic projects and the growth in MCK, Kaaga synod. Thereafter the study conducted an analysis to determine the regression weights of the study model as shown in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23***Regression Weights of the Moderating Influence of Involvement of communities in church projects***

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	d		
				Beta		
1	(Constant)	12.567	1.230		1.221	.237
	Communal Training	.144	.174	.125	.826	.410
	Sustainability	.239	.064	.296	3.737	.221
	Financial Literacy	.094	.049	.127	1.923	.156
2	(Constant)	12.914	1.084		11.916	.000
	Communal Training	-.041	.154	-.044	-.266	.790
	Sustainability	.107	.056	.164	1.898	.059
	Financial Literacy	.088	.043	.146	2.039	.043
	Involvement of communities in church projects	.123	.133	.136	.922	.357
3	(Constant)	13.020	1.164		4.689	.000
	Communal Training	.078	.068	-.753	-10.353	.348
	Sustainability	.099	.041	-1.420	-22.570	.177
	Financial Literacy	.141	.032	-1.171	-22.365	.239
	Involvement of communities in church projects	.270	.064	-.931	-13.104	.643
	Interaction term	1.732	.024	3.636	30.735	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Church Growth

In the first model according to Table 4.23, all the variables were statistically insignificant since their p-values were all above 0.05. In the second model when the involvement of community in church projects' variable was introduced to the model, sustainability and

financial literacy were significant whereas the rest of the variables were insignificant. In the third model when the interaction term was introduced, all the variables became statistically insignificant hence the interaction term had no notable impact. Therefore, when the overall model was equated with the coefficients, it resulted as follows:

$$\text{Church growth} = C + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_5 De + \beta_6 FiDe$$

Where: C was 13.020; Communal Training was 0.078; Sustainability was 0.099; Financial Literacy was 0.141; Involvement of communities in church projects was 0.270; Interaction term 1.732. The results indicated that involving communities in church project was relevant towards improving the growth of the church. Therefore, there was need to capitalize more on prayer days and evangelism missions so as to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and reach out to more people. When the Holy spirit was present in a church, the leaders were able to execute realistic and viable projects. Additionally, when more people were reached and became members of the church, they participated more in terms of giving their financial and non-financial resources towards the success of the project.

Further the church had a mandate of equipping guidance and counseling department with professionals so that members' welfare could be sorted. When mental health of members was taken care of, the church would have less conflicts hence increasing its ability to expand the projects since there were resources and good will of the members. Additionally, the church had a mandate to instill discipline in two perspectives which were through spiritual discipline and training in adhering to government policies. Spiritual discipline enabled members make ethical and reasonable decisions that would promote service delivery in the church projects. Adding to that, when the church was able to train members

to adhere to government policies, there would be less cases of corruption, misappropriation of funds, and court fines.

Therefore, the expenditures of the church projects would be less hence increased profit to expand the projects further. The church also had the mandate to encourage its clergy to regularly preach and teach the interconnection between biblical and financial principles. Once the members understood how each of these principles worked together, they were encouraged to shun laziness in the name of religion hence contributing ideas and resources towards the church projects. This was because they understood the relevance of finances, they were able to work during weekday and come to worship during Sunday services.

4.17 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter provided the results of the study as collected by the study. The reliability results, response rate and demographic information was provided. Descriptive findings of questionnaires and interviews on church growth, communal training, sustainability, financial literacy and involvement of communities in church projects were provided. Additionally, the chapter provided the results on research questions linking them to correlation analysis. Thereafter, the chapter examined the suitability of collected data using diagnostic tests such as normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and autocorrelation. In addition, the chapter expounded more on multiple regression analysis on elements such as model summary, ANOVA and regression analysis results of the influence of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of the Methodist church in Kenya. Further, the chapter provided moderating influence of involvement of communities in church projects through

Moderated Multiple Regression. The study cross-examined the moderating influence further through model validity test, model summary and regression weights.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The study's main purpose was to assess the influence of spiritual-economic projects on growth of the Methodist Church in Kenya, Kaaga Synod. The objectives were to examine the influence of communal training in spiritual-economic projects on growth of Methodist church in Kenya; To assess the influence of sustainability of spiritual-economic projects on growth of Methodist church in Kenya; To determine the influence of financial literacy of spiritual-economic projects on growth of Methodist church in Kenya; To investigate the influence of involvement of communities in projects and growth of Methodist church in Kenya. The study had two theories which were resource based and stewardship theories. The philosophy of the study was positive paradigm whereas descriptive research design was used in this study.

The target population was 25 circuits in Kaaga synod, Meru County, whereby the study used purposive sampling technique to select all the 25 superintendent ministers and 53 project heads. The study selected 30 percent of the project members' population to result to 196 project members who were selected through simple random sampling method across diverse circuits. Interview guides and questionnaires were used to collect data. The study conducted a pre-test study in Methodist church in Nairobi synod. A pre-test interview was conducted on 3 superintendent ministers, 5 projects heads and 20 community project members. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as median, frequencies and percentage. SPSS version 24 was used to analyze the data which was presented using

tables. The interview responses were analyzed using content analysis method after which the explanations were issued.

5.2 Summary of Results

The study presented the results of the variables beginning with the dependent variable which was church growth and later other independent variables which were communal training, sustainability, financial literacy, and involvement of communities in spiritual-economic projects as shown in subsections below.

5.2.1 Church Growth

The study asked questions in form of closed and open questionnaires to project heads and members whereas the superintendent ministers were interviewed. The results from the closed questions revealed that 180 (87%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.83, that the church has been assisting the needy through initiating various projects has increased the number of church members. Further, 178 (86%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.81 that the church members were able to do discipleship training within the community since they understood its value more as the church grew. Nevertheless, 103 (50%) respondents disagreed on a mean of 2.97 that there was more time allocated in worship and teaching of the word.

The results from the open-ended questions revealed that the church leadership role in ensuring that tithe and offering had increased were that there were renovations done to modernize the churches; different themed Sundays; they made known among members the church expenditures via a vis the income gotten; created so many services; and allowed various groups of church to operate. The guiding Biblical principles followed by the church

to practice accountability and stewardship were; honesty, hard work, merciful, reliability, respectful, resourceful, trustworthy, and integral.

The interview results revealed that the evangelism programs that the church engaged within a period of the last 3 months were soul winning, acts of mercy (visiting the sick and elderly), and bible exposition program (youth conferences and seminars). Further, the role played by the church in maintaining soul winning programs included provision of finances and non-finance materials such as providing cars and food material for the pastoral team involved in soul winning programs; offering leadership and guidance; nurturing young evangelists; and setting up policies especially on how to follow-up new believers such as establishing new believers' classes. Additionally, challenges that the church had undergone in its growth prospects which were related to spiritual-economic projects included lack of adequate finances, policies and service centered leaders.

5.2.2 Communal Training in Spiritual-economic Projects

The study asked questions in form of closed and open-ended questionnaires to project heads and members whereas the superintendent ministers were interviewed. The results from the closed questions revealed that 158 (77%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.57, that the creative ways that the church had come up enticed the community to become full members of the church leading to an increase in church attendance. Further, 150 (73%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.54 that the church members who had been empowered were more cooperative in church functions and attended Sunday services. Nevertheless, 98 (48%) respondents strongly disagreed and 52 (25%) disagreed

on a mean of 2.67 that there was a strategic plan in the church that guided the circuits on which projects to implement and the order they should follow.

The results from the open questions revealed that the various seminars that had been established to equip church members with spiritual-economic projects included men seminar, women seminar and the youth seminar. Further on, the challenges faced when implementing various communal training projects such as financial management courses included lack of finances, lack of concentration due to conflicts of interest from members, and resistance from some of the leaders. Additionally, the ways that the church leadership benefitted from trainings and conferences on management of church projects included through knowledge and connections created after interactions.

The interview results revealed that the material benefits of integration of spiritual-economics in Methodist church included greater productivity of the church to enhance self-sustenance to cater for its expenses; self-employment for some church members; evangelizing and improving the vulnerable members of the family. Further, the challenges the church management was faced with when running projects such as the annual rites of passage for both boys and girls program included competition with traditional systems; high cost especially due to constant review on charges; financial accountability and control from the church; and insufficient training for management to offer clear counseling. Additionally, the Methodist church in Kenya's projects benefitted the vulnerable groups through offering guidance and counseling program; providing basic needs such as foodstuff, clothing, and shelter; putting up small initiatives such as opening businesses for the disabled or ailing community members.

5.2.3 Sustainability of Spiritual-economic Projects

The study asked questions in form of closed and open-ended questionnaires to project heads and members whereas the superintendent ministers were interviewed. The results from the closed questions revealed that 107 (52%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.25, that there was a great team effort played by Methodist church and the government of Kenya towards improving various income generating projects. Further, 104 (51%) agreed on a mean of 3.80 that there was good management in income generating projects whereby qualified staffs were assigned task to manage within a specific duration of time. Nevertheless, 103 (50%) respondents strongly disagreed and 72 (35%) disagreed on a mean of 2.05 that the Methodist church had greatly partnered with other denominations such as Catholic church in delivering various community-based projects.

The results from the open questions revealed that the considerations given by the Methodist church when setting up an income generating projects included meeting its financial obligations; socio-economic impact that the project would have to the immediate community; resources at the disposal of the projects; location of the project; members spiritual growth and commitment to the church. Further, the church had managed various risks associated with income projects through guidance and counseling to the church members on how to interact with each other in course of project operations; organized various frequent groups meetings; and opportunity for members to contest for leadership. Additionally, the initiatives established by the church to instill visionary leadership among the project members included systems which allowed older leaders to offer in job mentorship to their juniors and interested members; cost-subsidized trainings on leadership to members; and exposure of members to various leadership conferences and seminars.

The interview results revealed that the Methodist church supported and empowered the vulnerable groups such as women and children through offering them seminars for self-awareness to understand their vision and purpose in this world. They were helped to form and register self-help groups; seeds for their farms and also providing some money for them to keep chicken and livestock; donations of food stuff, building houses for them; paying for their medical bills; and their children offered education sponsorship. Further, the Methodist church together with its international partners ensured income generating projects included local and international donors, partner churches abroad, its members through giving, the surrounding communities; non-governmental organizations such as ZOE, Compassion, and Samaritan purse.

Additionally, the measures that the Methodist church had implemented to ensure that gender equality in its projects included governing legislations such as standing orders and gender mainstreaming which was largely a church idea that allowed women to be part of leadership; equal treatment of male and female clerics; creating employment to women in the Methodist institutions. Additionally, the government interventions that played part in improving various income projects included president's good will; freedom of worship whereby churches were protected from victimization; allowing government sponsored students study at the Methodist institutions through higher learning parastatals such as JAB and TVET; and offering security to the assets of the church and also on various projects of Methodist church such as Saccos and main synod offices.

5.2.4 Financial Literacy of Spiritual-economic Projects

The study asked questions in form of closed and open-ended questionnaires to project heads and members whereas the superintendent ministers were interviewed. The results from the closed questions revealed that 139 (68%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.44, that there were financial literacy projects run by church to empower members. Further, 47 (23%) respondents strongly agreed and 99 (48%) agreed on a mean of 3.60 that there were visible measures that the Methodist church had put into place to promote good governance anchored on the various policies and directives issued by the government. Nevertheless, 20 (10%) respondents strongly disagreed and 84 (41%) disagreed on a mean of 2.93 that the Methodist church ensured that the rich and the poor got empowered economically without discrimination and inequality such as including financial literacy and management courses for all.

The results from the open questions revealed that the strategies implemented in church projects to be in a position of managing debt by the church included limiting the powers of church leaders into taking debt; limiting the amounts of debt that a church council would take at a one instance to minimize of risk associated with debt; and clauses from the church constitution on protocols to be taken before the decision of taking debt is arrived at. Additionally, the incentives used by the church to entice church members into expanding their savings plan in church projects included free trainings on financial management; exposure to different mentors such as local and international investors; access funds in form of Sacco loans; and creation of welfare programs to Sacco members.

Further on, the church promoted integrity through ensuring that the funds are mainly handled by a group of selected people. These people are mandated to manage funds hence responsible in mobilization, receiving, storing and using the funds for the intended reasons. The church has also contracted security services such as services to transport the church offertory and tithes to the bank. Additionally, the church had several bank accounts which receive the payments and require a number of members such as circuit reverend, chairperson of the project, and treasurer to act as the custodian of the accounts and make any withdrawals.

The study findings revealed that the financial literacy projects offered by the Methodist church were seminars tailored to equip financial knowledge to treasurers and stewards; trainings offered to farmers on how to tender for dairy animals, poultry and basic modernized farming methods at bio-intensive institution. Further on, the organizations had the Methodist church partnered with when training financial literacy projects to its members included KRA, RBA, community-based organizations, Saccos, banks, county government and NGOs. Additionally, the challenges faced by the church when training its members on financial literacy. included high incompetency of leaders offering treasurers training; language barriers whereby some members did not understand English or Kiswahili; and financial strains to cater for the facilitation of the training.

5.2.5 Involvement of Communities in Spiritual-economic Projects

The study asked questions in form of closed and open questionnaires to project heads and members whereas the superintendent ministers were interviewed. The results from the closed questions revealed that 117 (57%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.76,

that having strong religious leaders in church had enhanced easy blending of spirituality as well as economic empowerment. Further, 134 (65%) respondents strongly agreed on a mean of 4.33 that the impact of the church had been felt among community members due to provision of various types of aids such as financial aids, scholarship and job opportunities. Nevertheless, 87 (42%) respondents strongly disagreed and 40 (19%) disagreed on a mean of 2.32 that there had been an overall ethical advancement practices among church members.

The results from the open questions revealed that ways that the Methodist church promoted spiritual-economics aspects among its members included having services on Sundays for different spiritual-economic aspects and coordinating scholarships for needy children. The church had opened boarding schools, medical institutions, compassion projects/programs, donor programs, all which helped to train and teach members and non-members to promote their wellbeing. Further on, the various techniques used by the church to training members and employees to adhere to government policies included through classroom set-up, general meetings, seminars, conferences, retreats.

The study findings revealed that Methodist church ensured that social inequalities such as ethnicity and age, especially in relation to promotion of spiritual-economic aspects, were minimized by promoting leadership guided by the integrity of the word of God, standing orders, and use of both the church and country's constitution, when dealing with social lives of the members. The church also emphasized on use of common language that could be understood by all when teaching such as use of local language. Further on, the Christian virtues emphasized in Methodist to improve economic and reproductive growth included integrity, accountability, honesty, faithfulness, trustworthy, and living healthy lifestyle.

Additionally, the challenges faced by bishops when promoting spiritual-economic aspects among church members were unavailability of project leaders; failure of implementation of project policies; discouragements from some members; poverty of members; and internal wrangles in the church in regards to management of projects.

5.2.6 Overall Findings

Based on the overall findings, the study aimed to determine the influence of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of the Methodist Church in Kenya, Kaaga Synod. The model summary results showed that spiritual-economic projects had a 72.9% influence on church growth, as indicated by the r-square value of 0.729. The Durbin Watson value of 1.211 also showed a positive correlation between the variables. The ANOVA results further validated the model, with F (4,220) at 14.918 and $P \leq .000$, indicating that spiritual-economic projects had a positive and significant influence on church growth.

The study had a model which indicated that $Y = C + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4$ where: Y was church growth, β_i was coefficients to be estimated, C was constant, X1 was communal training, X2 was sustainability, X3 was financial literacy, X4 was involvement of communities in church projects.

Therefore, church growth = $12.567C + 0.144X_1 + 0.239X_2 + 0.094X_3 + 0.070X_4$. That is, Constant was 12.567 at a significance level of 0.237; communal training was 0.144 at a significance level of 0.410; Sustainability was 0.239 at a significance level of 0.221; Financial literacy was 0.094 at a significance level of 0.156; Involvement of communities in church projects was 0.070 at a significance level of 0.643. The results indicated that by adding one-unit X1, X2, X3 and X4, church growth increased by

0.144+0.239+0.094+0.070. Therefore, since all the p-values were greater than 0.05, it was prudent to indicate that separately, they were significant, however when combined only sustainability was insignificant.

Further when the moderating variable was introduced, all the variables became statistically insignificant hence the interaction term had no notable impact. Therefore, when the overall model was equated with the coefficients, it resulted as follows:

$$\text{Church growth} = C + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_5 De + \beta_6 FiDe$$

Where: C was 13.020; Communal Training was 0.078; Sustainability was 0.099; Financial Literacy was 0.141; Involvement of communities in church projects was 0.270; Interaction term 1.732. The results indicated that involving communities in church project was relevant towards improving the growth of the church.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

The following sections 5.3.1 to 5.3.5 indicate the conclusions made by the study on each variable.

5.3.1 Church Growth

The conclusions of church growth variable were that, the MCK council of Kenya had not reviewed their Sunday services programs for a long period of time. Therefore, the repercussion was that most members felt that their spiritual thirst was not quenched over the few minutes allocated to the services. The study also discovered that church growth was also negatively affected by inadequate monetary sources since every project required money to run and sustain. Further, there were still gaps on the extent of policies in place

particularly in the standing orders and insufficient service centered leaders on running spiritual-economic projects. This was whereby the project leaders tasked by the church, did not do so in good faith but rather to enrich themselves.

5.3.2 Communal Training in Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

The conclusions of communal training in spiritual-economic projects variable were that, the members did not concentrate to complete of the financial management courses since they either lacked financial literacy or simply expected payments of attendance at the end of the course. The study also established that there was resistance from some of the leaders whereby they felt that the timing of the implementation of communal training operations was wrong since other things needed priority. Further on, there was improper handing over during transitions leaving the new leaders to figure out things for themselves. Therefore, this meant that there was a period of total confusion since old leaders had not oriented the new ones on how much they covered as far as areas of concern areas were related.

5.3.3 Sustainability of Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

The conclusions of sustainability of spiritual-economic projects variable were that, the church projects such as schools and financial institutions which are main sources of income for the church, were negatively impacted by Covid-19 hence low income. This resulted to church taking more time than it was estimated towards delivering its mandate in conjunction with other churches.

5.3.4 Financial Literacy of Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

The conclusions of financial literacy of spiritual-economic projects variable were that, the disparity between the rich and the poor was not amicably handled. There were still some inconsistencies of how the poor members were handled in terms of opportunities available for them. Some financial literacy and management courses were expensive to pay hence the poor members in church had no financial muscle to cater for the expenses. Further, the study found out that the leaders offering treasurers training struggled with incompetency. Additionally, there was general lack of interest by some members whereby most of them were not ready to attend the training sessions hence low turnout.

5.3.5 Involvement of Communities in Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

The conclusions of involvement of communities in spiritual-economic projects variable were that, irrespective of the church clergy preaching on morality issues and eventually giving them finances to practice Biblical principles in their business, the members were still struggling to ensure that they followed strictly the teachings. The church leadership had still work to do as a means of providing more guidance on biblical principles. The study also found out that church leadership had a minimal or completely lack of close contact with members which caused lack of support hence internal wrangles especially when the members demanded explanation on management of church projects. In relation to policy implementation, the discovery was that when project leaders were tasked with the role of implementing agreed upon policies, they failed to do so in the right way.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

The following sections 5.3.1 to 5.3.5 indicate the conclusions made by the study on each variable.

5.4.1 Church Growth

The recommendations of church growth variable are that, the MCK council of Kenya should intervene and review the Sunday services especially towards increasing the worship and preaching time so as to enhance spirituality of its members. The Methodist church circuits should mobilize their members to raise more finances to facilitate various Methodist projects. The Methodist church leadership should also lobby with international affiliates to increase funding in Kenyan church to enable it carry more projects in bid of reaching out to the society. The Methodist council should also review standing orders particularly touching on project implementation and sustainability. The standing orders should also include the consequences of misappropriating project funds by leaders or members.

5.4.2 Communal Training in Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

The recommendations of communal training in spiritual-economic projects variable are that, the church leadership should increase more sensitization programs on the relevance of financial management courses to improve members' interests. Further, the church should also capitalize on these sensitization programs to train basic financial knowledge so as to ensure the members have a sound financial backing before enrolling for the courses. The sensitization programs should be used as a platform of informing the members on the benefits expectations and what not to expect such as payments after attendance at the end of the course. The church clergy should organize frequent meetings with project leaders so

as to develop goals and their timelines. This would enable the two parties have a working agreement to avoid further resistance. The study also recommends that there should be proper documentation of project activities such as having updated minutes of every meeting and updated financial records such as contribution and expenditures of the members among others as a way of minimizing transition problems.

5.4.3 Sustainability of Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

The recommendations of sustainability of spiritual-economic projects variable are that, the church council should develop strategies that would enable the church projects recover more quickly from the adverse effects of Covid-19 pandemic. This would enable the project members create goals that are in line with the strategies hence more appropriate method of recovery. The church clergy should also brainstorm with the project leaders and members on how to improve their projects so that they are not adversely affected by future calamities. This could include coming up with solutions like insuring the church projects in various insurers against natural and manmade calamities. This would enable the church leadership rest well assured that the project income will not subsidize in case of any unforeseen calamities.

5.4.4 Financial Literacy of Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

The recommendations of financial literacy of spiritual-economic projects variable are that, the church clergy should ensure that they empower the power members to attend various financial courses at subsidized or entirely free costs. Additionally, the project leaders should promote equality in access to opportunities whereby the poor members are given even more chances to access the opportunities which could involve leaving some opportunities to them. The church should also equip with skills and knowledge to its leaders

to ensure that they are competent enough to train the treasurers. The skills and knowledge could be facilitated through sponsoring them through formal training in colleges or universities. The church clergy should use their influence on members to uptake the initiative of sensitizing members on the importance of the trainings. This is because, the members ought to take into consideration the words of their minister as compared to the same words coming from someone else.

5.4.5 Involvement of Communities in Spiritual-economic Projects and Church Growth

The recommendations of involvement of communities in spiritual-economic projects variable were that, the clergy should advance their Biblical teaching and explanation skills so as to convince their members more on following them. Additionally, the clergy should also increase their personal prayer schedules so as to seek divine help from God on rooting his word into his people. The Methodist council should also develop Biblical preaching and teaching brochures that guide ministers on areas to concentrate on at a particular time. The church leadership which includes the ministers, project leaders and group leaders should create more time to attend meetings with members so as to create a rapport with them. The meetings could be in form of fellowships, one on one meetings, home bible churches, and home visits among others. This would enable members feel that their church leaders are close to them hence offering their support in matters of project management.

5.4.6 Implications of the Findings on Theory, Policy and Practice

The results are in consistent with resources-based theory whereby as a result of the church utilizing its available resources and combining them with creative initiatives of resources distribution, funding trainings in accounting management; paying different mentors to

mentor the members and also offer cheap loans, it gained competitive advantage of attracting more members. The results are also inconsistent with resource-based theory by Barney (1991) since in as much as the church has used its resources to pay allowances, train and empower church and project leaders, when they were leaving, they left a gap of confusion in their docket. Therefore, this created a chance for ill-motive members to siphon both monetary and non-monetary church resources.

These results were consistent with stewardship theory by Donaldson and Davis (1991). since when the church management trained and equipped members with financial empowerments and management, they were able to open business initiatives which made them self-employed contributing to reduction of unemployment and poverty eradication. Apart from that, the church had taken a very serious consideration to ensure that it put spiritual leaders that were strong as a means of acting as stewards of both material and non-material resources of the church. It required to have reliable leaders that would say no to common malpractices such as corruption, nepotism, and enriching themselves out of the church financial kitty.

Therefore, in relation to policy and practice, the church clergy should create an ultimatum of what should happen in cases where policies suggested have been wrongly implemented, delayed or not entirely implemented by the project leaders. There should be local standing orders on procedures to undertake when a leader does not implement suggested policies and solutions. This could include nature of warnings issued and invitation to an independent panel of ministers whereby the leader in question is given a chance to defend themselves.

5.5 Suggestion for Future Studies

The study was assessed the influence of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of the Methodist Church particularly in Kaaga Synod. Future studies should explore how spiritual-economic projects affect growth in other Methodist synods such as Nkubu, Mombasa and Tharaka synods

The study also collected data from superintendent ministers, project leaders and members. Future studies should also include other opinions from bishops to ascertain whether they would uphold or disregard with the findings of the study.

The study also did not collect secondary data such as income reports to determine categorically the growth status of the Methodist church. The main reason was due to inconsistency of the income reporting from local churches hence could have misled the study. Therefore, future studies should go an extra mile and included analysis of income reports to provide elaborate findings. The studies should provide a longer timeframe (1 to 2 years) to be in a position of recording consistent project incomes to be in a position of analyzing them.

The study also used questionnaires and interviews to gather data from the respondents hence future studies should expand data collection methods through including focus groups, analysis of church financial records as a means of gathering more information of spiritual-economic projects.

The study concentrated on communal training, sustainability, financial literacy and involvement of communities in spiritual-economic projects variables. Future studies

should expand the narrative to other aspects such as leadership training, government relationship with the church projects.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix I: Letter of Authorization

Jeniffer Kinya Lairangi,
P.O. BOX 269-60200,
Meru-Kenya.
Telephone number: 0741642646

To: Authorizing Manager,
MCK- Kaaga synod,
P.O BOX 269-60200,
Meru-Kenya.

Dear Sir/ Madam

**REF: INFLUENCE OF SPIRITUAL-ECONOMIC PROJECTS ON THE GROWTH
OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN KENYA. A CASE OF KAAGA SYNOD,
KENYA**

I am a PhD student at Kenya Methodist University (KeMU) in Main campus. I would like to request for authorization to conduct research in Kaaga synod. I am undertaking a dissertation on the influence of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of the Methodist church in Kenya. A case of Kaaga synod, Kenya. The objectives of the study are to investigate the effects of spiritual-economic projects in church growth, the extent of spiritual-economic projects in church growth, the nexus between spiritual-economic and church growth and financial literacy and spirituality on church growth in Kaaga synod in Meru County, Kenya.

The target respondent includes the superintendent ministers, project heads and community project members in Kaaga, synod circuits. The purpose of the research is purely academic and it will elaborate further on how combining spirituality and economics initiatives enhance church growth. I have attached a sample of questionnaires and interview guide with letter for your perusal.

Yours faithfully,

Jeniffer Kinya Lairangi

Appendix II: Letter of Consent

Dear Respondent,

RE: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I am post-graduate student at Kenya Methodist University (KeMU) pursuing a doctor of philosophy degree in religious studies. I am carrying out a study on the influence of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of the Methodist church in Kenya. A case of Kaaga synod, Kenya. I kindly request you to assist me gather information through giving responses. The information provided will only be used for the purpose of this study and the identities of the respondents will be held in strict confidence.

Yours faithfully,

Jeniffer Kinya Lairangi

Appendix III: Questionnaire for Project Heads and Community Project Members

You are requested to answer the following questions as truthful as you can. By filing in this questionnaire, you are affirming that you have agreed to participate in this study. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used for academic purposes only.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What position/ capacity do you hold in Methodist church?

- a) Circuit project chairperson
- b) Community project member

2. What is your highest level of education?

- a) Certificate
- b) Diploma
- c) Degree
- d) Masters
- e) PhD

3. How long have you served in the Methodist church in your capacity?

- a) Less than one year
- b) 1-3 years
- c) 3-5 years
- d) 5-10 years
- e) Above 10 years

SECTION B: COMMUNAL TRAINING IN SPIRITUAL-ECONOMIC PROJECTS AND CHURCH GROWTH

This section has statements regarding project communal training in spiritual-economic projects and church growth. Kindly respond with the response that matches your opinion. Please tick as appropriate in the boxes. 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4, agree, 5- strongly agree.

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Church members who have been empowered are more cooperative in church functions and attend Sunday services					
2.	Creative ways that the church have come up with such as educational scholarships, free medical check-ups, food donations among other ways have enticed the community to become full members of the church leading to an increase in church attendance.					
3.	The Methodist church has working systems that gather due diligence on areas to establish its projects to benefit the members of the community.					
4.	There is a strategic plan in the church that guides the circuits on which projects to implement and the order they should follow					

5. Highlight various seminars that have been established to equip church members with spiritual-economic projects?

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6. Explain the challenges faced when implementing various communal training projects such as financial management courses?

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7. In what way has the church leadership benefitted from trainings and conferences on management of church projects?

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SECTION C: SUSTAINABILITY OF SPIRITUAL-ECONOMIC PROJECTS AND CHURCH GROWTH

This section has statements regarding sustainability of spiritual-economic projects and church growth. Kindly respond with the response that matches your opinion. Please tick as appropriate in the boxes. 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4, agree, 5- strongly agree.

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	There are gender equality measures placed to ensure that all genders are well represented in various income generating projects.					
2.	There is good management in income generating projects whereby qualified staffs have been assigned task to manage within a specific duration of time					
3.	The Methodist church have greatly partnered with other denominations such as Catholic church in delivering various community-based projects					
4.	There is a great team effort played by Methodist church and the government of Kenya towards improving various income generating projects.					

5. What are some of the considerations given by the Methodist church when setting up an income generating program?

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6. Elaborate how the church has managed various risks associated with income projects which could cause strife within the church?

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7. Kindly name various initiatives established by the church to instill visionary leadership among the project members?

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SECTION D: FINANCIAL LITERACY OF SPIRITUAL-ECONOMIC PROJECTS AND CHURCH GROWTH

This section has statements regarding financial literacy of spiritual-economic projects and church growth. Kindly respond with the response that matches your opinion. Please tick as appropriate in the boxes. 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4, agree, 5- strongly agree.

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	There are financial literacy projects run by church to empower members					
2.	The Methodist church ensures that the rich and the poor get empowered economically without discrimination and inequality such as including financial literacy and management courses for all.					
3.	There are visible measures that the Methodist church have put into place to promote good governance anchored on the various policies and directives issued by the government.					

4.	The various financial literacy projects that have been able to attain both spiritual and financial acquaintance in personal finances management.					
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5. Explain various strategies implemented in church projects to be in a position of managing debt by the church?

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6. Highlight various incentives used by the church to entice church members into expanding their savings plan in church projects such as the KeMU Sacco?

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7. Briefly mention how the church promotes integrity while handling church finances to be in a position of maintaining safety of funds?

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SECTION E: INVOLVEMENT OF COMMUNITIES IN CHURCH PROJECTS AND CHURCH GROWTH

This section has statements regarding the influence of involvement of communities in church projects on church growth. Kindly respond with the response that matches your opinion. Please tick as appropriate in the boxes. 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4, agree, 5- strongly agree.

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Having strong religious leaders in church has enhanced easy blending of spirituality as well as economic empowerment.					

2.	The impact of the church has been felt among community members due to provision of various types of aids such as financial aids, scholarship and job opportunities.					
3.	The church has boosted various church members economically through initiatives such as free occasional financial training whereby members get trained on how they can invest and manage businesses.					
4.	There have been an overall ethical advancement practices among church members.					
5.	Godly principles have played a significant role towards improving the well-being of members such as helping them not go against the laws of Kenya.					

6. In what ways does the Methodist church promote spiritual-economics aspects among its members?

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7. Highlight various techniques used by the church to training members and employees to adhere to government policies

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SECTION F: METHODIST CHURCH GROWTH

This section has statements regarding Methodist church growth. Kindly respond with the response that matches your opinion. Please tick as appropriate in the boxes. 1- strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4, agree, 5- strongly agree.

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	The church has been in a position of assisting the needy through initiating various projects which has increased the number of church members					
2.	The church is able to comfortably fund evangelism missions hence increased number of souls won to Christ					
3.	There is more time allocated in worship and teaching of the word since members have discovered that the church functions are meant to equip and empower them both spiritually and economically					
4.	The church members are able to do discipleship training within the community since they understand its value more as the church grows					
5.	There are a lot of volunteers into God's work/ ministry since members have been able to sustain their livelihoods through engaging in church projects					

6. Explain the role church leadership has in ensuring that tithe and offering has increased in church

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7. Briefly mention the guiding Biblical principles followed by the church to practice accountability and stewardship?

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Appendix IV: Interview guide for Superintendent ministers

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your highest level of education?
2. How long have you served in the Methodist church in your capacity?

SECTION B: COMMUNAL TRAINING AND CHURCH GROWTH

1. What are some of the material benefits of integration of spiritual-economics in Methodist church?
2. What challenges does the church management faced when running projects such as the annual circumcision program?
3. What are some of the spiritual-economic benefits and challenges that church members experience as a result of leadership transition?
4. How does the Methodist church of Kenya's projects benefit the vulnerable groups especially the disabled and the people living with HIV/AIDs in the society?
5. What is the role of communal training in spiritual-economic programs on church growth in MCK, Kaaga synod?

SECTION C: SUSTAINABILITY OF SPIRITUAL-ECONOMIC PROJECTS AND CHURCH GROWTH

1. How does the Methodist church support and empower the vulnerable groups such as women and children?
2. Who are some of the partners that Methodist church have partnered with to ensure success of income generating projects?
3. Which measures have the Methodist church implemented to ensure that gender equality is present in its initiatives?
4. What are some of the government interventions that have played part in improving various income generating initiatives in Methodist church?

5. What is the influence sustainability of spiritual-economic programs on church growth in MCK, Kaaga synod?

SECTION D: FINANCIAL LITERACY OF SPIRITUAL-ECONOMIC PROJECTS AND CHURCH GROWTH

1. What are financial literacy projects offered by the Methodist church?
2. Which organizations has the Methodist church partnered with when training financial literacy projects to its members?
3. What are challenges faced when training its members on financial literacy?
4. What is the impact of financial literacy of spiritual-economic programs on church growth in MCK, Kaaga synod?

SECTION E: INVOLVEMENT OF COMMUNITIES IN CHURCH PROJECTS AND CHURCH GROWTH

1. How does Methodist church ensure that social inequalities such as ethnicity and age are minimized especially in relation to promotion of spiritual-economic aspects?
2. What are some of the Christian virtues emphasized in Methodist to improve economic and reproductive growth?
3. What are the challenges faced by bishops when promoting spiritual-economic aspects among church members?
4. What is the effect of involvement of communities in projects on spiritual-economic projects and the growth in MCK, Kaaga synod?

SECTION F: METHODIST CHURCH GROWTH

1. Explain how many evangelism programs has the church engaged within a period of the last 3 months?
2. Describe the roles played by the church in maintaining soul winning programs
3. Highlight the challenges that the church has undergone in its growth prospects which are related to spiritual-economic projects.
4. What is the influence of spiritual-economic projects on the growth of the Methodist Church in Kenya, Kaaga Synod

Appendix V: Introduction Letter



KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

P. O. Box 267 Meru - 60200, Kenya
Tel: 254-064-30301/31229/30367/31171

Fax: 254-64-30162
Email: deanrd@kemu.ac.ke

DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

August 16, 2022

Commission Secretary,
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations,
P.O. Box 30623-00100,
NAIROBI.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: LAIRANGI JENIFER KIINYA (REG.PRS-4-0302-1/2019)

This is to confirm that the above named is a bona fide student of Kenya Methodist University, in the School of Education and Social Sciences, Department of Theology Religious Studies and Counselling undertaking a Doctoral Degree in Religious Studies . She is conducting research on: "Influence of Spiritual Economic Projects on the Growth of the Methodist Church in Kenya. A Case of Kaaga Synod."

We confirm that her research proposal has been presented and approved by the University.

In this regard, we are requesting your office to issue a research license to enable her collect data.

Any assistance accorded to her will be appreciated.

Thank you



Dr. John Muchiri, Ph.D
Director, Postgraduate Studies

Cc: Dean SESS
CoD, TRSC
Postgraduate Co-ordinator TRSC
Student Supervisors

Appendix VI: Nacosti Permit

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 675562	Date of Issue: 31/August/2022
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Rev.. JENIFFER KINYA LAIRANGI of Kenya Methodist University, has been licensed to conduct research in Meru on the topic: INFLUENCE OF SPIRITUAL ECONOMIC PROJECTS ON THE GROWTH OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN KENYA. A CASE OF KAAGA SYNOD, KENYA for the period ending : 31/August/2023.	
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