

Influence of the Professional training of the Clergy on Fostering Cohesion among Ethnic Communities in Nakuru County, Kenya

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Abstract

This paper seeks to establish the influence of the Professional training of the Clergy on fostering cohesion in a multi-ethnic setting like Nakuru County in Kenya. Professional training of the clergy is not an end in itself but is the means to an end. They preach the whole counsel of God that will eventually produce mature believers who will perpetuate the kingdom values wherever they will be. Yet Kenya, with a population that is majority Christian at 83%, has had a trend of electoral violence since the introduction of multiparty politics in the 1990s with the most recent and severe case being the post-election violence (PEV) of 2007/2008. While Christians are generally credited for being a strong source of identity and value formation, it has not been the case for churches have been involved and affected often with ethnic groups pitted against each other. The study was guided by Burton's Human Needs Theory (HNT) and Lawrence's self- in-God (SIG) model. The study was conducted in Nakuru, a cosmopolitan County, employed descriptive research design and involved the Africa Inland Church (AIC), Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) and Africa Gospel Church (AGC) Congregations. A sample of 120 members of the clergy selected using purposive, stratified, proportionate and simple random sampling techniques participated in the study. The clergy's questionnaires (CQ) were used to collect data. The content and face validity of the instruments were examined by experts and their suggestions used to improve the tools before they were used to gather data. The collected data was analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Data was described and summarized using frequency tables and percentages. The Spearman's correlations was used to establish the relationship between the clergy's training and fostering cohesion among communities. The findings of the study established that professional training and qualification of the clergy does not influence fostering cohesion among ethnic communities.

Key words: Professional training, clergy, Christians' spirituality, ethnic conflict, cohesion, and peace.

Introduction

Theological seminaries have no counterpart in the Old Testament and the New Testament of the Bible. New Testament criteria for church leadership center more on the extent of the minister's personal likeness to Christ than on skill or knowledge. In Titus 1:5-9 and 1Timothy 3:1-10, Paul clearly establishes spiritual qualities. Spiritual formation of students in the theological institutions is an integral part of one who has been called into full time ministry. Mulholland (1993) defines spiritual formation as a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others. It addresses the content of faith (knowing), ministry skills and competency (doing) and character (being). It is the task of the Seminaries to recruit and train ministers of the Gospel whose character, theological knowledge, and lifestyle cohere to form a living powerful illustration of the message they proclaim. However, Peterson (1997) contends that 'spiritual formation' within Seminaries is somewhat problematic, for seminaries primarily engage in imparting knowledge and skills and not in nurturing spirituality. Still, Wilkes (1990) holds the view that spiritual life cannot be quantified or assessed, it is personal and should be left to the individual.

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Without intentional efforts to evaluate, monitor and foster spiritual formation, theological institutions risk producing sons of Ephraim described by Hosea as a “cake half-baked” (Hos. 7:8). A balanced Seminary graduate therefore knows the Word, has a personal faith in Jesus Christ and seeks to be an agent of transformation in the world. According to Willard (2002) a renovated heart transforms the mind, feelings, choices, body, social contexts and soul to produce a selfless individual who will ultimately raise a community of people to serve and govern the earth.

Professional training of the clergy is not an end in itself but is the means to an end. They preach the whole counsel of God that will eventually produce mature believers who will perpetuate the kingdom values wherever they will be. That is why this study looks at the effect of Professional training of the clergy on fostering cohesion among ethnic communities in Nakuru County.

Purpose of the study

The purposes of this study was two-fold, first to establish the influence of the professional training of the Clergy on fostering cohesion among ethnic communities in Nakuru County, Kenya and second to establish the relationship between clergy’s professional training and fostering cohesion among ethnic communities in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Materials and Methods

This study that adopted descriptive survey research design was undertaken in Nakuru County, a cosmopolitan County that is home to 1, 603, 325 people (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2014). The study was conducted in Nakuru County of Kenya that is comprised of nine Administrative sub-counties namely; Naivasha, Gilgil, Nakuru Town, Rongai, Nakuru North, Subukia, Njoro, Molo, and Kuresoi. The county is located between longitudes 35° 28’ and 35° 36’ East and Latitudes 0°13’ and 1° 10’ South in the former Rift Valley Province and is about 160km from Nairobi (Nakuru County Integrated Development Plan, 2013). The Kikuyu and the Kalenjin are the dominant communities in the county, making about 70% of the population (Kenya Information Guide, 2015). The location was chosen because many different ethnic communities inhabit it and is one of the counties that have been hardest hit by ethnic conflicts and disharmony since 1992 (Kalande, 2008).

The Clergy’s questionnaire (CQ) were used to collect data. The target population of the study was the clergy in Nakuru County. The accessible population of study was all the clergy of AIC, PCEA, ACK and AGC churches in five sub-counties of Nakuru County namely; Naivasha, Nakuru Town, Njoro, Molo and Kuresoi. The five sub-counties were selected because they are cosmopolitan and have been most affected by the ethnic conflicts recorded in the county since 1992 (CRECO, 2012).

The Pastors or the Clergy have been targeted because they are the ministers of the church whereas the believers were targeted because they make communities and are recipients of pastoral services.

Stratified sampling techniques were used to ensure that all the five Sub - Counties and the four churches (denominations); AIC, PCEA, ACK and AGC were included in the study. The sample

sizes of the clergy and the believers were determined using the Slovin's formula (Dionco-Adetayo, 2011) given below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + NE^2}$$

where: n = sample size, N = population size, E = margin of error or error tolerance and 1 = is a constant value.

The sample sizes of the clergy when the error margin is 5% was 169 and given that the accessible population was 316. The number of clergy and believers from each Denomination and Sub-County was determined using proportionate sampling techniques. Selection of those who took part in the study at the Sub-County and church levels was done using simple random sampling.

Results and Discussion

The study sought to establish the Influence of the Professional training of the Clergy on Fostering Cohesion among Ethnic Communities. Professional training like education is about more than service delivery because it is a means of socialization and identity development through transmission of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes across generations (Bush & Salterelli, 2000). The knowledge and skills acquired through training can also be used to manage conflict, bring harmony and cohesion among communities through peace building.

Data on professional training of the clergy was captured using CQ. Three sets of data were gathered; highest level of education, training in theology and life skills. The study examined these three components of professional training because it is multifaceted as it is composed of education, experience and skills (Lara, 2008). The highest level of education of the clergy sample is in Table 1.

Table 1 *Highest Level of Education of the Clergy*

Level of education n = 118	Frequency	Percent
Primary	3	2.5
Secondary	16	13.3
College	44	36.7
University	55	45.8

An examination of the results in Table 1 show that 2.5% of the clergy had attained primary level education, 13.3% had secondary school level of education, 36.7% had post-secondary school or college certificates while the remaining 45.8% were holders of university degrees. The results in the Table 1 reveal that the level of education of the clergy was high given that majority of them had attained university level of education. Ng and Feldman (2009) observed that, in addition to positively influencing core task performance, education is also related to creativity and citizenship behaviours and negatively related to on-the-job substance use and absenteeism. Ng, Eby, Sorensen and Feldman (2005) argue that education also promotes core task performance by providing individuals with more declarative and procedural knowledge with which they can complete their tasks successfully. This suggests that the clergy with higher levels of education

are likely to perform their spiritual and social responsibilities better; Not only empowering and equipping the believers for effective and faithful ministry within the local church ministry such as in worship services, teaching or fellowship but also in the marketplace in order to be faithful in partnering with God in the *Missio Dei* (Forster & Oostenbrink, 2015). Many pastoral leaders, however, seem to enjoy doing the work themselves without training others for service out of fear that they could be rendered unemployed (Stetzer, 2012). But the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9; 4:10) though the most neglected central teaching, is an important biblical idea that allows Christians to connect their beliefs to their everyday actions (Lindsley, 2013). This is expected to enhance the performance of believers so as to function effectively as agents of God's mission and kingdom in the market place that faces challenges like economic corruption, sexual temptations and social justice that are seldom dealt with from the pulpit (Forster, 2014a; Bosch, 2011).

Data on the profession training in theology of the clergy was also collected. Finke and Dougherty (2002) aver that the clergy need professional training for them to gain mastery of attachment to a specific religious culture. They add that training equips the clergy with the ability to effectively attend to the spiritual, theological and social needs of their flock. The clergy level of professional training in theology and other areas of ministry are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 *Clergy's Highest Level of Professional Training in Theology*

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage n = 116
Certificate	8	6.9
Diploma	52	44.8
Degree	33	28.4
Masters	11	9.5
PhD	1	0.9
None	11	9.5

The results in Table 2 reveal that majority of the clergy were diploma (44.8%) and degree (28.4%) holders. The distribution by level of professional training of others was; 9.5% were holders of master's degree, 0.9% had a PhD, 6.9% had attained post-secondary school certificates while 9.5% did not have any professional training. The results show that majority of the clergy had high level of professional training. This is good for discipleship since Christians in every generation are called to serve in all areas of life and imitating Jesus Christ is the goal of each believer (Baxton, 2011). For them to serve well, they need the leadership of the clergy that is professionally trained and are able to model in them selfless, dedication to Christ, courage, decisiveness, compassion, and persuasiveness. According to Finke and Dougherty (2002) the systematic training received in theology, doctrine, history, and ministry rituals provides seminary educated clergy with a religious capital that is distinct from that possessed by the laity or by clergy with no comparable education. They are thus better shepherds of flocks.

The clergy provided data on their life skills training in addition to those on their level of education and professional training. According to Forster and Oostenbrink (2015), globalization is forcing the church to think about the concerns of broader society in more effective and creative ways. These challenges include economic inequality, corruption, political and economic instability, difficult and unfair labour practices, and lack of social, economic and political integrity, unethical or destructive leadership, over-exposure to information, continuous change and turmoil, unemployment, poverty and hunger, HIV and environmental degradation and a host of others. These challenges demand that the Christians and the clergy in particular are equipped with skills to manage them. The areas of training in life skills are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 *Clergy's Life Skills Training Areas*

Training Area n = 120	N	Percentage	
		Yes	No
Leadership	112	91.1	8.9
Government and governance	75	53.3	46.7
Sociology	89	75.5	24.7
Business development and management	78	57.7	42.3
Life skills	79	60.8	39.2

An examination of the results in Table 3 show that the clergy had been exposed to training covering diverse areas such as leadership (91.1%), government and governance (53.3%), and sociology (75.5%). There were also those who have been provided training in business development and management (57.7%) and other life skills (60.8%). The results are an indication that the clergy's training do not only cover theology and discipleship but also other areas that provide them with the skills to deal with socio-economic needs of the flock. The other areas the clergy have been trained in addition to the life skills are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 *Other Areas that the Clergy have been trained*

Training Area n = 120	Frequency	Percent %
Conflict resolution, peace and reconciliation	3	2.4
Guidance and counseling	6	4.8
HIV/AIDS management	5	4.0
Community development	2	1.6
Capacity building	3	2.4
Farming	3	2.4
Evangelism	6	4.8
Others	11	9.2

The results in Table 4 show that a number of the clergy have undergone training in conflict resolution, peace and reconciliation (2.4%), Guidance and counseling (4.8%), HIV/AIDS management (4.0%), farming (2.4%) and capacity building (2.4%). The other areas they have been trained in are; community development (1.6%), evangelism (4.8%) and others (9.2%). The results reveal that the clergy were exposed to training in a wide range of areas. The results are in tandem with the recommendations of DeShon and Quinn (2007). They posit that the abilities of the clergy should not be limited to preaching, fellowship, and evangelism, they should also have

abilities to manage, built relationships, give care and assist their flock meet their daily earthly needs. The same is echoed by the Christian Reformed Church in North America (2010) that observed that leadership and service in church are responsibilities that require a wide range of skills.

The relationship between the professional training of the clergy and fostering cohesion among ethnic communities was determined by running the Spearman's correlations. The Spearman's correlation is the non-parametric alternative to Pearson's product-moment correlation. It is used to calculate the strength of the relationship between two continuous variables or in situations where one of the variables is ordinal (Pallant, 2005). It was used because level of professional training was considered as ordinal data. The output of the test is given in Table 5.

Table 5 *The relationship between Clergy's professional training and fostering Cohesion among Ethnic Communities*

Scale	Fostering Cohesion among ethnic communities	
Clergy's professional training	Correlation coefficient (r)	0.033
	p-value	0.557
	N	323

* Significant at 0.05 level

The results of the Spearman's test in Table 5 reveal the relationship between the clergy's training and fostering cohesion among communities was positive but not significant at the 0.05 level, $r(331) = 0.033$, $p > 0.05$. This implies that the training of the clergy does not influence cohesion among communities. The third hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between the training of the clergy and cohesion among communities was accepted.

The Spearman test results revealed that relationship between the clergy's training and fostering cohesion among communities was not significant. This implies that professional training of the clergy does not influence fostering of cohesion among ethnic communities. The results are consistent with the teachings of Barna (1997) who was convinced that what the clergy needs to lead God's people is belief in Him, His guidance and blessing, not competencies acquired through seminary training. The results are also in harmony with the views of Engstrom and Dayton (1976) who argue that the best leaders are those who model attributes of selfless dedication, courage, decisiveness, compassion, and persuasiveness. These traits reflect Jesus' role as a servant (Mark 10:45). What this means is that the clergy only needs to be a true servant of the Lord to effectively lead its flock. This in turn enhances the ability of the flock to perform its duties and responsibilities, such as fostering of cohesion among ethnic communities.

The results also support the views of Finke and Dougherty (2002) that God never calls an unprepared man to preach, further advising preachers never to let their study interfere with soul-saving: "If you can do but one let your studies alone". The results are also similar to the axiom of the founder of Calvary Chapel, Chuck Smith, that "God does not call the qualified, but instead qualifies the called" (Miller, 1997). Boice (1986) concurs by stating that it is the spirit of Christ that matters not qualifications. For in it, people of all cultures are brought together in fellowship and all national, ethnic, racial and other barriers are broken down.

The results, however, contradict the findings of Ng and Feldman (2009) that showed that, in addition to enhancing performance, professional training is also positively related to creativity and citizenship behaviours. Stark and Finke (2000) support Ng and Feldman work by advocating for theological education. They observed that professional training in theology provides the clergy with religious and social capital that are essential for their work. Religious capital is concerned with mastery of the doctrines, knowledge, skills, and rituals of a specific religion (Osler, 2007). Social capital on the other hand refers to the resources social actors secure through their interpersonal attachments such as trust, friendship, information and support. It leads to creation of a strong relationship between the clergy and congregation.

The results of the hypothesis test showed no significant association between clergy professional training and the fostering of cohesion among ethnic communities. Despite this, professional training is important because, like other forms of education, it entails a cumulative building process where the clergy accumulate an assortment of knowledge, skills, experiences, and relationships (Finke & Dougherty, 2002). Professional training like other forms of education is about more than service delivery because it is a means of socialization and identity development through transmission of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes across generations (Bush & Salterelli, 2000). The knowledge and skills acquired through training can be used by stakeholders to bring harmony and cohesion among communities through peace building in conflict prone areas like Nakuru County.

Recommendations

The results however revealed that professional training of the clergy had no effect on fostering cohesion among communities. Profession training is concerned with equipping the clergy with content on faith, ministry skills, competency and character formation. The training of the clergy tends to focus on equipping them with skills to function effectively within the ambit of the local congregation. It is the task of seminaries to train the ministers of the gospel whose character, theological knowledge and lifestyle cohere to form a living powerful illustration of the message they proclaim. It is recommended that the theological institutions must design balanced curricula with duo-approach or the praxis of holding together sound doctrine and contextually relevant ministry skills, that not only train the clergy to focus on equipping believers for ministries in the local church but also empowering them to be a strong influence in the world as the salt and light (Matthew 5:16), for the realization of a just, honest and compassionate society.

Conclusion

The study sought first to establish the influence of the professional training of the Clergy on fostering cohesion among ethnic communities in Nakuru County, Kenya and second to establish the relationship between clergy's professional training and fostering cohesion among ethnic communities in Nakuru County, Kenya. Data on professional training of the clergy was captured using Clergy's Questionnaire. The results reveal that the level of education of the clergy was high given that majority of them had attained university level of education.

The results further showed that majority of the clergy had high level of professional training that do not only cover theology and discipleship but also other areas that provide them with the skills to deal with socio-economic needs of the flock.

The Spearman's correlations test was used to establish the relationship between professional training of the clergy and fostering cohesion among ethnic communities in Nakuru County. The results were positive but not significant at the 0.05 level, $r(331) = 0.033$, $p > 0.05$. This implies that the training of the clergy does not influence cohesion among communities.

The conclusion drawn from these observations was that the professional training of the clergy does not influence fostering cohesion among ethnic communities.

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